

# VPL BOARD

## Regular Meeting Minutes

### Wednesday, January 26, 2022

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Minutes of the VPL Board Meeting held on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via video conference.

<b>Present:</b>	Tim Bottomer		
	Kurt Heinrich	—	Vice Chair
	Zahra Hussein		
	Kevin Lowe	—	Chair
	Melody Ma		
	Stuart Mackinnon	—	Vancouver Park Board Commissioner
	Raji Mangat	—	Vice Chair
	Barbara Parrott	—	Vancouver School Board Trustee
	Karen Spears		
	Abeer Yusuf		
<b>Absent:</b>	Clr. Pete Fry	—	Vancouver City Councillor
	Harlan Pruden		
<b>Management</b>			
<b>Present:</b>	Christina de Castell	—	Chief Librarian & CEO
	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>	Megan Langley	—	Manager, Neighbourhood Services
	Erin Watkins	—	Manager, Programming & Learning
<b>Guests:</b>	Johnathan Dyer	—	Acting President, CUPE Local 391
	Jenny Marsh	—	Executive Director, VPL Foundation
	Darius Maze	—	Co-Chair, Friends of VPL
	Lisa Culbert	—	Co-Chair, Friends of VPL
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>			
	Chrysalyn Tolentino	—	Executive Assistant

## INAUGURAL MEETING:

Chief Librarian & CEO Christina de Castell acknowledged that our work takes place on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. She acknowledged the news of the findings at the former St. Joseph's Mission Residential School shared by the Williams Lake First Nation (T'exelceme), and that we grieve alongside them for these children, and with those present who have connections to these lands and these peoples. She commented on the opportunities VPL has to contribute to Reconciliation through our work, including contributing to enacting the principles of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

### 1. Election of Chair

Chief Librarian & CEO Christina de Castell, acting as Chair, called the 2022 Inaugural Meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. The Chief Librarian then called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Library Board.

Moved by Raji Mangat

*THAT Kevin Lowe be nominated as Chair of the VPL Board for 2022.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

There being no other nominations, the Chief Librarian declared Kevin Lowe elected to the office of Chair by acclamation.

### 2. Election of Vice Chairs

Trustee Lowe assumed the position of Chair and called for nominations for the two positions of Vice-Chairs.

Moved by Kurt Heinrich

*THAT Raji Mangat be appointed as Vice-Chair of the VPL Board for 2022.*

Moved by Raji Mangat

*THAT Kurt Heinrich be appointed as Vice-Chair of the VPL Board for 2022.*

There being no other nominations, Board Chair Chan declared Raji Mangat and Kurt Heinrich elected to the two offices of Vice-Chair by acclamation.

## INTRODUCTION

### 3. 2022 VPL Indigenous Storyteller-in-Residence - Eden Fine Day

Erin Watkins, Manager, Programming & Learning introduced Cree author, musician and visual artist Eden Fine Day as VPL's 2022 Indigenous Storyteller-in-Residence. Her residency begins February 7 and runs until the end of May 2022. Ms. Day commented that she is honored and humbled to be involved in the process of sharing who is she and what she knows through this residency, and especially to children, and is planning to use multidisciplinary storytelling techniques to engage with the community through workshops, programs and events. She will also be working on her own creative projects, including the writing of a new album and completing a young adult graphic novel series. Trustees welcomed Ms. Day to VPL and congratulated her on her new role and noted that they are looking forward to seeing her activities.

## ADMINISTRATION

### 4. Consent Agenda - Removal of Items and Approval

Moved by Zahra Hussein and seconded by Kurt Heinrich

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

- Item Removed from In Camera Meeting Minutes: 2022 Operating Budget decision

*THAT the Library Board receive the report for information.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### 5. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Raji Mangat and seconded by Zahra Hussein

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

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### 6. Minutes

The draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held December 8, 2021 were presented to the Board for approval.

Moved by Karen Spears and seconded by Abeer Yusuf

*THAT the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held December 8, 2021 be approved as received.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

### ➤ Chair Remarks/Trustee Roundtable

Board Chair Lowe gave a warm welcome to our two new trustees: Tim Bottomer and Melody Ma.

