



PRLS Board Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2025

The regular meeting of the Parkland Regional Library System Board was called to order at 10:02 a.m. on Thursday February 27, 2025 in the Small Board Room, Lacombe.

Present: Barb Gilliat, Gord Lawlor, Ray Reckseidler

Present via Zoom: Jackie Almberg, Delijiah Antaloczy, Paul Ashfield, Alison Barker-Jevne, Jul Bissell, Laureen Clark-Rennie, Deb Coombes, Edna Coulter, Teresa Cunningham, Todd Dalke, Jeff Eckstrand, Sarah Fahey, Elaine Fossen, Shaleah Fox, Dwayne Fulton, Twyla Hale, Kathy Hall, Dana Kreil, Stephen Levy, Bryce Liddle, Julie Maplethorpe, Philip Massier, Ricci Matthews, Marc Mousseau, Cheryl Dezall, (alt. Joy-Anne Murphy), Jordon Northcott, Jacquie Palm-Fraser, Paul Patterson, Shawn Peach, Leonard Phillips, Dianne Roth, Sandy Shipton, Les Stulberg, Harvey Walsh, Carlene Wetthuhn, Bill Windsor, Janice Wing

Guests: Malcolm Boyd

With Regrets: Joy-Anne Murphy, Jackie Northey, Shawn Peach

Absent: Derald Anderson, Wayne Clark, Cal David, Les Fee, Tim Field, Pam Hansen, Cody Hillmer, Cody Johnson, Darryl Motley, Jas Payne, Naomi Tercier, Shannon Wilcox

Staff: Kara Hamilton, Patty Morrison, Paige Mueller, Andrea Newland, Ron Sheppard, Tim Spark, Donna Williams

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Barb Gilliat. Gilliat reviewed the ground rules of the meeting.

As part of PRLS' legislative compliance procedures, board members who send regrets are excused at the beginning of each meeting.

Motion by Gord Lawlor to excuse Joy-Anne Murphy, Jackie Northey, and Shawn Peach from attendance at the board meeting on February 27, 2025 and remain a member of the Parkland Board in good standing.

CARRIED
PRLS 1/2025

Twyla Hale entered the meeting at 10:05 a.m.



Agenda

1.1.2 Adoption of the Agenda

Gilliat asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda. There were none.

Motion by Stephen Levy to accept the agenda as presented.

CARRIED

PRLS 2/2025

1.2. Approval of Minutes

Gilliat asked if there were any amendments to the November 14, 2024 minutes. Paul Ashford stated that he was present at the November meeting.

Motion by Ray Reckseidler to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2024 meeting as amended.

CARRIED

PRLS 3/2025

1.3. Business arising from the minutes of the November 14, 2024 meeting

Gilliat asked if there was any business arising from the minutes. There was none.

2. Business Arising from the Consent Agenda

Gilliat asked if there was any business arising from the consent agenda. There was none.

Motion by Deb Coombes to approve the consent agenda as presented.

CARRIED

PRLS 4/2025

3.1 Vacant Seats on the Executive Committee

Sheppard reviewed. At the November organizational board meeting, two seats on Parkland's Executive Committee were not filled. Those seats were for Areas 7 and 8. After sending out invitations to PRL board members for Areas 7 and 8, staff found three volunteers, Dana Kreil of Lacombe County for Area 7, Les Stulberg from the County of Stetter, and Elaine Fossen from Village of Forestburg both for area 8. Stephen Levy from the Village of Sedgewick also volunteered. Since there were three volunteers for area 8, the collective membership from area 8 held a discussion in a Zoom breakout room. They chose Les Stulberg to be their representative on the Executive Committee. Dana Kreil was appointed for area 7.

Motion by Carlene Wetthuhn to appoint Dana Kreil and Les Stulberg to Parkland's Executive Committee.

CARRIED

PRLS 5/2025

Dwayne Fulton entered the meeting at 10:20 a.m.



3.2 2024 in Review – Approval of the 2024 Annual Report

Sheppard reviewed some of the highlights from the 2024 annual report.

