

Annapolis Valley Regional Library

Regular Board Meeting

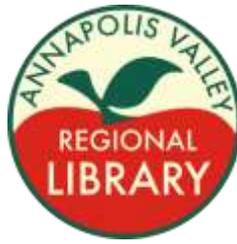
Thursday, November 20, 2025

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

In-person

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting
 - 3.1 Minutes of the October 16, 2025 Meeting
4. Guests/Presentations: none
5. Correspondence and Communications
 - 5.1 Received:
 - 5.1.1 Oct 22/25, CCTH to AVRL
 - 5.1.2 Oct 28/25, NSPL to CORL
 - 5.1.3 Oct 29/25, Valley REN to AVRL
 - 5.2 Sent:
 - 5.2.1 Oct 06/25, AVRL to CCTH
 - 5.2.2 Oct 07/25, AVRL to County of Annapolis (repeated for all municipalities)
6. Business Arising from the Previous Meeting:
7. Committee Reports
 - 7.1 Executive Committee
 - 7.2 Human Resources Committee
 - 7.3 Finance Committee
 - 7.3.1 Income Statement April 1, 2025 – October 31, 2025
 - 7.3.2 Deferred Revenue report April 1, 2025 – October 31, 2025
 - 7.3.3 Investment report: none
 - 7.3.4 Investment Subcommittee report: none
 - 7.3.5 Draft Interim 2026-27 Budget
8. Report from the Chief Executive Officer
 - 8.1 Update from the CEO
 - 8.2 Statistical Reports
 - 8.2.1 AVRL Performance Measures April 1, 2025 – October 31, 2025
9. New Business
 - 9.1 Strategic Plan – Progress Report 2025-28
 - 9.2 Discussion re: Board Communications to Councils/Public re: financial challenges
 - 9.3 Policies:



9.3.1 Intellectual Freedom

9.3.2 Public Computer Use 2025

9.3.2.1 Computer and Internet Access Policy 2017

10. In camera

10.1 Annapolis Royal Bequest Legal Opinion

11. Announcements from Board Members

12. Next meetings:

Thursday, February 19th, 2026, Virtual, 5:30pm

Thursday, April 16th, 2026, In-person, 5:30pm

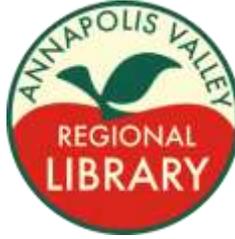
**Proposed: Saturday April 25 OR Saturday May 2, 9-4 Facilitated workshop:
Strategic planning with updated budget information**

Thursday, June 18th, 2026, In-person, 5:30pm Regular and AGM

Thursday, September 17th, 2026, In-person, 5:30pm

Thursday, November 19th, 2026, In-person, 5:30pm

13. Adjournment



Annapolis Valley Regional Library

Regular Board Meeting

Thursday, October 16, 2025

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Virtual (Zoom)

Minutes (DRAFT)

PRESENT: Janet Ness, Rob Baker, Jill Cox, Emily Lutz, Adele MacDonald, Karie-Ann Parsons-Saltzman, Chrystal Remme, Ty Walsh

STAFF: Julia Merritt (CEO)

REGRETS: None

1. Call to order

J. Ness called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: To accept Agenda as presented.

MOVED BY: Rob Baker **SECONDED BY:** Jill Cox

CARRIED

3. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

3.1 Minutes from the September 18th, 2025 in-person meeting.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of September 18th, 2025 in-person meeting.

MOVED BY: Adele MacDonald **SECONDED BY:** Emily Lutz

CARRIED

4. In camera:

9.1 Labour relations

MOTION: To move in camera; 6:08 pm.

MOVED BY: Adele MacDonald **SECONDED BY:** Jill Cox

CARRIED

MOTION: To move out of camera; 6:23 pm.
MOVED BY: Rob Baker **SECONDED BY:** Jill Cox
CARRIED

MOTION: THAT the AVRL Board ratify the NSUPE Local 23 contract as negotiated for 2025-2028.

MOVED BY: Adele MacDonald **SECONDED BY:** Karie-Ann Parsons-Saltzman
CARRIED

5. New Business

None.

6. Announcements from Board Members

None.

7. Next meeting(s):

The next regular Board Meeting is scheduled for:

Thursday November 20th, 2025; In-person at 5:30pm

8. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 6:25pm.

MOVED BY: Karie-Ann Parsons-Saltzman

CARRIED



**Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage
Office of the Minister**

1741 Brunswick Street, PO Box 456, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2R5 • Telephone 902-424-4889 • novascotia.ca

October 22, 2025

Janet Ness, Board Chair
Annapolis Valley Regional Library
PO Box 510
236 Commercial Street,
Berwick, NS B0P1E0
administration@valleylibrary.ca

Dear Janet Ness:

Thank you for your letter dated October 6, 2025, providing an update on the funding situation at the Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL).

I believe that public libraries are important community assets. They have demonstrated their strategic position and willingness to assist government in getting resources and information to Nova Scotians. Their contributions to their communities are significant.

I am aware of the challenges that the public libraries face as they serve their communities and I appreciate learning that the additional funding provided by the province this fiscal year has provided some financial relief in AVRL.

Advancing the work of libraries, especially in our current economic climate, requires that we have open and frank dialogue. I appreciate that libraries continue to share their day-to-day realities with me and that your board has taken the extra step to provide an overview of the planned service disruptions in your region. It is a testimony to the partnership we have with public libraries in this province.

As we move forward, we will continue to work collaboratively with the sector to address the issues and find solutions for sustainable funding for Nova Scotia's public libraries.

Thank you again for your letter and for your ongoing commitment to Nova Scotia's public libraries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Ritcey".

Dave Ritcey
Minister

cc: Chris Shore, Deputy Minister
Sara Halliday, Associate Deputy Minister



Julia Merritt <jmerritt@valleylibrary.ca>

[Lfrc] Library Funding Review Committee meeting (Oct. 22) update

12 messages

Somers, Lynn M via Lfrc <lfrc@lists.library.ns.ca>
Reply-To: "Somers, Lynn M" <Lynn.Somers@novascotia.ca>
To: CORL <chiefs.regions@lists.library.ns.ca>
Cc: "lfrc@lists.library.ns.ca" <lfrc@lists.library.ns.ca>

Tue, Oct 28, 2025 at 10:56 AM

Hi Everyone,

Deputy Minister Chris Shore convened a meeting of the Library Funding Review Committee on October 22 to provide an update on the funding review process.

As you know, a significant amount of work was completed over the summer of 2024. After reviewing the research, CCTH submitted a recommendation through the 2025 budget process, which did not result in a funding increase.

To help address current pressures, the department provided \$800,000 in bridge funding at the end of 2024–25 and an additional \$800,000 for 2025–26.

CCTH staff appreciate the information you've shared about the financial and operational challenges your libraries are facing. These insights are referenced often and continue to help us raise awareness across government of the pressures on the regional library system. Please continue to provide us with updates on the impacts your region is experiencing.

In the coming weeks, a small committee will be formed to maintain regular communication between CORL and CCTH and to help determine next steps.

Thank you for your ongoing collaboration and commitment to Nova Scotia's public libraries.

Lynn

Lynn Somers
Director, Nova Scotia Provincial Library
Dept of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage
6016 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Halifax NS B3H 1W4

October 29, 2025

Julia Merritt
Chief Executive Officer
Annapolis Valley Regional Library

Dear Julia,

Thank you for sharing information about the difficult financial decisions the Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL) is facing and the adjustments being made for the 2026-27 fiscal year. On behalf of the Valley Regional Enterprise Network (Valley REN), I want to express our appreciation for the vital role your libraries play in the economic and social wellbeing of our region.