Board Chair Lowe thanked everyone for their confidence in him to take on this role and shared that he is humbled by the opportunity to serve as chair of VPL Board of Trustees. He expressed that he is grateful that we work and live on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh Nations, and for VPL's role in advancing Truth and Reconciliation. He acknowledged that it has been a challenging couple of years, and expressed appreciation for the amazing work and dedication of library workers who continually makes us proud of this institution. He noted that our work will continue to advance the health, wellness and safety of our staff in partnership with CUPE 391, and for the betterment of library workers and patrons. We are proud of having strong relationships with our partners, such as the VPL Foundation and Friends of VPL who play extremely important roles in the library, from the development of facilities to supporting programmes such as the VPL Writer-in-Residence. Board Chair Lowe also acknowledged the work of the Chief Librarian & CEO and Directors and how they put their heart and soul into this establishment, and for their support and help guiding the Board in making decisions. He also thanked trustees for their time, effort and dedication in working on complex issues, spending time reading reports and giving thoughtful feedback. He is hoping that at some point in 2022 we will be able to meet in person again so we can continue to develop and build relationships and trust. As Trustee Pruden mentioned recently, building relationships is key since it is in these relationships that we are able to have thoughtful dialogue. We are looking forward to an exciting year ahead with our strategic plan implementation, working towards fine free, upgrading Central Library and increasing our digital presence.

Board Chair Lowe noted that in past years trustees have started the year with a brief round table to share information about themselves, and asked trustees share why they chose to volunteer for the Library Board.

Trustee Mackinnon is the current Vancouver Park Board Chair and the liaison to VPL. He shared that libraries have been a huge part of his life and he has been visiting Dunbar branch since he was a child. He feels that the whole world is at his fingertips if he is in the library.

Trustee Bottomer is a senior solicitor & counsel with BC Hydro and is very excited to be a part of the Library Board. He is lifelong library goer from a bookish family who considers libraries as magical places. He also appreciates that the library carries civil liberties books. He has volunteered all his life and would like to contribute to the society in any way he can.

Trustee Spears shared that she had been on the Library Board for one year and is thrilled to be a part of the Board. She is a huge library fan and known amongst friends to be obsessed with the library. She quoted author Zadie Smith that the library is “the only thing left on the high street that doesn’t want either your soul or your wallet”.

Trustee Hussein welcomed new trustees Bottomer and Ma, and congratulated Board Chair Lowe for his election as Chair. She shared that she volunteers to give back to the community and noted that volunteering improves our happiness. She grew up going to the Richmond Public Library and is in awe of the reach of libraries.

Vice Chair Mangat noted that being on the Library Board is one of her favourite activities. She had been on the Board since 2017 and offered herself as a resource to new trustees. Her day job is a lawyer in the not-for-profit public interest legal world. She added that libraries are places where changes happen that enrich our lives. She always wants to be around librarians as they are magical people.

Trustee Yusuf wished a happy Lunar New Year to everyone. She joined the library because it is one the last few places that is inclusive, progressive, and equitable. She also shared that her mother was a librarian. She enjoys this Board and feels that it is one of the few places that has great camaraderie and equity.

Vice Chair Heinrich shared that he has been on the Library Board for the past four years. His day job is working in UBC’s Communication Department. He has been chair of the CPRD Committee and is the liaison for the VPL Foundation. The library is a terrific resource for his young son, a fantastic space to just hang out, and a place very conducive to younger ones.

Trustee Parrott is a Vancouver School Board Trustee and liaison to the VPL Board. She was a teacher and activist for 35 years. She shared that this is her last year on the Board as she will not be running for re-election. She noted that in schools, the library is the center and hub of the school community, as it is in neighbourhoods, and it has been a pleasure to advocate for the library.

Trustee Ma is excited to be a part of the Library Board. She is the co-founder of Podyssey Podcasts and involved in civic advocacy for social justice and cultural conservation of Vancouver’s Chinatown. A big part of her life was going to the Strathcona library. She has hosted events at Central Library teaching kids how to code, hosting podcasts and has built her business with her co-founder using the library’s meeting rooms. The library has been a huge part of her life and she is thrilled to be able to contribute back to the institution that contributed to who she has come to be.

