

HALIBURTON COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD
LEGACY REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2006

MISSION STATEMENT

The Haliburton County Library Board aims to serve and enrich the entire community through the use of well supported and promoted services in a safe and accessible environment.

VISION

The Haliburton County Library Board believes in:

- ❖ Focus on the adequacy of facilities
- ❖ Highly trained staff
- ❖ Importance of the collection
- ❖ Electronic information
- ❖ Importance of technology

Over the past 3 years, the library board established new Mission and Vision statements and Strategic Plan to facilitate ongoing library improvements and awareness.

Working with the Strategic Plan, the board focused on the following improvements

- Accessible buildings and services, reflecting community needs
- Availability of modern technology
- Board effectiveness through study of Ontario Library Board Orientation kit and the study of local policies and traditions. Representatives attended Southern Ontario Library Service area trustee meetings and OLA conferences.
- Effectively managed library resources through ongoing evaluation of staffing and staff needs.
- Accountability – published its first Annual Report in 2005 and established an Annual Agenda to achieve scheduled reviews of library policies
- Fiscal responsibilities – Monitored budget variances at every meeting. (This allows for planning the following year's budget)
- Access to professional development tools. Funds were made available to staff to attend meetings and annual workshop and take EXCEL courses. Established an annual awards luncheon and presentation to library staff.
- Evaluation of collections and services, developing benchmarks for size, type and funding
- Established Board policies to assist Friends of the Haliburton County Public Library in their goals
- Support to the advocacy process through support of the Friends of the Library, mailing to lake associations, annual report and ongoing public service announcements in the local newspapers and radio stations

AS A RESULT

The book budget was increased from \$38,000 in 2003 to \$56,000 in 2004, \$65,000 in 2005 and 2006.

Allowances were made for extra funding for more library programming.

The municipalities were approached to upgrade all branches.

Some improvements have been made to maintain safe and attractive buildings.

The process of developing a Legacy Document and recommendations for a new board was begun.

Following up these achievements will be the incoming Haliburton County Library Board's responsibility. The current board has prepared this report as a legacy to its successor, as well as to members of the incoming county council. It draws on the library's history to provide both background information and suggestions for the future in the areas of Board governance, services, facilities, financing and, of course, the people we serve and those we hire to serve them.

Recommendations to the 2007-2010 Haliburton County Library Board

Board Training

The incoming HCL Board will be thrust immediately into making major decisions on issues like budgets. Nevertheless, we recommend that the Board be given training within its first two months on library policies and operations. The Ontario Library Trustee Kit should be reviewed by the Board as a whole.

We recommend that Board members take advantage of trustee training opportunities organized by provincial library associations, such as the annual OLA SuperConference and videoconferences, and participate in Area 4 Ontario Trustee activities organized by the Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS)

Governance

A review of the Strategic Plan 2004 - 2006 is recommended in preparation for establishing your own plan for 2007 to 2010. Establishment of an Annual Agenda to implement the Strategic Plan is strongly recommended. This will allow the Board to review each policy with a report from staff on how they have been able to implement the policy. The Board can decide if it needs to revisit the policy and/or obtain additional information. This allows for policy development with public consultation in an unpressured environment.

Buildings

We strongly recommend that the new board develop a 5 year capital plan to restructure the current system and allow for building expansion in Minden and Haliburton. A clear extensive plan needs to be taken to County Council.

In the meantime, special attention needs to be paid to improving accessibility in current branches where necessary. This should be addressed through the County Joint Accessibility Group.

Universal signage throughout the county system would be advantageous. There is need for directional signage to the branches from the villages, especially Minden and Haliburton.

Services

We recommend that with the development of better facilities, thought should be given to space required for the development of better services and programs especially for children and seniors.

More active outreach to seniors through Seniors' homes and home delivery through volunteers would be welcomed.

Budget

Barring any magic rabbits, the 2007 budget process will be very onerous and difficult, with lack of funding to fully support those services which Haliburton residents have shown they value. In making those decisions, we recommend that the incoming Board consider its core values, and importance of maintaining equity and accessibility to those of all incomes and educational levels.

The whole question of staffing and salaries needs to be addressed, especially in view of the possibility of library expansion.

Further study of library hours is recommended

In particular, we strongly recommend that the book budget continue to be of primary importance in the budget process and that it be maintained at least at current levels with a vision towards increased funding.

In 2006, we received a government grant of \$84,000 to help strengthen literacy and promote lifelong learning. A resolution was passed by the board: "that we set aside \$42,000, four equal shares of the remaining grant, one share for each township and total per township of \$10,500. This money would be set aside for use at the branch level in terms of physical improvements which could be interpreted as new equipment, shelving, furniture, etc., but for internal acquisitions only. Approval would not be given to property improvements or other capital expenditures." Care should be taken that these monies do not in any way hinder annual budgetary decisions, especially with respect to the book budget.

Friends of the Haliburton County Public Library

Friends of the Haliburton County Public Library continues to be a strong supporter of the library. It speaks to the public in favour of the library. The Chair of the Friends spoke to delegates at the OLA conference in February, once again bringing attention to Haliburton County and its accomplishments. In particular, its volunteers have assisted the board in a telephone survey of services and established partnerships within the county to provide books and programs for the library.

The HCL Board should continue its cordial and supportive relationship with the Friends, appointing a Board member as representative to the Friends, and recognizing that its work is essential to and separate from the Library Board.

In preparing this document we found the Ontario Public Library Guidelines Questionnaire helpful and recommend that it be used in any future planning process.

In closing, Haliburton County is on the brink of new and exciting developments and the library wants to be part of those developments. We look forward to new library facilities, new technology allowing for automatic circulation of materials, and the possibility of better programming and services in better facilities.