

City of Kenora
Minutes
Of a Committee of the Whole of Council
November 1, 2011
9:00 a.m.

Present:

Mayor D. Canfield, Councillor C. Drinkwalter, Councillor R. Lunny, Councillor R. McKay, Councillor S. Smith, Karen Brown, CAO, Heather Kasprick, Deputy Clerk, Charlotte Edie, Municipal Treasurer.

Regrets:

Councillor R. McMillan, Councillor L. Roussin

A. Public Information Notices

N/A

B. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest & the General Nature thereof

1) On Today's Agenda

2) From a Meeting at which a Member was not in Attendance

None Declared.

Peggy Walshe, Principal of Libraries in Transition, Stan Squires, Anne Church, Principal of A. F. Church & Associates were present as the Library Operational Review Consultants. Peggy explained that the review group is in Kenora to take a look at all aspects of the community and hear the opinions of all the stakeholders in the community. They are looking at Library operations including staff, spacing, how services are used, statistics, as well as looking at current and future trends to be included in their operational review. There are planned meetings with stakeholder groups including the public, Council, staff, and the Library Board.

The Consultants proceeded with prepared questions for Council:

Q. Please describe the relationship the City and Council have with the Library and the Library Board today

Councillor McMillan is the Council representative who sits on the Library Board who updates Council on the activities of the Library Board. It was felt that the relationship could be improved and possibly has been strained in past years. Councillor Lunny noted that there is very little that happens between Council and the Library so the relationship may be somewhat of a non-relationship. The relationship between the City staff and the Library staff is excellent and Finance does provide some internal services to the Library through their accounting department. Human Resources is not as actively involved as they do have their own CUPE local union and our HR Manager is not involved with their personnel matters.

The consultants noted that a survey conducted by the Library held that 86% of the respondents said that the Library was important or very important.

Q. According to Councillors, what are the major issues facing the Library?

Council agreed that the deficit and the cost of running the Library is the major issue. They have an aging workforce and many of the staff are at the top of their pay grids that will impact the budget. Succession plans for staffing will be important. Technology is always going to impact what we do at the Library and the staff are expected to teach the public who are using the Library. Council questioned if there were more opportunities for donations or fundraising for the Library. Peggy explained that there are complications with this as it takes staff time and someone to monitor and manage the donations. There may be other opportunities out there in granting or other fundraising opportunities that could potentially be another source of revenue. Council noted that if the Library stays within their budget there is no deficit, and advised the consultants that they were faced with a 4 year deficit that the Library overspent in their budget for four years and this is why we are here today.

Q. What will be the role of the Library in the City's future?

Council noted that we know what the primary activities of our Library should be but are their other activities that we should be looking into that may be lucrative to make the Library successful. There are some consistent themes within Libraries across Canada. No matter what the size of the community is tying into literacy to prepare the youth is a high priority. E-readers, downloadable books are examples of what libraries are looking in the technology aspects. Schools don't always fill all the needs, especially for seniors in the technology aspect. Libraries are always swamped with people looking for help in finding jobs, making suggestions, and information pieces to help people get ready for a job search. It is a place where people can go and feel safe to ask for help with a variety of things. The Library needs to be accessible to all public and be a community space, place and destination for all. Libraries give your community a sense of culture.

Q. What core services do you believe the Library must provide its citizens?

Further to the above comments on services, the Library provides a free internet use course that teaches people that may not be familiar with on-line use. It is very well used and possibly this should be marketed more so that more users may take advantage of this. Libraries can also proctor exams and this may be something that can be a potential revenue item for the Library.

It can be more cost effective to have the Library attached to other facilities such as a Recreation Centre. From a user and community perspective, it works well to have the pools, rinks and library attached together.

Q. Libraries often deliver effective services through strategic partnerships. What partnerships do you think the Library should pursue?

Some of the partnerships that other libraries are now seeing is within schools. Schools are losing their libraries and they are asking the public libraries to pick up that gap that is lost within the schools. A variety of partnerships with the museum, government

agencies, working with First Nations all have many potentials for the Library. Working with the private sector for more sponsorship events such as the Senior Centre, book clubs, are all positive outreach things for a community. The Keewatin branch has a shared space with the Seniors Centre as well as the Kenora branch has a shared space with the Early Years Centre. Councillor Smith noted that Kenora is looking at a post-secondary education institute and if we can bring this to fruition the Library would be key to this. We are always looking for future opportunities and things that will bring people and residents to this community. With our close proximity to Winnipeg, people will be retiring here. We need to look at how this will affect our Library, what role with this have and what partnerships will this bring. With the Lake of the Woods Community Foundation maybe the Library should be looking at establishing a fund through them. If the Library has its own Foundation, it is a lot of dedicated staffing resources, however, it would advertise and market for that specific fund only, not as generic advertising occurs for a Community Foundation.

Q. What are some of the key strategic initiatives/projects that the City of Kenora is undertaking? How do you see the Library participating in or contributing to these projects?

Downtown revitalization has brought a lot of people back to the downtown area. The new Harbourdome will also bring people to the downtown area and increase the public using the downtown. The community of Keewatin is also a full service community and many of the lake residents use Keewatin as their main stop coming in from the lake as all the services and stores they require are all within a walking distance from the docks.

Q. The Library's Operational Review will include a review of its governance. What is the opinion of Council regarding the current governance model? What changes would Council like to see in the Library's governance model?

The Board structure works well and it is volunteers who give their time to oversee the operations through Legislation. Council gives credit to the volunteers who do step forward to give their time in this capacity. It was suggested that there should be more training for Board staff to review policies and this would enhance their role as Board members. Council appreciated that their hands are tied in some respect with the Public Libraries Act, particularly with new members. It was suggested that we have many potential partnerships for the Library such as retired teachers. It was questioned if we have we ever tried to access those retired teachers, as volunteers to enhance services. This seems like a natural fit, and Council wondered if they have ever been approached, to step forward as volunteers on the Board. There are many community assets out there that we may have not have reached out to. Some libraries have outreached to homework clubs. They have accessed retired teachers to assist with these homework clubs and offered these services in their libraries.

1. Motion to Adjourn to Closed Session

Moved by R. Lunny, Seconded by C. Drinkwalter & Carried:-

That this meeting be now declared closed at 10:30 a.m. and further

That pursuant to Section 239 (3.1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, authorization is hereby given for Council to move into Closed Session for the purpose of: -

Personal Matter about an Identifiable Individual

Reconvene to Open Meeting:

Moved by C. Drinkwater, Seconded by S. Smith & Carried:-

That Committee hereby reconvenes to Open Session at 10:50 a.m. with no reports from the Closed Session; and further

That this meeting be now declared closed at 10:51 a.m.