AVRL is an indispensable partner in fostering inclusive growth and community resilience, which we witness regularly as part of our Welcome Network partnership with libraries across our region. Your branches serve as trusted “third spaces” for newcomers—welcoming them into our communities, sharing our regional welcome guide and event information, and connecting them with local networks and essential services. This work directly supports labour force participation, community integration, and local business vitality.

Through the work we do to help create the conditions for economic growth in the Annapolis Valley, we recognize and value the impact AVRL has on strengthening workforce readiness, small business activity, and digital access—key pillars of economic growth and stability. Your libraries also help reduce social isolation and increase civic participation, outcomes that are especially critical in rural regions.

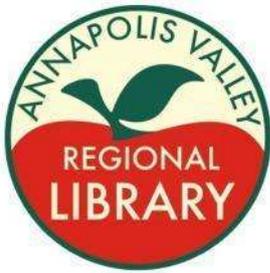
We recognize that service reductions risk diminishing these impacts. The Valley REN remains committed to supporting AVRL through our continued partnership and will work with our governing bodies to communicate how our region benefits from your programs, spaces, and staff expertise.

Thank you for all that you and your team do to keep our communities informed, connected, and thriving.

Sincerely,

Emily Boucher

Emily Boucher
Chief Executive Officer
Valley Regional Enterprise Network



Annapolis Valley Regional Library

P.O. Box 510 236 Commercial Street Berwick, NS B0P 1E0

Phone 1-866-922-0229

www.valleylibrary.ca email: administration@valleylibrary.ca

The Honourable Dave Ritcey
Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage
1741 Brunswick St., 3rd Floor
P.O. Box 456, STN Central
Halifax, NS B3J 2R5
Sent via email: MIN_CCTH@novascotia.ca

October 6, 2025

Dear Minister Ritcey,

On behalf of the Annapolis Valley Regional Library, thank you for the emergency funding provided this year. It offered short-term relief and demonstrated government's recognition of the essential role libraries play in our communities.

Despite this support, we must be direct: the emergency funding does not prevent us from having to reduce hours, limit access to new books and resources, and scale back programs. For 2025–26, AVRL received approximately \$180,000 but still faces a deficit of \$265,000 including wage adjustments.

Over the past several years, we have already made incremental cuts. At current, outdated funding levels, the next step will be unprecedented branch closures and significant service reductions.

As Boards, we have a responsibility to inform our communities about these impacts. Beginning in late October, we will be communicating service disruptions to our users. We felt it was important to provide you with this heads up before those messages go public so it doesn't catch you or your staff off guard.

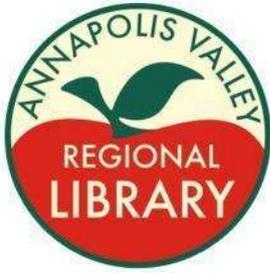
We are hopeful that the 2026 Spring budget will resolve our funding concerns and we will be able to resume services and resources to our communities. We continue to face concerning deficits, making sustainable funding an urgent priority.

Without sustainable funding, Nova Scotians will see and feel the difference in their libraries. With sustainable investment, we will continue to serve as reliable partners in affordability, housing, health, and lifelong learning.

Thank you for your attention and continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Janet Ness, Chair, Annapolis Valley Regional Library Board



Annapolis Valley Regional Library

P.O. Box 510 236 Commercial Street Berwick, NS B0P 1E0

Phone 1-866-922-0229

www.valleylibrary.ca email: administration@valleylibrary.ca

CC: The Honourable Tim Houston, Premier of Nova Scotia, MLA for Pictou East

Ms. Jill Balser, MLA for Digby-Annapolis

Mr. David Bowlby, MLA for Annapolis

Mr. John Lohr, MLA for Kings North

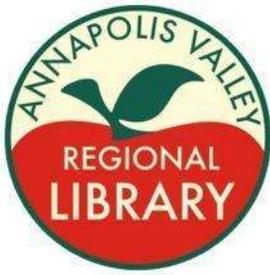
Mr. Chris Palmer, MLA for Kings West

Ms. Melissa Sheehy-Richard, MLA for Hants West

Ms. Julie Vanexan, MLA for Kings South

Stephanie Smith, Executive Director, Archives, Libraries and Museums, Department of
Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage

Lynn Somers, Director, Nova Scotia Provincial Library, Department of Communities,
Culture, Tourism and Heritage



Annapolis Valley Regional Library

P.O. Box 510 236 Commercial Street Berwick, NS B0P 1E0

Phone 1-866-922-0229

www.valleylibrary.ca email: administration@valleylibrary.ca

Warden Diane LeBlanc
The Municipality of the County of Annapolis
PO Box 100, 752 St. George Street
Annapolis Royal NS
B0S 1A0

October 7, 2025

Dear Warden LeBlanc,

I am writing on behalf of the Annapolis Valley Regional Library to share an update on our funding situation and the impact it will have on services in the coming months.

While we are grateful for the emergency funding provided by the Province this year, it was not enough to close our budget gap. For 2025–26, AVRL received approximately \$180,000 but still faces a deficit of \$265,000 with wage adjustments.

As a result, service disruptions are unavoidable. Despite years of incremental cuts, maintaining current funding will now lead to unprecedented branch closures and service reductions.

We believe it is important to be transparent with our municipal partners and communities about these changes. Our goal is to keep you informed so that your councils and staff are aware of the impacts and can respond to questions from residents.

Despite these challenges, our libraries remain committed to serving as vital community hubs — supporting literacy, learning, technology access, and social connection. We are hopeful that sustainable provincial funding in the Provincial Spring 2026 budget will allow us to restore services and strengthen our capacity.

In the current absence of a response from the Province, and to avoid major service restructuring in 2026, a separate budget request is forthcoming to municipalities for 2026-27. We will work with municipal staff to bring this forward according to your budget process.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our libraries and the communities we serve. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

