TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ALGONQUIN PUBLIC LIBRARY (SAPL)
AGENDA - REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD
March 25th, 2025, 7pm Madawaska Branch/Online

Land Acknowledgement:

With spring in the air, longer hours of sunlight and the land awakening, I am more aware of how important and interconnected our natural world is to me and all living things I want to give thanks to the Indigenous Algonquin people who cared for his land before colonization and to all those who still do. As a settler I am grateful for being able to live on this land now and will do my best to appreciate and preserve it for many springs to come.

Call to Order

1. **Approval of Agenda** *Motion Required*
2. **Approval of Minutes:** *Motion Required:* Minutes of February 25th, 2025, meeting.
3. **Report of the Chairperson:**

4. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
   - 4.1. **Staff Evaluations:** CEO evaluation has been completed. Librarian evaluation will be completed soon.
   - 4.2. **Annual Survey of Public Libraries (ASPL):** Work continues. The survey is due April 30th, 2025.

5. **New Business:**

6. **Reports**
   - 6.1. **Finance:** *Action:* Review of the February bank statements. $3406.53
   - 6.2. **Librarian's Report:** *Action:* Review and discuss librarian's and statistical reports.
   - 6.3. **Council Report:**

7. **Governance**
   - 7.1. **Policy:** *Action:* Make a motion to accept the mission and vision statements as reviewed at the last meeting. *Discuss:* Statement of Intellectual Freedom policy and the Canadian Federation of Library Associations statement provided at the last meeting. *Action*: Make a motion to accept the Statement of Intellectual Freedom policy.
   - 7.2. **Strategic Planning/Strategic Doing:** *Discuss: "*A Challenge to Intellectual Freedom" provided at the last meeting. Review: "Intellectual Freedom and Public Libraries: Protections Under Ontario's Public Libraries Act and How Library Boards Defend Intellectual Freedom"

8. **Next meeting:** April 22nd, 2025, Whitney Branch/Online
9. **Adjournment:** *Motion Required*

Township of South Algonquin Public Library CEO Monthly Report March 2025 Prepared By: Charlene Alexander

Daily Operations ● **Responsive ● Freedom ● Accessibility**

Assisted patrons with a variety of tasks including:

- Downloading, scanning, and emailing documents.
- Print, Fax, Copy
- Downloading, scanning, and uploading documents.
- Basic clean up and maintenance on a patron laptop
- Activate a new cell phone and set up an online patron account.
- Software updates on two laptops and one cell phone
- Assisted with creating and formatting a Word document.
- Helped two patrons to create accounts with Wealth Simple and to file their Income Tax's online.
- Readers Advisory

Other Tasks:

- Collection maintenance and review (ongoing). Ongoing weeding activities and removal from database. I have started a book list for purchases.
- Performed updates and maintenance on all computers and Chromebooks.
- Social Media Posts: Eighteen posts created/shared. Responded to comments and messages.
- Updated Website
- A lot of shoveling and spreading of ice melt to keep the entrance, stairs, and ramp clear.

Programming ● **Responsive ● Governance ● Freedom ● Accessibility**

- School Visits: Two classes visit bi-weekly.
- Prepared the seed library, book display, print materials and advertising for the Seedy Saturday
- Seedy Saturday March 8th 3 people in Whitney
- Astronomy in Action June 5th
- Adam Shoats Fall 2025

- Governance ● **Responsive ● Governance**
- Budget Meeting - March 19th
- Annual Survey/work continues – Due April 30th.
- Internet Connectivity Reimbursement 2024 $1740.00
- 2024 Provincial Funding received $6464.
- Prepared Agenda, minutes, and report. Attended regular monthly Library Board Meeting
- Attended monthly Township Committee meeting and compiled a report for Council.
- Attended Monthly CEO Informal Zoom Meeting
- Reviewed and submitted staff payroll to township, bi-weekly.
- Regular check-ins with Branch Librarian via phone/email
- Updating the operational manual
- Continue to work on a new format for agendas, minutes, and policies
- Continuing work on MOU

Township of South Algonquin Public Library Librarian Monthly Report March 2025 Prepared By: Cynthia Haskin

Daily Operations ● **Responsive ● Freedom ● Accessibility**

- Shoveled snow on step often
- Cut local articles of interest from old newspapers

Programming ● **Responsive ● Governance ● Freedom ● Accessibility**

- Set up seed display and organized seed event for my branch
- We had twelve people attending Seed exchange
- Had members of the Madawaska Valley Garden club set up a table

