

Board Agenda: January 22, 2024, 7:15 pm

Sparwood Public Library Association

Chair: Rose Sharma

1. Approve Minutes of December 18, 2023 (attached)

Be it resolved that the minutes of the December 18, 2023 Sparwood Board of Trustees meeting are approved.

2. Approve Agenda

Be it resolved that the agenda for January 22, 2024 is approved.

3. Preliminary 2023 Financials (presentation, report attached)

Be it resolved that the preliminary January-December 2023 Profit and Loss statement is received.

4. Draft reopening plan (presentation, report attached)

Be it resolved that the Board move in camera.

Be it resolved that the Recommendations for Reopening be approved.

Be it resolved that SPL request governance supports through the Kootenay Library Federation for board training, and support in preparing for the 2024 AGM and Ministry deliverables.

Be it resolved that the Board return to the regular meeting.

5. Consultant biweekly updates (attached)

Be it resolved that the January 6, 2024 Consultant Update is received.

Be it resolved that the January 19, 2024 Consultant Update is received.

6. Confirm Board Membership and Contacts (attached)

Be it resolved that the Board Membership document is confirmed.

7. Correspondence

- a. Email Re: Sparwood Library – Jan 9 2024
- b. Email from Rose Sharma Re: Sparwood Library -Jan 12 2024
- c. Email re: Library Closure – Jan 5 2024
- d. Email from Rose Sharma Re: Library Closure – Jan 12 2024
- e. Letter from Rose Sharma to Fernie Heritage Library – Jan 12 2024

Be it resolved that all correspondence has been received.

8. Adjournment

Sparwood Public Library Board

Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 18, 2023

Present Rose Sharma (Chair)
 Suzanne Georgiou-Morey (Vice Chair)
 Debbie Fraser (Treasurer)
 Lois Halko (Trustee)
 Sam Atwal (Council Appointee)
 Harold Baytaluke (Trustee)
 Anne O'Shea (Library Consultant and Interim Leadership)

Location Microsoft Teams

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:21pm

2. Agenda

Motion: Moved by Rose Sharma / seconded by Lois Halko that the Agenda be approved. Carried.

3. Minutes

Motion: Moved by Rose Sharma / seconded by Sam Atwal that the December 4, 2023 Board Minutes be approved. Carried.

4. Consultant update

The Board received and discussed the Consultant's Report from Anne O'Shea, reporting on work undertaken since December 5th. It was decided that Rose Sharma and Anne O'Shea would determine the date for an on-site visit by Anne, dependant on the availability of the staff. If they are available in early January, Anne will plan to be on site Wednesday January 10th and Thursday January 11th, 2024.

5. Upcoming 2024 Board meeting dates

Monday January 8, 7:00 pm MST

*May be changed to an on-site meeting on Wednesday January 10th

Monday January 22, 7:00 pm MST

Monday, February 5, 7:00 pm MST

Wednesday February 21, 7:00 pm MST

*Moved to Wednesday to avoid conflicts with Family Day and Council meeting

Monday March 4, 7:00 pm MST

Anne will send MS Teams invites for these times. The link to the Teams meeting will always be included in the agenda document as well.

6. Board Membership and Contact Information

The Board reviewed the current Board Membership and updated contact information.

Motion: Moved by Rose Sharma / seconded by Sam Atwal that the Board Membership is correct. Carried.

7. SPL Communications Plan

The draft SPL Communications Plan was reviewed and the following changes were made:

- The Library will create a new Facebook profile to use for posting updates. This profile will become an administrator for the existing SPL Facebook page. Lois and Suzanne will create this new profile and give it administrative privileges, then send the login details to Anne to post the update.
- The same update will be posted to the SPL website. Anne will work with the BC Libraries Cooperative to get access to update this site.
- The speaking notes will be updated to include the information that the former director has retired, and appreciation for his long service to Sparwood.

Motion: Moved by Rose Sharma / seconded by Suzanne Georgiou-Morey that the Communications Plan be approved and adopted with the changes above. Carried.

8. Round table

Supervision: Will a new Librarian need to be hired before the library is able to re-open? No, but a plan will need to be in place to provide interim supervision. Anne needs a deeper understanding of the library's staffing before making a formal recommendation on how to approach this need.

Staffing: [REDACTED]

Security: The Board discussed building access, and who should have a key and security code. Anne will reach out to the security company to reset all the existing access codes and issue new ones for: staff, cleaning company, chair, vice chair and interim director.

