

AGENDA

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**
3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**
 - 3.1. Committee of the Whole Meeting – April 4, 2023
4. **PROCLAMATIONS**
 - 4.1. Heart Failure Awareness Week – May 5-11, 2024
 - 4.2. International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia – Friday, May 17th
 - 4.3. Accessibility Awareness Week – May 26-June 1, 2024
5. **PRESENTATION**
 - 5.1. Annapolis Valley Regional Library – Julie Merritt, CEO
 - 5.2. Alertable Program – Brian Orde, REMO Coordinator
6. **ANYTHING BY CITIZENS**

Procedure: A thirty-minute period will be provided for members of the public to address Council regarding questions, concerns and/or ideas. Each person will have a maximum of two minutes to address Council with a second two-minute period provided there is time remaining within the thirty-minute "Anything by Citizens" period.
7. **ACTION ITEMS**
8. **INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**
9. **CORRESPONDENCE**
10. **ANTHING BY MEMBERS**
11. **ADJOURNMENT**

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

A regular monthly meeting of the Committee of the Whole of Middleton Town Council was held in person, via ZOOM and on Facebook Live on Tuesday, April 2, 2024.

PRESENT

Chairing the meeting, Mayor Sylvester Atkinson; Councillors John Bartlett (via ZOOM), Michael Fairm, Bernadette Knapp, Chad LeBlanc and Gary Marshall; Chief Administrative Officer, Ashley Crocker; and Recording Secretary, Sharon McAuley.

Regrets: Deputy Mayor Gail Smith.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Atkinson called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

240402.01: It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda, as circulated. Motion carried.

3. PROCLAMATION

3.1 Volunteer Week

Mayor Atkinson proclaimed April 14 – 20 as Volunteer Week in the Town of Middleton.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

240402.02: It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting of March 4, 2024, be approved, as circulated. Motion carried.

5. ANYTHING BY CITIZENS

CAO Crocker informed Committee that there were no questions/comments/concerns nor ideas submitted prior to the meeting for Committee to review and answer at this time.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

6. ACTION ITEMS

There were no action items.

7. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 Dangerous and Unsightly Status Report for March 2024

CAO Crocker informed Committee:

- the Town has received a request for an extension to the order on the Victoria Street property;
- work is progressing and an extension will be issued.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Letter from Minister Lohr – New EMO Department

A letter from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding the creation of a new EMO Department.

CAO Crocker advised Committee that the Town also received confirmation that the Service Exchange Agreement between the Province and the municipal units has been signed. With this agreement, the Town will no longer be responsible for expenses associated with regional housing and corrections, and in exchange, our equalization grant from the province will reduce slightly (but not for 5 years).

9. ANYTHING BY MEMBERS

On questions from Committee, CAO Crocker informed the Committee:

- the entrance signs on Bridge Street and the east end of Town are missing and the cost for replacements will be placed in this year's budget;
- staff will look into having the sign near TRA repainted;
- staff will review any policies/procedures regarding how Council members welcome new businesses to Town (staff always welcome new businesses);
- the mobile speed signs are being moved around Town;
- the wet spot in front of 136 Main Street has been there for a number of years and public works dug it up in the past and found it is naturally occurring and there was no cause for concern at that time.

10. ADJOURNMENT

240402.03: It was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m. Motion carried.

