

Chair Report

November 2018

This has been an interesting fall. First, the bad harvest conditions suddenly becoming good conditions, but only after nature took the grain down a grade, or two. It has also been a very busy time for me personally. When you move, it takes a lot of time, and a lot of effort. This fall, in the middle of my own move, I needed to help 2 of my daughters to move as well! None of the moves were over a great distance (thank goodness), but most of the work is the same regardless as to how far you move. Any free time I did have was used in getting the moves done. While there is still some work left, all of us will be fully settled by the middle of November.

On Sept 19, Julie and I were able to meet with Dianah Davidson, PLSB to discuss several issues. While none of the positions actually changed, we both have a better understanding. Part of the discussion, was concerning why PLSB has decided Northern Lights is non-compliant. For the first time since I have been on the Northern Lights Board (and I think for a lot longer than that), PLSB is being very strict about the MLIS requirements. For our population, we are supposed to have 6 MLISs on staff. In the past, as other systems do, Northern Lights was able to count the MLISs within the system, as well as the members on our staff who have their MLIS. For the first time, we are not able to count an MLIS who doesn't serve a population of over 10,000. At our meeting, Dianah Davidson indicated we would be considered compliant if we advertised for the outstanding position. Right after the meeting, Julie advertised for the outstanding position.

The change in the MGA resulted in yet another issue with compliance. On Oct 2, I found out we had 14 members of the Board who were appointed for the full Council term of 4 years. The Libraries Act only allows for a 3 year term – so once again we were considered non-compliant. These municipal partners were asked to change the appointment to a 3 year term. I need to point out Northern Lights has no say in these appointments – it is up to our municipal partners who they appoint, and they set the term. On Oct 4, I talked with Jordan, PLSB, who said PLSB would need to see the appointments before Northern Lights would be considered compliant. Because October is the restructuring month, I expected these appointments would be changed during the restructuring meeting of Council. On Oct 29, I was told, all of the appointments have now been changed. So, unless PLSB comes up with something else, our grant cheque should be in the mail!

Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the Northern Lights conference this year, because of a prior commitment. Vice-Chair Vicky Lefebvre was able to attend on my behalf. I have always enjoyed the Northern Lights conference, with interesting sessions and good networking opportunities – I am certain this year was no different.

This year the AUMA conference was held in Red Deer, and being held at the end of September. I think Red Deer did a good job hosting the conference, even if they still have some of the bugs (bussing) to work out! The education sessions I attended were interesting, even if one was not what I had expected! All of the main speakers were entertaining as well as interesting. It was also great to have all of the hospitality suites in the same hotel. As always, I spent a lot of time during the conference talking about Northern Lights, and Library Systems.

This continues to be an interesting world we live in. International politics, national politics, and local politics all continue to be “more interesting” than they have been for years. I know we will work our way through this, even though at times, less interesting has a lot of appeal!