SPL needs a privacy policy to guide the use of the video cameras. Anne will reach out to the security company to ensure that for now, the video surveillance is password protected and access is limited.

Work was initiated to update the security system with a panic button to address some of the staff concerns. The board asked Anne to move forward with the quote received.

Motion: Moved by Sam Atwal / seconded by Lois Halko that Anne O'Shea may approve individual expenditures up to \$5,000. Expenditures over \$5,000 can be approved by the Chair and Treasurer.

CVIPT program: The application for 2024 is complete - thank you to Lois. Anne will take care of submitting the paperwork to receive the outstanding funding from 2023.

Summer Employment Program: The Board wishes to apply for grant funding to support a summer reading club position. The institutional account password is missing and needs to be reset by an individual, who is linked to the account. Presently the former director is the named individual, and someone needs to take over by visiting a Service Canada centre with documentation. Sam offered to go into Service Canada in Cranbrook if needed to reset this. Anne will follow up with Sam with the details.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm MST.

DRAFT

Sparwood Public Library Association

Profit and Loss

January - December 2023

	TOTAL
INCOME	
4090 PLSB - Operating	16,275.20
4091 PLSB - Resource Sharing	3,958.08
4092 PLSB - Enhancement Grant	97,308.52
4093 PLSB - Equity/Literacy	6,500.00
4094 PLSB - BC OneCard	81,385.55
4098 RDEK - Operating	24,951.00
4100 DOS Grants in Aid - Operating	212,684.80
4110 DOS - Matching Donation	6,000.00
4140 Other Grants	1,000.00
4150 Fax Revenue	199.10
4300 Donations Revenue	4,071.10
4520 Laminating Revenue	35.20
4540 Book Sale Revenue	291.30
4600 Photocopie/Printer Revenue	4,099.33
4610 Other Services	80.00
Sales of Product Income	302.45
Total Income	\$459,141.63
GROSS PROFIT	
	\$459,141.63
EXPENSES	
5405 GST Expense	8.77
5440 Advertising & Donations	3,318.20
5480 Bank charges & Interest	471.23
5495 Accounting & Bookkeeping	4,300.00
5500 Books	18,481.57
5508 Computer - Software	5,168.82
5509 Computer - Repairs & Maint.	2,163.98
5510 Electronic Resources	5,195.90
5540 Furn & Equip - Repairs & Maint.	13.46
5545 Furniture and Equipment	239.98
5560 Insurance	15,041.59
5565 Janitorial Services & supplies	27,007.85
5575 Library Supplies	1,585.09
5600 Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds	6,349.30
5610 Periodicals - newspapers, mags	3,602.16
5620 Memberships	1,584.78
5670 Office Supplies - Staff	17.89
5671 Office Supplies - General	2,015.76
5675 Office Supplies - Postage	2,429.53
5681 Professional Development	601.43
5682 Professional Fees	16,739.40
5690 Programming -General supplies	733.47
5695 Security services	225.00
5700 Telephone	2,919.61
5710 Photocopier	8,154.82
5720 Travel & Convention Fees	210.36

Sparwood Public Library Association

Profit and Loss

January - December 2023

	TOTAL
5740 Utilities/Property tax	8,780.40
5750 Volunteer/Staff Appreciation	198.69
5760 Payroll Expenses	38,500.00
Taxes	7,763.94
Wages	117,243.78
Total 5760 Payroll Expenses	163,507.72
5790 WCB Expense	300.94
5800 Wage Benefits	1,500.00
Uncategorized Expense	66.00
Total Expenses	\$302,933.70
OTHER INCOME	
Wage Subsidy income	1,848.96
Total Other Income	\$1,848.96
OTHER EXPENSES	
6900 Capital Reserve (budget)	16,000.00
Total Other Expenses	\$16,000.00
PROFIT	\$142,056.89

Recommendations for reopening

Prepared by: Anne O'Shea

Date: January 19, 2022

CONFIDENTIAL

Executive Summary

I was engaged to support the SPL board in developing a reopening plan and helping the library move to a sustainable operational model. In my early work with SPL it has become clear the organization has several areas of need and that work to address these areas will need to be done in phases, according to priority. I have identified the following areas of need:

- Human Resources
- Operations
- Financial Management
- Governance

Each area has been summarized below, with actions prioritized into before opening / after opening / ongoing. Given the number of items needing attention, I recommend that the library work toward a tentative reopening date of March 1, 2024.

