

Village of Nobleford: Establishing a Library Board

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Background

In Alberta, public libraries are considered a municipal service; however, guidelines for setting up a library board and operating a library are laid out in the provincial [Alberta Libraries Act](#) and the [Libraries Regulation](#). The Libraries Act has created a structure for library service based on local and regional service. The Government of Alberta also provides an annual operating grant to local and regional library boards, provided that the municipality contributes a certain level of funding.

Setting up a Library Board

Residents of a municipality without a library board may approach the municipal council with a request to form a library board. The library board is established by municipal bylaw; the bylaw is then sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for approval. Once established, members of the library board are appointed by council. Library boards must have at least 5 but not more than 10 members. Up to two members of council may sit on the library board. The library board must meet a minimum of every 4 months or as needed to manage library operations effectively.

The Library Regulation requires that within a year of establishment, the newly-created board must draft a specific set of bylaws and policies as laid out in Section 7(2) in the [Libraries Regulation](#). Subsequently, the board must develop a budget and a Plan of Service based on a needs assessment process that is held within the community. The budget must be approved by the municipal council.

Chinook Arch employs librarians who are able to assist with the needs assessment, Plan of Service, and policy development processes. The Public Library Services Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs can also provide guidance in the process of setting up a library board.

Library Funding

Each municipality establishes funding levels for its local library board: this is called the “Local Appropriation,” and it can take two forms: an amount of money appropriated from local tax base and transferred to the library board, and/or an amount of money expended by the municipality on behalf of the library board for library purposes. Funding levels vary widely across the province. Within the Chinook Arch region, municipal funding for populations of 1,000 to 2,000 ranges from \$5.05 to \$44.38 per capita with an average of \$20.32 per capita.

In order to receive an operating grant from the Public Library Services Branch (PLSB), a municipality must contribute at least \$2.00 per capita to the library board. Library boards in municipalities with a 2010 population of 601 – 1,200 receive a flat grant of \$8,350 from the PLSB.

Most municipal libraries in the Chinook Arch Area also serve the rural population around them and therefore also receive some funding from the rural municipality. The County of Lethbridge currently

provides some funding for Coaldale and Picture Butte libraries through its membership in Chinook Arch and could be approached to also provide some funding for Nobleford once the library board is established.

Regional Library Services

The majority of Alberta municipalities belong to a regional library system. There are seven regional library systems in the province. Southwestern Alberta is served by the Chinook Arch Regional Library System. Chinook Arch is a library service organization that was formed in 1992 by an agreement between municipalities.

Regional Library Services enhance local library services by providing a framework for libraries to share resources and by providing technology services. By joining Chinook Arch, Nobleford could have instant library service while developing its own local library.

As a member of Chinook Arch, Nobleford residents would have immediate access to all the libraries in the Chinook Arch region including both Picture Butte and Lethbridge public libraries. A full range of benefits of membership in Chinook Arch is attached.

There is a municipal levy associated with joining a regional library system. Membership levies in the Chinook Arch Region have two components: a municipal membership fee and a library board fee. The library board fee is \$3.57 per capita, a rate that has not increased for many years. The library board pays a fee in acknowledgement of the fact that certain tasks that the Region performs would otherwise be performed by library staff.

The municipal fee is currently \$7.20 per capita, and is levied based on the current population as posted annually by Alberta Municipal Affairs. The municipal fee will increase marginally each year until 2018, which is the final year of the current budget. The fees for 2016 will be \$7.42; for 2017: \$7.64; and for 2018: \$7.87. The following chart shows the total projected cost of membership in Chinook Arch over the next few years:

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Board Levy	\$ 3.57	\$ 3.57	\$ 3.57	\$ 3.57
Municipal Levy	\$ 7.20	\$ 7.42	\$ 7.64	\$ 7.87
Cost (1,000 Population)	\$ 10,770	\$ 10,990	\$ 11,210	\$ 11,440
Cost (1,300 Population)	\$ 14,001	\$ 14,287	\$ 14,573	\$ 14,872

Please feel free to contact Chinook Arch staff at any time for additional information:

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Appendix

Benefits of Membership in Chinook Arch Regional Library System for Nobleford Public Library and Village

Library Collections

- Residents have immediate access to 900,000 books, audio-books and films available at 34 libraries throughout the region through a fully automated joint catalogue of all member library holdings
- Library materials from throughout southwest Alberta are delivered to the Nobleford Public Library weekly as requested
- Book allotment for the purchase of materials by the library is \$2.00 per capita from the Chinook Arch budget – materials are delivered to your library ready to be shelved
- Centralized ordering and cataloguing ensures significant discount on materials purchased
- Online access to thousands of magazines such as Consumer Reports and Scientific American– at home or at the library – through databases licensed by the System
- Downloadable e-books and audio-books in System collection available to all library card holders
- Download or stream movies, television programs, audio books and music
- Block collections of audio books and large print books provided to the library and rotated regularly to make new titles available
- Public Services librarians assist with the development of a core collection for the library
- Library to You (L2U) service available to patrons who want paperbacks mailed to their home address

Library Technology

- Internet service provided by the System over Alberta Supernet
- Monthly Supernet costs are paid by the Alberta Public Library Services Branch
- Wireless internet services provided at the library
- Email service for library staff
- Manage and support the integrated library software including the online library catalogue which can be accessed from home or at the library
- Library Website is hosted by Chinook Arch and staff are trained in its use
- IT support and help desk support provided by System
- Network support
- Purchasing services – corporate pricing available by purchasing computers and peripherals through Chinook Arch

Library Support and Training

- Consulting assistance with Needs Assessment and planning process for the library
- Public Services trains staff to use the library software
- General library operations support
- Reference service support through Lethbridge Public Library and System staff
- Bi-monthly Member librarians meetings
- Marketing support

Library Programs

- Chinook Arch Library Card provided with your Library name on it – Library card can be used at all member libraries
- Delivery services – regular delivery service – minimum one delivery per week, additional deliveries will depend on volume of materials handled
- Residents can obtain a Me card which can be used at any public library in Alberta or TAL card (The Alberta Library) to borrow from any public or academic library in Alberta
- Residents can request Interlibrary loans for materials not available in Chinook Arch
- Summer reading program incentives encourage children's literacy in the off school months
- Video conference network provides access to programs and information services, as well as for access to distance education and other programs
- Annual Southern Alberta Library Conference with reduced costs for member libraries