fort erie PUBLIC LIBRARY

APPROVED

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
CENTENNIAL BRANCH BOARDROOM
MINUTES
September 15, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT	BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT
Larry Graber, Chair	
Andrew Caird	
Barb Ruegg	
Daniel Turner	
Joan Christensen	
Maria Brigantino	
Stan Sauer	
Tricia-Lynn Pascia	
STAFF PRESENT	**DELEGATIONS**
Jen Kendall, CEO	
Carley Binder, Business Administrator	

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was brought to order by the Chair at approximately 4:26 p.m.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair acknowledged that the land on which we are gathered is the traditional territory of the Attawandaronk, the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe people. We are the beneficiaries of ancient agreements such as the Dish With One Spoon between the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee, who agreed to share the abundance of the land through peace, friendship and mutual respect; the Two Row Wampum, by which the Haudenosaunee welcomed the settlers and agreed to share the land in mutual respect; and the Treaty of Niagara, considered a fundamental document by First Nations in all future relations and treaties with the British.

We recognize that we have a responsibility to be stewards of the land, in cooperations and collaboration with the Indigenous peoples, not only for one generation but for all generations to come. We understand that we have an obligation to learn the lessons of our history, educate ourselves about the experiences of the Indigenous people and seek opportunities to heal the wounds that will result in reconciliation with our Indigenous sisters and brothers.

Many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people live and work in Fort Erie. We stand with all Indigenous people, past and present, in promoting the wise stewardship of the lands on which we live. We have the good fortune to live in a land of such abundance, diversity and beauty – let us be vigilant in protecting Turtle Island.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

3.1 Approval of Agenda

26-069 **Moved by: Andrew Caird**
Seconded by: Tricia-Lynn Pascia

That the Agenda of the September 15, 2026, Board Meeting be approved as presented.

CARRIED

4. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- None.

5. DELEGATIONS

- None.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Item 6.1 was removed from the consent agenda.

6.1 Approval of Minutes **Regular Board Meeting June 16, 2026**

26-070 **Moved by: Daniel Turner**
Seconded by: Barb Ruegg

That the June 16, 2026, minutes be approved as amended.

CARRIED

A member had a question for the board about some items that were reflected in the Minutes. The minutes were discussed and revised and accepted as amended by the board.

6.2 Report #FIN-26-055 **Financial Report – June – August 2026**

26-071 **Moved by: Maria Brigantino**
Seconded by: Daniel Turner

That the Consent Agenda items 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 of the September 15, 2026, Regular Board Meeting be approved as amended.

CARRIED

7. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

7.1 Report #26-057 CEO Monthly Activity Report

26-072 **Moved by: Maria Brigantino**
Seconded by: Daniel Turner

That the Fort Erie Public Library Board adopt the Chief Executive Officer's Board Communication Activity Report #26-057.

CARRIED

A copy of the CEO Activity Report for September 2026 was circulated to Board Members for information. There was no business arising from the Report.

Highlights from the report:

Summer 2026 was a busy and productive season across the library system. We completed major tech and infrastructure upgrades, including system-wide computer replacements, high-speed fibre internet at all branches in partnership with the Town. Online service improvements, and digital platform redesigns were also among the projects completed over the summer.

Our circulation stats were the highest they have been in the past 7 years with our physical circulation hitting a peak of 12, 880 items in August.
From June through August, collection work focused on smoothing vendor workflows, refreshing high-use areas, and standardizing processing across branches. We completed the LBI migration, refined processing standards for easy readers, board books, and fiction, corrected CVS fund-coding errors, and fast-tracked items delayed during transition.

Major organization projects progressed well: adult non-fiction reclassification is complete, social issues materials were reshelved, and public -facing location updates in Evergreen are live. They YA collection at Centennial was temporarily moved for construction, and a trial inventory at Crystal Ridge went smoothly. Full inventories will follow once 7-year noncirculating weeding is completed.
We added 771 print items and 11 periodicals over the summer. Demand remains high, with 63% of new items showing as checked out or placed on hold.

Youth and teen programming had a standout summer, highlighted by a 27% increase in TD Summer Reading Club (TDSRC) registration (604 children). Attendance was strong all summer: 588 youth attendees in June, 1,782 in July, and 1,473 in August. (4,024 total) across 133 events, exceeding 2025 numbers despite a shorter schedule.

Programming focused on hands-on STEAM, arts, and community partnerships. Highlights included a Dinosaur Dig with a 400lb sandpit, a joint story time and ferry history lesson with the Fort Erie Railway Museum, and a sidewalk painting event at Sugar Bowl Park (42 kids).
Our biggest hit was a sold-out appearance by Caitie from Super Simple Songs, which drew families from across Niagara and earned over 12,000 media impressions. Staff also pivoted underperforming concepts, turning a desert-island math activity into a popular "Night at the Museum" escape room.