1. Human Resources

Presently, there is no Library Director, and the two regular part-time staff are on temporary leaves. Three casual staff accepted job offers from the Library Board but only one has received training. Presently, the library does not have adequate human resources to operate. In addition, the workplace culture has degraded due to a lot of conflict, so relationships and culture will need to be carefully supported as the library moves through reopening and onboarding new staff. It is important to stress that libraries are community hubs where relationships are crucial, and the culture of the organization impacts the quality of its services.

[REDACTED]

While the existing staff are experienced and knowledgeable in many areas of library operations, there are significant gaps without a director, notably:

- Collection management (ordering books, ensuring the collection is maintained, handling any challenges)
- Supervision of staff, including oversight of the new casual staff's probationary periods

- Financial management, including supporting the Board to develop a 2024 budget and meet its financial reporting obligations under the Library Act.
- Ensuring that there is appropriate distance between the Board and staff so the Board can focus on governance and operations can continue without intervention.

Therefore, before re-opening, a supervisor must be found. This must be someone with some library and management experience who is not party to any of the earlier conflicts and can help restore a sense of calm and professionalism to the organization. I am happy to continue with some supports, and can fill in some areas, but it will be important for the library to have someone who can come on site and handle day-to-day matters.

Recommended Actions: Human Resources		
Before Reopening	After Reopening	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm return to work dates for employees. • Identify interim supervisory support (I am investigating some options) • Engage the new casuals who have accepted job offers. • Train the new casuals who have not yet received training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update job descriptions for clarity and currency, beginning with the Director role. • Post the Director role • Provide annual performance reviews for all permanent staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • Other than the 2 existing employees and the 3 casuals who have accepted job offers, <u>do not hire or rehire any additional staff</u> until operations are stabilized and a new Library Director is hired. This will simplify staff relations and ensure that the new director is able to build a well-functioning team.

2. Library Operations

The library has needs relating to the building, library collections, opening hours and practices. Some are immediate needs which should be addressed immediately, while others are improvements which can occur over time.

Recommended Actions: Library Operations		
Before Reopening	After Reopening	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year-end license renewals (done) • Alarm upgrades (done) • Limit access to surveillance video (done) 	Develop missing library-specific policies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection Development • Intellectual Freedom • Privacy and Access to Information • Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review operating processes, as many seem unnecessarily complex. This requires a knowledgeable person to review how things are being done and

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace circulation computer (ordered, awaiting installation) • Ensure the library is clean and safe • Address fire issues by replacing ceiling tiles • Bring staff back 1-2 weeks prior to re-opening to address the backlog of books to be catalogued, ILLs to be sent out / checked in and books waiting to be checked in, and year-end tasks which have not yet been completed • Communicate re-opening timeline to the public, the District and to other Kootenay libraries • Restart all ILS functions, beginning with those needed for pre-opening work, and then the customer-facing services upon reopening. • Work with ULS to order a shipment of books to fill the gaps from not ordering since October. If possible, pay a small premium for selection and processing support so the books can go straight on the shelves. • Confirm initial opening hours – recommend starting small and then building out. • Confirm whether the library is fine free and ensure that this is reflected in Board policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fines and Fees 	<p>systematically train staff and document better approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document operational processes in a Standard Operating Procedures manual to ensure sustainable operations in the event of future disruptions.
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3. Financial Management

The library contracts bookkeeping and uses an accountant for its annual review. There are limited documented processes to set budgets and approve spending, and following the departure of the former director, day to day spending was overseen by the Board, creating additional steps for basic processes.

An initial review of 2022 and 2023 spending identified concerns regarding overspending in some areas and underspending in others. A full review of the library’s spending should be undertaken by the new Library Director, with the goal of reducing some costs so that the library can invest in collections. In the meantime, there are some immediate areas needing attention, particularly those which are the responsibility of the Library Board under the Library Act.

