

Minutes of the VPL Board Meeting held on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 6:10 p.m. at the Level 8 Morris J. Wosk Boardroom, 350 West Georgia St., Vancouver, BC.

Present:	Tim Bottomer		
	Emily Lapper		
	Kevin Lowe	—	Chair
	Parveen Mangat		
	Raji Mangat		
	Clr. Peter Meiszner	—	Vancouver City Councillor
	Harlan Pruden		
	Karen Spears	—	Vice Chair
	Ziming Yang		
	Abeer Yusuf		
Absent:	Victor Huang		
Board Liaisons:	Victoria Jung	—	Chair, Vancouver Board of Education
Management			
Present:	Christina de Castell	—	Chief Librarian & CEO
	Kay Cahill	—	Director, Information Technology & Collections
	Alyssa Green	—	Acting Director, Neighbourhood & Youth Services
	Dawn Ibey	—	Director, Central Library & Public Service
	Julia Morrison	—	Director, Corporate Services & CFO
	Carol Nelson	—	Director, Planning & Communications
	Balwinder Rai	—	Director, Human Resources
Staff:	Sophie Middleton	—	Neighbourhood Services Manager
	Greg McLeod	—	Acting Assistant Manager, Programming & Learning
Guests:	Elisha McCallum	—	Board Member, VPL Foundation
	Christian Kruse	—	Co-Chair, Friends of VPL
	Johnathan Dyer	—	Acting President, CUPE Local 391
	Kelsey Reimer	—	Recording Secretary, CUPE Local 391
	Joseph Kakwinokanasum		Indigenous Storyteller-in-Residence
Recording Secretary:	Lianne Watt	—	Acting Executive Assistant

INAUGURAL MEETING:

Chief Librarian & CEO Christina de Castell acknowledged that our work takes place on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Christina reported that she has been reviewing the draft UNDRIP Action Plan that was developed by staff from the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and the City of Vancouver, with contributions from VPL staff. This follows from the joint UNDRIP strategy. She shared that VPL has been identified as having a role in public education as it relates to Indigenous rights in the action plan, and that it includes the work to explore more inclusive governance for VPL that the Library Board directed staff to undertake.

1. Election of Chair

Chief Librarian & CEO Christina de Castell, acting as Chair, called the 2024 Inaugural Meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. The Chief Librarian & CEO then called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Library Board.

Moved by Karen Spears

THAT Kevin Lowe be nominated as Chair of the VPL Board for 2024.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

There being no other nominations, the Chief Librarian & CEO declared Trustee Kevin Lowe elected to the office of Chair by acclamation.

2. Election of Vice Chair

Trustee Lowe assumed the position of Chair and called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair.

Moved by Raji Mangat

THAT Karen Spears be nominated as Vice-Chair of the VPL Board for 2024.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

There being no other nominations, Board Chair Lowe declared Trustee Spears elected to the office of Vice-Chair by acclamation.

3. Chair's Remarks

Board Chair Lowe welcomed trustees to the 2024 Vancouver Public Library Board. Board Chair Lowe acknowledged that the meeting takes place on the unceded, ancestral and present homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and the Vancouver Public Library is situated within the colonial construct of Vancouver.

Board Chair Lowe expressed that he is proud of the work that has happened over the course of his tenure on the VPL Board, in particular as it relates to advancing the goals of Truth and Reconciliation. He acknowledged the work of trustees, both past and present, and thanked them for their participation as volunteers on the VPL Board and for their ongoing contribution of thoughts and ideas to make VPL a space that is representative of the people of Vancouver.

Board Chair Lowe thanked the VPL Foundation for their ongoing work to secure funding that supports VPL initiatives. He noted that he is pleased to see the progress of the Children’s Library Revitalization project and the plans for the opening of a new branch at Oakridge later this year. Board Chair Lowe thanked the Friends of the VPL, for their work in the Bookmark store, their efforts at the annual book sale, and their support for the Writer-in-Residence program. Board Chair Lowe thanked the representatives of CUPE 391 for being advocates and partners in representing and supporting staff, and their continued advocacy in bringing issues forward to the VPL Board on behalf of their members.

Board Chair Lowe thanked the Chief Librarian & CEO, the Directors Group and the Managers for their excellent representation of VPL and their ongoing support to the Board. He also thanked the administrative support team of Chrysalyn Tolentino, Executive Assistant and Joan Brookes, Administrative Assistant, for their role in helping organize the Board meetings, their support for trustees, and their assistance in ensuring that meetings run efficiently.

