Vancouver Public Library

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date:	June 16, 2020
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Meeting Date:	June 24, 2020

TO:	VPL Board
FROM:	Kevin Lowe, Chair, Governance Committee
SUBJECT:	**Policy Management Framework**

SUMMARY

This report provides a Policy Management Framework to support Board Policy Review.

PURPOSE

This report is for information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board receive the report for information.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

The Governance Committee had previously received a draft of this document in April 2019 and provided feedback, which was incorporated into the version presented June 15. The Committee members commented on the value of the Policy Management Framework for trustee understanding of roles and approach, as well as its value for orientation for new trustees. They identified that the policy process presented is traditional, and noted that there are opportunities where traditional policy frameworks have failed certain groups, and that the Library may wish to explore other policy frameworks in certain circumstances. This need to consider other approaches has been included in the version presented, with revised text in red on page 6. Trustees recognize that this will be a living document, and will be subject to modifications over time.

BACKGROUND

Policies and their accompanying procedures are key documents in any organization. At VPL, policies set out the principles that we will follow in delivering service to our patrons in alignment with the library's vision, mission and values.

In November 2018, staff presented a recommended approach for the Board Policy Review for discussion. It was agreed that the first step of the Board Policy Review would be the development of a Policy Management Framework to provide staff, VPL Board, and the public with a clearly articulated standardized process to develop and manage policies. The framework would not be a Board approved policy unto itself.

In April 2019, staff presented a draft Policy Management Framework to the Governance Committee. The Committee reviewed and gave feedback on the framework including feedback on guiding principles, a policy review frequency, and a preferred course of action when a Council policy falls within the definition of an administrative policy at the Library.

DISCUSSION

Attached is VPL's Policy Management Framework, incorporating the Governance Committee's feedback provided in April 2019 and June 2020. This document will be used to guide staff and support policy development and review by the VPL Board.

A review of all Board policies has commenced, and the recommended prioritization of policies during the review will be provided to the Services, Finance, and Human Resources Committee and the Community Relations, Planning and Development Committee for consideration in July, with each committee considering the policies that fall within their terms of reference.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The development of the policy management framework and the review of Board policies will be conducted within the scope of regular operations.

FINAL REMARKS

A clear, consistent and relevant set of Board policies is critical for the effective governance and operations of VPL. A policy management framework will enable VPL to oversee, manage and maintain its policies effectively.

VPL Policy Management Framework

1. Purpose

The purpose of the VPL Policy Management Framework is to guide VPL's management team in the development and ongoing maintenance of its policies. All policies require periodic review to ensure that they support the organization in its current Vision, Mission and Values and that they are effective in serving the organization and its patrons.

The Vancouver Public Library (VPL) is governed by various laws, including the following:

- BC *Library Act*
- Federal and Provincial Laws of General Application, including: *Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms*, *Criminal Code of Canada, BC Human Rights Code,* BC *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act,* BC *Workers Compensation Act*
- City bylaws

Within this legal framework are policies which serve to guide the Board, management and staff in the decision-making process in their work at VPL. Policies provide a framework for the delegation of decision-making authority and the criteria on which that delegated authority is based. They also set out rules and principles to minimize misunderstandings and reduce uncertainties. VPL's policies often arise from legal requirements from the BC *Library Act* and provincial or federal law.

2. Definitions

What is a policy?

A policy establishes a position, intention or plan on an organizational issue. It is of strategic importance, is holistic in purpose, and has long term commitments.

Policies are typically:

- A set of criteria, rules or principles describing a position on a specific topic or issue, why that position has been adopted and to whom, when and where it applies.
- Mandatory to follow and include requirements that must be met.
- Prepared to ensure effective and consistent decision-making that reflects the Mission, Vision and Values of VPL.

Policies do not provide procedural detail. However, they may be linked to procedures which outline how to operationalize the policy.

