

Minutes of the VPL Board Meeting held on Wednesday, October 30, 2024 at 6:15 p.m. at the Level 8 Morris J. Wosk Boardroom, 350 West Georgia St., Vancouver, BC.

Present:

Tim Bottomer		
Victor Huang		
Kevin Lowe	—	Chair
Parveen Mangat		
Raji Mangat	—	Vice Chair
Clr. Peter Meiszner	—	Vancouver City Councillor
Harlan Pruden		
Karen Spears		
Ziming Yang		

Absent:

Emily Lapper
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 & Facilities
Carol Nelson	—	Director, Planning & Communications
Balwinder Rai	—	Director, Human Resources

Staff:

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

Guests:

Victoria Jung	—	Chair, Vancouver Board of Education
Jean Broughton	—	Vice President, CUPE Local 391
Audrey Wang	—	Member-at-Large, CUPE Local 391

Recording

Secretary:

Chrysalyn Tolentino	—	Executive Assistant
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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Trustee Victor Huang acknowledged that attendees are participating from the traditional territories of the Coast Salish people and the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Trustee Huang spoke about his own learning and reading, and shared

comments from Murray Sinclair about the role of education in Reconciliation. He noted that he is grateful to be part of VPL and continue to learn and expand his perspective on Indigenous rights.

ADMINISTRATION

1. Consent Agenda - Removal of Items and Approval

Moved by Clr. Peter Meiszner and seconded by Parveen Mangat

THAT the following Board reports be approved on consent:

- Public Library InterLINK Executive Director Report
THAT the Library Board receive the report for information.
- September 30, 2024 (Q3) Financial Operating Results
THAT the Library Board receive the report for information.
- Draft Minutes – October 16, 2024 Governance Committee Regular Meeting
THAT the Library Board receive the draft minutes for information.
- Draft Minutes – October 24, 2024 CRPD Committee Regular Meeting
THAT the Library Board receive the draft minutes for information.
- Facilities Master Plan Approach
THAT the Library Board receive the report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Harlan Pruden and seconded by Ziming Yang

THAT the Board approve the regular meeting agenda as received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Minutes

The draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held September 25, 2024 were presented to the Board for approval.

Moved by Ziming Yang and seconded by Karen Spears

THAT the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held September 25, 2024 be approved as received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. **Clr. Peter Meiszner**

Board Chair Lowe acknowledged that today is Clr. Meiszner's last meeting with the VPL Board and thanked Clr. Meiszner for his contributions and support. Clr. Meiszner thanked the Library Board for their warm send off, noting that he has enjoyed his time and that he will continue to be an advocate for the Library. He recognized the work of all the trustees on the Library Board.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

➤ **Vancouver School Board**

Vancouver School Board Chair Victoria Jung shared that this may be her last meeting as VSB representative to the Library Board. She highlighted events in the school district and shared information about anti-racism books purchased with grant funds.

➤ **CUPE Local 391**

Jean Broughton, Vice President of CUPE 391, introduced Audrey Wang, CUPE 391 Member-at-Large and Supervisor at Carnegie Branch. Jean shared that Amir Abbey, President of CUPE 391 attended the CUPE Sectoral Conference and found it helpful to understand broader picture of libraries. She noted that Union members continue to be redeployed to other locations to address staffing shortages, particularly on Sundays, and they look forward to moving back to their home branches. Short staffing is on everyone's minds and concerns about burnout. CUPE 391 is committed to working with management to seek investment in VPL's staffing budget. Jean shared that their members are looking forward to the Wellness Conference and noted that wellbeing, safety and work-life balance are important to staff. The Union also recognized Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell who has led the library through unprecedented times and members appreciate her honesty, respect to staff and her open communication. The Union hopes that the hiring committee will consider someone for the position who is experienced building trust in a changing workplace, and they want to be a partner in this work.