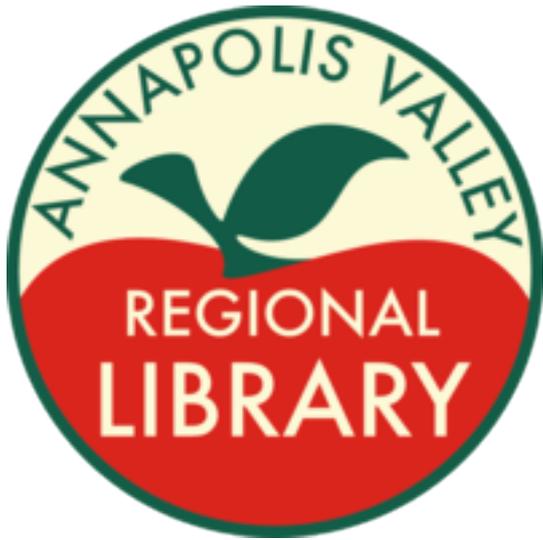
Sincerely,

Janet Ness, Chair, Annapolis Valley Regional Library Board

Board Reporting

Annapolis Valley Regional Library

For the period ended October 31, 2025



Prepared on

November 12, 2025

Table of contents

P&L w Budget Comparison	3
-------------------------------	---

P&L w Budget Comparison

April - October, 2025

	Actual	Budget	Remaining	Total % Remaining
INCOME				
4010 Revenue - Lost Books	1,527.58		-1,527.58	
4020 Revenue - Province	1,532,900.00	2,022,600.00	489,700.00	24.21 %
4030 Revenue - Municipal	527,175.00	702,900.00	175,725.00	25.00 %
4100 Revenue - One Card Library Alliance	4,114.27		-4,114.27	
4105 Revenue - Printing	19,988.20	27,000.00	7,011.80	25.97 %
4700 Revenue - Deferred Write down	9,318.44	49,155.00	39,836.56	81.04 %
4701 Revenue - Book Sales	2,580.10		-2,580.10	
4702 Revenue - Donations	23,632.30	8,000.00	-15,632.30	-195.40 %
4704 Revenue - Misc	14,844.66		-14,844.66	
4705 Revenue - Wages External Funding	7,683.78		-7,683.78	
4800 HST Rebate (OLD)	54,163.20	50,000.00	-4,163.20	-8.33 %
4901 Revenue - Interest	10,782.60	40,000.00	29,217.40	73.04 %
Total Income	2,208,710.13	2,899,655.00	690,944.87	23.83 %
COST OF GOODS SOLD				
5000 COS - Books, Periodicals & related costs	165,009.40	340,000.00	174,990.60	51.47 %
5020 Equipment Purchases		5,500.00	5,500.00	100.00 %
5025 Furniture Purchases		3,000.00	3,000.00	100.00 %
5026 Capital Purchases - Other	27,612.18	54,155.00	26,542.82	49.01 %
Total Cost of Goods Sold	192,621.58	402,655.00	210,033.42	52.16 %
GROSS PROFIT	2,016,088.55	2,497,000.00	480,911.45	19.26 %
EXPENSES				
5030 Lost Book Replacement Expenses	81.67		-81.67	
6005 Advertising & Promotion	2,311.56	6,000.00	3,688.44	61.47 %
6010 Bank Charges	1,155.99	2,500.00	1,344.01	53.76 %

				Total
	Actual	Budget	Remaining	% Remaining
6015 Communication & Internet Expenses	4,001.05	5,500.00	1,498.95	27.25 %
6017 Computer Application & Service Costs	3,403.80		-3,403.80	
6020 Dues, Fees, & Memberships	174.00		-174.00	
6025 HST Rebate - Books (OLD)		45,000.00	45,000.00	100.00 %
6040 Insurance	11,042.36	19,000.00	7,957.64	41.88 %
6045 Leases - Equipment	334.63		-334.63	
6050 Miscellaneous Expenses	83.83	500.00	416.17	83.23 %
6055 Office Expenses	18,447.32	35,000.00	16,552.68	47.29 %
6060 Postage	18,065.13	30,000.00	11,934.87	39.78 %
6065 Professional Fees	79,495.52	80,000.00	504.48	0.63 %
6200 Program Costs	18,150.27	11,000.00	-7,150.27	-65.00 %
6300 Rent	45,380.88	69,507.00	24,126.12	34.71 %
6305 Repairs & Maintenance	159.94		-159.94	
6350 Service Contracts	61,627.63	97,795.00	36,167.37	36.98 %
6399 Union Negotiation Expenses	2,215.25		-2,215.25	
6400 Salaries & Wages	1,310,210.14	2,233,850.00	923,639.86	41.35 %
6450 Staff Moving Expenses	5,459.71		-5,459.71	
6600 Vehicle Expenses	17,986.08	22,000.00	4,013.92	18.25 %
6650 Board Expenses	504.25	1,700.00	1,195.75	70.34 %
6700 Staff Expenses	33,947.32	40,750.00	6,802.68	16.69 %
Total Expenses	1,634,238.33	2,700,102.00	1,065,863.67	39.47 %
NET OPERATING INCOME	381,850.22	-203,102.00	-584,952.22	288.01 %
NET INCOME	\$381,850.22	\$ -203,102.00	\$ -584,952.22	288.01 %

Deferred Revenue Report - Detailed

March 31, 2024-October 31, 2025

ITEM CLASS	2600 DEFERRED REVENUE
AR- Bequest (Evans Estate)	1,231,897.08
AR- General	564.80
AR-Innovation-Lab	0.00
AR- Peter Mansour Donation	168.77
AVRL-Adaptive Equipment	4,105.17
AVRL- BookBikes - Libracycle	0.00
AVRL- Bookclub in a Bag	2,422.33
AVRL- Bridge Funding	0.00
AVRL- Cancer Resources	734.27
AVRL- CFUW	3,835.23
AVRL- CPI Trainer	882.91
AVRL- CTNet 150 Makers	689.95
AVRL- Curtis Chipman	11,072.99
AVRL- FLIEF	4,292.54
AVRL-Food Security Init	81,620.27
AVRL- General	1,023.10
AVRL-Grant-Tax	0.00
AVRL-LDF-Comm Consultation	0.00
AVRL-LDF-Comm with Library	0.00
AVRL-LDF-Sharing NS	1,352.64
AVRL-LDF-Staff Training	858.37
AVRL- Moving Through Grant	2,034.14
AVRL- Period Poverty	24,865.48
AVRL- SERAD	3,369.79
AVRL- Teen Zone	29,804.07
BE- Harry Potter	2,201.08
BE-Library Fund	4,080.81
BE- Outdoor Reading Room	334.34
BE- Programming	2,177.56
BR- Anonymous Funds	2,158.90
BR- Book Sales	294.71
BR- Expansion	605.07
BR-Friends-Fund	2,823.13
BR-Friends-Programming	91.74
BR-Roberta White	10,000.00
BR- Wellness	136.53
HA- Book Sales	18.00
HA- Donations	13.55
HA-Program Room	46.23
KE- Book Sales	1,331.69
KE- Computer Classes	2,418.64

KE- Valerie Goldin Donation	7,454.92
KI- Book Sales	1,011.42
KI- Canada Helps Building	2,078.43
KI- Canada Post	8,247.68
KI- General	53,621.08
Ki-Grant-Tax	1,594.96
KI- Programming	160.65
LA- Book Sales	678.30
LA- General	0.00
LA- Literacy	61.67
MI- Book Sales	1,299.31
MI- Estate of C Harvey	1,357.75
MI- Estate of David Arthur Ritchie	86,905.43
MI-Friends-Programming	495.38
PW- Book Sales	488.20
PW-Friends-Donations	3,670.24
WI- Book Sales	1,835.16
WI- General	1,607.18
WI-Nordic Walking Poles	72.66
WO- eBikes	441.34
WO- General	7,331.99
WO-General-Donations	50.00
WO-Hammett Donations	3,971.48
WO-Innovation-Lab	9,035.54
WO-New Building	175,342.86
WO- NS Tech	42.96
	0.01
Total	1,803,182.48

Report to Board

To: AVRIL Board
From: Julia Merritt
Date: November 20, 2025
Re: Draft Budget 2026-2027

In order to proceed with requests for increased funding from municipal units in 2026-27, the AVRIL has been asked to provide a budget forecast for 2026-27. The Board is requested to review, adjust, and approve an interim budget at its November 20, 2025 meeting to allow this work to proceed.

Budget Overview

This budget represents an interim position for the Board's review prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, pending more information regarding the Provincial Library Funding Formula, Provincial "Bridge" funding, or additional contributions from the municipalities.

AVRIL is on track to realize the full amount of its budgeted deficit in 2025-26.

This will deplete the reserve fund by approximately \$250,000 and leave roughly \$400,000 available to use in 2026-27.

The attached budget represents an interim deficit of \$528,280.

Note: for the purpose of this exercise, only one of the two Bridge funding amounts provided by the Province in 2025-26 has been included. If repeated, that would reduce the deficit by roughly \$93,000.

