2018 Annual Operating Grant Report

Introduction:

The Northern Rockies Regional Municipality (NRRM) was incorporated in 2019. The first regional municipality in the province of British Columbia, the NRRM includes the communities of Fort Nelson, Fort Nelson First Nation, Prophet River First Nation, Toad River, Testa River and several smaller communities. The NRRM covers approximately 10% of British Columbia’s landmass and is located in the northeast corner of the province. The town of Fort Nelson is the largest community within the NRRM as well as the min service sector for the northeast regions, as well as the southern Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

The NRRM’s economy is strongly based on oil & gas, forestry and tourism. In the last few years NRRM has seen a significant slow down in oil & gas and forestry, which has led to high unemployment in the area. Over the past 10 years NRRM has seen a population decrease of 10% from a population of 4,514 in 2006 to 3,366 in 2016.¹

Fort Nelson is a warm and vibrant community. We are the gateway of the Northern Rockies and embrace our unique northern lifestyle. Fort Nelson Public Library (FNPL) is an active member and supporter of our community and continues to offer programs and build community partnerships that can help support our community during this time.

In 2018 FNPL continued working within our 2015-2018 Strategic Plan. FNPL’s board is working this year to create a new strategic plan. FNPL’s 2015-2018 strategic plan identifies the following priority areas:

- Programs and Services: which aligns with the provincial priorities of fostering connected communities, building capacity and working together
- Facility: which aligns with the provincial priorities of fostering connected communities and sustaining our success
- Technology: which aligns with the provincial priority’s of fostering connected communities and building capacity.

**Priority 1: Fostering Equitable Access to Information and Services**

In 2018 FNPL focused on making our space and access to our collections accessible to all members of our community. Our first step in having an accessible space was to fill in our “Pit” or the sunken floor area. The pit was a space of approximately 400sqft, which was not accessible as the only access to this area was by stairs. Raising the pit to the same level as the rest of the floor, gave us accessible space that we can now use for programs, collections, and seating. This project was partially funded by the Government of Canada’s Enabling Accessibility Grant.

Following the completion of the renovation, we then moved to make sure our adult fiction shelving was moved to an accessible height. We are committed to ensuring that our physical space and collections remain accessible.

The Library Director participated in the Digital Resources Consultation Group. The Digital Resources Consultation Group was formed by members of BC public libraries and worked under the direction of the BC Libraries Cooperative’s Licensing Business Function Group. After consulting with BC Public libraries, the group developed a plan to create a core collection of digital resources that would be available to all BC public libraries. The recommendations of the group were provided to the Ministry of Education in August.

**Priority 2: Developing Skills and Knowledge**

This year the Library Director acted as a consultant to two local teachers who were taking teacher librarian courses. We met on an informal basis a couple of times throughout the year and talked about different aspects of the profession. FNPL also consulted with the teacher librarian from Fort Nelson Secondary School and provided information on using our digital resources. The teacher librarian then took the information we provided her and ran several classes for her students where she introduced them to our digital resources.

FNPL runs a variety of programs throughout the year which focus on developing skills and lifelong learning. Two new programs we offered this year was our Daddy and Me, and Mommy
and Me Hair Fair programs as well as our Gift Wrapping for adults. During the Hair Fair programs children with an adult caregiver were invited to join a local hair stylist and learn the basics of doing hair. Between both programs we had 13 adult and 15 children participate.

For our Gift Wrapping for Adults we invited a local business owner to come and teach program participants some different techniques for wrapping gifts. Participants went home excited to use their new skills on their Christmas presents.

**Priority 3: Working Together**

FNPL has several community partners that we work with throughout the year. Our community partners include the Fort Nelson Community Literacy Society (FNCLS), Fort Nelson Family Development Society, and the Fort Nelson Recreation Centre. This year FNPL looked at participating in joint programs that would be held at both the library and at various community organizations. We are a small town, and to have successful programs we need to work together rather that independently.

One of the programs that we have had great success with is our Messy Play program. This program runs once a month and at the same time that the FNCLS runs a parenting group. Rather than force parents to choose one program over another, the FNCLS holds their parenting group at FNPL’s Messy Play program.

In our community it is necessary that the community organization support each other, and FNPL is working at establishing strong lasting relationships with our community organizations. We also encourage organizations to hold the occasional program in the library.

**Priority 4: Enhancing Governance**

Over the past couple of years FNPL has been working on updating our policy manual. It is the goal of the FNPL board to be forward looking rather than reactive when it comes to creating our policies. This year we have created policies on room rentals, advertising on FNPL property, and exam invigilation. We have also reassessed our code of conduct. Now that our policy manual is up to date, we will continue to review it on a yearly basis to ensure it remains current.