Board Chair Lowe stated that he is looking forward to the work of the VPL Board over the coming year, especially the work to be done to advance Indigenous rights and Reconciliation. He noted that it will be important to reflect on how we can be good allies in this work so that all people feel represented. Board Chair Lowe thanked trustees for the opportunity to represent VPL and shared that he is humbled by their support.

4. Trustee Roundtable

Trustees shared information about themselves and personal reflections about their connections to libraries and VPL.

PRESENTATION

5. 2024 VPL Indigenous Storyteller-in-Residence: Joseph Kakwinokanasum

Greg McLeod, Acting Assistant Manager, Programming and Learning, introduced Joseph Kakwinokanasum, the 2024 VPL Indigenous Storyteller-in-Residence. A writer, creator, and born storyteller and member of the James Smith Cree Nation, Joseph grew up in the Peace region of northern BC.

Joseph is a graduate of Simon Fraser University's The Writer’s Studio and The Writer’s Studio Graduate Workshop. He was selected by Darrel J. McLeod as one of The Writers

Trust of Canada's Rising Stars of 2022. His short story, *Ray Says*, was a finalist for CBC's Nonfiction Prize in 2020 and his manuscript *Woodland Creetures* was awarded the 2014 Canada Council for the Arts Creation Grant for Aboriginal Peoples, Writers and Storytellers. His debut novel, *My Indian Summer*, loosely based on his own childhood, was the winner of the 2023-2024 First Nations Communities READ Award and shortlisted for the 2023 ReLit Award for fiction. His work has been published in the anthology *Resonance: Essays on the Craft and Life of Writing*, the *Humber Literary Journal*, and *Emerge*, *The Writer's Studio* anthology.

Joseph shared some reflections about his past and that he is looking forward to his work as the VPL Indigenous Storyteller-in-Residence. He commented that he is eager to host sessions for adults and children, and is enthusiastic to share his knowledge using library resources. Joseph thanked the Friends of VPL, VPL staff, and in particular the Programming and Learning Department for their support.

6. Children's Library Revitalization Design

Alyssa Green, Acting Director of Neighbourhood & Youth Services, provided an overview of the Children's Library Revitalization project, shared the concept drawings and proposed floor plan, and provided an update on the timeline.

Trustees asked for clarification on the planned relocation of the Teen Library and whether the size of the collection in the Children's Library would be changing. Chief Librarian & CEO Christina de Castell explained that a revised Central Library Master Plan would address the future plans for the building. The Central Library Master Plan was previously completed in 2012, and included the anticipated move of the Vancouver Archives to the Central Library. Since the Archives will no longer be moving to Central Library, the Master Plan will need to be revisited. Christina noted that in addition since 2012, space for learning about the local Nations has been identified as an opportunity, and conversations with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations will be part of the process. Kay Cahill, Director, Information Technology & Collections indicated that with the Children's Library revitalization there would be an adjustment to the collection size to reflect the needs of the community, which would likely include a reduction in the number of reference and research items.

ADMINISTRATION

7. Consent Agenda - Removal of Items and Approval

Trustees agreed to pull out the 2024 InterLINK Provisional Budget and Board Annual Planning Calendar from the consent agenda.

Moved by Harlan Pruden and seconded by Raji Mangat

THAT the following decision be approved on consent:

- 2024 Operating Budget Decision – November 15, 2023
THAT the Library Board receive this decision for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Emily Lapper and seconded by Councillor Peter Meiszner

THAT the Board approve the regular meeting agenda as received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9. Minutes

The draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held November 22, 2023 were presented to the Board for approval.

Moved by Abeer Yusuf and seconded by Tim Bottomer

THAT the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held November 22, 2023 be approved as received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

➤ **Vancouver School Board**

Trustee Victoria Jung thanked the VPL staff for their work in supporting a VSB school during a recent flood. She reported that the Education Plan Committee has recommended that the Vancouver School Board approve three new courses: Applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) 12; Music Theory 11; and Queer and Trans History of BC 12.

➤ **CUPE Local 391**

Johnathan Dyer, Acting President, CUPE 391 shared that he will be acting president until mid-February. Johnathan reported that the CUPE 391 Executive and VPL Management representatives are currently engaged in bargaining and the next meeting will take place on Monday, January 29.

➤ **Friends of VPL**

Christian Kruse, Co-Chair of the Friends of the Library Board, shared that the scaffolding in the concourse is continuing to impact traffic at the Bookmark store. Christian reported that the addition of a sandwich board directing the public to the Bookmark store on the Georgia Street entrance has helped to increase visibility.