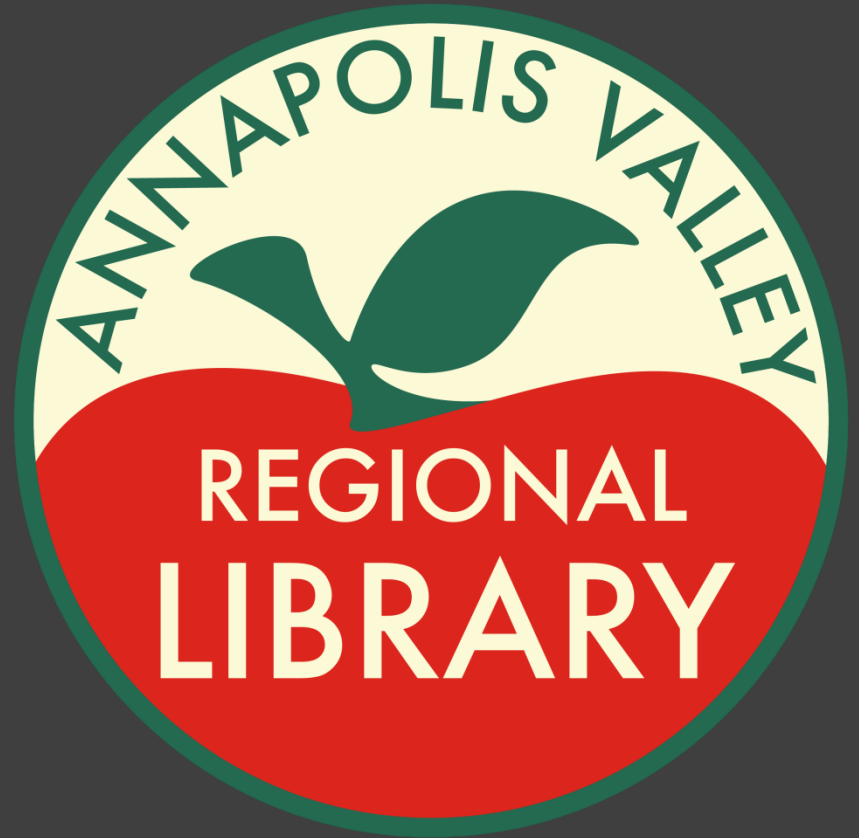
MAYOR

RECORDING SECRETARY

UNAPPROVED

Annapolis
Valley
Regional
Library

2023-24 Update



2023-24 In Review

- Same Page usage grew over 20% - AVRIL borrowed over 157,000 items
- Over 4,000 new memberships: 1 in 5 residents in Annapolis Valley is an active user
- Total of 5% increase overall in library usage



Funding Review Update

- Library Funding Review Committee has been formed to provide recommendations to government for the next funding model; first meeting April 2024
- Committee composed of library CEOs, board members, municipal representatives, and provincial government staff from CCTH and Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Goal of March 2025 for recommendation to government; research being conducted on salaries, collections, and technology
- Anticipate further consultation with municipalities Fall 2024

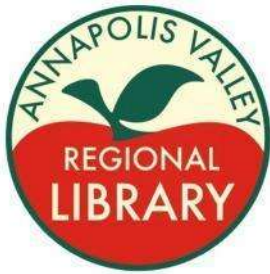


RENEW
YOUR
CURIOSITY

TRANSIT 250

Are you following us?
www.valleylibrary.ca

Thank you!



Annapolis Valley Regional Library

P.O. Box 510 236 Commercial Street Berwick, NS B0P 1E0

Phone 1-866-922-0229

www.valleylibrary.ca email: administration@valleylibrary.ca

The Honourable Allan MacMaster
Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage
1741 Brunswick St., 3rd Floor
P.O. Box 456, STN Central
Halifax, NS B3J 2R5
Sent via email: MIN_CCTH@novascotia.ca

March 28, 2024

Dear Minister MacMaster,

Thank you for your letter of January 15, 2024. We are writing to answer the questions that you had outlined in that letter, and would be happy to provide additional information.

In 2023-24, AVRL received Bridge Funding of \$58,500, which was extremely helpful. This grant was used to help fund a balanced budget that included:

1. 2% cost-of-living adjustment for salaries
2. Increases to liability insurance and extended health care benefits
3. Same Page software and shipping costs

However, the 2023-24 budget soon proved to be unequal to the major challenges associated with staff recruitment and retention. Our areas of challenge are:

1. Turnover: 38% of permanent staff positions have turned over from 2022-2024, which has resulted in significant lack of capacity
2. Low wages: have resulted in a lack of candidates and poor retention
3. Casual staff: usage has increased exponentially to augment the lean staffing model

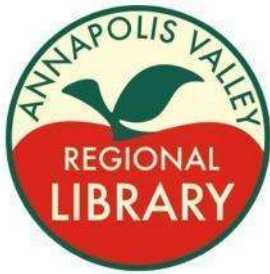
Further, AVRL staff have unionized and the first collective agreement was ratified in October 2023. To retain a competent workforce and avoid service disruption through strike or other labour action, the AVRL Board was willing to use its financial reserves, and has authorized deficit budgets for those years.

