

APPROVED

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
CENTENNIAL BRANCH BOARDROOM
MINUTES
 January 22, 2025

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT	BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT
Joan Christensen	Ken Burden
Andrew Caird	Tricia-Lynn Pascia
Larry Graber, Chair	Samantha Mclean
Barb Ruegg	
Stan Sauer	
STAFF PRESENT	DELEGATIONS
Maria Brigantino, Business Administrator	

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was brought to order by the Chair at approximately 4:30 p.m.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair provided a land acknowledgement to open the meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

3.1 Approval of Agenda

25-001 **Moved by:** Stan Sauer
 Seconded by: Barb Ruegg

That the Agenda of the January 21, 2025, Board Meeting be approved as presented.

Carried

4. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

5. DELEGATIONS

None.

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Acting Secretary, Maria Brigantino conducted the Election of Officers of the Board. Ms. Brigantino opened the floor for nominations for the position of Chair of the Fort Erie Public Library Board for the Year 2025.

25-002 Moved by: Barb Ruegg

That Larry Graber be nominated for the position of Chair of the Fort Erie Public Library Board for the Year 2025.

Carried

There were no further nominations from the floor.

**25-003 Moved by: Barb Ruegg
Seconded by: Joan Christensen**

That nominations for the position of Chair of the Fort Erie Public Library Board for the Year 2025 be closed.

Carried

Larry Graber was declared by acclamation, the Chair of the Fort Erie Public Library Board for the Year 2025.

Ms Brigantino opened the floor for nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the Fort Erie Public Library Board for the Year 2025.

25-004 Moved by: Stan Sauer

That Barb Ruegg be nominated for the position of Vice Chair of the Fort Erie Public Library Board for the Year 2025.

Carried

There were no further nominations from the floor.

**25-005 Moved by: Larry Graber
 Seconded by: Andrew Caird**

That nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the Fort Erie Public Library Board for the Year 2025 be closed.

Carried

Barb Ruegg was declared by acclamation, the Vice Chair of the Fort Erie Public Library Board for the Year 2025.

Ms. Brigantino relinquished the Chair at this time and Larry Graber resumed the duties as the Chair of the Fort Erie Public Library Board.

The Chair of the Board reviewed the other appointments that will be made to various committees in the coming months. He indicated he would be sending out the information on each committee so that Board Members consider serving on these committees in 2025.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

- 7.1 Approval of Minutes: Special Board Meeting December 3, 2024**
- 7.2 Report # 25-001: Confirmation of Accounts**
- 7.3 Friends of the Library: Minutes of Executive Meeting and General Meeting**
- 7.4 Friends of the Library: Memorandum of Agreement (Annual Review)**

**25-006 Moved by: Joan Christensen
 Seconded by: Andrew Caird**

That the Consent Agenda items 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 of the January 21, 2025, Regular Board Meeting be approved as recommended.

Carried

8. BUSINESS ARISING

8.1 Report # 25-002: 2025 Budget Slide Presentation

**25-007 Moved by: Barb Ruegg
Seconded by: Stan Sauer**

That the Fort Erie Public Library Board receive for information, Report # 25-002: 2005 Budget Presentation Slides to the Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie.

Carried

Copies of the 2025 Budget Presentation Slides were circulated to the Board for information. Discussion ensued with respect to the presentation with Board members unanimous in their support for the information that will be presented to Town Council.

9. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

9.1 Report # 25-005: Internal Board Communication

**25-008 Moved by: Stan Sauer
Seconded by: Andrew Caird**

That the Fort Erie Public Library Board adopts the Board Communication Library Activity Report # 25-005.

Carried

A copy of the Board Communication Library Activity report was circulated to Board Members for information. There was no business arising from the report.

Highlights:

- Staff Vacancies that are now filled: Senior Collections Librarian; Children’s and Teen Librarian, Library Programing Assistant and Business Administrator.
- The new siding around the front entrance awning at the Centennial Branch is now installed.
- The automatic door operators for the two public washrooms at the Centennial Branch are installed.
- The library had 104,243 visits last year which was a 20.5% increase from last year and 48% over 2022.

9.2 Report # 25-006: Patron Survey Report

**25-009 Moved by: Barb Ruegg
Seconded by: Joan Christensen**

That the Fort Erie Public Library receive Report # 25-115, Patron Survey Report for information.

Carried

The CEO circulated a report summarizing the results of a patron survey that was conducted via paper and online from November to December 2024 to establish a baseline for user perception of the library. This was the first in a series of surveys that will be conducted throughout 2025.

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.1 Report # 25-005: Claims Return

**25-010 Moved by: Joan Christensen
Seconded by: Andrew Caird**

That the Fort Erie Public Library Board accepts the proposed revision to the current process for Claims Returned materials.

Carried

The CEO circulated a report that outlined the current process for handling claimed returned library materials and proposed a revised procedure to align with industry best practices and improve patron relations. The revisions will allow patrons to file a claim return for our files, with no charges applied to the patron's account. The restriction is that each patron will be allowed a maximum of three claimed returned items on their account. Once the limit is reached, subsequent claimed returned items will be subject to standard replacement fees.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the new practices for claims returned and collection agencies will occur with any adjustments needed based on data analysis and patron feedback.

10.2 Report # 25-006: Collection Agency

**25-011 Moved by: Barb Ruegg
Seconded by: Joan Christensen**

That the Fort Erie Public Library Board discontinue use of Collection Agencies and focus on internal strategies to recoup lost materials and fees.

Carried

The CEO circulated a report which outlined the current practice of using a collection agency to recoup costs for lost or unreturned items from patrons. The agency does not collect the funds but instead directs the patron to the library for payment. In analysing the return on investment, the library recoups roughly 5% of the funds reported to the agency. The CEO recommended a number of alternative strategies that will be implemented internally.

The use of collection agencies by libraries presents several drawbacks, including negative impacts on patron relations and a low return on investment. Alternative strategies, such as improved communication and dispute resolution mechanisms, will be more effective in recovering overdue materials while maintaining a positive and welcoming library environment.

The CEO outlined the next steps in implementing the alternative strategies outlined in the report.

11. POLICY & BYLAWS

None.

12. INQUIRIES BY MEMBERS

None.

13. MEETINGS

9.1 Regular Meeting of the Board **Tuesday, February 18, 2025**
4:30 p.m. Centennial Branch

14. CLOSED SESSION

None.

15. ADJOURNMENT


As there was no further business, the Chair of the Board declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:46 p.m.

The undersigned have reviewed the Minutes of the January 21, 2025

Original Signed by:



Larry Graber, Chair



Maria Brigantino, Business Administrator