

Library holds event bidding farewell to beloved CEO Rose Dotten

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Shelburne residents, library patrons, friends, family, and colleagues of the local library's longtime CEO, Rose Dotten, gathered at the library on Oct. 26 to pay tribute to her retirement.

Dotten has been CEO of the Shelburne Public Library for 17 years, first assuming the position in 2008.

"This has been the happiest period of my life, 17 years at this Library," Dotten said. "I'm looking forward to retirement, but I will miss the library. The library is being left in good hands, so that is a good feeling."

When Dotten first took up the mantle as Library CEO, the Shelburne Public Library was a radically different building. Lacking internet access or even an online presence, Dotten invested heavily in overhauling the digital side of the library, and initially spent a third of the budget on e-resources. Through her leadership, the library's TD Summer Reading Club was proclaimed the best in Canada in 2016.

Looking back, she said that while the library has changed a lot, the people haven't, which brings her some comfort.

"When I look around this room, and see the work that went into the decorations, you can see what a great community we have here," she said. "I'm absolutely overwhelmed, I can feel the love and the care, and it reminds me that the people haven't changed at all."

After a short meet-and-greet and refreshments, library chair Geoff Dunlop thanked Dotten for her years of tireless work.

"When we were looking for a new CEO, we realized our first choice had been hiding in plain sight the whole time," he said. "A local resident, a library supporter, and library card holder, Rose Dotten. She brought with her excellent academic qualifications, of course. Under Rose's capable leadership, the library is a safe and welcoming place where everyone is accepted and valued. Everyone that came to the library was greeted with a smile."

"Thank you for your guidance, your inspiration, and your leadership. It has been a rollicking 17 years and it's been an honour to work together. Congratulations on 17 wonderful years," Dunlop added.

Dotten thanked Dunlop and took the podium again. She insisted that her leadership was only possible with the people she worked with.

"None of this could have been accomplished without an incredible team behind us," she said. "For me to have had the kind of support I've had from the library board, I just can't express what that has meant to me; it's been a blessing."

Dotten passed through the audience, directly thanking every staff member and supporter she could see individually, praising their unique contributions and impact on her and the library as a whole.

She then introduced her successor, Shannon McGrady, who officially took over the position on Oct. 20. McGrady acknowledged the boots she was stepping into but expressed optimism for the library's future under Dotten's leadership.

"It's clear to me that I'm stepping into a massive, incredible legacy. I was nervous on my first day," she said. "But I think we, in this room, know that libraries are the heart of the community, cornerstones of strong communities. I've been made to feel so welcome, so thank you to the team and to the board."

?The staff have been a beautiful thing to witness. I hope to make you all proud,? McGrady added.

With the torch passed, Dotten said she plans to continue her gardening hobbies during her retirement.

?I have 50 acres just outside of town, and a massive garden, so you know exactly what I'll be doing with my time,? she said.

?The library has such an incredible team, so I'm confident that it's going to be as good or even better in the future.?