Board Chair Lowe shared that his father was an elementary school teacher who instilled his love for life-long learning. Libraries have always been a part of his life, and he is interested in knowledge acquisition, knowledge translation and evolving space for the community. He is proud to be a part of this journey.

Board Chair Lowe added that former trustee Rhonda Sherwood has resigned and we will be working on filling that vacant position. He will send an email to trustees to confirm participation in various committee and liaison roles. He asked trustees to let him know what roles they would like to volunteer for.

➤ **CUPE Local 391**

Johnathan Dyer, Acting President of CUPE 391 shared that it has been a very busy month for the Union between the implementation of the vaccine mandate and other activities. He noted that the Union had their first refusal of unsafe work and thanked HR Director Rai and the OH&S Committee for investigating this. He also thanked the Chief Librarian & CEO for reaching out to Indigenous staff when news about Williams Lake came out this week. Board Chair Lowe thanked Johnathan and asked to please pass their thanks to former Acting CUPE 391 president Lisa Saayman.

➤ **Friends of VPL**

Lisa Culbert, Co-Chair, Friends of VPL, congratulated Board Chair Lowe for his appointment and welcomed the new Board members. She noted that the Friends inaugural meeting will be held in February, and their board met a few weeks ago to revisit and adjust their strategic plan. She detailed some accomplishments for the past year: hiring their general manager, improving operations for their organization, streamlining their policies, completion of the updated MOU with VPL and renewed lease of the Book'mark. One area that they will be focusing on is the reinstatement of their book sale in the spring. They will also be focusing on board recruitment this year. Trustee Yusuf asked Lisa to share social media materials for their board recruitment that trustees could amplify. Trustee Ma asked if they are looking for specific skill sets. Lisa responded that they will be revisiting the skills matrix and identify gaps. They will share this once it is finalized. Board Chair Lowe stated that the Friends is a wonderful board to be on and encouraged trustees to be members of the Friends and visit Book'mark.

➤ **VPL Foundation**

Jenny Marsh congratulated Board Chair Lowe and Vice Chairs Heinrich and Mangat for their appointment and welcomed Trustees Bottomer and Ma to the Board. She thanked the Bottomer family for their support of the Library through the Foundation. Jenny expressed interest in connecting with Trustee Ma for her personal experience in library spaces. She reported that the Foundation has completed the transition of bookkeeping to an outsourced provider and noted that Director Morrison will remain as member of the VPL Foundation's Finance Committee. She also shared some fundraising updates: the cardholder acquisition campaign raised over \$118K for 2021, the regular donor campaign raised \$80K and the direct mail acquisition campaign raised over \$20K. She is happy to note that they have exceeded their fundraising goals for 2021 and acquired new Foundation

supporters. The Foundation is gearing up for the Library Giving Day campaign which will roll out in April.

## **ITEM FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION**

### **7. 2022 InterLINK Provisional Budget**

Vice Chair Mangat, in her role as the VPL Board liaison to the InterLINK Board, presented for information the 2022 InterLINK provisional budget. She provided some background on the role of InterLINK and services provided. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell provided additional background information on the budget and noted the decision made a few years ago that VPL will no longer receive funding as a provincial/regional resource, and the agreement at the Board to eliminate special adjustments to levies for some other systems over three years, which is contributing to the changes seen in the budget. She also noted that due to COVID in 2020, many patrons were not commuting to downtown, resulting in a drop in our circulation and a rise in other communities. VPL is now back to being a net lender. Trustee Ma sought clarification on the consequences of the lesser grant. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell responded that we reduced interlibrary loan staffing due to the reduction in funding. Trustee Mackinnon commented that he is an avid crime novel reader and he appreciates interlibrary loans.

