

Area libraries discussing what went wrong

By Sarah Sobanski

Back-to-back-to-back resignations by North Hastings library CEOs have left the community wondering how it can better support its libraries. To do that, it first has to ask what factors contribute to the area's high turnover rate and how best to address them.

In October, former Wollaston Public Library CEO Carolyn Henderson resigned due to "personal reasons," according to a Wollaston Public Library report made to Wollaston council Nov. 14. *Bancroft This Week* has been unable to reach her for comment.

Former Bancroft Public Library CEO Chris Stephenson left in November because he said he felt council wasn't working with the library to meet its needs - neither in terms of infrastructure nor financially. He said the library was the last inaccessible library in southern Ontario and that long-term staff members at the library were making less than what the town offered to pay for a new receptionist/admin assistant.

The last resignation, effective Jan. 5, came when former Hastings Highlands Public Library CEO Kim McMunn said she had to look after her health. A letter from the library board chair Kathy Irwin to Hastings Highlands council suggested McMunn's resignation, and her own, were due to lack of support from members of council. At the time the board was the subject of controversy after discovering a more than \$30,000 surplus fund.

Southern Ontario Library Service library development consultant Peggy Malcolm said she had never seen a "falling apart of the libraries" to the "extent" it had happened in North Hastings.

"It's happened before, usually it's about communication. Often we can fix it but not always