Changes from 2025-26

1. All wage rates adjusted for the rates negotiated in the 2025-2028 Collective Bargaining Agreement; staff list adjusted for changes made during that time. All benefits categories have been updated to include current data (CPP, EI, etc).
2. Collections budget held at existing levels to prioritize this core service.
3. Loss of Same Page postage grant; in 2024-25 this was over \$14,000 in revenue.
4. Reduction to Payroll Processing Fees line; AVRIL has re-developed in-house competencies to perform the payroll function and will cancel the contract for managed payroll services.
5. All other lines adjusted to reflect changes to actual expenses, or held at 2025-26 levels where possible.

Remaining to include:

1. Any changes to the Library funding formula, or additional Bridge/Emergency funding amounts.
2. Any additional contributions from the municipal units.

Staff Recommendation/Draft Motion

THAT the AVRL Board approve the interim 2026-27 Budget as presented.

DRAFT November 19, 2025

AVRL INTERIM Budget April 1, 2026 - March 31, 2027

EXPENSES

Item A	2025-26 Budget	2026-2027 Budget	Explanation
Salaries and Wages	\$ 2,022,820	\$ 2,121,786	2026 negotiated wage amounts; staff list adjusted for changes
Benefits	\$ 337,875	\$ 398,839	Adjusted for 2026 mandatory contributions: CPP, EI, EHC. 2025 WCB rate. Over 15% increase to extended health care rates. Inclusion of 7% pension match per 2025 CBA.
Library Materials/Processing	\$ 340,000	\$ 340,000	Nov/25: paper and books currently exempt from tariffs.
Vehicle Operation	\$ 22,000	\$ 22,000	
Equipment Purchases	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	
Furniture Purchases	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	
Systems Service Contracts	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	Softwares eg website, Adobe, Zoom; Photocopier; learning management system
Alliance	\$ 62,795	\$ 63,155	As per Same Page Alliance software contracts
Staff Travel, Training, Conferences	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	Same as 2025-26
Board Expenses	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,700	
Office Supplies	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	Including expenses for staff recognition
Postage and Shipping	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	Cost of Same Page shipping; no postage grant for 2026-27
Insurance	\$ 19,000	\$ 19,000	
Professional Fees	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000	Audit Grant Thornton \$30,000; MNP Financial Services est \$36,000; Legal or other consultant \$14,000
Bank Charges	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	Cost for payment by EFTs; VISA charges
Payroll Service Charges	\$ 28,000	\$ 12,000	Developed in-house skills; cancelling managed payroll services
Administration Office Rent	\$ 69,507	\$ 70,550	Per lease, addition of 1.5%
Telecommunications	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	
Advertising	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	
Programming Supplies/SRC	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,000	
Staff Continuing Education	\$ 750	\$ 750	
Miscellaneous & Memberships	\$ 500	\$ 500	
Subtotal A	\$ 3,158,447	\$ 3,303,780	

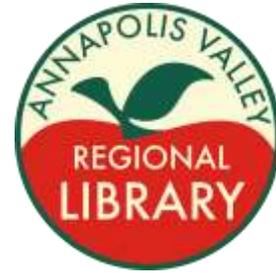
DRAFT November 19, 2025

Item B	2025-2026 Budget	2026-27 Budget	Explanation
Technology Reserve	\$ 54,155		No tech replacement project in 2026-27
Vehicle Reserve			
Operating Reserve			
HST	\$ 45,000	\$ 50,000	In and out, revenue reflected below
Grants (Restricted)		\$ -	
Subtotal B	\$ 99,155	\$ 50,000	
TOTAL EXPENSES (A+B)	\$ 3,257,602	\$ 3,353,780	
AVRL Budget April 1, 2026 - March 31, 2027			
REVENUE	2025-2026 Budget	2026-2027 Budget	
Item C: Municipal Units & Province			All funding levels maintained as per April 1/20 - March 31/25 funding formula
Province	\$ 1,919,600	\$ 1,919,600	
Annapolis County	\$ 130,700	\$ 130,700	
Kings County	\$ 331,600	\$ 331,600	
West Hants County	\$ 134,400	\$ 134,400	
Annapolis Royal	\$ 3,400	\$ 3,400	
Middleton	\$ 12,300	\$ 12,300	
Berwick	\$ 17,400	\$ 17,400	
Kentville	\$ 42,800	\$ 42,800	
Wolfville	\$ 30,300	\$ 30,300	
Subtotal C (Mun Units + Province)	\$ 2,622,500	\$ 2,622,500	

DRAFT November 19, 2025

Item D: Board Generated			
Fees/Fines	\$ 27,000	\$ 27,000	Public printing
Donations AVRIL	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	Unpredictable revenue stream; most donations received are for specific branch use; current process separates those for deferred, branch-specific spending
HST Rebate	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	Change based on 2024-25 actuals
Term Deposit Interest	\$ 40,000	\$ 20,000	Based on 2025-26 actuals; interest rates reducing
Special Grant Province of Nova Scotia	\$ 196,200	\$ 98,000	\$98,000 Bridge funding 2026-27 NOT confirmed; have removed the second 93,000 Emergency Funding as it was also one-time No Same Page postage grant, loss of \$14,252 in 24-25 Not including any @NS funding that may be applied for
Subtotal D (Board Generated)	\$ 321,200	\$ 203,000	
Item E: AVRIL Reserves			
Transfer from Automation Reserve	\$ 49,155		No technology project in 2026-27
Transfer from Operating Reserve - Operating	\$ -	\$ -	
Subtotal E (AVRIL Reserves)	\$ 49,155	\$ -	
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 2,992,855	\$ 2,825,500	
Total Surplus/Deficit	-\$ 264,747	-\$ 528,280	

CEO Update



To: AVRIL Board
From: Julia Merritt
Date: November 20, 2025
Re: CEO Report to Board

Operations Update

- Staffing:
 - No major changes to permanent staffing since Spring 2025.
 - The Manager of HR continues to hire additional casual staff to cover regular staff absences and to keep up with the turnover of casual staff.
- Kentville branch safety updates:
 - No updates resulting from conversations with the landlord's agent regarding security in the common areas. Some movement in working with the landlord to obtain quotes for electrical work to reconfigure the space.
- Staff working groups:
 - Disruptive Behaviour: The code of conduct procedures have been aligned with the new policy, will be implemented on December 8th through staff training, public signage, and documented on the website.
 - 2SLGBTQIA+: held its first meeting and is collecting staff input regarding training priorities for 2026.
 - Public Computer Use: processes are in development and will be rolled out, pending policy approval at this meeting.
- Windsor and Hantsport had their roofs replaced in October. Hantsport's exterior signage is scheduled to be replaced in 2026.
- Lawrencetown Village is planning to replace part of the library's exterior façade in 2026.

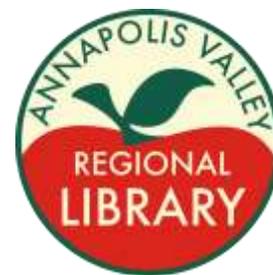
Strategic Items

- Union update: the 2025-2028 Collective Bargaining Agreement was signed and put into effect on October 21st.
- General Funding Updates:
 - The Library Funding Formula Review Committee had its final meeting on October 22nd.
 - There is no definitive plan or information re: moving forward the Library Funding Review Committee's recommendations for inclusion in the 2025-26 Provincial budget.
 - Following up from the AVRL's meeting with the Region's CAOs/Clerks in October, the CAOs have asked through MMAH for a meeting with CCTH.
 - Week of Nov 3rd: soft-launch of communications to the public regarding potential service impacts.
 - Meetings with 3 MLAs in September/October/November. No meeting dates set with the other 3 MLAs in the region.
 - A CORL meeting was held on November 12th, to continue to share each region's updates and impacts. AVRL has shared its talking points and the general timeline for service reductions.
- **The CEO is actively working through multiple potential service models in the case of status quo funding 2026-27. If there are to be service changes, it will be critical that the changes are a catalyst for a new model of service, with a complete and compelling vision for what good library service looks like 'on the other side'. The CEO suggests that the Board undertake a facilitated workshop in April/May 2026, to make decisions based on all available information. Suggested dates are listed on the agenda.**
- The grant-funded Shipping pilot project between AVRL, Colchester-East Hants, and South Shore has proceeded to phase 2, and is currently piloting a commercial courier to test this function.
- Wolfville branch: The Town has hired Fathom Studios to complete a facility needs assessment for the entire Town, with a report expected in the first half of 2026. AVRL Board member Janet Ness, and members of the senior management team, contributed to this process with an in-person meeting on October 8th.
- CORL has scheduled a 2-day meeting in December, with the goal of investing in professional development for the CEOs and dedicating time to identify and work on collective projects. The December continuing education session will focus on

outcome-based planning and evaluation, and will include a “Chiefs and Chairs” session.