Recommended Actions: Financial Management		
Before Reopening	After Reopening	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint accountant to prepare and review the 2023 Financial Statements. • Develop and approve the 2024 Library budget. • Provide clear direction on interim spending authorities to streamline operational spending. • Produce and approve the Library’s 2023 SOFI and Financial Statements and submit to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs’ Library Branch by March 1. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review contracts for janitorial, advertising, and photocopy costs • Provide financial statements to the District of Sparwood and share with the association’s members for inspection before the AGM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon hiring a new Library Director, have them carefully review the library’s contracts and spending, with a goal to reduce spending in some areas to build investment in library materials. • Quarterly statements prepared by the Bookkeeper and reviewed by the Board and shared with District of Sparwood.

4. Governance

SPL’s policy framework is several years old, and there are gaps which need to be addressed. In the absence of clear policy, there is an ongoing risk of conflict and a lack of clarity. Putting some clear policies in place will be crucial for the library’s long-term success. The board has engaged Laurie Klassen through the Columbia Basin Trust, who is working on a renewed policy framework for the Board’s review. This is an excellent step and introducing updated policies will provide clear guidance to all involved.

As a Public Library Association under the Library Act, SPL has several legislative obligations, which need support. Missing Ministry deadlines risks the library’s funding. Upcoming and overdue items include:

- March 1 – Annual financial statements, SOFI, Ministry grant reports and 2023 operating statistics
- Planning for the 2024 Board AGM (advice coming soon from the Ministry)
- The 2022 operating statistics were due March 1, 2023 and have not yet been received.
- The Ministry wrote the Board November 24, 2023 seeking documentation and actions and has not received a formal response.

Recommended Actions: Governance		
Before Reopening	After Reopening	Ongoing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete work with the Columbia Basin Trust to adopt a policy framework and key policies • Ensure that the Board maintains a minimum of 5 Trustees • Strengthen SPL’s governance practices, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Board governance training ○ Engage a governance consultant who can support the Board’s work. (KLF grant available) ○ Clarify the role of the Board especially as relates to staff relations to reduce further conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and approve SPL’s 2023 financial statements and SOFI. • Complete the required grant report for the Libraries Branch • Initiate a search for a Library Director, who will be the only employee of the Board and who will oversee all other staff and the library’s operations. • Fill immediate policy gaps (see list under operations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet all Ministry deadlines including those for annual reports, financial reporting and operational data. • Keep and approve written minutes of meetings • Use formal voting on motions to make decisions • Receive formal correspondence at board meetings. • Recruit new members for future board service • Build a policy review cycle to ensure policies are kept relevant and up-to-date • Explore the benefits, draw backs and process to transition to a Municipal Library under the Library Act.
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Timeline for reopening

Given the scope of work which needs to be completed prior to opening, I recommend a tentative re-opening date of March 1, 2024. This allows enough time to bring staff back to work, train the new casuals, catch up on backlogs and prepare to reopen. Prior to this date it is essential that an interim supervisor is hired. The library will not be able to function effectively without a coordinator.

Consultant support

My contract has 54.75 hours remaining and ends March 4, 2024. I am happy to draw up a limited contract to continue to support the Board and be a resource for the interim supervisor beyond that date. We can discuss options for additional support once we have more clarity on a reopening date and availability of an interim supervisor. In the meantime, I recommend that my efforts focus on:

- Identifying an interim supervisor
- Approaching KLF to seek supports for the Board
- Working through the recommended “before reopening” action items above.

Please note that I am unavailable Jan 23-26th (as outlined in our letter of agreement) and March 9-24th (in the event that the Board wishes to engage me for future support).

Sparwood Public Library Association – Consultant’s Update

Date: January 6, 2024
To: Sparwood Public Library Board of Trustees
From: Anne O’Shea, consultant

Summary of Activities

Since December 15th, I have:

- Attended the December 18, 2023 Board Meeting and circulated draft minutes for review
- Completed my one-on-one meetings with all Board Members. Since my last report I met individually with Trustees Suzanne Georgiou-Morey (Vice Chair), Sam Atwal (Council Appointee), Debbie Fraser (Treasurer)
- Met with Emma Dressler, Chief Librarian, Fernie Library
- Connected with Joanne Plesman and Jean Shatlow and arranged a meeting for next week
- Began gathering information for a reopening plan

Operational Updates

- Confirmed renewals of Sparwood’s electronic resources which are licensed through the BC Libraries Cooperative
- Arranged a meeting to review everything required to restart SPL’s catalogue, holds and ILL services
- Gained access to SPL’s public website
- Approved the installation of the new access panel and panic button to enhance safety in the library, including one additional fob which can be given to the library director when hired.
- Planned travel to Sparwood for Wednesday January 10th and Thursday January 11th.

