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# PRLS BOARD TALK

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## Highlights of the Parkland Regional Library Board Meeting

SEPTEMBER 17, 2020

### Advocacy Committee Report

Money is tight for every level of government - urban, rural, towns, counties - and we must ring the bell about what our library system can do for the Alberta Government in cost reductions.

Rural libraries can be a distribution point for services and products from government agencies - and other organizations, too. Face masks are being distributed to patrons through libraries through the *Masks for Albertans* initiative.

When the pandemic hit, many service organizations had to shut down operations. Libraries across the region developed innovative service models in order to continue delivering services. Parkland Regional Library enabled all member libraries to provide digital services, at a bare minimum, through library Wi-Fi hotspots and the eLibrary.

eBook circulations have gone up 43%, while eAudiobook and eMagazine circulations have increased by 25% each since before the pandemic. Learning resource use has also seen dramatic increases, as more students are accessing online learning instead of attending school. Solaro, an Alberta Curriculum learning support database, has been accessed 2.5 times more often. And, in August alone, there were 80,778 library Wi-Fi sessions! That's 80% of the overall 103,016 Wi-Fi sessions since the pandemic started.

This is going to be our new normal. The System will have to continue providing increased digital content and all of

our libraries are going to have to maintain their new service delivery models - such as virtual programming, curb-side pickup, and *Take and Make activity kits* - in addition to traditional services.

Studies show that whenever the economy declines, library use increases. This is not a time that we can reduce investment in libraries. During this economically challenging time our libraries are more important than ever to our residents.

### Budget 2021

PRL's 2021 budget was approved by the board and will be sent out to the municipalities next week. There will be no increase in the per capita requisition for 2021.

### Building Update

Parkland's building will be complete slightly ahead of schedule (by the end of September). We may start trying to move non-essential items in early but can't move operations over until after the SuperNet connection is completed. The SuperNet move is scheduled for October 18<sup>th</sup> (a Sunday) to reduce downtime of the network. Staff are already working on moving our utilities over to the new building and working with our insurance company to have our new building assessed.

### Provincial Operating Grants

For the current fiscal year, the Government of Alberta issued library operating grants in two installments. The first 50% installment was issued in the spring. The second installment is currently being disbursed to libraries. Parkland received its second portion of the operating grant and rural library services grant on September 10<sup>th</sup>. This payment was in the amount of \$709,784 and includes the rural library service grant which we will begin dispersing to libraries immediately.

### Board Meeting Dates for 2021

Parkland has always had difficulty accommodating the different schedules of the many individuals on the board. The restriction on gatherings imposed by the government due to COVID-19 have only added another layer of complexity to organizing board meetings.

To try and accrue data from as many board members as possible, a survey was sent out on August 7<sup>th</sup> which closed on September 9<sup>th</sup>. There were 42 respondents.

The survey had three questions. The responses and totals are below:

1. Do you prefer attending Parkland board meetings virtually or in person?
  - Virtually -25
  - In-person -17
2. At what time of day would you generally prefer board meetings to be held?
  - Morning -21
  - Afternoon -17
  - Evening -4
3. On what day of the week would you prefer board meetings be scheduled?
  - Monday -12
  - Tuesday -6
  - Wednesday -9
  - Thursday -15
  - Friday -0
  - Saturday -0
  - Sunday -0

Most respondents favored virtual meetings, and even some who preferred in-person meetings would be happy with meeting virtually. 17 preferred in-person meetings.

A slight majority preferred morning board meetings over afternoon with very few interested in attending evening meetings. Thursday was the preferred day of the week to hold meetings with Monday as the runner up.

Based on the raw data, the majority of board members want to have virtual board meetings on Thursday mornings.

At board direction, staff will take the information provided and create a proposed schedule of meetings for the consideration of the board at their November meeting.

### Community News from Trustees

**Sedgewick and District Municipal Library** is sending books to the elementary school teachers with a craft that corresponds with the book. Their library board is considering holding a small contest in relation to the activity.

**Stettler Public Library's** Summer Reading Program was held outside. They have also eliminated late fees. Despite this, their revenues have barely gone down.

**Sylvan Lake Municipal Library** has also eliminated late fees.

**Olds Municipal Library** will be purchasing "meeScan" for their patrons, a self-checkout application that library patrons can use with their smart phone or tablet.

**Clive Public Library** has done some amazing work in creating a green space that sits between the library and the next building. It is very close to being completed.

**Lougheed and District Public library's** donation jar brings in more money than late fees ever did.

### Board Member Present

Deb Smith, Gord Lawlor

### Board Members Present via Zoom

Jason Alderson, Jackie Almborg, Connie Beringer, Jared Booth, Jacqueline Boulet-Boden, Amanda Derksen, Darlene Dushanek, Colleen Ebdon, Kevin Ferguson, Jeanny Fisher, Elaine Fossen, Dwayne Fulton, Sandy Gamble, Bruce Gartside, Megan Hanson, Jeanette Herle, Trudy Kilner, Cora Knutson, Lonnie Kozlinski, Dana Kreil, Stephen Levy, Daryl Lougheed, Philip Massier, Leah Nelson, Ray Olfert, Rick Pankiw, Terilyn Paulgaard, Norma Penney, Rosella Peterman, Bill Rock, Heather Ryan, Sharolyn Sanchez, Janine Stannard, Patricia Toone, Cindy Trautman, Sharon Williamson Bill Windsor, Bonita Wood, Ann Zacharias

### With Regrets

Doreen Blumhagen, Blair Morton, Les Stulberg, Sonia Temple, Doug Weir

### Absent

Wendy Aschenbrenner, Glen Carrit, Clark German, Barb Gilliat, Agnes Hoveland, Josephine McKenzie, Corby Parsons, Chris Ross, Shannon Wilcox

### PRLS Staff

Ron Sheppard, Tim Spark, Donna Williams, Colleen Schalm, Kara Hamilton, Haley Amendt

**Next Meeting: November 12,  
2020, 10:00 AM.**

For more information or if you want a copy of the draft minutes from this board meeting, please contact PRL.