➤ **VPL Foundation**

Board Chair Lowe read the VPL Foundation's report, sharing that about 100 people attended Storybook Social but it was not a fundraiser, and that they may hold a similar celebratory event in future. The annual cardholder campaign has raised about \$75,000, which is an improvement over last year, and the VPL Foundation fall direct mail and email solicitation will begin soon. The 2023-24 Annual Report to donors is being emailed to donors and the Foundation is excited to launch the Step Up for Literacy mini campaign aimed at encouraging gifts of \$10,000 (can be pledged over up to 5 years) with the option for recognition on the Children's Library staircase.

ITEM FOR DECISION

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

CPRD Committee Chair Raji Mangat introduced and provided an overview of the report noting that the Committee supported requesting Board approval of the framework for decision making for recognizing events and observances. The Committee agreed that the framework should prioritize events and observances related to Indigenous peoples and the local Nations, and identified opportunities to enhance this in the framework. The Committee's suggestions have been incorporated.

Clr. Meiszner noted similar discussions and changes have been happening at City Council. Trustees asked about capacity and flexibility for recognizing minor events, including whether branches could choose to participate in neighbourhood-based activities, and how the event lists would be established and refined over time. Director Nelson responded that there is no limit on minor events and it will be at discretion of staff based on time available. Chief Librarian & CEO noted that minor event recognition could include social media posts, and branches will have the discretion to participate in community events. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell confirmed that staff would bring back the framework and list to the Board, if staff later identify gaps or risks associated with changes.

Trustees asked if staff consider changes needed to the Endorsement and Advocacy Policy in relation to this framework, or whether another policy is needed. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted that by approving this framework, the Board would be giving staff direction to implement it, and this would be done through administrative policy and procedures. Trustees also noted alignment with the Strategic Plan and asked about the review period for the framework and list, given policies normally have an established review period. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell confirmed that the list would need to be reviewed following the determination of a new Strategic Plan as the priorities may change.

Trustees also asked for further information about the potential handling of additional days of significance for Urban Indigenous Peoples in Vancouver, and staff noted that there would be flexibility in observing these, noting there are also additional days important for Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Trustees suggested descriptive wording or operational framing as an alternative to using major, intermediate and minor as groupings, as these may be read as judgement about value. Staff agreed that this would be an improvement and to incorporate the change.

Trustees noted the diversity of Vancouver's population and asked for additional information about how VPL acknowledges and reflects the ethnic and religious diversity of Vancouver and noted challenges with the choices for the suggested major and

intermediate events, such as the broad grouping of Asian Heritage Month which doesn't recognize the diversity of cultures. Trustee Parveen Mangat noted the importance of the Multicultural Strategy in the Strategic Plan, which has been delayed, and that this issue also needs to be considered for the library collection. She provided examples of Sikh books that are not available through VPL. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell acknowledged the challenges, including operational capacity and long term partnerships. She noted that participating in neighbourhood events through units should remain possible, and that participating in large scale parades cannot be expanded, and may need to be reduced, until we can remedy minimum staffing levels. She noted that staffing was not sufficient for the level of participation in the Pride parade, and branch hours were reduced that weekend in 2024. Trustees suggested that the Board consider asking for additional funding for staffing in order to increase participation in community events, given the importance, and suggested staff bring back a proposal. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell provided information about the issues of short term and event-based staffing, which is no longer working for VPL, perhaps due to higher costs of living. Staff have identified that long term and full time staffing will need to increase in order to engage more with community events, and hope that the investment request for 2024 will be granted and address the problem.

Trustees considered and discussed whether both the framework and the list of events should be approved, and Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell noted that the issues are complex and important and warrant thorough consideration by the Board. Trustees agreed that the framework should be approved and decided that staff and the CRPD committee should further consider the list of events and learn through implementation, and that staff should continue to use the proposed list in 2025 as a pilot.

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

Moved by Ziming Yang and seconded by Tim Bottomer

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; and

That the Board direct staff to report back in no more than one year's time on the principles and evaluation criteria implementation.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURN

Moved by Harlan Pruden and seconded by Ziming Yang

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Kevin Lowe, Chair

Christina de Castell, Secretary