Board Communications

- The Board has received the following correspondence:
 - Notice to bargain from CUPE. Per Rose the bargaining committee will be: Chris Bleich, Rose, Harold, Jessica Wheeler.
 - Letter from a local resident – the letter and response from the Chair will be included in the next board meeting package.
- The following message has been posted to the SPL website and Facebook page.

Thank you for your support and patience as we work towards reopening the Sparwood library to our community. The Board is developing a reopening plan with the support of a library consultant, and look forward to sharing the details early in the near future. While the Library location remains closed, Sparwood residents can:

1. *Access our digital collections 24/7*
2. *Visit and borrow materials from the Fernie Library*
3. *Request inter-library loans (ILL) from Elkford Library*

We send our thanks to the community for your patience, and to our neighbour libraries for their support during this closure. We all look forward to welcoming you back into the Sparwood Public Library as soon as possible. Future updates will be posted to the SPL website and Facebook group. Please watch these sources for the most up-to-date information.

Sparwood Public Library Board

Upcoming operational matters

- Young Canada Works grant application.
- Reviewing SPL finances
- Reviewing SPL's new governance policy framework
- Annual survey (outstanding item to PLB, was due March 2023)

Upcoming Board matters

- The next meeting will be Monday January 22, 7:15 MST on Microsoft Teams. The link will be circulated in the meeting invitation and in the board package.
- Response to PLB Request letter, dated November 24, 2023
- Planning for the AGM

Onsite Activities

I will be onsite at Sparwood Public Library on Wednesday January 10th and Thursday January 11th. My hours at the library will be:

- Wednesday: 10:30 am – 7 pm
- Thursday: 10 am – 4 pm

The library will not be open to the public on these dates. This trip will be focused on identifying work needed to prepare the library for re-opening, confirming whether staff are able to return to work, exploring a supervisory strategy, and reviewing on site files. Meetings planned so far:

- Meeting with staff – morning of Wednesday Jan 10th
- Meeting with Lois to work on Facebook account – 2pm Wednesday Jan 10th
- Meeting with Book keeper evening of Wednesday January 10th.

I would like to meet as many Board members as possible while in Sparwood. Please email or phone me to arrange a time.

Contract update

Total contract hours	120
Hours used previously	16.25
Hours used Dec 16-Jan 5	18.5
Hours remaining before March 4th	85.0

Sparwood Public Library Association – Consultant’s Update

Date: January 19, 2024
To: Sparwood Public Library Board of Trustees
From: Anne O’Shea, consultant

Summary of Activities

This has been a very busy two weeks. Since January 6th, I have:

- Travelled to Sparwood to visit the library and take stock of operational needs
- Met with Joanne Plesman and Jean Shatalow to review operations and discuss their readiness to return to work
- Worked with Lois to create an SPL Board facebook account
- Had the approved panel and security system alarms completed
- Met with Emma Dressler, Chief Librarian, Fernie Library
- Met with Andrea Scarlett and reviewed SPL’s 2023 financials.
- Met with Laurie Klassen (Columbia Basin Trust) and reviewed the draft policy framework
- Met with Melanie Greaveley of the Kootenay Library Federation to discuss grant funding
- Met with Mari Martin, Libraries Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs
- Met with the BC Libraries Cooperative to review SPL’s catalogue, holds and ILL services and identify necessary steps to reopening
- Drafted the Recommendations for Reopening document included in this board package

Operational Updates

- Due dates have been extended to February 15th
- I have renewed Sparwood’s electronic resources which are licensed through the BC Libraries Cooperative
- The new access panel and panic buttons have been installed to enhance safety in the library, including one additional fob which can be given to the library director when hired.
 - New access codes have been issued to Joanne, Jean, Rose, Suzanne and Sandra (cleaner). I have documented the master code and additional codes for handover to the future library director.
 - Since the new securing monitoring contract is with Paladin, I cancelled the existing monitoring contract through Peak Security. This had been pre-paid through March, so there will be a short period with double charges.
- The final paperwork for the 2023 CVITP tax clinics grant was submitted on Jan 12th.
- I’ve ordered the previously approved new circulation computer.
- Recommended to Chair that SPL not pursue the Young Canada Works grant this year – there are so many operational needs and at present there is no one to supervise the work. Summer Reading Club is organized by the BC Library Association and basic operation of the SRC can be supported by regular staff.

