



Minutes of the VPL Board Regular Meeting held on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via teleconference.

<b>Present:</b>	Jennifer Chan	—	Chair
	Clr. Christine Boyle	—	Vancouver City Councillor
	Kurt Heinrich		
	Rebecca Jules		
	Kevin Lowe		
	Raji Mangat	—	Vice Chair
	Harlan Pruden		
	John Schaub		
	Rhonda Sherwood	—	Vice Chair
<b>Absent:</b>	Abeer Yusuf		
	Zahra Hussein		
	Stuart Mackinnon	—	Vancouver Park Board Commissioner
<b>Management Present:</b>	Barbara Parrott	—	Vancouver School Board Trustee
	Christina de Castell	—	Chief Librarian
	Kay Cahill	—	Director, Collections & Technology
	Julie Iannacone	—	Director, Neighbourhood & Youth Services
	Dawn Ibey	—	Director, Library Experience
	Julia Morrison	—	Director, Corporate Services & Facilities
	Carol Nelson	—	Director, Planning & Communications
	Balwinder Rai	—	Director, Human Resources
<b>Staff:</b>	Daniela Esparo	—	Manager, Neighbourhood Services
<b>Guests:</b>	Kari Scott-Whyte	—	President, CUPE Local 391
	Julian Key	—	Member-at-Large, CUPE Local 391
	Jenny Marsh	—	Executive Director, VPL Foundation
	Jennifer Clarke	—	Chair, VPL Foundation
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	Chrysalyn Tolentino	—	Executive Assistant

## CHAIR'S REMARKS

Board Chair Jennifer Chan thanked everyone for making the effort to call in and participate during this challenging and sombre time of this COVID-19 health emergency that is also a time for gratitude and appreciation. She remarked that there are a lot of changes happening in our organization and it important that we maintain vital relationships with our partners such as the VPL Foundation, Friends of VPL and CUPE 391. On behalf of the Board, she thanked all VPL staff and let them know that the Board appreciates their work. She also thanked Kari Scott-Whyte for working around the clock in keeping their members informed and expressed her appreciation and respect to Chief Librarian Christina de Castell for supporting and updating the Board, for representing VPL to the City and EOC, and for her passion, resilience and patience in these times of uncertainty.

## ADMINISTRATION

### 1. Removal of Items from Consent Agenda

There were no agenda items removed from the Consent Agenda.

### 2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Raji Mangat and seconded by Abeer Yusuf

*THAT the Board approve the regular meeting agenda as amended.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### 3. Approval of the Items for Consent

Moved by Rhonda Sherwood and seconded by Harlan Pruden

*THAT the following Board reports be approved on consent:*

- Monthly Outcomes Report – February 2020  
*THAT the Library Board receive the report for information.*
- Draft Minutes – March CRPD Committee Regular Meeting  
*THAT the Library Board receive the draft minutes for information.*
- Draft Minutes – March SFHR Committee Regular Meeting  
*THAT the Library Board receive the draft minutes for information.*
- Provincial Library Grant  
*THAT the Library Board receive the report for information.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### 4. Minutes

The draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held February 26, 2020 were presented to the Board for approval.

Moved by Kevin Lowe and seconded by Clr. Christine Boyle

*THAT the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held February 26, 2020 be approved as received.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

##### ➤ **CUPE Local 391**

Kari Scott-Whyte, President of CUPE 391, thanked the Board Chair for her kind words and noted that this is a very challenging and difficult week for all members and she appreciates the Board's support as the Union works through a great deal of concern from staff as they are notified of their status. She is really challenged by the dichotomy presented with collaborative work on one hand and on the other, real gaps in communications. She reiterated that communication should be clear, and that staff have expressed their confusion and anxiety. Kari thanked the Board and expressed appreciation to them for listening.

