



**West Grey Public Library Board  
Draft Special Meeting Minutes  
West Grey Public Library – Virtual  
January 20, 2021 at 7 p.m.**

Board members: Malcolm Beddoe, Les Bridgen, Boyde Colwell, Beth Hamilton, Michele Humphrey, Elizabeth Murray, Stephen Townsend

Staff members: Kim Storz, CEO, Lindsey Glazier, Sarah Watts

**1. Call to order**

Chair Beddoe called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Approval of agenda**

**3. Declarations of pecuniary interest or conflict of interest**

None.

**4. Introduction of board members**

West Grey Public Library Board Chair Malcolm Beddoe introduced the four additional members of the public and two council representatives on the board.

**5. Introduction message**

Board Member Elizabeth Murray shared a message from the board noting that the discussion is focused on the closure of part of the Elmwood Resource Centre. Findings from the service review in 2020 by an external consultant were shared. Challenges regarding budget, circulation, catchment area, membership and resources were noted as the reason for the decision by the board to close the Elmwood site. Member Murray noted the ability for members to access online services, learning and communities and facilities, programmes and services at the Neustadt, Durham and Ayton library branches, in addition to services offered by the Bruce County Library system.

**6. Correspondence**

The board received seven items of written correspondence, of which one was addressed to the chair of the West Grey Public Library Board, while six were addressed to the Council of the Municipality of West Grey and then provided to the library board for consideration.

Chair Beddoe addressed community concerns regarding the location of historical documents previously in the possession of the Elmwood library. The historical documents were signed over to Delton Becker and Verna Beckenhauer in 2015 and the West Grey library does not have possession of any historical newspapers or articles. The board will follow-up with those residents regarding the documents.

## **7. Comments and questions from members of the public**

Delton Becker confirmed that the historical documents previously in the possession of the Elmwood library are presently in the vault at the West Grey municipal office in Durham.

Mr. Becker raised concerns regarding hours and access to the Elmwood library. Concerns regarding having a public meeting to discuss the closure of the Elmwood branch during COVID-19. Mr. Becker enquired about the methods used to provide public notice of the meeting and asked if the library board has reached out to Hanover Public Library regarding a reciprocal agreement.

CEO Storz confirmed that she could reach out to the CEO of the Hanover Public Library and begin discussions regarding a reciprocal agreement, which would then be presented to both library boards for further discussion and approval. In 2015, there was a three-month reciprocal agreement with Hanover Public Library to provide free services to Elmwood residents in which 16 residents participated.

Public notice for this meeting was shared through radio and newspaper advertisements, the municipal website, library and municipal social media and printed posters.

Bob Weirmeir raised concerns regarding informing the public of the public meeting, removing library services in Elmwood, and access for seniors to library resources outside of Elmwood.

Dale Arhens raised concerns regarding only providing library resources to residents virtually and the challenges regarding access to services. Mr. Arhens raised concerns regarding communicating the public meeting to the public. Concerns were raised regarding the availability of a community hub for residents.

Penny Rogerson raised concerns regarding public consultation prior to closing the library, the need for a resource centre in the community and the ability for residents to access other locations to access library resources.

Paul Aaron raised concerns regarding the notice provided to residents regarding the public meeting, holding a public meeting during a pandemic, holding a meeting after making the decision to close the library. Mr. Aaron enquired if Brockton council had been approached regarding providing financial support towards the Elmwood library.

Ruth and Elaine McDougall noted the importance of the Elmwood library as a community hub. Concerns were raised regarding access for families and seniors to other library branches and resources and the ability for members of the community to participate in the public meeting in a virtual format. Ms. McDougall enquired about research regarding the ability to provide a bookmobile.

CEO Storz informed that the Bruce County Library has been looking into providing a bookmobile to residents since 2017, this mobile library will stop in Elmwood but has been deferred several times.

Dale Leifso, Vice-Chair, St. John Lutheran Church Council noted that having the library in the church basement was an opportunity for the church to provide outreach to the whole community. Concerns were raised that nobody approached the church to discuss how they can work cooperatively with the board. Mr. Leifso stated that the church is more than willing to be a partner and they are willing to discuss how they can make a library viable in Elmwood.

Shirley Young raised concerns about residents in Elmwood losing access to all library resources after the library closed, stating that there has been no promotion regarding programming at the centre and a lack of new material for the resource centre.

Staff responded noting that they are aware of the limited services at the resource centre in Elmwood noting various forms of promotion that have been done and the lack of demand for the use of computers.

Kevin Eccles asked if there is enthusiasm from the board to continue to provide services to Elmwood residents. Mr. Eccles mentioned the community hall and fire hall as potential options.

CEO Storz responded that operationally the library is going to try and support Elmwood residents using virtual methods. Staff understand the issues with accessibility regarding virtual access. Home bound delivery to seniors who are unable to access services will continue. Programs, books and services will continue to be available at the three other branches. CEO Storz has been in contact with Bruce County to see if there is a joint service that can be provided between West Grey and the Bruce County Library system.

Dale Ahrens raised concerns about a study taking place and the hiring of a consultant with no communication to the public and having alternatives for library resources and a community hub available prior to closing the resource centre.

Penny Rogers raised concerns about the board making a decision to close the resource centre prior to consultation with the public. Ms. Rogers raised concerns regarding the amount of notice citizens were given to take part in the meeting and highlighted the continual reduction of hours and services at the resource centre following the closure of the library.

Shirley Young raised concerns about the lack of resources at the Elmwood library compared to the other branches and how that reflects on service levels and membership and noted drawbacks to ordering books virtually.

Chair Beddoe clarified that the resource centre in Elmwood is a resource centre, not a library branch.

Delton Becker raised concerns about that lack of community input to find solutions to improve service at the resource centre.

Joanne Klein raised concerns about making library services available for all and the limitations of providing only virtual options for Elmwood residents and concerns regarding removing a community hub for seniors.

Bob Weirmeir shared the historical significance of Elmwood.

Staff outlined the current service provided by the resource centre and stated the limited COVID hours have shown to be adequate for members using curbside pickup.

Doug Hutchinson, West Grey councillor shared that what he is hearing is that Elmwood is missing a community hub and suggested that community members get together and discuss options. Councillor Hutchinson informed that he would be willing to bring the discussion regarding a community hub to council and would be willing to sit in on a meeting with community members.

Rev. Hannes Aasa, St. John's Lutheran Church thanked everyone for their thoughts and questions noting that his observations tend to be positive and that many families have moved into the Elmwood area.

Penny Rogerson raised concerns about getting rid of the resource centre without another space available for seniors or youth in the community.

Rev. Hannes Aasa shared that the library board has missed possible opportunities noting that Councillor Hutchinson shared good suggestions.

Dale Ahrens raised concerns about the removal of the library as the community hub in Elmwood.

Christine Robinson, West Grey Mayor shared that the feedback provided at the meeting from residents is valued.

Chair Beddoe thanked participants for their input and time.

## **8. Adjournment**

**Moved by** Stephen Townsend

That the West Grey Public Library Board does now adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

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Chair

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Date