- Beginning November 2025, AVRL will begin posting the full Board packages on the AVRL website. Currently only the agendas and minutes are posted. This will allow Board members to access the files without needing to use email as a distribution method, and will allow staff or members of the public to see the content of the Board meetings. This is regularly accepted practice in locations where a library is closely adjacent to municipalities and should pose no issues, rather, will improve the level of transparency and openness with which the AVRL operates.

Report



To: AVRL Board
From: Julia Merritt, CEO
Date: November 20, 2025
Re: Performance Measures April 2025 – October 2025

Circulation of Materials				Total Patrons			
Branch	April - October 2024	April - October 2025	% Change	Branch	2023/2024	2024/2025	% Change
Annapolis Royal	23,877	22,225	-6.9	Annapolis Royal	1,804	1,862	+3.2
Berwick	44,616	42,142	-5.5	Berwick	2,724	2,873	+5.5
Bridgetown	16,655	14,649	-12.0	Bridgetown	819	857	+4.6
Deposit Services	11,461	6,609	-42.3	Deposit Services	114	92	-19.3
Hantsport	7,063	6,945	-1.7	Hantsport	562	585	+4.1
Kentville	67,741	66,500	-1.8	Headquarters	132	144	+9.1
Kingston	38,447	34,433	-10.4	Kentville	4,827	5,126	+6.2
Lawrencetown	5,723	5,300	-7.4	Kingston	2,743	2,948	+7.5
Middleton	41,516	37,281	-10.2	Lawrencetown	430	492	+14.4
Port Williams	16,680	18,088	+8.4	Middleton	1,835	1,914	+4.3
Windsor	39,281	39,562	+0.7	Port Williams	718	748	+4.2
Wolfville	63,241	58,967	-6.8	Windsor	3,349	3,568	+6.5
Borrow By Mail	7,605	6,960	-8.5	Wolfville	4,226	4,320	+2.2
Audiobooks/ebooks	50,107	53,984	+7.7	Total	24,283	25,529	+5.1
Emagazines	16,488	21,740	+31.9				
Total	458,046	440,003	-3.9				

AVRL Computer Statistics April - October, 2025

Branch	Number of Computers	2024 Total Hours of Computer Usage for Period	2025 Total Hours of Computer Usage for Period	% Change
Annapolis Royal	4	672.00	767.50	+14.2
Berwick	4	1,094.50	759.50	-30.6
Bridgetown	4	715.00	667.00	-6.7
Hantsport	4	216.00	94.00	-56.5
Kentville	6	2,939.50	2,338.50	-20.4
Kingston	4	1,385.00	1,771.00	+27.9
Lawrencetown	5	111.00	113.00	+1.8
Middleton	4	811.50	1,567.50	+93.2
Port Williams	6	315.50	359.00	+13.8
Windsor	9	3,191.00	2,952.00	-7.5
Wolfville	3 + 4 Lab= 7	1,361.50	1,067.50	-21.6
Total	57	12,812.50	12,456.50	-2.8

Branch	2024 Total Hours of Wireless Use for Period	2025 Total Hours of Wireless Use for Period	% Change	2024 Total Number of Wireless Connections for Period	2025 Total Number of Wireless Connections for Period	% Change
Annapolis Royal	24,376.5	25,536	+4.8	11,840	10,313	-12.9
Berwick	11,624.5	20,739.5	+78.4	7,323	7,856	+7.3
Bridgetown	7,345	6,092	-17.1	11,089	9,011	-18.7
Hantsport	5,222.5	3,573.5	-31.6	2,665	1,922	-27.9
Kentville	15,868	14,766	-6.9	12,991	11,809	-9.1
Kingston	11,087.5	8,950	-19.3	5,108	4,649	-9.0
Lawrencetown	5,760	6,089	+5.7	3,399	3,865	+13.7
Middleton	16,435.5	15,416	-6.2	13,103	9,878	-24.6
Port Williams	3,826.5	4,487	+17.3	2,830	2,797	-1.2
Windsor	11,652	13,150	+12.9	9,225	8,602	-6.8
Wolfville	22,592.5	9,456.5	-58.1	13,217	7,926	-40.0
Total	135,791.5	128,256.5	-5.5	92,790	78,628	-15.3

AVRL Progress Report 2025-2028: November 2025

Achievement of these goals may be delayed due to the Library Funding Formula Review and its impact on operations.

Perspectives	#	Strategic Actions	KPIs	Initiatives	Status
	B1	Finalize and implement up-to-date Board / Governance Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Development Framework is approved by the Board and in place Core suite of policies are approved and in place to support Board Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Framework brought to Board for September 2025 meeting 3 policies brought forward for adoption and revision to September 2025 Board meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Framework approved at September 2025 Board meeting Sept/25: Code of Conduct, Contests, and Investment Policy approved Nov/25: Intellectual Freedom and Computer Use policies brought forward Anticipated completion of core policy approvals: December 2027
	B2	Develop and deliver a change management plan, including a communications plan, staff training, etc., to introduce Policy Development Framework and approved core policies to staff and the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are able to confidently locate, understand and uphold library policies Public are aware of and understand library policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part 1: Sr Mgrs. complete Change Management training Sept 2025 Part 2: Sr Mgrs. develop Plan for Dec 2025 Part 3: all-staff implementation 2026 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training module developed and reviewed by all Sr. Managers Aug/Sept 2025 Draft change management plan in progress, Nov/25
	B3	Modernize roles & responsibilities for Friends of the Library relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board and Friends are aligned in goals for communication process, fundraising projects, role of volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friends are included in government communications plan with National PR, will be asked for help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nov 2025, Friends groups have been sent letter re: funding challenges/service impacts in 2026. Multiple groups are in contact with the CEO regarding how they can help at this time.
	B4	Establish collaborative working strategies (e.g. work groups, standing committees) to advance specific operational goals and support service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential measures to determine success could include: number of staff participating in at least one working group; ability of working groups to make meaningful progress towards goals; staff demonstrate increase in skills; staff perception of working groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First attempts in process; work groups of Branch Supervisors to document current operating procedures as of March 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects as of Nov/25: Disruptive Behaviour procedures, Branch Procedures manual, Public Computer use New working group Nov/25: 2SLGBTQIA+ Testing and refine processes to determine functional needs.