Teen initiatives focused on hands on skills and leadership. Youth Library Association (YLA) members selected $250 in new YA titles, created a new orientation booklet, recruited new members, and started planning the annual holiday Angel Tree drive. Popular teen activities included 3D design and bedazzling; less popular crafts (like sprayed book edges) will shift to adult programming.

For Adult Services we received (up to) $12,500 in funding through the 2026-27 Seniors Community Grant Program. The grant is already funding senior-focused outreach, accessible collection upgrades, gross-motor craft kits, and monthly Senior Cafes with local community partners.

Our marketing progress is a new addition and covers our marketing progress, audience growth and operations. The summer focus centered on driving program registration, running targeted campaigns (Hoopla update and TDSRC) and assessing internal workflows, design standards and analytics.
Digital engagement grew noticeably: Facebook reached 62.0K views in August (+6.5% over July), led by event recaps and promo posts. Instagram reached 5.7k unique accounts (+39.5%), boosted by visual recaps and short-form video. Direct patron conversion also remained high, highlighted by the August e-newsletter achieving a 35.36% open rate and driving 208 direct clicks to program registration pages.

8. BUSINESS ARISING

8.1 Report #26-058 Financial Standing Report

26-073 Moved by: Joan Christensen
Seconded by: Andrew Caird

The Fort Erie Public Library Board receive the Report #26-058 as presented.

CARRIED

A copy of the Financial Standing Report account status for August 31, 2026, was circulated to Board Members to receive as information.

Overall, Management expects the Library to remain within its approved budget at year end, while continuing to monitor interest revenue, expenses, grants and a fundraising campaign. Which has included donations from the Fort Erie Rotary Club.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Report #26-059 Shared Facilities Draft Report

26-074 **Moved by: Maria Brigantino**
Seconded by: Tricia-Lynn Pascia

That the Fort Erie Public Library Board accept draft Report # 26-059 for information.

CARRIED

The CEO prepared a report on best practices for shared facilities based on interviews of other libraries in Ontario that have built such spaces. This was discussed in the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.
The conclusion being that successful shared facilities are driven not shared buildings alone, but clearly defined governance, operational responsibilities, and facility design. Common lessons emphasize the importance of maintaining library autonomy through controlled access, separate entrances where possible, dedicated operational zones and clear policies regarding shared spaces, security, washrooms, scheduling and supervision of children. Written service-level agreements and operating protocols are identified as essential tools for preventing operational conflicts and ensuring that responsibilities for maintenance, security, booking, and incident response are clearly understood.

9.2 Report #26-060 CEO Succession Plan

26-075 **Moved by: Daniel Turner**
Seconded by: Andrew Caird

That the Fort Erie Public Library Board receive Report #26-060 for information.

CARRIED

The CEO distributed a CEO Succession Plan report to the board for information.
A succession plan is a necessity because it helps ensure that we can continue operating smoothly if we are in a situation where the CEO is absent, retires, resigns, or is otherwise unable to fulfill their responsibilities. By identifying critical roles, documenting essential duties, and preparing capable backups, we reduce the risk of service disruptions, delays in decision making, and loss of important institutional knowledge. A well-developed succession plan also

provides confidence to staff and stakeholders that leadership transitions can be managed effectively while maintaining accountability and continuity of service.

10. POLICY AND BY LAWS

10.1 Report #26-061 Guidelines for Establishing and Filling the CEO Position

26-076 Moved by: Joan Christensen
Seconded by: Maria Brigantino

The Fort Erie Public Library Board approve the Guidelines for Establishing and Filling the Chief Executive Officer Position as presented.

CARRIED

The CEO simplified the paragraph under section 1.02

10.2 Report #26-062 General Policies - Purchasing

26-077 Moved by: Barb Ruegg
Seconded by: Daniel Turner

That the Fort Erie Public Library Board approve the General Purchasing Policy as presented.

CARRIED

The CEO added in the suggested preference to include local vendors.

10.3 Report #26-063 Customer Service Policy

26-078 Moved by: Andrew Caird
Seconded by: Daniel Turner

That the Fort Erie Public Library Board approve the Customer Service Policy as presented.

CARRIED

The CEO revised the policy to support ongoing Strategic Goal plans without being overly specific.

11. ENQUIRIES BY MEMBERS

- A member commented that they have received feedback from the community that our Summer Reading Program was excellent this year.
- A member suggested that we add a board member recruitment advertisement for board members on our website and social media with additional skills and expertise that the board is looking for.

12. MEETINGS

12.1 Regular Meeting of the Board — **Tuesday, October 20, 2026 4:30 p.m. Centennial Branch**

13. ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, the Chair of the Board declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 p.m.

The undersigned have reviewed the Minutes of the September 15, 2026, Regular Board Meeting.

Original Signed by:

Larry Graber, Chair

Jen Kendall, CEO