VPL has two main policy categories: Board and Administrative, as well as accompanying procedures:

VPL Policy Management Framework

Board Policies	
Scope	Board policies reflect the unique governance and oversight responsibilities of the Library Board within the organization. They establish the strategic direction of the Library, determine the delegation of responsibility, define the Board's relationship with the Chief Librarian, and establish the Board's rules of conduct, roles, due diligence, etc. Public library boards in B.C. are governed by terms set out in the *B.C. Library Act*. Board policies also provide high level direction, defining the scope and limits within which the library operates and providing parameters for effective decision-making by the Board, management and staff. They are foundational in that they advance the vision, mission, values and strategic direction of the Library.
Approval	Board policies are approved by the Board, unless otherwise determined by the Board.

Administrative Policies	
Scope	Administrative policies are enabling policies that focus on responsibilities of management, including business operations and day-to-day management of services, personnel and facilities. They are usually accompanied by detailed procedures. They may provide further detail to Board policies or stand alone as an independent policy.
Approval	Administrative policies are approved by the VPL Directors Group [1], unless otherwise determined by the Chief Librarian.

Procedures	
Scope	A procedure defines the specific rules, steps and actions required to apply or implement a policy. Procedures contain mandatory steps and provide the necessary detail and instruction to describe the authorized course of action. They ensure the efficiency and accuracy of policy implementation. Procedures are often, though not always, related to a policy.
Approval	Developed, approved, implemented and monitored by the Director and/or Manager of the applicable work unit.

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[1] The Directors Group comprises the Chief Librarian and all senior managers who report directly to the Chief Librarian. "Director" refers to a member of VPL senior management.

3.   Example: Relationship Between Board Policies, Administrative Policies and Procedures

Board Policy

Procurement Policy:
Sets out the requirements and financial authority limits
for the procurement of goods, services and construction

Administrative Policy

Collections Acquisitions Policy:
Outlines the requirements for the procurement of
materials for VPL's physical and digital collections

Procedures
Specifies the steps and actions required to implement
the Collections Acquisition Policy

Physical Collections:
Purchase Order, New Vendor Approval, Vendor
Assignment
Contract Review & Approval, Receiving

Digital Collections:
Digital Collections Approval
Digital Collections License

4.   Relationship with City of Vancouver Policies

The *Guidelines on the Relationship Between Vancouver City Council and the Vancouver Public Library Board* (passed by Council in 2008), outline the relationship between VPL and City Departments, and were adopted as a VPL Board policy in 2008. The *Guidelines* recognize that "the Library Board has sole authority for establishing policy governing the operations of the Library". However, as a municipal body, VPL "will, where appropriate, adhere to Council policies."

As it relates to **financial** policies, the *Guidelines* state that:

- VPL will "adhere to City policy regarding operating and capital budget reporting and transfer authorities".

- VPL will "have purchasing policies that follow City policy and practice for awarding contracts."

- "Any financial policies will be within the authority limits set by Council."

Therefore, all VPL policies relating to budget reporting, procurement and financial authority limits must be adopted from the City, with minor modifications made to reflect VPL structure, roles and internal practices as needed. Retaining references linked to the City policy is necessary to ensure alignment as edits occur. They require approval as a Board or Administrative policy, as applicable.

The *Guidelines* further state that VPL will:
"ensure that Library personnel policy and practice do not unnecessarily conflict with City policy and practice."

Although the *Guidelines* do not require VPL to adhere to City human resource policy, VPL's typical practice is to adopt human resource policies from the City with minor modifications made to reflect VPL structure, roles and practices. They require approval as a Board or Administrative policy, as applicable, and VPL has the option to modify or add to the policies at the Board or management's discretion.

For Council policies that fall within an administrative definition at the Library, VPL staff may recommend that the Board consider adopting the City's approach through an Administrative policy.

When a new VPL policy is developed to reflect the content of an existing City of Vancouver policy, in full or in part, the name of the City policy must be noted in the VPL policy.

5. **Guiding Principles**

- Simplicity: Policies and procedures will be written such that staff and members of the public will find them easy to understand and to follow.

- Plain Language & Clear Presentation: Policies and procedures will be written in plain language. Wherever possible formatting tools such as lists, tables, graphs, and other visual aids will be used to assist with communicating the information.

- Access: Policies and procedures will be published using channels that are readily available to staff and the public.