As a result of staffing shortages, and to reduce the deficit, in 2023-24 we have cut:

1. Programs: 50% reduction; only core literacy and technology programs continuing.
2. Staff: positions are being gapped where possible, especially management/non-union.
3. Special projects: with fewer staff we cannot advance the library's role in community.

The budget for collections was reduced in 2021 to be able to participate in the Same Page consortium, so these funds have not been further reduced.

Due to these changes, the previously forecasted deficit of over \$100,000 for 2023-24 is now estimated to be close to zero.



Annapolis Valley Regional Library

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In 2024-25, these reductions will continue. Based on the current funding formula, we anticipate that the 2024-25 Bridge Funding amount for AVRL will be roughly \$90,000. We are very appreciative of this assistance and we thank you for your efforts to secure this additional funding. The budget shortfall for 2024-25 including Bridge funding and service/staff reductions is currently estimated at \$150,000 (previous estimate \$250,000).

Taken together, these measures will allow us to maintain regular operating hours through 2024-25. Forecasting beyond that point is not possible as the collective agreement expires on March 31, 2025.

For these reasons, AVRL is eager to begin the funding review process with the Ministry and CORL. AVRL's CEO, Julia Merritt, is deeply involved in working with Council of Regional Librarians subcommittee to research salary rates. She will also be participating on the Funding Review Committee. Lastly, the Library Development Fund's grant to AVRL this year will permit a community consultation project in late 2024, which will provide updated information regarding community needs as well as satisfaction levels. We look forward to being able to contribute time and data to the ongoing efforts to plan for the future success of Nova Scotia's public libraries.

Again, we thank the Ministry for its ongoing support of public libraries in Nova Scotia and we look forward to working together during the budget review process.

Yours Sincerely,

Janet Ness, Board Chair

CC: Mr. Keith Irving, MLA for Kings South

Mr. Carmen Kerr, MLA for Annapolis

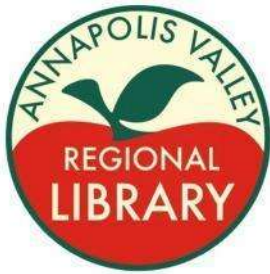
Mr. John Lohr, MLA for Kings North

Mr. Chris Palmer, MLA for Kings West

Ms. Melissa Sheehy-Richard, MLA for Hants West

Stephanie Smith, Executive Director, Archives, Libraries and Museums, Dept of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage

Lynn Somers, Director, Nova Scotia Provincial Library, Dept of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage



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Background Figures

2022-23		Notes
# of positions vacated	12	Not including casual staff
% of total workforce turnover	25%	
% of staff making \$16-18/hr	9%	Living wage for Ann. Valley 2022-23 is \$22.40
% of staff making \$18-20/hr	44%	73% of total staff make below a living wage
% of staff making \$20-22/hr	20%	

2023-24		Notes
# of positions vacated	6	Not including casual staff
% of total workforce turnover	13%	
Increase in use of Casual staff	700%	Compared to 2022-23
Salary increase	\$1/hour	Negotiated with NSUPE; living wage \$25.40
Forecasted Deficit	\$100,000	March 2024: now estimating near \$0 deficit

2024-25		Notes
Salary increase	\$1/hour	Negotiated with NSUPE
Forecasted Deficit	\$150,000	Reduced from original estimate of \$250,000



ANNAPOLIS VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Updates from the CEO and Board Chair

2023-24 was another busy year at the library! The past two years have been filled with major staffing changes - many of our dedicated staff have retired, and new staff are learning the ropes.

Despite all the internal changes, library services were full steam ahead. There was a 5% increase overall in library usage compared to 2022-23, and we continue to grow beyond pre-pandemic heights.

Later in 2024, we are looking forward to rejuvenating the Library's strategic plan after engaging our communities in consultation. We can't wait to hear where our communities want to take their libraries next!



Julia Merritt, Chief Executive Officer

January 2024 marks the 75th Anniversary of the creation of The Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL) as the first regional public library in Nova Scotia. From its inception, AVRL has been innovative and forward-thinking, starting with having the first bookmobile in Canada! Understanding and responding to social, economic, and cultural changes that the citizens and patrons of Public Libraries value and support has been key to successful operation over 75 years. 2023-2024 has been a transformative year for AVRL, as it positions itself to address the new and emerging needs for the next 75 years.

