

MANAGEMENT REPORT

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TO: Library Board
FROM: Kevin Lowe, Chair, Governance Committee
SUBJECT: Trustee Appointment Process 2025

SUMMARY

The City of Vancouver has posted a call for trustee applications for 2025 that will close on September 29. This report provides information about the process, including the Board Recruitment Plan.

PURPOSE

This report is for information.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive the report for information.

POLICY

The Library Act (http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96264_01) identifies that Library Board members are appointed by municipal council, and must be residents or electors of the municipality, under s.6, or appointed through service agreements under s.48, which may include agreements with Indigenous governments. Under the Library Act s.6, trustees are appointed for a term of 2 years, and can serve for no more than 8 consecutive years. VPL has 11 board members, and the Library Act s.6 requires that one board member is a representative of City Council.

INDIGENOUS CONSIDERATIONS

The Library Board has identified that supporting the implementation of UNDRIP is a priority, and that the Library Board has an opportunity to ensure that Indigenous Peoples right to self-government can be exercised in the governance of VPL services. With the Board's direction, VPL commenced an inclusive governance project to explore how Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations would like to

exercise their right to govern services delivered to their members, and the Nations have confirmed their interest in this discussion and included it in the MSTV UNDRIP Action Plan, within Action Group 12. Work is underway on research and relationship building, with plans to undertake joint discussion in 2025.

Residents of Musqueam Indian Band reserve no.2 are eligible for appointment to the Library Board, while residents of Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nation reserve lands are not eligible (although they may be eligible to be trustees for other libraries). Under the Library Act, s.48, service agreements with Indigenous governments can include an appointment to the Library Board, however, the current service agreements between the City of Vancouver and the Musqueam Indian Band and Squamish Nation for Senakw do not include Board representation.

Staff have promoted the opportunity to express interest in trustee roles to the local Nations and urban Indigenous organizations during recruitment periods annually since 2021, and continue to work with the Nations to build better relations.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Library Board determines the strategy and policies that guide the organization. Appointments to the VPL Board are an important consideration of City Council, and current practice gives VPL the opportunity to provide feedback about applicants.

BACKGROUND

The VPL Board does not control the decisions of who is appointed to the Board, however, the Board is presently able to participate in the Council process through providing confidential feedback via the Chief Librarian & CEO. The Chief Librarian & CEO works with two trustees who are not eligible for re-appointment, usually from among the chair, vice-chair and committee chairs, to provide the feedback. The City Council Nominations Committee has this feedback available to them as part of their deliberations.

The Board Governance Committee created the existing Board Recruitment Plan after reviewing the plans and approaches of several other large urban public libraries. The participation of library boards and staff in the council appointment process varies considerably among libraries, with some libraries having a similar opportunity to provide confidential feedback, while others do not have a role in the appointment process. The Governance Committee has previously discussed the appropriateness - or inappropriateness - of articulating specific skill sets, such as management experience, financial savvy, or strategic planning. It was determined that the preferred approach was to reference knowledge, skill, or related experience to the matters for which the Board is responsible, allowing for a wide range of contributions.

The Committee also considered setting diversity aspirations for the Board. It was recognized that even with such targets, the Board would never be able to represent the whole diversity of Vancouver and that it would be better to recognize diversity of the Board as a reflection of the community as an important tenet without identifying specific requirements.

The Library provides a Prospective Trustee Information Package that is updated annually by staff and is available to the public on the Board page of the website: <https://www.vpl.ca/about/board>.

In 2022, the VPL Board recommended that the number of trustees be reduced to 11, from 13, and that the tradition of appointing a member of the Vancouver School Board and Vancouver Park Board to the VPL Board through Council end. It had been identified that the relationships with these organizations had evolved to being primarily operational over time, and with the competing demands on their time affecting their ability to attend meetings, a non-voting Board liaison would be more appropriate for the relationship. These changes were implemented by City Council beginning with the 2023 Board appointments.

DISCUSSION

Annually the Governance Committee may choose to discuss priorities for representation on the VPL Board, which are applied during the applicant review. The Committee has previously discussed that there are also risks in reaching out to recruit specific individuals, given that it is Council that appoints members of the Library Board, as this creates expectations among those contacted.

The timeline for 2024 is:

September 3-29	Applications open
September 30-October 18	Application review by VPL committee
October 21-November 30	Council Nomination Committee process

The Board Recruitment Plan is attached as Appendix A, outlining the existing annual process and considerations. Generally, the Trustee Applicant Review Committee has requested re-appointments of existing trustees interested in continuing, given the learning curve for new trustees. If the Committee and Council apply this practice, there will be an opportunity for one new trustee to join the Board in 2025, as Trustee Raji Mangat is completing her eighth year on the Board, and this is the maximum term under the Library Act.

