

## **Yellowhead Regional Library board orientation – Jan. 24, 2021**

From Wayne Rothe

To: Spruce Grove council, SGPLB

Re: YRL trustee orientation Jan. 24, 2022

I attended an orientation session this morning for YRL trustees. Here are my notes, which will provide council members and SGPLB trustees with useful background on YRL and its relationship with local jurisdictions (member municipalities and school districts).

Note: The YRL director and chairperson are offering to present to councils on the system and board and their activities; let me know if Spruce Grove council would like a presentation. The offer applies to library trustees.

- YRL is one of seven regional systems in Alberta (see attached map) and the second oldest; Parkland Regional Library is the oldest (not to be confused with Parkland County).
- YRL has 53 members - 50 municipalities and three school divisions. The 10 largest members by population (including Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, and Parkland County) get automatic membership on the executive committee. The executive committee meets four times per year to handle more routine matters. There are certain things that the exec committee cannot do, such as changing the master membership agreement.
- The master membership agreement is the overarching agreement that sets out responsibilities, fees...most everything. Member withdrawal requires notice of one calendar year. This agreement is on the YRL website; it's long but important.
- The municipalities and school divisions are the YRL members; the local library boards are NOT the members. Therefore, YRL is accountable to the members (municipalities and school divisions), also to Alberta Municipal Affairs Public Library Services Branch. The YRL does have a working relationship with local libraries and boards.
- Alberta is the only province where regional membership is not compulsory. In provinces with compulsory membership those provinces have more control over regional systems.
- One member = one vote
- The YRL board is a governance board, which means that (similar to council) we have one employee (our director) and all staff report directly or indirectly to the director.
- One of the most important membership benefits is sharing of books and other resources. This saves members considerable money.
- Regional services are only available to residents of member municipalities. A resident cannot circumvent this by getting a card at a member library; members should not subsidize services to non-members.
- With few exceptions, regional boards cannot direct local boards, which are independent.
- The province owns the YRL building and land; we lease.
- Plan of service: a library's plan of service is the equivalent of a council's strategic plan. Just as a council's strategic plan is the most important thing that a council does, the plan

of service is the most important task of library boards. Local library boards can do a three-, four-, or five-year strat plan, whereas regional boards must do three-year plans. Plans of service are sent to Alberta Municipal Affairs for review.

- Because of COVID19 YRL got approval for a one-year plan for 2022 and will do a new three-year plan in 2022. Until the mid-'90s regional boards did plans of service for local boards, but local boards now do their own.
- YRL's plan of service sets out the following objectives. (Note: Those are quite general and perhaps more specificity would be useful.)
  - o 1. To provide quality services that support the policies of and challenges faced by member libraries,
  - o 2. Strengthen organizational capacity, and
  - o 3. Demonstrate the value of YRL to its stakeholders.
- Budget and financial statements (timelines):
  - o Spring/summer: managers draft operating budgets for departments,
  - o August: draft budgets are presented to the executive committee for discussion; the draft budget goes to the exec committee in September for a recommendation to go to the board in October,
  - o October: YRL board receives the draft budget for discussion; municipalities receive a copy of the draft budget at this time;
  - o November/December: board votes on the budget.
  - o Budget here: [Yellowhead Regional Library - Finances - Yellowhead Regional Library \(yrl.ab.ca\)](http://yrl.ab.ca)
- Any levy increases require approval of two-thirds of the 53 members representing two-thirds of YRL population served.
- YRL serves 303,695 population, making us the second largest of the seven in the province (by about 3,000 people). This number is the Alberta Treasury Board estimate for 2020-21; YRL will use this figure for 2022 fees.
- YRL trustees are expected to wear their YRL hat in board meetings; this is the same as council reps on boards and committees. For example, we should vote for what's best for YRL even if it conflicts with the interests of the municipality/school division; you can vote differently at the council level (for trustees who are also elected officials) and at the local library board (for those who are local trustees).
- Legislation permits regional boards to also charge local library boards for services (over what they charge municipalities and school boards); YRL does not do this.
- Collection and resource sharing:
  - o In 2021 YRL provided sessions to 214 local library staff representing 360 training hours. Examples: critical-incident staff training, equity and diversity training, working with the homeless, etc.
  - o YRL handles the movement of materials to and from local libraries.
  - o YRL handles book and resource sharing – including the very expensive e-materials, which are much more costly than paper materials. (E-books cost \$180 per copy.) This service saves local libraries considerable money!
- For anyone interested, the Public Library Services Board holds its own orientations. Some of these will focus on responsibilities, library act and law, etc. etc.