- Confirmed to the BC Library Association that Sparwood would participate in the Summer Reading Club and ordered 120 core material kits (funded by the province, no cost to SPL). After reopening, there will be a call for additional (paid) materials, which the library can explore.
- I've removed staff access to the video surveillance system until the Board can develop a policy in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Access to Information Act [RSBC 1996] C.165.

Board Communications

- The Board has received the following correspondence:
 - Notice to bargain from CUPE. I recommend that the Board confirm its bargaining committee members with Chris Bleich
 - Two letters of concern regarding the library closure – the letters and response from the Chair are included in the board meeting package.
- The following message has been posted to the SPL website and Facebook page.

Thank you for your support and patience as we work towards reopening the Sparwood library to our community. The Board is developing a reopening plan with the support of a library consultant, and look forward to sharing the details early in the near future. While the Library location remains closed, Sparwood residents can:

1. *Access our digital collections 24/7*
2. *Visit and borrow materials from the Fernie Library*
3. *Request inter-library loans (ILL) from Elkford Library*

We send our thanks to the community for your patience, and to our neighbour libraries for their support during this closure. We all look forward to welcoming you back into the Sparwood Public Library as soon as possible. Future updates will be posted to the SPL website and Facebook group. Please watch these sources for the most up-to-date information.

Sparwood Public Library Board

Upcoming Board matters

- The next meeting will be Monday February 5, 7:15 MST on Microsoft Teams. The link will be circulated in the meeting invitation and in the board package.
- Preparing and approving annual financial statements and SOFI
- Submitting annual Ministry grant funding report
- Submitting 2022 and 2023 operational data to the Ministry
- Response to PLB Request letter, dated November 24, 2023
- Planning for the AGM

Availability

As mentioned in our agreement, I am not available for the remainder of this week as I will be at a library conference.

Contract update

Total contract hours	120
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Hours used previously	35
Hours used Jan 6 – 19, 2024	30.25
Hours remaining before March 4th	54.75

Sparwood Public Library Association Board of Trustees Membership

Name	Email address and Phone number	Date of most recent election	Date first elected	Position (Chair/Vice Chair/Trustee)
Rose Sharma	sharmar1@shaw.ca , 250-425-6900 Cell: 250-910-0513	May 10, 2023	May 10, 2023	Board Chair
Suzanne Georgiou-Morey	suzanne_georgiou@yahoo.com , 250-910-9674 (cell)	May 10, 2023	May 10, 2023	Vice Chair
Debbie Fraser	mylila@live.ca 250-910-0024	May 10, 2023	May 10, 2023	Treasurer
Sam Atwal	satwal@sparwood.ca For Teams invites: atwalfamily1@outlook.com 780-804-0484	Appointed May 5, 2023	May 10, 2023	District of Sparwood Council appointee
Harold Baytaluke	hbaytaluke@yahoo.com 250-910-8728	May 10, 2023		Trustee
Lois Halko	loishalko@shaw.ca 250-910-0364	May 10, 2023	April 12, 2021	Trustee
Samantha Chenier	Samanthacharlene77@gmail.com 306-461-8050			

Please note: personal contact information is confidential.

Last updated: January 19, 2024

Anne O'Shea

From: Pal Sharma <sharmar1@shaw.ca>
Sent: January 12, 2024 12:36 PM
To: Elizabeth Francis
Cc: Anne O'Shea; mayor@sparwood.ca
Subject: Re: Re Sparwood Library

Dear Elizabeth ,

Thanks for writing and sharing your concerns about the library closure. The board is equally concerned and working hard toward reopening to the public. We have engaged a library consultant who is developing a reopening plan, which will ensure that when our library reopens, it will do so with the necessary supports to remain open. We hope to have a reopening date to share very soon – please keep an eye on the library website and facebook page, which we will update when a date is known.

Sincerely,

Rose Sharma, Board Chair

D Pal Sharma, P.Eng.
ROSE HOLDINGS INC.
#452 Engelmann Spruce Drive
P.O. Box 481, SPARWOOD BC V0B 2G0
CANADA

From: Elizabeth Francis <lizziebfrancis@gmail.com>
Date: Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 10:43 AM
To: <mayor@sparwood.ca>, Pal Sharma <sharmar1@shaw.ca>, <lois.halko@shaw.ca>, <satwal@sparwood.ca>, <suzanne_georgiou@yahoo.com>, <mylila@live.ca>, <findinglifeagain@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re Sparwood Library

Dear Mayor and Library Board members,

I am writing as a concerned citizen.