➤ **VPL Foundation**

Elisha McCallum, Vancouver Public Library Foundation Board member, noted that she, along with three other new members were elected to the VPL Foundation Board at their meeting on January 16, 2024.

Elisha described the addition of three new committees to the VPL Foundation Board structure, which will support their team and assist with long range planning. Elisha reported that the VPL Foundation Fall & Winter fundraising is well underway and has so far raised \$268,000 in undesignated funding through an email campaign. Planning has started for the 2nd Annual Fundraising drive scheduled for March through May 2024.

➤ **Trustee Roundtable**

Board Chair Kevin Lowe welcomed Sophie Middleton, Neighbourhood Services Manager to the meeting, and noted that he would be sending an email to trustees requesting that they indicate which VPL Board Committee and liaison roles they are interested in.

ITEM FOR DECISION

10. 2024 Operating Budget

Julia Morrison, Director, Corporate Services & CFO presented the 2024 Operating Budget that was approved by City Council on December 12, 2023. The approved Council budget provides an additional \$180K of ongoing annual operating funding to open two more branches on Mondays. Based on community need and existing use, management have identified Champlain Heights and South Hill branches to open on Mondays, and anticipate that the branches will transition to the new hours in early April 2024.

Julia Morrison shared that currently, nine of our 20 neighbourhood branches are open seven days per week, with the remaining 11 branches open Tuesday through Sunday. Six of the 11 branches that are currently not open on Mondays are within Vancouver's Eastside, and five are within Vancouver's Westside.

Trustees asked what rationale had been used to select Champlain Heights and South Hill Branches for the additional hours. Julia Morrison shared that both of these branches are in the South East quadrant of the city, where social services are less concentrated than in other areas of the city, and that Directors considered the circulation and usage statistics. She noted that Champlain Heights supports families within the growing East Fraser Lands (River District) development, where library services are not yet provided. Trustees also inquired about the opportunities to open Marpole on Monday in extreme weather events, and whether the goal would be to ultimately have all branches open on Mondays. Staff confirmed that strategy would be part of future Board budget discussions.

Board Chair Lowe asked about plans to share the change in hours with the public and Council. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell explained that communication will start closer to the opening time. Director Ashdown can provide more details at the February Library Board meeting including an update on the anticipated timeline for the change in hours.

Moved by Raji Mangat and seconded by Parveen Mangat

THAT the Board receive this report for information, and THAT the Board approve the Council-approved VPL 2024 Operating budget of \$62,876,898.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION

11. Vancouver City Council Strategic Priorities

Christina de Castell, Chief Librarian & CEO, shared the City Council Strategic Priorities 2023-2026 report to support Board members in their future discussions with Council members. Christina described the table included in the report that identifies VPL Strategic Plan priorities and goals that aligns with Council priorities, as well as operating activities that support Council priorities. The VPL report is based on the Vancouver City Council report *Vibrant Vancouver: City Council's Strategic Priorities, 2023-2026*, approved on October 31, 2023. Christina noted that this is the first time VPL has been identified specifically in the list of City Council priorities.

Trustees asked if the document is publicly available and Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell confirmed that it is. Trustees also suggested that a matrix of individual Councilor's priorities could be useful if staff capacity were available. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted this may be beyond the capacity of staff at this time, but that this could be discussed at a CRPD meeting.

Moved by Abeer Yusuf and seconded by Harlan Pruden.

THAT the Board receive this report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEMS PULLED OUT OF CONSENT

12. 2024 InterLINK Provisional Budget

Trustee Karen Spears shared that the provisional 2024 InterLINK budget was passed at the InterLINK Board meeting held November 28, 2023. Trustee Spears also shared the InterLINK 2024 Budget FAQ that provides additional details on the InterLINK budget process.

Moved by Karen Spears and seconded by Raji Mangat

THAT the Board receive this report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

13. Board Annual Planning Calendar

Christina de Castell, Chief Librarian & CEO, presented the Annual Board Planning Calendar that is included in the VPL Trustee Orientation binder, and is used by the Board and VPL staff to plan activities during the year. Christina reviewed key activities, such as the annual British Columbia Library Association conference and educational opportunities hosted by the BC Library Trustees Association.

Moved by Tim Bottomer and seconded by Harlan Pruden.

THAT the Board receive this report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURN

Moved by Harlan Pruden and seconded by Abeer Yusuf

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Kevin Lowe, Chair

Christina de Castell, Secretary