MINUTES OF CARLETON PLACE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD  
March 19, 2025

7:00pm, Zoom Teleconference/Barbara Walsh Room

IN ATTENDANCE

Shelley Smith Chair

Monique Cooke Vice Chair

Mark Hinton Trustee / Carleton Place Council Representative

Aaron Niedbala Trustee

Carson Mok Trustee

Meriah Caswell CEO

Heidi Sinnett Secretary

WITH REGRETS

Mike Jeays Trustee

Linda Guetta Trustee / Beckwith Representative

The meeting was called to order at 6:59pm.

1. **Respect and Acknowledgement Declaration:**  
   *We* would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather*is the traditional* *unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg People. We are meeting on land that has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples from the beginning. We are grateful to the generations of people who have been, and continue to be, stewards of this place.*

1. **Additions to and approval of the Agenda**  
   Meriah noted the addition of 12c) Incident report. Moved by Aaron Niedbala, seconded by Mark Hinton that the Agenda for the March 19, 2025 Library Board Meeting be accepted as amended. CARRIED.
2. **Disclosure of Conflict of Interest**  
   None.
3. **Meeting Minutes**
   1. Minutes from the February 19, 2025 Library Board Meeting.

Moved by Aaron Niedbala, seconded by Carson Mok that the Minutes from the February 19, 2025 Library Board Meeting be accepted as presented. CARRIED.

1. **Correspondence** 
   1. Incoming –
      1. CCA Grant announcement – Local poet Claudia Coutu Radmore will receive a $300 Writers’ Union Grant from the Canada Council for the Arts to do a poetry event at the library on April 10, 2025.
      2. Township of Beckwith – 2025-2028 Library Service Agreement. A signed contract was received from the Township of Beckwith.
   2. Outgoing – none.
2. **Librarian’s Report from February 2025**. February and March were busy months with virtual Technology events for Seniors provided by the Lanark Immigration Partnership. Heidi delivered a well-attended Technology at the Library workshop for the Carleton Place Recreation and Culture Department series “Seniors Take Charge”.

Successful March Break sessions included a Mini Maker Information Workshop, a Popular Party, and a Robotics event by Steampunk Education. The launch of the Seed Library and the continuation of Forest of Reading in March made for a busy month.

Meriah attended a virtual meeting regarding the “Shadow War on Libraries” documentary from CBC’s The Fifth Estate and found it informative. The Board asked for viewing links.

Moved by Monique Cooke, seconded by Carson Mok that the Librarian’s Report from February 2025 be accepted as presented. CARRIED.

1. **Financial Report –** None**.**
2. **Committee Updates**

Advocacy Committee update. – Aaron Niedbala requested more time to create elevator pitches and will present when ready.

The Board discussed a possible Finance Committee that includes the CEO and Treasurer as well as other Board members. Meriah will draft a Terms of Reference to present at a later meeting.

1. **Strategic Planning Implementation Updates.**
   1. Increase Community Connections – Heidi discussed a Beckwith School “Real World Project” by a Grade 3&4 class that will provide activities to accompany Decodable books in the library’s collection. The Board will be invited to the final presentation in June once a date has been finalized.
   2. Adapt and Grow with the Community – Trustee Carson Mok recused himself from the meeting at 7:11pm due to a conflict of interest. Quorum was maintained.

Meriah noted difficulties in filling the new Library Program Coordinator position. The Board discussed options that allow the CEO to make more lucrative offers to potential candidates.

Moved by Mark Hinton, seconded by Monique Cooke that the Board provides the CEO autonomy to offer up to $40,000 on a 12-month contract that carries over into the next fiscal year in order that the position be filled immediately. CARRIED.

Carson Mok returned to the meeting at 7:36pm.

1. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
   1. 2025 Library Board work plan. No changes were made at this time.
   2. Hoopla Spending. A CEO report detailed a marked increase in recent Hoopla checkouts that may result in budget overages. The CEO recommended continued access to all Hoopla formats but suggested placing daily spending caps on checkouts.

Moved by Mark Hinton, seconded by Aaron Niedbala that the library implements daily budget caps beginning April 1, 2025, and use the remainder of 2025 to gather user feedback and investigate alternative content platform options for 2026. CARRIED.

Meriah will provide staff with communication points for questions from the public.

1. **Policy Review and Updates** 
   1. Room Rental Policy- Deferred.
2. **New Business**
   1. 2024 Annual Report Draft. Meriah presented the 2024 Annual Report Draft.
   2. Community Partnerships – Mark Hinton gave a verbal report regarding a session he attended at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association 2025 Conference that referenced unique ways to provide community services in Public Spaces. While the library is the perfect venue for such services, Meriah acknowledged current pressures on staffing but suggested revisiting the idea in fall 2025.
   3. Incident Report – Meriah shared that a staff member reported a verbal slur made toward them on March 15, 2025, after several young people were asked to leave the library following noise and behaviour warnings. A follow up with the OPP designated this as a hate incident. A Trespass letter informing the perpetrator of a suspension of library privileges for a period of six months was mailed to the individual and provided to the OPP, and an incident report was filed with the Town.
3. **Closed Session** – none.
4. **Date of Next Regular Meeting**: April 16, 2025 at 7:00pm. Location: Zoom/Barbara Walsh Room.
5. **Adjournment** – 8:40pm.

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Chair Secretary

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