



**Adam A. Donaldson** @adamadonaldson

Mar 25, 2024 · 57 tweets · [adamadonaldson/status/1772382085866500205](https://twitter.com/adamadonaldson/status/1772382085866500205)

Coming up at 6 pm, it's this month's Guelph Public Library Board of Director's meeting. This is what's coming up on the agenda:



**MEETING PREVIEW: Guelph Public Library Board for March 25, 2024**

Spring has sprung, and that's true at the Guelph Public Library too, but for this month's Board of Directors meeting we're going to play some catch up too. There's at least ...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2024/03/22/meeting-preview-guelph-public-library-board-for-m...>

Chair Williamson has called the meeting to order.

Williamson starts by noting that the library gave out 10,000 pairs of eclipse glasses in 5 days, and they also gave out 8,200 COVID test kits since January. Another reminder that the library is about more than books.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interests? None.

Cllr Caron's not here for this one.

Consent agenda. Williamson pulls the operating variance report. Otherwise, consent agenda approved.

**Consent Agenda (15 min) – Board Review**

- 5.1 Adoption of February 2024 Minutes**
- 5.2 Correspondence**
- 5.3 Acting CEO's Report**
- 5.4 Service Utilization Scorecard**
- 5.5 Service Capacity Scorecard**
- 5.6 Operating Variance**
- 5.7 New Central Library - Milestones Update**

There seems to be some confusion about 5.6 Operating Variance, which is the regular report, and "2023 Preliminary Year-End Operating Variance Report" which is the yea-end report

from last year. It's not helping that it's hard to hear and reports aren't incl. with the agenda. First report, Staff Report re: Communications Plan. Michelle Campbell, Manager of Public Service, who notes that we're about to hear from Sidekick Consulting about the details. She says board can help out by keeping plan in mind with the Strategic Plan development...

...and support the collection of testimonials and impact to demonstrate how the library changes lives.

Sorry, I'm having an incredibly hard time hearing people in the room.

The report is received unanimously.

Next, Marketing Communications Plan. Rosanne Leung from Sidekick will present.

Leung says they started the process back in Dec 2022. The desire was about how to create a new accessible, flexible and inspiring space. Answer was new tech, more spaces and an attractive destination.

Goal was to change the narrative knowing that skeptics need to be addressed as well as supporters in talking about what the library can do.

"Understanding our Customer": Median age is 29 and is likely seeking continuous learning, professional development or "recreational" reading. They value the library for vast resources and being an info-rich environment.

Understanding the library: free accessible resources, spaces for collaboration, and access to knowledge and educational resources. Can enrich people on personal or professional journeys.

Plan separated in three phases: Awareness, Driving Visitation, and Ambassadorship. What are things we can do now, as we countdown to the opening, and once the library opens?

Awareness phase (right now): collect testimonials, start engagement, develop partnerships thru business and schools, and doing a bit of advertising through media releases and community events.

Visitation (countdown) phase: Monthly events to building excitement, special memberships or early access, referrals, collaborative marketing with other groups.

Ambassadorship (after opening): Referral and rewards system, a library ambassador program with high volume users and a storytelling campaign.

The next step is assigning each of those tactics, streamline channel and content strategies, simply the message, weave in the campaign along with posts about regular library business. Leung notes there's a "lean team" at GPL, so they need the help.

Also, they need to start executing the testimonial campaign, which is where the board can be the biggest help. Humanise the role of the library. Leung suggests a theme of "The place where..." As in "The Library is the place where first Canadian friends are made."

Questions? How do you measure increase in awareness? Leung says social media following and growth metrics is one, building a marketing scorecard too. Also, leverage the organic channels already there, and focus on those. The rest will take care of itself.

There's a difference between the profiles of the median Guelphite and the median library, Sidekick points out. Interestingly, the profile of the library user skews younger than the median age of your average Guelphite, which is 51.

Goller asks about developing the profiles. Leung says that they spoke directly with library staff and used past public outreach efforts. As for the skeptics, #1 was the question about whether spending on library was proportional, and is there value in library offerings.

Leung says that this skepticism seems tied to the idea that the library is books, and not how the library offers other services, programs, and community/family history.