Governance ● **Responsive ● Governance**

- Working on updating the user manual for Inter Library Loans
- Working on to do checklist for weekly/monthly duties
- Doing my part of info for Annual survey
- Attended regular monthly Library Board Meeting
- Took the minutes of the Board meeting
- Regular check-ins with the CEO via phone/email

Intellectual Freedom and Public Libraries

Protections Under Ontario's Public Libraries Act and How Library Boards Defend Intellectual Freedom

Introduction

Public libraries in Ontario play a vital role in safeguarding **intellectual freedom**, promoting **diversity**, and ensuring **equitable access** to information. Governed by the **Public Libraries Act (PLA)**, libraries and their boards uphold fundamental democratic values by protecting the public's right to access diverse viewpoints without censorship. This document explores how Ontario libraries support intellectual freedom, diversity, and accessibility while operating under the legal framework of the PLA.

1. Protecting Intellectual Freedom

Ontario libraries are committed to providing access to a broad range of information and ideas, even when some materials may be controversial or unpopular. Library boards play a crucial role in protecting intellectual freedom by:

- **Developing and enforcing policies** that uphold the right to read, view, and listen to various perspectives without censorship.
- **Defending against book bans and challenges**, ensuring that diverse opinions remain accessible to the public.
- **Adopting the Ontario Library Association (OLA) Statement on Intellectual Freedom**, which reinforces the right to free inquiry and access to information.

How the Public Libraries Act Protects Intellectual Freedom

While the **Public Libraries Act** does not explicitly mention "intellectual freedom," it establishes several key protections:

- **Free and Equitable Public Access (Section 23)**: The PLA requires public libraries to offer free access to materials and resources, preventing financial barriers to information.
- **Independent Governance by Library Boards**: Library boards operate separately from municipal governments, reducing political interference and censorship.
- **Protection from Book Challenges**: Library boards follow professional collection development policies, allowing them to reject demands to remove books or restrict access based on personal objections.
- **Open Access to Information**: Libraries are not subject to government-imposed restrictions on information, ensuring free access to diverse viewpoints.

2. Supporting Diversity in Libraries

Libraries actively promote diversity by ensuring that their collections, programs, and services represent various cultural, social, and personal experiences. They achieve this by:

- **Curating diverse collections** that include works by Indigenous, LGBTQ+, racialized, and marginalized authors.
- **Offering multilingual resources** to reflect the linguistic diversity of Ontario communities.
- **Hosting inclusive programming**, such as cultural celebrations, Indigenous storytelling, and LGBTQ+ events.
- **Addressing systemic barriers** by making library spaces and services accessible to underrepresented groups.

3. Ensuring Equitable Access for All

Ontario libraries are committed to making information and services available to all, regardless of economic status, ability, or background. This commitment includes:

- **Eliminating financial barriers**, such as offering free membership, digital resources, and in some cases, eliminating late fees.
- **Providing adaptive technologies**, such as screen readers, audiobooks, and accessible workstations for individuals with disabilities.
- **Creating safe and welcoming spaces**, ensuring all patrons feel valued and included.
- **Expanding internet access**, including free Wi-Fi, lending hotspots, and public computers to bridge the digital divide.

4. The Role of Library Boards in Upholding These Principles

Library board members in Ontario ensure that public libraries continue to serve as **defenders of intellectual freedom, diversity, and equity**. Their responsibilities include:

- **Advocating funding** to maintain and expand library services.
- **Approving and enforcing policies** that align with intellectual freedom and diversity principles.
- **Engaging with the community** to understand and address its evolving needs.
- **Challenging censorship efforts**, ensuring access to a wide range of materials and viewpoints.

5. Differences Between the Alberta and Ontario Library Acts

While both Ontario and Alberta have legislation governing public libraries, their Acts differ in keyways:

Aspect	Alberta Libraries Act	Ontario Public Libraries Act
Governance	Municipal councils establish library boards but have some oversight on board decisions.	Library boards operate independently from municipal governments.
Board Autonomy	Library boards must obtain council approval for some financial decisions.	Library boards have full authority over budgeting and operations.
Censorship & Intellectual Freedom	No explicit protection of intellectual freedom, though libraries follow CFLA and provincial policies.	Library boards follow the Ontario Library Association (OLA) Statement on Intellectual Freedom.
Funding	Provincial and municipal funding, but cuts can occur based on council decisions.	Provincial and municipal funding, with boards having more autonomy in fund allocation.
Challenges to Books & Materials	No formal process for handling book challenges in the Act; libraries set their own policies.	Libraries follow OLA guidelines, with boards having final authority on material challenges.