##### ➤ **Friends of VPL**

Ann True, President of the Friends of VPL, sent her report via email: The Friends have cancelled their May book sale, and have stopped sorting and accepting book donations. They are looking to reschedule their AGM from May 2 to June or July and determine how they can proceed by phone or video conference. Book'mark has been closed since March 17<sup>th</sup> and won't reopen until Central Branch does.

##### ➤ **VPL Foundation**

Jenny Marsh, Executive Director of the VPL Foundation, reported that they are putting plans on hold and have paused their direct mail campaign. They are planning to continue sending emails to promote and share the great work of the Library in these hard times. Jenny is participating in conversations with library foundations across North America discussing best practices.

#### ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

#### 5. COVID-19 Update

Chief Librarian Christina de Castell provided an overview of VPL activities in response to the

COVID-19 pandemic, including suspending public-facing services in the previous week, and notifying staff this week who will be laid off or affected because of the closure of all branches and in-person service at Central Library. Christina and Director of Human Resources, Balwinder Rai spent much of the past weekend along with CUPE 391, 15, and 1004 negotiating a Letter of Understanding (LOU) for workforce reductions. The Letter of Understanding was ratified by the Board on Monday evening, March 23, and by City Council, and was ratified by the three unions. The LOU includes 42 days of wage protection for regular full time, posted part time, and regular part time staff with benefits and 28 days of pay protection for auxiliary, regular part time without benefits and temporary staff. Managers began contacting staff Tuesday offering continuing roles in essential work to deliver services digitally and by phone, and contacting others to provide notice of layoff and the pay protection period. Management have been receiving many questions from staff regarding redeployment opportunities and individual situations related to the LOU terms. Because this is a multi-party agreement, decisions around interpretation require consultation with the City, and take longer than in usual circumstances. Christina observed that the Federal Government released an announcement of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit to help workers who have lost their income because of the pandemic whether they are eligible for EI or not.

Christina shared good news related to use of digital library services, including library card sign-ups of 50 per day; many requests for eReader support; an online storytime delivered last week and publishers showing flexibility in licensing. Staff are proud to continue delivering so many services digitally and by phone in this difficult time.

Trustee Heinrich asked about resources to support staff in this difficult time. Christina replied that the main source of support is through Homewood Health, which offers immediate professional counselling over the phone and options for follow-up appointments. Managers are offering contact information for follow-up with themselves and Human Resources. Trustee Yusuf asked about the number of staff who are temporarily laid off and Christina provided a breakdown of estimated staff affected as well as estimates of those continuing to work from home and onsite at Central Library to provide digital and phone support, accounting, human resources and for special projects. Trustee Lowe sought clarification on the challenges related to interpretation of the Letter of Understanding and the Union's concerns about communication. Christina gave an example of the Federal Government's Emergency Response Benefit, which will provide greater income for some auxiliary staff than the pay protection available to them in the LOU. She described the communication strategy, which included a script for managers' conversations, with email follow up, and commented on the impact of emotion in these conversations. Trustee Yusuf asked if the Board will be called to ratify changes to the LOU, and Christina noted that this would depend on the situation. Vice Chair Sherwood thanked staff and acknowledged Kari's emotion as she has been experiencing the difficulties of staff, and expressed hope that the Board can support Kari and staff in these trying times. Board Chair Chan asked

about communication and whether there was anything further that the Board should be hearing about, and Christina responded that she will consult with Kari further. She noted that this situation is extraordinary as all the questions are new and urgent, and unlike in normal union-management discussions, we do not have past experience to draw on.

Trustee Yusuf asked if any other big publishers followed Macmillan in changing license terms for content to libraries and whether the Library can advocate for more of this. Christina noted that Penguin Random House is another big publisher that has changed its terms to be more flexible, and that CULC has reached out to Canadian publishers to ask for flexibility so that libraries can deliver storytimes online.

## **ADJOURN**

Moved by Harlan Pruden and seconded by Rebecca Jules

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m. and moved to in-camera as per Board Procedure Policy 7(o)(iii) *Labour relations and other employee relations*.

---

Jennifer Chan, Chair

---

Christina de Castell, Secretary