Internal Business Processes	B5	Review, update, and document all business processes and records management practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented Administration and Financial procedures • Documented Branch Operations procedures • Documented Technology Services, Circulation procedures, Service Delivery procedures, etc. • Document HR procedures (recruitment, training, etc.) • Records management system in place to maintain accurate files • Business processes are posted in shared and easily accessible locations for the staff • Procedures are reviewed on an annual or as-needed basis by staff working groups, with changes recommended to senior management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branch Supervisor working groups 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - branch procedures - computer use - incident management procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In progress; rollout of incident management and computer use procedures planned for December 2025
	B6	Develop and deliver a Technology Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an equipment inventory • Establish an equipment replacement strategy & timeline • Identify an equipment maintenance plan • Library Board makes annual capital transfer to reserves to fully fund technology needs • Equipment is replaced on a regular schedule to avoid service disruptions, security risks, poor service quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment inventory in process • 51 public and staff computers being replaced in 2025 to bring all computers to under 5 years old and upgrade to Windows 11 	In progress Nov/25
	B7	Develop a cybersecurity plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AVRIL cyber security plan meets the standards for minimizing risk to the organization. • Staff are trained on Online Security Fundamentals • Staff are trained on the new cybersecurity plan, understand their roles and responsibilities, are able to follow security protocols and procedures. • Potential measure of preparedness could include: training for staff and periodic testing of knowledge and behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Security Fundamentals training will be made available to all staff fall/winter 2025-26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2026 for other major components • Oct/25: Identification of the Center for Internet Security Critical Security Controls (Basic Tier) as the framework for developing a plan that meets these KPIs

	B8	Deliver on the actions in the new Accessibility Plan including working with our town/village/county facilities partners to complete an audit of all facilities, and other items as per new Accessibility Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AVRl's accessibility work meets or exceeds the standards laid out by legislation and the AVRl's Accessibility Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with all 11 Municipalities and determine a) what work they are doing to meet the accessibility legislation requirements and b) their level of willingness to work together on making facility improvements • Apply for a Library Development Fund grant in late 2025 or the 2026 intake to fund an audit of all facilities • Identify priority action items and how the Library can work towards them independently or in partnership with Municipalities. 	Not started
	B9	Identify a new organizational staffing model to meet current and future operational and service delivery requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Board has comprehensive data to use in making decisions in tandem with the Library Funding Formula and Strategic Plan goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing model that accounts for multiple funding scenarios: status quo funding/service levels, status quo funding/reduced service levels, moderate funding increase, significant funding increase o Step 1: Identify principles/priorities that drive the staffing model o Step 2: Scheduling exercise: draft models that determine the ideal and required staff levels at varying open hours o Step 3: Develop costing models that account for staffing resources at multiple funding scenarios and levels of service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to September 2025 Board meeting that details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 10 costed service models that account for multiple funding scenarios at status quo or progressive increases, using existing service model o Report includes identification of principles/priorities that drive the models o Step 2 in progress: Scheduling exercise: draft models that determine the ideal and required staff levels at varying open hours • Nov/25, additional service models in development for consideration going into 2026-27

	B10	Implement the new staffing model as able and as funding permits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision and action items are aligned with the strategic plan and its goals for improving and/or increasing service. Achievement can be measured by examining pre and post-strategic plan service metrics, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulation statistics: physical, digital, holds queues, patron requests submitted vs filled Membership statistics: number of unique users, frequency of use, physical vs digital use Use of physical spaces: number of users per day/week/month, number of computer/wifi uses, use of in-branch spaces for reading, study, family time Number of programs, change in attendance numbers at programs Patron feedback: verbal, written, through surveys Percentage of staff delivering programs 		To be implemented in tandem with funding decisions 2026-27
--	-----	--	---	--	--

	L1	Develop and deliver training to support workplace safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased staff engagement and morale Increased staff skill set AVRL uses a variety of methods to measure success of the training and performance management strategies, e.g. Staff self-reporting, customer feedback, observed behavior, increased quality of performance Reduction in WCB claims and injury reports 		Planned for 2026
	L2	Develop and implement a rigorous Performance Management strategy			Planned for 2026-27
	L3	Encourage staff engagement and support skills development		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2025: development of onboarding program; storytime training; cybersecurity fundamentals; DiSC profile assessments 	In progress
	L4	Identify and develop a single communications platform for all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff consistently use a single digital access point for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared file access Storage of organizational documents Communications Collaborative work Staff surveys can measure attitudes, pain points, functionality, etc. 	Assessment of current options under way	In progress

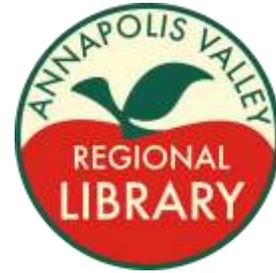
Learning & Growth	L5	Adopt a change management approach to promote change adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff understand the life cycle of programs, services, and processes and know what to expect during rollout of new initiatives or changes to operations • Staff find it easier to adopt changes or new developments, as measured through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Staff self-reporting o Decreased conflict within the organization o Shorter implementation time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sr Mgrs have completed change management training; to develop plan for the staff body by the end of 2025 	In progress
	L6	Develop and deliver diversity and cultural sensitivity training to promote a welcoming and inclusive workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive changes in knowledge, attitudes, behavior, interpersonal relationships as demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Increase in incorporating principles of diversity into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - programming, - partnerships, - marketing, and - customer service - interpersonal relationships between staff: based on staff reporting, changes or reductions in the number and types of interpersonal problems to be resolved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intent to establish staff working group/planning committee Fall 2025; recruitment under way 	In progress; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New working group Nov/25: 2SLGBTQIA+
	L7	Create opportunities to support each other through coaching and mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive changes in knowledge, attitudes, behavior, interpersonal relationships as demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Increased team cohesion o Increased skill/quality in job performance o Decreased feelings of isolation o Assessment of the program using participant feedback o Assessment of whether the program is impacting rates of retention or successful career development at AVRIL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloting an internal mentorship program to ensure all staff have the opportunity to develop their career through the development of interpersonal relationships for the sharing of information and personal support 	In progress; first mentorship organized and completed
	L8	Leading with emotional intelligence training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive changes in knowledge, attitudes, behavior, interpersonal relationships as demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Increased ability to solve problems without managerial support o Increase in quality of solutions found o Increased team cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial course for staff made available in Learning Management System Fall 2025 	In progress

	L9	Develop and deliver a Staff Recognition Program to acknowledge and reward milestones and accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AVRL uses a variety of methods to measure success of the staff recognition program, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o staff self-reporting, morale and engagement reporting pre and post-recognition program o increased participation in organizational initiatives o increased sense of inclusion 		Planned for 2026-27
	C1	Develop a new Programming Framework for Adults, Teens, and Children that aligns with community demand and the Library's mission to build strong communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework is complete • Priorities, resources, and partners are identified • Action plan is complete • Training for staff is developed and implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Positive changes in knowledge, attitudes, behavior, skills as demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observed delivery of programs - Participant feedback - Other measures? • Changes/increase in number and types of programs delivered sustainably 		Not started; planned for early 2027 pending funding formula and service model decisions in 2026
	C2	Identify and take action to restore select core programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of programs year over year • How many different types of programs are being offered YOY • Evaluation of reliability/consistency of programs • Attendance metrics • Qualitative reporting from program attendees re: quality • Measures of sustainability of program delivery increase (eg multiple staff trained on the same program to prevent service disruption, staffing model permits increase from X to Y number of programs, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largely TBD in conjunction with: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) new Library Funding Formula; 2) internal training and capacity-building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently undertaking staff training pilot to restore Storytime at more AVRL branches (2025-26) • Nov/25 training completed at Port Williams, Windsor, Hantsport