Summary

- **Ontario's Public Libraries Act** provides **stronger autonomy** for library boards, making it harder for municipal councils to interfere in collection decisions.
- **Alberta's Libraries Act** allows **more municipal control**, which can lead to funding cuts and influence over library policies, as seen in cases like Valleyview.

Conclusion

The **Public Libraries Act** provides a strong foundation for Ontario libraries to protect **intellectual freedom**, promote **diversity**, and ensure **equitable access** to information. By following this legal framework and adopting professional standards, libraries and their boards continue to be vital institutions that empower individuals, foster knowledge, and uphold democratic values.

Through their commitment to free and open access, Ontario's public libraries remain essential spaces for learning, inquiry, and cultural exchange, ensuring that all members of the community can explore and engage with a diversity of ideas and perspectives.

Township of South Algonquin Public Library
Minutes of the Meeting Held
February 25th, 2025, 7pm Whitney Branch/Online

Attendees: Rose Jessup, Councillor Laurie Siydock, Vicki Forward, Sarah Ennor**,** Elaine Hare **Staff:** Cynthia Haskin, Charlene Alexander **Regrets:** Jeff Bowman
Land Acknowledgement: Vicki Forward
Call to Order: 7:03pm

1. **Motion # 2025-04**

Moved – Elaine Hare Seconded – Rose Jessup /To approve the agenda, as amended/Carried.

2. **Motion # 2025-05**

Moved – Elaine Hare Seconded – Sarah Ennor /To approve the minutes of January 21st, 2025 / Carried.

3. **Report of the Chair:** No report
4. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
   - 4.1. **Board Evaluations:** Completed. A summary of results provided to the board. Next Steps: The CEO will send out the board package one week prior to the meetings, if a major review of documents is needed it will be sent out earlier. Recommended that the CEO work on summarizing larger governance pieces to share with the board and to incorporate at least 10 minutes of governance into each regular meeting.
   - 4.2. **Staff Evaluations:** *Action:* CEO to contact Chairperson to set evaluation dates.
   - 4.3. **CEO Training - Foundations of Integrating AI in Libraries:** Ambre Schlechter will provide coverage at the Whitney branch on March 6th while the CEO attends training.
   - 4.4. **OLA Marketing Libraries Think Tank 2024:** The CEO provided a report to the board.
5. **New Business:**
   - 5.1. **Annual Survey of Public Libraries (ASPL):** Work has begun on the annual survey. The survey is due April 30th, 2025. Information about ASPL was provided to the board.
6. **Reports**
   - **6.1. Finance:** Bank Statements January $3396.21
   - 6.2. **Librarian Reports**: There is a drop in statistics that could partially be due to winter weather. School visits have been affected by snow days and illnesses since Christmas break. Discussed that available space in the Township newsletter is shrinking, and we had to reduce our information by 50%. Consider doing our own library newsletter (a couple times per year) and/or adding a QR Code to the Township newsletter. The CEO will continue to work on a new format for agendas, minutes, and policies.
   - 6.3. **Council Report:** Apologized for missing the last board meeting. She gave kudos to Charlene Alexander for her grant writing efforts. Announced that there will be exciting news for the Township by the weeks end.
7. **Governance**
   - **7.1. Governance Committee:** none
   - **7.2. Policy:** Reviewed of vision and mission statements
   - 7.3. **Strategic Planning/Strategic Doing:** The CEO provided the document "A Challenge to Intellectual Freedom," a copy of our Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the statement from The Canadian Federation of Library Associations statement for review and discussion at the next meeting.
8. **Programming**
   - 8.1. **School Visits:** Three classes, bi-weekly **Daycare Visits:** Occasional
   - 8.2. **Astronomy in Action** *Next Steps:* Apply for an event permit with the school in the spring. Apply for grant funding in April through Community Futures Development Corp. Local Initiatives grant. Tentative June 5th, 2025.
   - 8.3. **Adam Shoalts Event:** Fall 2025.
   - 8.4. **Seedy Saturday Events** *Action:* Plan and execute the first-ever Seedy Saturday events at both Whitney and Madawaska branches on Saturday, March 8, from 11 AM to 2 PM. Activities will include light refreshments, seed swap, gardening book displays, and a used book sale. This initiative ties into the seed library, now in its third year. The CEO has contacted Seeds of Diversity for resources, free seeds, and promotion of their website.

