



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE ANNAPOLIS VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD

Submitted by: Chrystal Remme, WHRM Councillor, District 3

Meeting Date: September 17, 2025

Meeting Location: Berwick Library Branch Multi-Purpose Room

SUMMARY/UPDATE OF THE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES:

The Annapolis Valley Regional Library Board met on September 17. I was unfortunately unable to attend due to a family emergency, but I reviewed the Board package and have been kept updated since the meeting.

There have been some changes around the Board table. Janet Ness has stepped down as Chair and as the Town of Wolfville's representative. As I was serving as Vice Chair, I have now moved into the role of Chair, with Adele MacDonald taking on Vice Chair. Mayor Jodi MacKay will be joining the Board as the new representative for the Town of Wolfville.

I really want to recognize Janet and everything she has given to AVRL. This has been an incredibly difficult year for the organization and the Board, and she has helped guide us through some very difficult conversations and decisions. I have really appreciated the opportunity to work alongside her as Vice Chair and have learned a lot from her. She has given so much of her time and energy to our libraries, and she will certainly be missed around the Board table.

There has also been an incredible amount of support for AVRL from the community. At the end of July, Nova Scotia author Rachel Reid donated \$300,000 to AVRL. That donation is expected to keep the Hantsport, Kentville, Middleton and Port Williams branches operating for roughly another seven months.

Rachel also donated her time to a fundraising event at Acadia University on September 12. As of September 14, the event and related fundraising had raised just over \$72,000 through ticket sales, the silent auction and other donations and fundraisers.

That isn't the only support AVRL has received. As of the end of August, another \$41,444 had been donated directly to AVRL, including \$20,000 specifically for the Berwick Branch. I think the response from residents and communities really shows how important their libraries are to them.

At the same time, the fundraising report was a good reminder of just how much money it takes to operate our libraries. Even with Rachel's generosity, the attention the fundraiser received, and so many people stepping up to help, these donations are buying AVRL additional time rather than solving the bigger funding issue.

AVRL also received clarification from the Ministry on the \$18.7 million provincial public library funding figure being referenced during provincial budget sessions. Of that amount, \$16.958 million is for regional library operating funding, including the Library Development Fund grant, while \$1.745 million is for Nova Scotia Public Library operations, including salaries and benefits. I wanted to make sure Council was aware of what is included in that figure.

The Board will be looking ahead to 2027-28 at our November meeting, including what funding requests may need to be made to municipal partners. I will keep Council updated as that work moves forward.

ACTION ITEMS:

There are no action items for Council from this meeting.