IT Accomplishments:

- Migrated 527 computers from Windows 10 to Windows 11.
- Replaced 144 desktop and 20 laptop computers throughout the region.
- Replaced 16 monitors along with several other peripheral items throughout the region.
- Replaced one physical service at the Parkland Regional Library System (PRLS) office.
- Migrated several servers to the latest version of the Windows Server operating system.
- Migrated the PRLS Support site and equipment booking software to a new Linux operating system.
- Continued development of the website to further enhance it for library patrons throughout the region.
- Assisted the Edberg Municipal Library with their move. Facilitated their SuperNet move and re-configured the network and equipment at their new facility.
- Continued to maintain existing infrastructure for technologies such as; wireless, firewalls, network switches, servers, storage, desktops, laptops, etc.

Finance & Operations Accomplishments:

- Finance staff ordered and processed 26,155 new library materials at a cost of \$525,526
- In 2024 the van drivers made 3,120 library deliveries driving 182,250 kilometers
- The number of bins moved around the system on vans was 32,028
- The operations staff sent and received approximately 1,098 ILL items weekly through the government courier system.

Marketing

Parkland conducted several large-scale marketing campaigns in 2024. We had an extensive internal awareness campaign to increase our members' awareness of PRLS services. Additionally, we collected stories from patrons for our "Because of the Library" campaign. These stories were turned into graphics that were then shared widely through our own channels but also through a paid advertising partnership with Black Press Media. As part of this partnership, Parkland ran a two-month long digital ad campaign that included targeted ads, promotional news stories and print ads for eight member libraries in their local newspapers. The marketing department also facilitated our yearly contests (Library Card Sign Up Season and the Golden Ticket Contest) which were a huge success this year. The Amisk library won a state-of-the-art virtual reality headset and received training on how to use it for their community. Finally, the marketing team continued to support member libraries with a variety of marketing campaigns, content creation and training.



Advocacy

In 2024 Parkland helped galvanize the willingness of the regional systems into focusing on three advocacy goals. Those goals are:

1. Future of Public Library Board Operating Grant Funding Structure for Intermunicipal Library Boards – A proposal for adjustments to the funding model to support intermunicipal cooperation, allowing consolidated boards to remain financially viable while streamlining governance structures.
2. Future of Alberta Library SuperNet – A call to reassess bandwidth allocations for the SuperNet to ensure that library connectivity keeps pace with evolving internet standards, especially for rural communities.
3. Strengthening Library Services through Sustainable Funding – A suggestion for establishing a predictable funding model that reflects population growth and inflation, enabling libraries to continue meeting the expanding needs of their communities.

Other activities included developing training documents. Some very good documents were also created for use during MLA visits which could be used by all seven of the systems. Parkland's visits have met with some success; however, it has proven to be a challenge to obtain visits with our MLAs.

Parkland participated with the other six library systems in a province-wide omnibus survey which sought to measure public support for library service. Results from the survey indicated that 81% of Albertans agree that there is value in public libraries as free spaces to read, learn, have fun, and access the internet, and that 70% of Albertans agree that convenient access to their public library in person or online is important to them.

Library Services Achievements

In 2024, the Library Services Department conducted 1,445 virtual and phone consulting sessions, including 69 onsite library visits. We offered 27 various training events and 16 virtual/in-person meetings. We had a total of over 660 participants. Our biggest event was the relaunching of the Parkland Conference in September 2024. It was very well attended and participants enjoyed getting together, in-person, with Parkland staff, member library staff and board members. Planning is already underway for the 2025 Parkland Conference.

At the library service point in Maskwacis, numerous changes occurred since the beginning of their fiscal year on April 1, 2024. An additional staff member was hired, providing the opportunity for the library to diversify and begin offering in-house and outreach programming to the community. Staff have been visiting schools and all four Nations and promoting the services available through the library. We were also able to replace all the flooring within the library. This made a tremendous impact to the overall beautification of the space. We are, however, still advocating for a new library space that would better serve the needs of the community.



Motion by Teresa Cunningham to approve the Parkland Regional Library System's 2025 Public Library Survey and 2024 Annual Report as presented.

