

Message from the Chair,

I feel like I blinked and missed summer and we are already just about half way through September, the saying times fly's really resonates especially with the busy schedules. The children are back in school and the leaves are changing color so we are looking forward to changing with seasons and getting a head start on planning for the upcoming year.

I would like to thank our staff, member boards, and our libraries for their patience and work with Northern Lights as we work diligently through our staffing shortages. We have finally achieved our required amount of MLIS staffing for our system in August with our last hire and we are happy to welcome all our new staff, and we look forward to a great year understanding the challenges that comes with training. Again a huge Thank you to our staff who have covered positions they are unfamiliar with and responded to our system's needs with staff shortages due to vacancies, vacations and illness. It is during these times that the great foundation that was built you can see the strength in your staff.

As a board we want to say welcome to Amy Knifton, Bibliographic Services Manager; Jake Marion, Public Services Manager; Greg Morgan, Public Services Consultant; and Vicky Zhang, Public Services Consultant.

Our building committee, budget committee, policy and advocacy have all met and are working to set their terms of reference and assumed duties. Our executive has met a few times and were committed to funding the 50% of the grants even when we had not received ours. They recognised the position some libraries were in especially our board of record libraries. Thank you again to all who have worked with the various committees and your commitment to NLLS, with everyone's tight schedules it is appreciated that you all work to make things happen. These committees are especially important in our political climate now as we are unsure of our funding. We understand that we need to be able assist our libraries with creative ways by sharing fundraising ideas and we are aware a lot of our libraries will have to become very adept at grant writing and we are looking at holding a grant writing workshop so stay tuned. Remember our advocacy courses are open to all. The different committees have done a lot of work you will see from their reports and they will share highlights at our meeting.

I have had the privilege to be invited to attend a couple of meetings, one with ICE (Irma, Chauvin, and Edgerton), Two Hills and Bonnyville. It was great meeting with the councils and boards sharing their cost savings by belonging to our system and just a few of the great things we have to offer. We had some good discussions. Why libraries are so important was spelled out in these meetings and hearing from the library board in Two Hills on their struggles and accomplishments just emphasized the need to work together. Some common struggles can be found across the system(s) libraries with fundraising and board recruitment. I think municipalities can feel secure in their knowledge that libraries are the be all end all for them in so many ways. We have so much to be proud of in the work of libraries. Their libraries cover all the pillars a community needs in social, economic, educational, as well as being inclusive and diverse.

Yellowhead Regional library system invited us to join them in meeting with one of our MLA's Mr. Glenn van Dijken (UCP). **MLA for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock**. We had an excellent meeting on August 30th and felt he was definitely surprised at the amount of savings we provide municipalities, and the small portion of funding the government provides compared to municipalities. The provinces budget close to \$35000.00 million is very small in comparison to other ministries. I have attached the pictorial we used and my report as to the meeting. With our vice chair Warren there Mr. van Dijken had a familiar friendly face. Coles notes he wanted to know how we can save money, benefits to the

rural communities and reduce red tape. We explained the multiple opportunities the library card provides our membership and how one community Hinton had priced out an estimated cost of \$76.00 per capita would be required to provide the services they received by being part of a system. Our systems are an integral part of the fabric of this province. Once again a big thank you Karla Palichuk the Executive director and Hendrik Smit their chair for this wonderful opportunity. I have provided copies of this for our advocacy committee to use. We will be coming out with a strong message shortly and the tools you can use to assist in your advocacy methods. Things to remember, when a library located in a rural community closes, you can easily be required to travel 60 kilometers to the next place which would be a struggle. Within an urban or city landscape it can be a few kilometers with public transit available which is not possible in smaller or rural communities.

I sent out a letter congratulating the new minister, asking for partial funding until the budget came out as well as invited him to our September meeting (unfortunately, he was unable to attend). To date we have not had a response, but we are happy that the government chose to advance 50% of our funding. I believe this was a result of Albertans all around the province in different areas put in precarious positions of not having funds to operate with. As mentioned before we need to advocate, advocate advocate...

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the meeting September 21st, 2019.

Vicky Lefebvre

Chair

NLLS

Please feel free to contact me at gillesvicky74@gmail.com or vllefebvre@coldlake.com 780-573-1926 at any time with questions or anytime I can be of assistance.