

Minutes of the VPL Board Community Relations, Planning & Development Committee Regular Meeting held on Thursday, October 24, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Present: Raji Mangat – Chair
Emily Lapper
Karen Spears

Absent: Harlan Pruden
Abeer Yusuf

Management

Present: Christina de Castell – Chief Librarian & CEO
Maryn Ashdown – Director, Neighbourhood & Youth Services
Kay Cahill – Director, Information Technology & Collections
Dawn Ibey – Director, Central Library & Public Service
Julia Morrison – Director, Corporate Services & CFO
Carol Nelson – Director, Planning & Communications

Staff: Patricia Chong – Manager, Policy & Planning
Scott Fraser – Manager, Marketing & Communications

Guest: Amir Abbey – President, CUPE 391

Recording

Secretary: Chrysalyn Tolentino – Executive Assistant

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Committee Chair Raji Mangat acknowledged that our work takes place on the unceded and traditional homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. She observed that VPL has made a long-term transformational commitment as an organization to right relations with the local Nations and that work is happening throughout VPL. She reflected on the significance of this work, that it is iterative, and that it takes time, and recognized that we have much work still to do.

ADMINISTRATION:

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Karen Spears

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 of September 16, 2024 for approval by the Committee.

Moved by Emily Lapper

THAT the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held September 16, 2024 be approved as received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PLANNING

3. Promotion of Cultural and Library Events and Observances at VPL

Carol Nelson introduced the report and noted that the number of potential days of celebration and remembrance is numerous, and VPL would not be able to dedicate adequate resources to promoting all of them, particularly when combined with core library programs and services that require promotion. Staff identified the need to develop a framework that included overarching principles and evaluation criteria for public events and observances to manage public facing events ensuring balanced workload for staff. Staff also identified a classification of events into three tiers: major, intermediate and minor to help resources. We are seeking the Board's validation and direction on this framework and the initial lists.

Trustees noted the ambiguity of the term "broad" used in item 4 of the principles for recognition and suggested alternatives or removal. They also asked for the rationale why the Board would need to approve library programs, and whether the list would come back to the Board annually. Chief Librarian & CEO clarified that Board approval for promoting library programs that are in the operating budget are not required, and the report would be modified to ensure this is clear. Director Nelson noted that major changes would be brought back to the Board and this is not expected to be annual.

Trustees noted under Evaluation Criteria that recognizing events related to societal trends or issues could create challenges and confusion. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell responded that the Strategic Alignment criteria would be sufficient to address relevant events, and staff

would respond to the Committee’s feedback by removing this criteria for the recommended framework.

Trustees noted the importance of prioritizing events connected with Indigenous peoples and the local Nations, and sought to confirm that these opportunities fit within the framework, such as recognizing the Women’s Memorial March or Red Dress Day. Staff identified the opportunity to include events associated with local Nations in the government sources at item 4 of the Framework and other relevant opportunities for amendments. Trustees further discussed the challenge of broad observance events such as Mother’s Day, Valentine’s Day etc. and staff confirmed that these could be considered by staff and recognized at a unit level through activities. Staff confirmed areas that would be addressed through amendments in response to the Committee’s discussion prior to submitting the framework and list for Board approval.

At the end of the discussion, the following motions were raised:

Moved by Karen Spears

THAT the Committee recommend that the Board approve the principles and evaluation criteria for public-facing events, programs and observances as amended and direct the Chief Librarian & CEO to implement these in operations.

THAT the Committee recommend that the Board approve the major and intermediate non-library events and themes for recognition beginning in 2025, and direct the Chief Librarian & CEO to maintain the list in future years.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Facilities Master Plan Approach

Committee Chair Raji Mangat introduced the topic and referred to staff. Patricia Chong, Manager of Policy & Planning, presented an overview of the current Facilities Master Plan elements, approved by the Board in 2018, to inform discussion of how the Board would like to be involved in the next iteration. Trustees thanked Patricia for the clarity of her presentation and expressed interest in Board involvement in the Guiding Principles and the Prioritization in particular. They noted the importance of considering how to balance opportunities that arise for development with the VPL Board’s priorities based on condition and use in the next Facilities Master Plan.

Following the presentation on the Official Development Plan (ODP) at the September Board meeting, staff are proposing that VPL update the FMP after data is available from the ODP. Trustees discussed and agreed with this recommendation. They noted that any lessons learned in service provision during the pandemic might inform the update. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell shared that staff noticed that co-located facilities posed the most challenges

during the pandemic, and we had to wait to reopen branches that were co-located with community centres for both practical operational reasons and labour relations reasons. Staff will be thinking about incorporating this learning as we update the Facilities Master Plan.

Trustees expressed support for maintaining or increasing the service targets, and noted that VPL is among the highest of comparator urban libraries in square feet per capita. They also noted the opportunity for Board involvement in advocacy related to the Facilities Master Plan, to Council or the Province, and during the ODP process.

Moved by Emily Lapper

THAT the Committee recommend that the Board receive this report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Raji Mangat, Chair

Christina de Castell, Secretary