CARRIED

PRLS 6/2025

3.3 Approval of the 2024 Outlet Annual Reports

Sheppard reviewed the 2024 outlet annual reports for Brownfield Community Library, Nordegg Public Library, Spruce View Community Library, and Water Valley Public Library. These are the four library service points for which the Parkland Board is the governing board. Under the Alberta Libraries Act, the PRLS Board must approve the annual reports for these service points.

In addition to reviewing their annual reports, Sheppard commented on the future of outlet libraries. On January 16th and again on February 13th, Parkland's Director attended a Zoom meeting hosted by the Public Library Services Branch at Municipal Affairs. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss whether allowing library systems to be the "board of record" for library service points was to continue. This meeting was a follow-up meeting from one held on November 20th last year. As yet no decisions have been made by the government. It was made clear at the meeting that should systems no longer be the allowed to be the governing board for library service points, it could be years before any change occurs.

Motion by Janice Wing to approve the annual reports for Brownfield Community Library, Nordegg Public Library, Spruce View Community Library, and Water Valley Public Library as presented.

CARRIED

PRLS 7/2025

3.4 Advocacy Committee Terms of Reference

Sheppard reviewed. At the November board meeting, the group discussed how to increase the effectiveness of the Advocacy Committee. Based on feedback received at the December Executive Committee meeting, the Terms of Reference for the Advocacy Committee were modified.

The most significant changes were that board members who volunteer for the committee are expected to commit to actively engage in advocacy work. This may include, but not be limited to;

- Meeting MLAs
- Visiting municipal councils
- Providing training/mentorship to member library boards



At the last Executive Committee meeting, Yellowhead Regional Library's (YRL) continued attendance in Parkland Advocacy Committee meetings was also discussed. It was decided that they would attend on an "as needed" basis when collective advocacy action was required.

Motion by Ray Reckseidler to approve the Advocacy Committee Terms of Reference as amended.

CARRIED
PRLS 8/2025

3.5 Election of the Advocacy Committee

Sheppard reviewed. Board volunteers who sit on the Advocacy Committee will be reimbursed for participating in meetings. In accordance with PRLS policy, trustees will receive \$100 per half-day of honorarium for attending meetings and mileage reimbursement at a rate of \$0.550 per km. for those who choose to attend meetings in person.

Meeting dates will be set at the discretion of the Advocacy Committee, but are generally on the afternoons of the Executive Committee meetings from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The next meeting of the Advocacy Committee will be on March 27th at 1:00 p.m. The tentative, regular meeting dates for 2025 will be set at the March meeting.

After approving the new Advocacy Committee terms of reference, past Advocacy Committee Chair Gord Lawlor asked for up to six volunteers to sit on the Advocacy Committee. Gord Lawlor, Sarah Fahey, Ray Reckseidler, Todd Dalke, Stephen Levy, and Barb Gilliat volunteered.

Motion by Kathy Hall to appoint Gord Lawlor, Sarah Fahey, Ray Reckseidler, Todd Dalke, Stephen Levy, and Barb Gilliat to the Advocacy Committee.

CARRIED
PRLS 9/2025

3.6 Budget Summary Report

Bill Windsor entered the meeting at 11:04 a.m.

Sheppard reviewed. This is the third year Parkland has produced such a report. Originally, the report was designed to identify the cost for public library service throughout the Parkland region. The current version has been much simplified. Given the many variances in the way libraries calculate their income and expenditures, it is hoped the new format for the report will be easier to understand.

Based on the information provided by member libraries, 35% deficit budgeted in 2024.

The Executive Committee reviewed this document at their January meeting and did not recommend any changes, and the board offered no suggested changes.



Motion by Gord Lawlor to receive for information.

CARRIED

PRLS 10/2025

3.7 Parkland's Auditor 2025-2027

Sheppard reviewed. The 2024 audit concludes Parkland's current three-year contract for audit services with MNP.

Parkland staff have been very happy with MNP's audit services. They have been Parkland's auditor since 2019. Staff did not recommend switching auditors or engaging in a request for proposal to seek alternate audit services. Parkland's two staff, who are primarily responsible for financial management, are retiring in 2025. Switching auditors would create significant unnecessary upheaval. Moreover, staff at MNP will likely be providing training and support for Parkland's new finance staff.