Moved by Zahra Hussein and seconded by Stuart Mackinnon

*THAT the Board receive the report for information.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **8. VPL and Friends of VPL Memorandum of Understanding**

Julia Morrison, Director, Corporate Services & Facilities, presented the updated Memorandum of Understanding between the Vancouver Public Library and the Friends of the Vancouver Public Library Society, which replaces the Letter of Understanding between the Vancouver Public Library and the Friends from 1995. The core concepts of the MOU remain unchanged while the exchange of documents, such as minutes and financial information, and the process for fundraising priorities, were updated based on current practices. In addition to the MOU, staff worked with the City's Legal Services department and the Friends to update and renew the terms of the lease for the Book'mark retail store and space for sorting and office activities on a five-year renewable term. Vice Chair Heinrich inquired about section 3.3 of the MOU where "The Friends will permit people of all genders the opportunity to be nominated and to serve on the Friends' executive committee and board of directors." Lisa Culbert, Co-Chair of Friends, noted that this may be legacy language and the Friends are looking at diversity with a full view of inclusivity on their board. Trustee Spears noted the same thing and that she assumed this is a statement around diversity and inclusion. Chair Lowe referred to section 1.1 around Library Board

trustees becoming members as well as appointing a VPL Board liaison to the Friends. He asked Trustees to consider volunteering as an alternate liaison to the Friends.

Moved by Abeer Yusuf and seconded by Kurt Heinrich

*THAT the Board receive the report for information.*

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **9. COVID Operations Update**

Julie Iannacone, Director, Neighbourhood & Youth Services, shared a verbal report about COVID operations. She noted that management has established priority branches to remain open for service and shelter in the event of a severe staffing shortage. Criteria for priority branches includes branch size, operating hours, neighbourhood need, and proximity to other services such as public restrooms. If a non-priority branch does not have enough staff to be open, we will reduce hours and may redeploy existing staff to a priority branch. Overtime pay may be authorized to keep priority branches open when regular practices, such as calling for auxiliary staff and asking other locations to redeploy staff have not been successful. So far, we have not had to close branches completely, however, we have on occasion opened late or closed early. We are managing well and we will continue to support staff.

Dawn Ibey, Director of Library Experience, noted that Central has had staff shortages due to illness but nothing with a substantial effect. She shared that managers have worked on contingency plans in case of staffing shortages and prioritized services. She added that the number one priority is to keep all our facilities open, which may mean redeploying staff fluidly among departments and branches, and that the larger units in Central make it easier for Central to adjust staffing while maintaining access to collections, services and computers. Staff are quite heroic in continuing our services.

Board Chair Lowe asked Directors Iannacone and Ibey to pass on the Board's gratitude to library staff working in these trying times. Trustee Yusuf asked what trustees can do to support staff. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell responded that the Board is helping by recognizing the current environment and by having delegated operational decision making. She encouraged trustees to reach out to her if they have any questions regarding operational issues. Trustee Ma thanked staff for their proactive approach and asked if staff sickness has exceeded service thresholds. Director Iannacone responded that so far, this has been not an issue in larger locations but has affected smaller locations. Trustee Ma also asked about public reaction to opening late. Director Iannacone noted that we have not received any complaints and the public has been understanding. The impact so far has been very low. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell added that the size of our auxiliary work force has helped cover vacation and illness in branches. Trustee Ma also asked if overtime has been significant. Director Iannacone responded that it has been low and the priority setting



has helped manage that. Trustee Bottomer asked where the minimum staffing level comes from. Director Iannacone noted that this is an internal process with consideration to staff classification. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell added that this is driven by safety considerations rather than regulatory requirements. Trustee Spears recognized the ongoing toll of the pandemic on staff and thanked them for their amazing work and dedication. Board Chair Lowe asked if staff are seeing gaps in policies exposed by COVID. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell responded that we have not seen further gaps, after those addressed by the Emergency Response policy at the beginning of COVID, and that those decisions by the Board in 2020 have been serving us well.

**10. Confirming Completion of Annual Chief Librarian & CEO Performance Review**

Board Chair Lowe reported that part of the responsibility of the Board is to conduct the Chief Librarian & CEO's performance review. He noted that he and Trustee Pruden met with the Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell last week and completed the performance review.

**11. International Holocaust Remembrance Day**

Trustee Mackinnon shared that January 27 is the 77th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau honouring the victims and the survivors of the Holocaust. City Hall and public buildings will be illuminated in yellow on January 27.

**ADJOURN**

Moved by Abeer Yusuf and seconded by Kurt Heinrich

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

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Kevin Lowe, Chair

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Christina de Castell, Secretary