

---

Minutes of the VPL Board Services, Finance & Human Resources Committee Regular Meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20, 2024 via Zoom.

**Present:** Tim Bottomer — Chair (arrived at 6:15 pm)  
Victor Huang  
Kevin Lowe - Acting Chair  
Parveen Mangat  
Ziming Yang

### **Management**

**Present:** Christina de Castell — Chief Librarian & CEO  
Maryn Ashdown — Director, Neighbourhood & Youth Services  
Kay Cahill — Director, Information Technology & Collections  
Sophie Middleton — Acting Director, Central Library & Public Service  
Julia Morrison — Director, Corporate Services & CFO  
Carol Nelson — Director, Planning & Communications  
Balwinder Rai — Director, Human Resources

**Staff:** Jon Downey — Manager, Security Services  
Patricia Chong — Manager, Policy & Planning

**Guest:** Johnathan Dyer — Acting President, CUPE 391

### **Recording**

**Secretary:** Chrysalyn Tolentino — Executive Assistant

### **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

Board Chair Lowe acknowledged that our work takes place on the ancestral, unceded and present homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. He noted that March 19 is Two Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ Celebration and Awareness Day and marks the spring equinox.

### **ADMINISTRATION:**

#### **1. Approval and Additions to the Agenda**

Moved by Victor Huang

*THAT the Committee approve the regular meeting agenda as received.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## 2. Minutes

The Chief Librarian & CEO presented the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held February 21, 2024 for approval by the Committee.

Moved by Victor Huang

*THAT the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held February 21, 2024 be approved as received.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## SERVICES

### 3. Collection Trends and Intellectual Freedom Challenges 2023

Kay Cahill, Director of Information Technology & Collections highlighted and summarized five-year collection trends at VPL and intellectual freedom challenges in 2023. She noted for trustees' attention trends related to format shifting, increased use of holds, and use and impact of Indigenous collections, as well as advocacy efforts related to digital licensing.

Trustees inquired about the impact of the significant increases in holds on staff time and workload, and whether this is an area of concern, and Director Cahill noted that this is being monitored. They also asked whether the increased cost of digital licences is requiring trade-offs in the collection budget, and about advocacy activities to other levels of government for improved licensing models, as well roles for trustees. They inquired whether any proactive activity was being considered around collection challenges in the lead up to elections, and the impact this can have on public conversations. Trustees also observed the need to apply an equity lens when re-allocating funding to digital formats, given these are less accessible for those who do not have the technology and connectivity.

Moved by Parveen Mangat

*THAT the Services, Finance, and Human Resources Committee recommend that the Board receive the report for information.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### 4. Update on Goal 4.2 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace

Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell acknowledged and thanked Patricia Chong and the staff working on the EDI project for all their work and effort on this project. She provided an overview of the report that includes recommended goals for VPL as an equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace, and an update on progress for Goal 4.2 of the Strategic Plan 2020-

2025, including staff consultation, consultants' recommendations, and examples of planned actions. Staff is seeking Board approval of the following five goals:

1. Staff of diverse identities, backgrounds, abilities, and expression feel appreciated for their contributions and included as part of VPL.
2. Staff trust that leadership and human resources understand their needs and goals, welcome their input, and take appropriate action on their concerns.
3. VPL provides a work environment free from discrimination, bullying, and harassment, where staff feel supported when faced with inappropriate behavior, whether from the public or among colleagues.
4. Staff feel included in decisions that impact their daily experiences and well-being at VPL.
5. VPL staff and leadership reflect the diversity of the community that we serve at all levels of the organization.

Trustees thanked everyone for this work and acknowledged that this is a difficult topic. They also expressed their appreciation that this is a priority for VPL.

Trustees asked about the Board's role in the EDI strategy and action plan, and the next steps for the Board. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell requested that the Board consider and approve the goals and provide feedback on metrics, and noted that the Board will receive annual updates on progress and are asked to hold the organization accountable for making progress. She invited the Committee to share thoughts if they would like to be involved in other ways.

Trustees noted the importance of centering the Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation Strategy and UNDRIP in the context of EDI work, and that this is missing in the current report, and Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell agreed that this should be included in the approach. Trustees asked if the increased engagement that would be indicated in Goal 4 would be a risk when the organization needed to make urgent decisions, and Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell commented that engagement processes require additional time, and there will be times when engagement would not be possible, such as compliance or emergency situations, which leadership will need to determine. Trustee also raised for discussion and confirmed that by approving these goals, the Board would not be saying that these goals should be above all other goals for the organization in the Strategic Plan.

Trustees extensively discussed Goal 5, including the diversity that is not captured in the demographics identified, questioning whether equity goals are adequately included in the language of Goal 5, and clarifying the metrics. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted that equity and inclusion for diverse groups are captured through Goals 1 to 4, and that diversity is intended to be the focus of Goal 5 as in particular, VPL does not currently reflect the racial

diversity of Vancouver among librarians and leadership. She provided information about the categories used from the Census, which were used in the Employee Benchmark Survey, and noted that in the visible minority category, the visible minority groups could not be further broken down in most cases as it would compromise privacy. She noted that as VPL increases its diversity over time, this goal could be adjusted and that this is intended to be a place to begin for the next 3-5 years. Trustees inquired whether the Board's diversity should be included in the goal, and Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted that this is not within the control of VPL, so she would not recommend this, and that it would need to be a goal for Council, who does the appointments. It was also suggested that in order for VPL to be equitable the diversity goal should aim higher, beyond the existing population demography.

Trustees observed the need to be mindful that the goals and actions were created by staff, and they are intended to guide staff work, and shared their appreciation that VPL is doing this work and for the staff involved.

<Trustee Yang left at 6:53 p.m.>

Trustees discussed possible next steps for the goals, and agreed that a discussion with the full Board at the March 27 meeting would be helpful. At the conclusion of the discussion, the following motion was raised:

Moved by Tim Bottomer

*THAT the Committee recommend that the Board approve the Goals 1-4 and refer Goal 5 for a full board discussion at the March 27, 2024 Library Board meeting.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Trustees thanked all the staff who participated in shaping this report.

## **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

---

Tim Bottomer, Chair

---

Christina de Castell, Secretary