Customers and Stakeholders	C3	Leverage change management principles to encourage staff adoption of the Programming Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff understand the life cycle of programs, services, and processes and know what to expect during rollout of new initiatives or changes to operations • Staff find it easier to adopt changes or new developments, as measured through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Staff self-reporting o Decreased conflict within the organization • Shorter implementation time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sr Mgrs have completed change management training; to develop plan for the staff body by the end of 2025 	In progress
	C4	Develop and implement Partnership Framework to expand our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership Policy is approved by the Board • Partnership Framework is complete • AVRIL priorities and resources are identified • Potential partners and/or opportunities are identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy to be developed as part of the policy review currently underway, expected in 2026 	In progress
	C5	Develop and implement Volunteer Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Policy is approved by the Board • Volunteer Operational Framework is complete • Volunteer Management Program is complete • Responsibility for the Framework and oversight of the volunteers is delegated as appropriate • Volunteers are recruited and begin contributing to library services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy to be developed as part of the policy review currently underway, expected in 2026 	In progress
	C6	Seek out and act on opportunities for partner organizations to deliver services that we do not have capacity/skill to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking opportunities are planned and delegated to appropriate staff members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Organizational priorities are clearly understood by delegated staff o Staff engaged in networking opportunities follow appropriate procedures for partnership development o Networking opportunities yield positive ideas for partnership (including ideas that aren't able to be pursued, but build connections and relationships with community organizations) • Organization-wide partnerships yield service increases to AVRIL service area • Internal database of current and potential partners is created and kept current with contact information 		Not started

Financial Stewardship	F1	No specific strategic goals currently set; section included as placeholder			
	F2				
	F3				
	F4				
	F5				

Report



To: AVRIL Board
From: Julia Merritt, CEO
Date: November 20, 2025
Re: Board Discussion re: Council/Public Communications

Timeline for Communications Fall 2025

Municipalities

October 6, 2025: AVRIL scheduled a meeting with all 11 CAOs and Clerks of the municipalities and villages that operate library buildings to advise them of the risks to service, and the forthcoming budget request for 2026-27.

October 07, 2025: AVRIL followed up with a formal letter to advise the municipal units of the financial challenges, as well as a confidential backgrounder for councils. The letter is included in the Correspondence section of this Board package.

No follow-up requests for information have been received to date.

AVRIL is now in the process of determining how to formally present its budget request to each council.

Provincial MLAs and MCCTH

Beginning in mid-September, AVRIL staff attempted to get in-person or telephone meetings with the six MLAs in the region, however between September and November, only three MLAs responded to schedule meetings.

On October 6, 2025, AVRIL sent a letter to the Ministry of Culture, Communities, Tourism and Heritage to update them on the financial situation of the AVRIL and the scope of the impacts to service that will take place (included in Correspondence).

General Public & Community Stakeholders

As of the week of November 3rd, the AVRL has begun publicly communicating the risks to service in 2026-27 via posters in the branches and a notice on the website. Staff have been trained on how to answer questions relating to this topic and are referring the public to speak to their MLAs and/or municipal councils.

Formal letters have been sent to all the Friends of the Library groups, as well as community organizations that AVRL has recently been in partnership or who have been major supporters, such as a Rotary club.

For Discussion

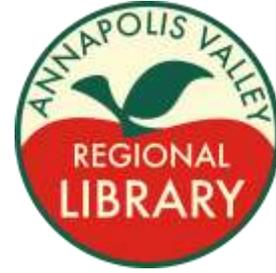
The Board has been provided with a copy of the talking points that the AVRL staff are using to have this conversation with the public, as well as the link to the Zoom recording of the training to provide additional context for the summary of talking points.

It is likely that the AVRL Board members are going to frequently receive questions regarding the future of AVRL.

Staff recommend that the AVRL Board discuss:

- Any coordinated or regular communications to councils
- The talking points provided as background for answering questions that are likely to come up in conversation with municipal councils or members of the public

Report



To: AVRIL Board
From: Julia Merritt, CEO
Date: November 20, 2025
Re: Cover Report: Intellectual Freedom and Public Computer Use Policies

The following report describes the context for the two policies presented for Board approval in this package.

Background

Intellectual Freedom

Intellectual freedom is one of the fundamental core values of public libraries. In an era of increasing challenges to intellectual freedom as well as censorship, it is essential that the AVRIL Board record the AVRIL's relationship to and endorsement of intellectual freedom.

There is currently no formal Intellectual Freedom policy at AVRIL. The AVRIL Board has included a statement under the Policies section of the website that states:

"The Annapolis Valley Regional Library Board has adopted as policy the Canadian Federation of Library Associations Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries."

The updated, formalized policy also recommends that the AVRIL Board endorse this statement, while also including the following:

- A brief definition of intellectual freedom
- The AVRIL's role and responsibility in interacting with intellectual freedom
- Links to additional context surrounding intellectual freedom such as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

Public Computer Use

AVRL's existing Computer and Internet Access policy was implemented in 2017, and has not been updated since. It contains a basic outline of the risks and limitations associated with using public-access computers at the library, as some procedural items associated with public computer use.

The proposed 2025 version has been developed in tandem with a staff working group who reviewed AVRL-wide procedures to enhance clarity and consistency for staff and patrons. This updated version of the policy includes:

- The scope of access to technology at AVRL
- User safety and privacy
- AVRL's liability, including both technological risks and when staff are asked for assistance
- Conditions of use; acknowledgment of the library as a public space
- Related legislation and policies

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend THAT the AVRL Board:

- rescind the existing Intellectual Freedom statement and Computer and Internet Access policy, and
- adopt the new Intellectual Freedom and Public Computer Use policies.

Annapolis Valley Regional Library Statement on Intellectual Freedom

Approval Date: 2025-11-20

Last Revision Date:

Effective Date:

Date of Last Review:

Annapolis Valley Regional Library's Position and Endorsement

Intellectual freedom means that everyone has the right to their own opinion and to access information and ideas from all points of view without restriction.

The Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL) believes that intellectual freedom is an essential human right. The AVRL endorses the principles in the [Canadian Federation of Library Associations' Statement on Intellectual Freedom](#).

How AVRL Promotes Intellectual Freedom

Supporting and promoting intellectual freedom is one of AVRL's core responsibilities. We do this by providing access to collections, services and spaces where people may engage in controversial and challenging ideas in an environment that encourages and values a diversity of thoughts, ideas and opinions. AVRL welcomes diversity and supports equity and inclusion by welcoming everyone, without judgment, to pursue their interests at the library, provided they do not violate AVRL's policies, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act, or Canada's Criminal Code.

More Information on Intellectual Freedom

- [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#): Section 2(b) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects "freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication."

- [Criminal Code of Canada](#): Section 63 pertains to Unlawful Assemblies and Riots. Section 297 pertains to Defamatory Libel. Section 318 pertains to Hate Propaganda.
- [Nova Scotia Human Rights Act](#): Sections 4 and 5 relate to “Discrimination Prohibited”
- [Canadian Federation of Library Associations’ Intellectual Freedom Statement](#)
- International Federation of Library Associations’ Intellectual Freedom Statement

Public Computer and Internet Use Policy

Approval Date: 2025-11-20

Last Revision Date:

Effective Date:

Date of Last Review:

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the terms and conditions for public computer use at Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL), and to ensure that internet use conforms with all applicable laws.

Scope

This policy applies to all AVRL users with or without a library card using library technology resources and internet services at all library locations, online, or at an external outreach location. Library technology resources include, but are not limited to, in-branch computer hardware, applications, software, and peripherals such as keyboards and mice. Internet services are defined as AVRL's wired and wireless networks. This policy also includes printing and scanning services, as well as computer devices provided to library users or by staff such as USB or external storage devices.

Underlying Principles

The Public Computer and Internet Use Policy is driven by the fundamental principles of library service including the preservation and promotion of universal access to information and ideas.