- Related information: Wherever practical, related information will be contained in the same policy/procedure. When new circumstances require additional policy development, an update to existing policies will be considered before adding new ones.

- General Rules: Policies will be written to address most but not all situations (80/20 rule). Policies/procedures that try to address every possible situation often become counterproductive because the core rules get lost in too much detail and complexity.

- Incremental Changes: Occasionally legislative changes or other external influences require major changes to our policy/procedures; however, when not facing such pressures the priority will be to adjust and improve rather than making radical changes.

6. Governance and Roles

VPL policy development and management is based on a decentralized model of policy ownership supported by a centralized coordination function.

The Policy and Planning department facilitates policy development and management processes. They ensure that policies are managed according to the standardized framework by undertaking the following:

- Maintains the Policy Management Framework, under the direction of the Chief Librarian
- Develops standardized processes for the development and amendment of policies, including maintenance of standardized templates (See Appendix A for Board and Administrative Policy Templates)
- Centralizes and manages VPL's policy records
- Each year, identifies the policies to be reviewed, recommends a schedule, and notifies the policies' owners of the required review.
- Supports policy owners in conducting research to support the development of new policies or review and amendment of existing policies

VPL's Directors are VPL's **policy owners**, and each has the primary and functional responsibility for initiating, drafting, implementing, and monitoring a policy by undertaking the following:

- Accepts ownership of policies assigned by the Chief Librarian
- Acts as the point of contact and lead for the policy (or delegates this responsibility to a Manager)
- Provides rationale and justification for the policy
- Conducts research to determine best practices and application to the Library

- Consults with legal counsel, as needed, on the possible legal implications of the proposed policy or amendment to an existing policy
- Ensures adequate opportunity for review and input by other departments and stakeholders during development phase
- Coordinates and monitors the approval processes
- Develops and provides appropriate communication and training plans to implement the policy
- Monitors and reviews policy on a regular basis.

7.   Policy Lifecycle

The traditional lifecycle of a policy includes the following stages:
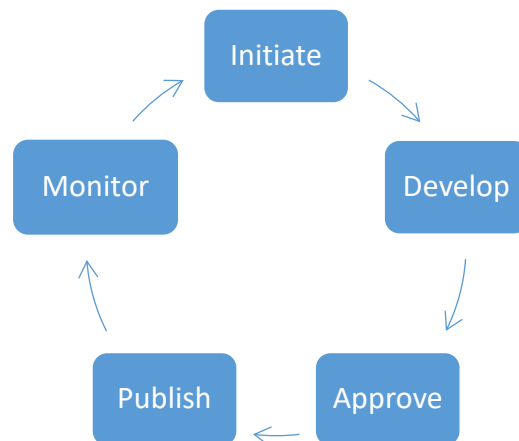
VPL follows the traditional lifecycle of a policy for much of our policy development, as described below. The VPL Board and staff recognize that traditional policy development has at times failed certain communities, and VPL will consider alternative policy approaches where appropriate in an effort to improve and evolve our practices to better meet the needs of all communities. As these approaches evolve, they will be incorporated into this framework.

Initiate.
- An issue is identified that signals the need for a new policy to be created or an existing policy to be revised. The issue may be driven by a policy trigger, such as:
  - A change to the external operating environment
  - A change to governmental legislation or requirements
  - A change to City of Vancouver policies

- o New or amended tools and technology

- o A risk is identified resulting from an audit or review

- o An implementation problem or gap in service delivery.

Develop.

- The Policy and Planning Department is advised that a new or revised policy is being developed.

- Research is conducted to inform the policy content, including internal and external research, and gathering of input from key stakeholders.

- The new or revised policy is drafted using the templates in Appendix A.

- The policy is classified as Board or Administrative policy according to the definitions in Section 2.

- Key stakeholders are consulted on the draft policy, including VPL Directors and Managers, legal services, VPL Board committees, and other relevant City departments as needed.

Approve.

- The draft policy is reviewed by the Directors Group and approved by the appropriate authority as outlined in Section 2.

Publish & Communicate.