In January 2023, AVRL welcomed Julia Merritt as our new CEO and leader of a new management team following the retirements of long-term employees with over 150 years of collective service to the AVRL. As with many organizations facing new challenges post-Covid, Julia looked ahead to the opportunities that re-organization presents, and has guided AVRL forward with the promise of many more years of public library service to the residents and patrons of our 11 branches from Annapolis County to Windsor-West Hants County.

Janet Ness, Chair

NEW USERS

4,683



TOTAL PROGRAMS

1,989

ACTIVE USERS

24,037

PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

14,498





ANNAPOLIS VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



Highlights

- The Same Page partnership with the 8 rural libraries in Nova Scotia continues to be a resounding success in its second year. AVRL users borrowed over 157,000 items - 20% more than 2022-23!
- Over 4,000 new memberships were issued, which means 1 in 5 residents in Annapolis Valley is actively using their library card.
- The Lawrencetown branch began piloting changes to its hours, eliminating the dinner-hour closure to provide uninterrupted service for the public.
- AVRL celebrated the generous bequest of the late Mr. Donald Evans, who donated over \$1.2 million for the long-term benefit of the Annapolis Royal branch.

DIGITAL ITEMS BORROWED

108,311

TOTAL ITEMS BORROWED

800,152

PUBLIC COMPUTER ACCESS (HOURS)

21,689

WIRELESS USAGE (HOURS)

282,269



Proclamation

HEART FAILURE AWARENESS WEEK MAY 5-11, 2024

WHEREAS over 750,000 people of all ages in Canada are living with heart failure, and heart failure is expected to cost the Canadian economy \$2.8 billion per year by 2030, and

WHEREAS people with heart failure experience debilitating symptoms such as shortness of breath, swelling and exhaustion, and people who care for those with heart failure are often overwhelmed and stressed, and

WHEREAS Heart Failure Awareness Week is an opportunity in the Town of Middleton to raise awareness of the causes of heart failure and the impact it has on individuals living with heart failure and on their caregivers.

THEREFORE, I, Sylvester Atkinson, Mayor of Middleton do hereby proclaim May 5-11, 2024, as Heart Failure Awareness Week in the Town of Middleton.

Dated at Middleton, Nova Scotia
this 6th day of May 2024.

Sylvester Atkinson, Mayor



Proclamation

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND BIPHOBIA MAY 17, 2024

- WHEREAS** the Town of Middleton strives to be a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive and safe community for all of its citizens;
- WHEREAS** while intolerance of members of the LGBTQ2S+ community is still pervasive in society, the 2024 theme, “No One Left Behind: Equality, Freedom and Justice for All”, reinforces that individuals have the right to live their sexualities and express their gender(s) openly with freedom from physical violence; and
- WHEREAS** today we celebrate and lift the LGBTQ2S+ community in the Town of Middleton and maintain our ongoing commitment to fight systems of oppression that impact them.

THEREFORE, I, Sylvester Atkinson, Mayor of Middleton do hereby proclaim May 17, 2024, as International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia in the Town of Middleton.

Dated at Middleton, Nova Scotia
this 6th day of May 2024.

Sylvester Atkinson, Mayor



Proclamation

ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS WEEK “COMMUNITIES FOR ALL: TAKING ACTION ON ACCESS AWARENESS” MAY 26 – JUNE 1, 2024

WHEREAS the Town of Middleton aims to celebrate achievements made both by and for persons with disabilities in the areas of accessibility, transportation, housing, recreation, education, and communication; and

WHEREAS the foundation of Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Act is to provide, support, and protect the rights of persons with disabilities to full inclusion and accessibility by the identification, prevention and removal of accessibility barriers; and

WHEREAS through public awareness, community partnerships and education, this campaign aims to foster an environment of equal participation for persons with disabilities within the Town of Middleton.

THEREFORE, I, Sylvester Atkinson, Mayor of Middleton do hereby proclaim May 26 – June 1, 2024, as Accessibility Awareness Week, “Communities for All: Taking Action on Access Awareness” in the Town of Middleton.

Dated at Middleton, Nova Scotia
this 6th day of May 2024.

Sylvester Atkinson, Mayor