Users are responsible for their own actions and activity. Improper use of library technology resources and internet services may lead to the suspension or loss of privileges. Use of the library's technology resources or internet services for a purpose or action that is, or the library reasonably believes to be, contrary to the law or AVRL's Code of Conduct Policy, or other relevant library policies, is prohibited.

AVRL supports the individual accessibility needs of persons with disabilities and respects the principles of dignity, independence, equal opportunity, and integration.

This policy aligns with AVRL's Statement on Intellectual Freedom

Policy Statement

The Annapolis Valley Regional Library (AVRL) provides free and equitable access to public computers and the internet at every library branch to fulfill AVRL's mission to build strong communities through the sharing of places for collections and connections.

General

- Computer hardware, software and internet access is available at every library branch.
- The specific software, hardware and functionality may vary from branch to branch.
- AVRL does not guarantee consistent quality and speed of hardware, software, and internet services available at library locations.
- Access to library technology resources and internet services is offered on a first come, first serve basis.
- To ensure equitable access, time limits may be implemented.
- Access may be limited on occasion due to planned library activities, services, upgrades or repairs.

User Safety and Privacy

The Internet is an unregulated environment. Information found on the internet may not be accurate, complete or current.

AVRL does not censor access to the internet or protect users from information they may find offensive.

Library users access and use library technology resources and internet services at their own risk. Users should be aware that others might be able to view the information displayed on the computer monitors, and that the internet is not secure and third parties may be able to obtain information about users' activities.

AVRL is not responsible for equipment malfunction or the loss or transmission of users' data. AVRL assumes no responsibility for the security and privacy of transactions performed using library technology resources and/or internet services.

AVRL is not responsible for the privacy and security of confidential or sensitive information transmitted over internet services.

Technology designated for children and/or families may be filtered to reduce the likelihood of customers accessing age-inappropriate materials. As with other library materials and services, supervision of a child's access to technology is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian or person who has signed the child's library card in accordance with the AVRL's borrowing information.

Liability

AVRL does not manage the content of the information accessed through the wired or wireless internet services and only assumes responsibility for the information provided on library-developed websites, apps, or other digital products.

AVRL is not responsible for the content of links or secondary links from its website(s), affiliate websites, or third-party vendors.

AVRL is not responsible for the loss or damage of files or customer peripherals when using library technology resources.

AVRL assumes no responsibility for any direct or indirect claims, damages or costs sought by users of third parties arising from library users' access to library technology resources and internet services.

Users must comply with copyright laws, privacy laws, licensing agreements, and other intellectual property rights. AVRL is not responsible for infringements of these laws.

Public Space

Users should be aware that they are accessing library technology resources and internet services in a public space.

All library users, including users of library technology resources and internet services are expected to follow AVRL's Code of Conduct and other library policies. Violations of this Policy and/or the Code of Conduct may result in the suspension of library privileges, and prosecution.

Conditions of Use

AVRL reserves the right to limit internet use in terms of the amount of time used and/or network capacity/bandwidth, and terminate an internet or computer session at any time.

Non-library devices must not be physically connected to the library's network. Users are responsible for logging out of any personal accounts and clearing their own browsing history.

Users are not permitted to save any files to library computers.

Staff Assistance

Upon request, staff may provide assistance with a customer's personal device(s) that may require library staff to operate, change settings, and/or install/update software on the device.

AVRL is not responsible for damage to property, equipment malfunction, configuration, and software changes or the loss or transmission of users' data as a result of staff assistance.

Staff may decline to provide assistance such as in situations that involve the disclosure of private information including financial and/or legal transactions, and/or requests that violate AVRL's Code of Conduct.

Staff are available to provide assistance with library computer resources, but may not be able to provide advanced technical support beyond the scope of their professional capabilities.

Implementation

The Coordinator of Public Services is responsible for implementing this policy.

Related Legislation and Library Policies and Statements

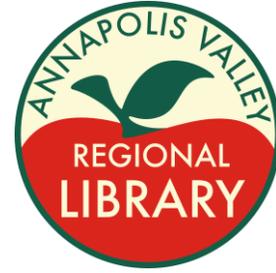
[Nova Scotia Accessibility Act](#)

[Copyright Act](#)

[Code of Conduct Policy](#)

AVRL's Statement on Intellectual Freedom

Policy



Policy Name: Computer and Internet Access Policy

File Name: EX-0045

Date: February 9, 2017

Review Date: February 2018

Related Policies:

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline patron access and use responsibilities and Annapolis Valley Regional Library's responsibilities for the use of public computers and access to the Internet via Library networks.

POLICY:

The Annapolis Valley Regional Library provides access to public computers and the Internet as part of its mandate to meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the community.

GUIDELINES:

Information and resources available on the Internet can expand and enhance the materials offered at AVRL's Branches. The AVRL does not censor users by restricting Internet access. Library patrons access the Internet at their own discretion. Some websites may contain information that other library patrons find controversial or inappropriate. In support of intellectual freedom, the Library does not monitor and has no control over information accessed through the Internet. It is the user's or their guardian's responsibility.

1. Patrons access public computers and associated software at their own risk. The Library is not responsible for equipment malfunction, damage to disks, loss of data, transmission of data (secure or otherwise), data saved on a public computer, personal computer, laptop, or any other devices.
2. AVRL's wireless network is not secure. Information sent from your wireless device could be captured within or in close proximity to the Branch. The Library assumes no responsibility for equipment, or any alterations or loss of configurations, security, or data resulting from the use of AVRL's wireless network.

3. Public access terminals are available by reservation for thirty or 60 minute time slots. After that time, if no one else has a reserved time, you may sign up again. Reservations, up to three library days in advance, are accepted by phone or in person. No single user can reserve more than 1 hour in a 24 hour period. Anyone who is more than 10 minutes late for a reserved time may lose the entire reserved time.
4. You may not use your own software programs on the library computer. This is to help prevent computer viruses.
5. Misuse of computers or software is unacceptable. Failure to adhere to this clause could result in the patron being held legally and financially responsible for any damages.
6. No more than 2 people are permitted at the computer work station at one time.
7. The software available on the work stations is varied. While staff is trained in the use of library-related databases and some other software products, they may not be familiar with all products. Staff will offer assistance whenever possible.
8. Prior to accessing the Internet, the "Internet Code of Ethics" posted near each computer should be reviewed and adhered to.
9. There is a cost for printing. Please ensure that your printed material is recovered. The Library is not responsible for items left unattended.
10. To protect AVRL computers, all library machines have virus-protection software. If you download programs/files from the Internet, it is advisable to check for viruses before using them on your computer. The library cannot guarantee they will be virus-free.
11. Responsible computer use includes but is not limited to:
 - a. It is expected that patrons will use the computers and access the Internet in such a way that does not disturb and is respectful to other patrons;
 - b. Patrons may not use library equipment or the Internet, or the Library's wireless network for any illegal activity or to place material on the Internet related to any illegal activity. Patrons are subject to Federal and Provincial legislation regulating Internet use, including the provisions of the Criminal Code pertaining to obscenity, child pornography, sedition, and incitement of hate etc. Civil law forbids the harassment, libeling, or slandering of others. Any materials tending to deprive any person of their rights, or to expose any person to hatred or affronts to human dignity cannot be displayed or disseminated through library computers. Any known activity will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
 - c. Any illegal activity will result in the patron being denied further access to public computers and the Internet for a period to be determined by the Chief Executive Officer.
12. Should misuse be detected, the Library reserves the right to terminate a patron's access to public computers, the Internet or the wireless network at any time.
13. Library patrons have the right to confidentiality and privacy in the use of public computers, the Internet and the wireless network to the extent possible given certain constraints such as proximity of staff and other patrons in our public spaces.