We all know the past four years have been pretty tough, without even diving into personal health issues and situations. Finally some "Covid reprieve" came and our community massively was hit with other things: fire, affordable thrift shop closure, potential food bank closure, and a closed library.

As the mother of a large homeschool family I utilized the "New to You" and public library alot! When we moved here over eleven years ago I soon found the library to be the one safe space in Sparwood. Dropping my kids off for frequent amazing programs run by Mrs Plesman was the only semblance of community we had living here.

I remember the sign on the door the day almost everyone quit- I am assuming because from that day forward I only ever saw Mrs Joanne and Mrs Jean. This struck huge concern as I knew it took way more help to keep the library running. My concern

was merritted when I watched program after program drop, and hours shorten until finally it was shut down. This over the course of months where no help was sought to give these two ladies support or rest.

Last week I had a letter drafted to you all in hopes you would get some support for these ladies and have our library opened again, then I saw an announcement about it possibly opening.

So, now I write to state:

Please hire staff/ manager etc that will support Joanne and Jean in the amazing job they did, please have them involved in the process of bringing people in as man do they know their stuff. The safety, care, fun and learning that they offered to our community was above and beyond, without them and their personal influence I am convinced the Sparwood library will become just another library. The first time I brought my kids in (all prepared for the "library" look) and was greeted by Joanne I knew this was a special library. Please let it stay that way, safe spaces in communities are so hard to find, let us not have a known one taken away.

With concern and hope,

Liz Francis

Anne O'Shea

From: Pal Sharma <sharmar1@shaw.ca>
Sent: January 12, 2024 12:36 PM
To: Elizabeth Francis
Cc: Anne O'Shea; mayor@sparwood.ca
Subject: Re: Re Sparwood Library

Dear Elizabeth ,

Thanks for writing and sharing your concerns about the library closure. The board is equally concerned and working hard toward reopening to the public. We have engaged a library consultant who is developing a reopening plan, which will ensure that when our library reopens, it will do so with the necessary supports to remain open. We hope to have a reopening date to share very soon – please keep an eye on the library website and facebook page, which we will update when a date is known.

Sincerely,

Rose Sharma, Board Chair

D Pal Sharma, P.Eng.
ROSE HOLDINGS INC.
#452 Engelmann Spruce Drive
P.O. Box 481, SPARWOOD BC V0B 2G0
CANADA

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 10:43 AM
To: <mayor@sparwood.ca>, Pal Sharma <sharmar1@shaw.ca>, <lois.halko@shaw.ca>, <satwal@sparwood.ca>, <suzanne_georgiou@yahoo.com>, <mylila@live.ca>, <findinglifeagain@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re Sparwood Library

Dear Mayor and Library Board members,

I am writing as a concerned citizen.

We all know the past four years have been pretty tough, without even diving into personal health issues and situations. Finally some "Covid reprieve" came and our community massively was hit with other things: fire, affordable thrift shop closure, potential food bank closure, and a closed library.

As the mother of a large homeschool family I utilized the "New to You" and public library alot! When we moved here over eleven years ago I soon found the library to be the one safe space in Sparwood. Dropping my kids off for frequent amazing programs run by Mrs Plesman was the only semblance of community we had living here.

I remember the sign on the door the day almost everyone quit- I am assuming because from that day forward I only ever saw Mrs Joanne and Mrs Jean. This struck huge concern as I knew it took way more help to keep the library running. My concern

was merritted when I watched program after program drop, and hours shorten until finally it was shut down. This over the course of months where no help was sought to give these two ladies support or rest.

Last week I had a letter drafted to you all in hopes you would get some support for these ladies and have our library opened again, then I saw an announcement about it possibly opening.

So, now I write to state:

Please hire staff/ manager etc that will support Joanne and Jean in the amazing job they did, please have them involved in the process of bringing people in as man do they know their stuff. The safety, care, fun and learning that they offered to our community was above and beyond, without them and their personal influence I am convinced the Sparwood library will become just another library. The first time I brought my kids in (all prepared for the "library" look) and was greeted by Joanne I knew this was a special library. Please let it stay that way, safe spaces in communities are so hard to find, let us not have a known one taken away.