9. **Correspondence: none**
10. **Any Other Business: none**
11. **In-Camera/Out of Camera:** none
12. **Next Meeting**: March 25th, 2025, 7pm Whitney Branch/Online
13. **Adjournment**

Motion # 2025-06

Moved by – Sarah Ennor Seconded by – Elaine Hare /To adjourn 8:22pm Carried.

Township of South Algonquin Libraries Monthly Stats

March, 2025

	Whitney		Madawaska	
	Jan	Feb	Jan	Feb
Head Count	145	136	73	92
School/daycare visit headcount	11	32	0	0
Program headcount	0	0	0	0
combined total	156	168	73	92
Circulation	441	398	69	56
Activity Kits (includes Park passes)	3	4	0	0
Device	6	5	0	0
Computer users	25	13	18	14
Inter Library Loans	14	15	1	0
New Members	2	0	1	0
Print/fax/copy	19	10	4	6
Reference/Reader's Advisory	87	58	2	3
Tech/media/software support	18	16	5	7
minutes spent on above requests	658	730	36	42
In Library Use	6	35	19	28
Over drive users/both branches	19	13	0	0
Overdrive circulation/both branches	214	167	0	0
non members users	4	10	16	20
seed library	0	0	0	0

Head Count by Day

Tuesday	0	0	25	23
Wednesday	39	62	0	0
Thursday	145	48	29	39
Saturday	29	26	19	30

TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ALGONQUIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries

Recognizing that the board has a fundamental responsibility for upholding the principles of, as well as advocating for, intellectual freedom, this policy ensures the rights of individuals to access information.

1. The board adopts the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries, approved originally on June 27, 1974; Amended November 17, 1983, November 18, 1985 and September 27, 2015.

2. It is the responsibility of the board, and those who work in the library, to:

a) ensure that all library users have the fundamental right to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly

b) guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable

c) make available all of the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them

d) resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities, while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups

3. The board directs the Library Chief Executive Officer to ensure that the principles of intellectual freedom are integrated into all organizational policies, procedures and practices.

Related Documents: Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries (Appendix A)

Date of Last Review: 2011, 2019 Approval Date: August 26th 2019

Chairperson: Christine Luckasavitch CEO: Charlene Alexander

Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries

Approval History: ~ June 27, 1974 Amended November 17, 1983; November 18, 1985; and September 27, 2015

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations recognizes and values the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as the guarantor of the fundamental freedoms in Canada of conscience and religion; of thought, belief, opinion, and expression; of peaceful assembly; and of association.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations supports and promotes the universal principles of intellectual freedom as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which include the interlocking freedoms to hold opinions and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

In accordance with these principles, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations affirms that all persons in Canada have a fundamental right, subject only to the Constitution and the law, to have access to the full range of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, and to express their thoughts publicly. Only the courts may abridge free expression rights in Canada.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations affirms further that libraries have a core responsibility to support, defend and promote the universal principles of intellectual freedom and privacy.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations holds that libraries are a key institution in Canada for rendering expressive content accessible and affordable to all. Libraries are essential gateways for all persons living in Canada to advance themselves through literacy, lifelong learning, social engagement, and cultural enrichment.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and facilitate access to constitutionally *Policy:*

protected expressions of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, including those which some individuals and groups consider unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, in accordance with their mandates and professional values and standards, libraries provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and foster free expression and the right to safe and welcoming places and conditions. To this end, libraries make available their public spaces and services to individuals and groups without discrimination.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and defend privacy in the individual's pursuit of expressive content. To this end, libraries protect the identities and activities of library users except when required by the courts to cede them.

Furthermore, in accordance with established library policies, procedures and due process, libraries resist efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Library employees, volunteers and employers as well as library governing entities have a core responsibility to uphold the principles of intellectual freedom in the performance of their respective library roles.

Policy: Foundation-01 Intellectual Freedom Appendix A

Transaction and balance statement report

Company name: CORP OF THE TWN OF SOUTH ALGONQUIN

Library Board

001869679618 CAD

Transaction and balance details

Date	Description	Debit amount	Credit amount	Balance
Feb 01, 2025	**Opening balance**			**3,396.21**
Feb 05, 2025	CREDIT MEMO INT @ 3.5800% CIBC-AUTOMATED INTEREST SYSTI		10.32	3,406.53
Feb 28, 2025	**Closing balance**			**3,406.53**
	Total value		10.32	
	Total count	0	1	