

Chair report to the Executive Committee

May 3, 2019

The main reason my report is not in your package, is because I expected events at Jasper would have to be part of the report.

First, Julie and I, have continued to present our report to our partners. We are continuing to present to municipalities who have requested our attention. In April we had a request from the Viking Library Board (Apr 9) and the Holden presentation (Apr 15) was a joint presentation to the Council and to the Library Board. The response to our presentation continues to be good; however, both of the Library Boards raised new questions. Both of the Boards were concerned about Northern Lights customer service. Both of these Libraries are small and need Northern Lights to do more for them. Both of these Libraries feel they don't have the staff time to take full advantage of what Northern Lights has to offer. This needs further discussion. With our current shortage of staff, I'm not sure we have more support to give either!

Now to Jasper. As always, the Jasper Library Conference was a good conference, with many opportunities to discuss common concerns with other trustees from around the province. The course content, as usual, was good. However, this year, there were more meetings with the other system chairs and directors, than in past years.

This year there were changes to discuss. With a new Provincial Government (as of April 16), there was lots of speculation as to what to expect from the new Government; lots of ideas of what to expect in the days to come. On April 30th, the new premier was to appoint his new Ministers, and there was a fear Libraries would be moved to the Culture Ministry. Thankfully, Libraries have remained in Municipal Affairs.

A Systems, and Nodes, meeting was organized by Yellowhead, and hosted by St Albert Library, on Friday night. Lots of ideas were tossed about, until an agreement was reached. First, a congratulatory letter would be sent to the new Minister (Kaycee Madu), as soon as possible after his appointment is announced. This letter was sent on May 1st, with all of the systems and nodes logos on the letterhead and signed by all of the Chairs. By sending just 1 letter, from everyone, it shows the Minister the Library Community is standing together, and working together. Since the Minister will be receiving many letters, we wanted to do something to make sure our letter gets noticed. As far as I know, this is the first time all of the Systems, and the Nodes, have signed a single letter.

This was a great first step, but the next step moves to the Libraries. We need to gather, and forward to the Minister, stories from our patrons, to show how Libraries are being used, by the public, to achieve "the Alberta Government goals of strengthening our economy, seeking a smarter approach to innovation, and welcoming and supporting newcomers and creating a better place for Albertans to raise their children." This is just the beginning of a long term campaign.

It was felt, the first step had to be done immediately; the next steps are a lot less urgent but are also quite important. The goal is to maintain our current Library funding from the Provincial Government, and to begin the work to increase the contribution by the Province.

Thanks

Larry Tiedemann