With concern and hope,

██████████

Anne O'Shea

From: Lois Halko <loishalko@shaw.ca>
Sent: January 5, 2024 10:23 AM
To: Anne O'Shea; Rose & Pal Sharma
Subject: Fwd: Library Closure

Hi Anne and Rose,
Who would you suggest should reply to [REDACTED] letter below?

Thanks,
Lois

Lois Halko
PO Box 1303
Sparwood, BC V0B 2G0
loishalko@shaw.ca
(H) 250-425-7256
(C) 250-910-0364

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED]
Date: January 5, 2024 at 11:14:18 AM MST
To: loishalko@shaw.ca
Subject: Library Closure
Reply-To: [REDACTED]

Dear Lois,

I am writing to express my concern and disappointment over the length of time it is taking the Library Board to reopen the library.

The lack of communication with the community about why the library was closed, what the board is doing to reopen it or any details surrounding the process of reopening the library is leaving the community, and myself personally, in a state of distrust, frustration and confusion.

The library is a vital part of our community and is a resource our family utilized weekly, if not multiple times a week. When we first moved to town, we were excited about all the programming offered by the library. The hours the library was open were amazing, the staff was friendly and helpful and the library became a place where we spent a lot of time. As a homeschooling family, we also utilized the library as a resource for books and materials to subsidize our curriculum. Without the library being open, some of our learning has had to be adjusted on the fly, as we are no longer able to reserve books through our local library. This has complicated matters for our schooling, especially through having to source alternative books through other libraries, most of which aren't able to be found, reserved or ordered in time. This is only one example of how the library being closed has affected us personally.

Another concern with the closure is the limited time you are now leaving the library to apply for grants and funding. Early in the year is when planning is supposed to happen for grants and community programming. Without the library being open or acknowledging a plan to reopen, the library runs the risk of not being able to apply for specific government grants that help run the educational programs that are vital to our community. These programs offer a safe place for children to be in the summertime, as well as a valuable educational component. The longer the library remains closed, the longer the delay is to apply for grants, resulting in more time needed to rebuild and reestablish programs. Having the library closed has already hurt our community - not having funding, grants or programming would potentially be devastating to our wonderful town.

My ask is that you as a board become more transparent with the community about what processes you are going through to hire staff and reopen the library. I ask that you reopen the library as soon as possible, with a communicated, established plan to keep it open and running for the future. The Library is vital to our community and we want it to continue to be a place where we enjoy spending time, where our kids are safe and where opportunities for education thrive.

I personally am willing to volunteer, if having community members involved would help expedite the opening of the library.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these important issues.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

Anne O'Shea

From: Pal Sharma <sharmar1@shaw.ca>
Sent: January 12, 2024 12:23 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Anne O'Shea
Subject: Library Closer

Dear [REDACTED],

Thanks for writing and sharing your concerns about the library closure. The board is equally concerned and working hard toward reopening to the public. We have engaged a library consultant who is developing a reopening plan, which will ensure that when our library reopens, it will do so with the necessary supports to remain open. We hope to have a reopening date to share very soon – please keep an eye on the library website and facebook page, which we will update when a date is known.

Sincerely,

Rose Sharma, Board Chair

D Pal Sharma, P.Eng.
ROSE HOLDINGS INC.
#452 Engelmann Spruce Drive
P.O. Box 481, SPARWOOD BC V0B 2G0
CANADA



Rose Sharma, Board Chair
Sparwood Public Library
110 Pine Avenue
Box 1060
Sparwood BC V0B 2G0

Jill Gilhuly, Board Chair & Emma Dressler, Library Director
Fernie Heritage Library
492 3rd Avenue
PO Box 448
Fernie BC V0B 1M0

January 12, 2024

Dear Jill Gilhuly, Emma Dresser, and members of the FHL Board and Staff,

On behalf of the Sparwood Public Library Board, I would like to thank Fernie Heritage Library for your support during this challenging time. We know that Fernie is supporting local residents who are missing their library services, and we appreciate your efforts to ensure that residents in our region are able to access critical services including information, computer services, programs and collections.

We are working to reopen the Sparwood Public Library, and have engaged a library consultant to support us in developing a sustainable reopening plan, so that when we reopen, we can be confident that there will not be further closures.

We will share the details of our reopening plans with you as soon as they are available. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

With thanks,

Rose Sharma
Board Chair, Sparwood Public Library