Trustee Information Session

VPL holds an online information session for prospective trustees, where the Board Chair, Board Vice-Chair, and the Chief Librarian & CEO provide information and answer questions. This session is scheduled on Tuesday, September 17, 2024 and is advertised on the City and VPL websites.

Trustee Applicant Review Committee

As noted in the Board Recruitment Plan, the applicant review normally includes the Chief Librarian & CEO and 2-3 trustees who are not applying for re-appointment. The review will take place in October.

FINAL REMARKS

Recognizing that City Council has sole authority to appoint Library Trustees, the Library Board can provide important context and information about the priorities for Library Board composition.

Appendix A: Board Recruitment Plan

Objective

To successfully achieve its mandate of providing sound governance and oversight to the Vancouver Public Library (the Library), Board members must collectively possess experience in a wide range of subjects, have the personal attributes necessary to function as part of a consensus-driven group, and be representative of the community they serve.

The Board recognizes that in keeping with the Library Act, Vancouver City Council (City Council) is solely responsible for determining the constitution of the VPL Board of Trustees. However, the Board believes that it is important that City Council be provided with the Board's insights on the skills, qualifications, and experience that would benefit the Library in making its selection of Library Trustees.

Legislative Background and Guidance

The Board of the Vancouver Public Library (the Board) operates according to The Library Act, as well as other acts such the Vancouver Charter and the BC Human Rights Code, and is responsible for ensuring that public library services are delivered effectively and efficiently to the City of Vancouver. References in this document refer to the Library Act unless otherwise indicated.

In accordance with the Library Act, s.5 and s.6:

- The VPL Board shall be composed of an uneven number of members, not fewer than five or more than thirteen, appointed by the municipal council.
- All regular appointments are to be made each December at the first regular meeting of the municipal council, or as soon as convenient.
- A vacancy arising during the term of an appointment is to be filled, for the remainder of the term, by an appointment made at the first meeting of the municipal council after the vacancy arises, or as soon as convenient.
- The member appointed to the library board from the municipal council holds office for one year, or for the remainder of the year for which the appointment is made.
- All other regular appointments are for terms of 2 years.
- A member is eligible for reappointment, but no member may serve for more than 8 consecutive years.
- The term of office of a member continues until a successor is appointed unless the member is removed for cause.
- The City Clerk shall give public notice of vacancies on the Board by publishing a notice of them in a newspaper.

The Board shall therefore develop and document the preferred Profile for Library Trustees. The Board shall review and update the Profile every two years.

Should vacancies arise during the term of the Board, the Board shall assess its collective skills and attributes to identify any gaps. The Board will then communicate to City Council the preferred skills and competencies of any new Trustees to be appointed.

Skills and Competency Profile

As a general principle, prospective Trustees will ideally have management and/or Board experience in one or more organizations of relevance to the Library.

To ensure that the Board collectively possesses the necessary attributes, the Board has adopted a Library Trustee Profile (the Profile) that sets out, as a guideline, the characteristics desirable of a new Library Trustee. It is recognized and expected that individuals will have experience and skills in multiple areas, but may not have formal designations.

Trustee Selection Process

The Chief Librarian & CEO identifies 2-3 Trustees to serve with them as a review committee each fall. Typically, the review committee will be comprised of the Chair of the Board and the Vice Chair, provided that none of the above are seeking reappointment. If so, then the Chief Librarian will seek assistance from another mid-term Trustee.

The review committee reviews all of the applications within the context of the profile and makes a recommendation to City Council as per the suitability of the applicant.

Public Library Trustee Profile

1. Demonstrates an active interest in public issues relating to literacy, learning and libraries.
2. Complies with the Board Governance policies.
3. Improves the diversity of the board, so it better reflects the diversity of our community.
4. Contributes knowledge, experience or a professional designation or background that complements that of the existing board members.
5. Has the knowledge, experience or potential to contribute to one or more of the key areas of board involvement, such as: Governance and policy, Strategic Library Planning, Finance, Technology, Infrastructure or Advocacy.
6. Is committed to investing personal time in preparing for board meetings, participating on board committees and supporting the library's vision and mission through involvement in library events, fundraising and Council meetings.
7. Is committed to advocating on behalf of the library.
8. Demonstrates alignment with the values of the board through interactions and communications, which reflect fairness, openness, thoughtfulness and respect.