- The approved policy is provided to the Policy and Planning department and copied to the Directors Support Group, who will file the policy in the assigned VanDocs folder and publish it on the staff intranet and VPL.ca, as appropriate (see Section 8 Publishing Rules)

- The new / revised policy is communicated to key audiences via email, messaging on the staff intranet, verbally, etc.

Monitor.

- The policy is reviewed according to the specified review schedule (see Section 9 Policy Review Schedule), or earlier if an issue arises signalling the need for a policy revision or potential rescission.

- Policies may be rescinded by the original approver as designated under Section 2.

8.   Publishing Rules

VanDocs: All VPL policies will be stored in VanDocs and will be considered the authoritative versions.

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Staff Intranet: All VPL policies, both Board and Administrative, will be published on the staff intranet (the HUB). A news item about each new or revised policy will be posted.

In addition to publishing a policy on the staff intranet and creating a news item, an email may also be sent to all VPL Directors and Managers with instructions to inform all staff under their supervision, to ensure maximum staff awareness of policies considered particularly important.

Public website: VPL will publish all Board policies on its public website. In addition, VPL will publish on the public website any Administrative policies that directly affect the public, and/or other policies as deemed appropriate by the VPL Directors Group.

When policies are published on the public website, all components of the policy will be included except for administrative sections such as Policy Administration Roles and Responsibilities, and Approval History.

9.   Policy Review Frequency

All policies will be reviewed at least every 5 years, with the option for more frequent review for specific policies or categories of policies.

In areas where the *Guidelines on the Relationship Between Vancouver City Council and the Vancouver Public Library Board* (see Section 4) indicate that VPL will adhere to City policies, the review frequency will be the same as the corresponding City policy. For these policies, if the City conducts a review outside of the policy's regular frequency period, VPL will also review its policy.

For all other policies, the policy owner will determine the review frequency based on an assessment of the policy's **risk** and **priority**, and will consider the following factors:

Factors affecting policy risk:

- Financial
- Operations
- Reputation
- Legal/regulatory
- Health/safety
- Environmental
- Potential negative impacts on patrons/City residents

Factors affecting policy priority:

- Is this an initiative that promotes the priorities of either the VPL Board of Trustees or VPL's Strategic Plan?

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- Is the policy used to guide activities stemming from financial or legal requirements?
- Does the policy generate strong public interest across a wide range of stakeholders?

In addition to the factors affecting risk and priority, the policy owner may initiate a review at any time as deemed necessary, if an issue arises signalling the need for a policy revision or potential rescission.

APPENDIX A

Policy Templates

BOARD POLICY

SUBJECT:	
CATEGORY:	POLICY CODE:

Objective

Scope

Definitions (Optional)

Policy Statements

Non-compliance Consequences

Policy Administration Roles and Responsibilities

Enter Content Owner	Oversees and recommends updates to the policy as required.
Enter Committee	Reviews policy as required and recommends changes to the Board
Board	Approves policy and revisions to the policy
Chief Librarian	Administers the policy

Related Policies

Approval History

ISSUED BY:	Library Board	APPROVED BY:	Library Board	DATE:		
REVISED BY:		APPROVED BY:		DATE:		
REVISED BY:		APPROVED BY:		DATE:		

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW		REVIEW CYCLE	[#] Years

Related Procedures

Appendices

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

SUBJECT:	
CATEGORY:	POLICY CODE:

Objective

Scope

Definitions (Optional)

Policy Statements

Policy Procedures (Optional)

For Staff:

For Manager:

Non-compliance Consequences

Policy Administration Roles and Responsibilities

Enter Content Owner	Oversees and recommends updates to the policy as required.
Approving Authority	Approves the policy, delegates monitoring of adherence of this policy to the Managers Group.
Managers Group	Oversees the day-to-day implementation of the policy and procedures.
Special Function Manager	Regularly reviews the procedural parts of the policy to reconcile discrepancies.

Related Policies

Approval History

ISSUED BY:	Directors Group	APPROVED BY:	Directors Group	DATE:		
REVISED BY:	Directors Group	APPROVED BY:	Directors Group	DATE:		

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW		REVIEW CYCLE	[#] Years

Appendices