MNP's cost increase is marginal. At their December 12th meeting, the Executive Committee endorsed continuing to use MNP as Parkland's auditors and accept the fees for 2025-2027.

For the 2024 audit year, the Executive Committee reviewed MNP's audit plan and approved it at their December meeting. The auditors were at Parkland on February 3rd and 4th when they completed their on-site work. The audit will be presented to the board in May for review.

Motion by Carlene Wetthuhn to receive for information.

CARRIED

PRLS 11/2025

3.8 Woodworker's Guild Joint Project

Sheppard reviewed. Late last year, Parkland entered into a partnership with the Central Alberta Woodworker's Guild (CAWG), a volunteer organization, to produce a variety of puzzle kits for programming in public libraries. These kits are intended to provide children with a way to develop their manual dexterity. The kits are equally useful for seniors or those experiencing cognitive decline who wish to improve their motor, nervous, or hand-eye coordination skills. The kits are also perfect for multi-generational programming.

In an attempt to be responsible conservators, these kits were produced at low cost with repurposed oak from unwanted church pews. The puzzles and kits can be assembled and disassembled over and over again, allowing for years of use.

An event to introduce the kits, to which the press and members of CAWG will be invited, is planned for March 21st at the Servus Credit Union Public Library in Blackfalds.

Motion by Deb Coombes to receive for information.

CARRIED

PRLS 12/2025



3.9 Staff Engagement Survey

Sheppard reviewed. The Executive Committee mandated that a staff engagement survey be developed. The draft survey was reviewed by the Executive Committee at their October 17th meeting and was disseminated to staff in November.

Overall, the response rate was good and the survey results are positive. However, Parkland management are discussing how to best address the few areas where improvement could be made.

In December, Board Chair Barb Gilliat emailed to acknowledge that the Executive Committee received and reviewed the survey.

Motion by Harvey Walsh to receive for information.

CARRIED
PRLS 13/2025

3.10 Staff Recognition

Sheppard reviewed. According to PRLS's Human Resource Manual, employees will be recognized with a monetary reward for long service with Parkland Regional Library System.

In addition to a pin indicating the number of years of service, a monetary award is provided to staff. For 2025, long service award recipients were:

Janelle Johnson – 5 years
Russell Adams – 10 years
Steven Dobrowolski – 10 years
Ron Sheppard – 20 years
Sandie Bilk – 20 years
Alida Burnard – 20 years

Motion by Laureen Clarke-Rennie to receive for information.

CARRIED
PRLS 14/2025

3.11. Updates

3.11.1. Director's Report

3.11.2. Library Services Report

3.11.3. IT Report

3.11.4. Finance & Operations Report

Sheppard asked if there were any questions regarding the Director's Report, Library Services Report, IT Report, or the Finance and Operations Report. There were none.



Motion by Paul Patterson to receive the Director's, Library Services, IT, and Finance & Operations Reports for information.

CARRIED
PRLS 15/2025

3.12. Parkland Community Update

Hardisty Public Library has a new library manager; Heidi Dayot was promoted from assistant manager to library manager. Many thanks to Consultant Olya Korolchuk for all her help.

Innisfail Public Library 20% of schoolchildren in the town are being homeschooled since COVID, and many of them hang out at the library as their home base. The library offers various programming for the homeschoolers.

They also promote library memberships for members at the Bowden Penitentiary, organizing pick up and drop offs to inmates.

Delijiah Antaloczy, Deb Coombes, Edna Coulter, Jacquie Palm-Fraser, and Paul Patterson left the meeting at 11:42 a.m.

The **Penhold & District Public Library** would like to talk to other nearby municipalities about advocacy to their school districts.

Delburne Municipal Library has a new library manager, which allows them to be open for more hours. They have also set up six book bins around the community.

Motion by Dana Kreil to accept the Parkland Community Update for information.

CARRIED
PRLS 16/2025

4. Adjournment

Motion by Ray Reckseidler to adjourn the meeting at 11:47 a.m.

CARRIED
PRLS 17/2025

Chair