

VPL BOARD

Community Relations Committee

Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 14, 2022

Minutes of the VPL Board Community Relations, Planning & Development Committee Regular Meeting held on Monday, February 14, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via video call.

Present: Kurt Heinrich – Chair
Kevin Lowe
Karen Spears
Abeer Yusuf

Absent: Harlan Pruden

Management

Present: 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

Guest: Lindsay Grant – Indigenous Planner
Johnathan Dyer – Acting President, CUPE 391

Recording Secretary: Chrysalyn Tolentino – Executive Assistant

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Committee Chair Heinrich acknowledged that our work takes place on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell welcomed Lindsay Grant, VPL Indigenous Planner to the meeting, and thanked her for her contributions and coordination of staff in creating the UNDRIP report.

ADMINISTRATION:

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Kevin Lowe

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 held November 15, 2021 for approval by the Committee. Trustee Yusuf noted a correction.

Moved by Karen Spears

THAT the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held November 15, 2021 be approved as amended.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

3. Advocacy Policy

Staff identified a gap in VPL's policy around advocacy communications following discussions with trustees in June 2021 about a proposed change to the federal Broadcasting Act, and Director Nelson provided a report and proposed Advocacy policy to address this gap. The policy considers the scope of topic areas for organizational advocacy, and when to engage the CRPD committee.

Trustees Spears noted agreement that VPL should only participate in issues that impact Library services and sought clarification on the limited list of library values in section 2.3 of the policy. Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell clarified that references are intended to refer to key legislation that governs VPL services, rather than being intended as a reference to VPL's values. Trustee Spears suggested that section 1.2, describing topics that VPL would not advocate on, was not necessary in addition to section 2. Board Chair Lowe noted that he found the language of section 1.2 in the first bullet insufficiently clear, particularly on issues "that do not directly impact library services." He also noted that in terms of scope, the policy applies to both the Board and staff but the non-compliance section only speaks to staff; consequences should be added for the Board as well as appropriate. He also commented on the topics, noting that legislation relevant to the Library could also include employment or accessibility topics, among others. Trustee Yusuf expressed concern about the potential impact on staff who engage in advocacy. Director Nelson clarified that this policy is for Board and staff advocating as a representative of the library, and that this policy would not affect staff's ability to advocate as a private individual. Committee Chair Heinrich noted that in his experience the limitations provided in section 1.2 can be helpful in deciding where to invest efforts. For section 2.3, he suggested modifying the second bullet to "issue areas such as literacy, education, and human rights, as they relate to library services." He noted that the policy covers the subjects of advocacy but not how we would develop positions, and asked staff how the Board would ensure informed decisions on this. Chief Librarian & CEO responded that the way VPL usually engages with an issue would be as a result of discussions happening within the BC library partners or nationally through Canadian library associations. Typically these organizations have committees of interested parties or experts who come up with a position

and VPL is asked to support or endorse the position, or may independently make the choice to do so. Board Chair Lowe commented on section 2.4 and noted that the Board will need to trust that staff will inform the Committee of issues that could negatively impact VPL. He noted the issue from 2021 that was a CFLA position, and that prior to taking a position, it would be helpful for the Board to have had thoughtful discussion on an issue. Trustee Yusuf reiterated her hesitation about the impact on staff, and Committee Chair Heinrich invited comment from Johnathan Dyer, Acting President of CUPE 391. Johnathan replied that staff are often engaged in advocacy as part of their community engagement, and that staff are not always clear about what is permitted and is not by policies. He gave an example about choosing to wear an Orange shirt for Orange shirt day, as an activity that staff would have been uncertain about prior to the Library encouraging this, and that this day is not connected to library services.

Committee Chair Heinrich summarized that there was general consensus that VPL should not participate in issues that do not impact Library services (section 1.2), and summarized the Committee's concerns about the policy's impact on staff and the need for greater clarity about topics for advocacy. The Chief Librarian & CEO indicated that staff would revise the draft policy based on feedback and bring it to a future committee meeting.

4. UNDRIP Implementation

The Chief Librarian & CEO presented a report providing a summary of current, planned and potential activities that support the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and acknowledged Indigenous Planner Lindsay Grant's work coordinating the report with staff. In the interests of alignment with work underway to implement UNDRIP at both the Province and the City, the report presents current, planned and potential VPL actions are organized under the four themes of the B.C. DRIPA Draft Action Plan. The Committee shared their appreciation for the report and agreed that a plan organizing activities around the four themes would be helpful, and that they would like to be engaged in ways that are supportive of the work. They noted the varying pace of work in this area, and some trustees expressed interest in quarterly reporting, being the same frequency as financial reporting, as well as in a visual dashboard style report similar to the strategic plan reports.

Moved by Kevin Lowe

THAT the Committee recommend that the board receive the information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PLANNING

5. Strategic Plan Reporting – Q4 2021

Carol Nelson, Director of Planning & Communications, presented a report on progress on the priorities and goals in the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. Components include performance indicators, strategic initiative progress updates, a spotlight on key library activities, and a

sampling of patron appreciation and engagement. Trustee Yusuf sought clarification on the definition of wired internet use and Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell responded that this provides use of VPL desktop computers with internet access, and noted that WiFi use cannot be accurately tracked.

Moved by Abeer Yusuf

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

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

GOVERNANCE

6. CRPD Terms of Reference

Chief Librarian & CEO de Castell presented the Community Relations, Planning & Development Committee Terms of Reference for information. She noted that the Terms of Reference are reviewed every year and were last reviewed in February 2021. Board Chair Lowe noted that point 6 could be clarified since not all issues from the referring bodies would be appropriate for CRPD. Staff will incorporate Board Chair Lowe's feedback and bring a revised version of the Terms of Reference to the March committee meeting.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Kurt Heinrich, Chair

Christina de Castell, Secretary