So where in the plan are the skeptics being countered? Sidekick says that's why they want to highlight community members and how the library plays a role in their success. It will showcase all the great things the library is doing.

The point is made that things like "exclusive access" may not fit in with the library's values like accessibility. No question, just a comment.

Cllr Klassen asks about hiring one other person is going to allow the GPL to execute this plan. Notes that perhaps the board should have a marketing committee, not to take on the work, but to help guide the work and check in on progress.

Ellery proposes a motion to direct the exec to look at the creation of a marketing/external affairs committee. The motion is approved.

Before receiving the report for information, Goller asks if staff are being committed to the work within it. Williamson says no, the information is being given to staff so that they can decide what to implement and how, it's being received by the board for info.

Next, it's the IT Annual Report with Andrew Kwan, Manager of Information Technology at the Library.

It sounds like there's a discussion about whether or not this conversation should take place in closed for the cyber security portion. Kwan will do the report first.

Kwan says that current infrastructure has served the library well, but tech is constantly changing to they need to be nimble. There were a significant number of upgrades last year incl. multi-factor authentication, new public IP addresses, MS Exchange migration...

...new 86" smart touch TV at Starwood, enhancements to the risk assessment program, upgraded CCTV, upgraded Polaris internal system, installed Axis 3D people counters at all locations.

Coming up this year, continued upgrades to the MS 365 project, replace the legacy UPS unit, and replace ageing servers.

Board going into closed session to discuss cyber security issues. Stay tuned.



Board has emerged from close. Motion to accept the report for information is approved.  
Motion to extend the meeting beyond 8 pm is approved.

Next, 2023 Preliminary Year-End Operating Variance Report. Acting CEO Atkins says the result is to get direction about what to do with negative variance, which here is 2.7%.  
Revenue, staff and consulting is the cause, revenue alone was down \$70k.

Revenue on lost items has gone way down. With elimination of fines, people are retuning the materials no matter how late. Elevator repairs were also a drag last year, plus increase in sick time and short term disabilities, and more mat. leaves (5 FTs last year).

Reserve funds were set aside to help cover the consultant costs in 2021 and 2022. Significant operating expenses have been incurred in last few years, over \$540k, which is above the one per cent threshold the City likes to see. Can cover the variance.

Essentially, Atkins wants direction to send letter to City asking that variance get covered from the reserve. Also, these numbers are not yet final.

Goller asks about revenue opportunities. Atkins notes that one of the goals this year is to look at a digital store to sell some library swag. This was discussed at a previous meeting.

Motion to direct staff to send that letter approved.

Next, 100 Norfolk Sale Update. Member Webb notes that the committee has met once, and terms of reference is to explore sale options and maximise revenue for the good of the city and library.

Webb says step one is to work out the tenancy agreement between the City and the Library. They're also looking at risk opportunity analysis to see who should handle sale, library of the City.

Talked to the fundraising committee about how the sale can maximise those efforts, a report from KCI is coming.

Williamson adds that the City had some questions and wanted to make sure they were all on the same team and "rowing in the same direction", hence this motion:

That the Guelph Public Library Board reaffirms its commitment to the Baker District Project and directs funds generated from the sale of 100 Norfolk Street, the current Main Branch location, to support the new Central Library, contingent on the finalization of the tenancy agreement for the new facility. The Guelph Public Library will work to maximize revenue from the sale of 100 Norfolk Street for the benefit of the community, the Board and the City.

Point of clarification, where the motion says "board" it should say "library". The motion is amended.

The motion is approved as amended.

Next, 2023 Board Evaluation. Williamson says one of the take aways is that the board really needs to dig into knowledge of the library's functions and how the board fits into that. Look for more presentations at future meetings. Also, comms and partnerships a learning area.

Williamson adds that they're working on better tools for next year's evaluation too. More on that to come later.

Motion to receive this report approved.

Now the board will go into closed session again, this time on labour relations or employee negotiations.



And we're back. Again.

Recap of closed sessions

- direction was given to staff about cyber security
- direction was given to CEO recruitment committee to get feedback from City on that process.

News business, OLS Representative. Williamson says they have had a representative historically, but not for some time. He's not asking for a commitment tonite, but wants board members to think about it because there are events coming.

And that's a wrap for this meeting!



@threadreaderapp unroll please!

...