Greater Victoria Public Library Board
Regular Meeting
April 27, 2021
12:00p.m. – 1:00p.m.

MS Teams Meeting Online
The GVPL Board recognizes and acknowledges the traditional territory of the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations on which the Central Branch is located and Board Meetings take place.

Mission Statement
We build community and support literacy and lifelong learning by providing free access to information, space, tools and expertise.
1. Call to Order

2. Indigenous Acknowledgement

3. Chair’s Remarks

4. Consent Agenda
   4.1 Approval of Agenda
   4.2 Approval of Minutes – March 23, 2021 – Attachment 4.2

5. Officers Reports
   5.1 Chair Report
   5.2 CEO Report

6. Business Arising from Previous Meeting
   6.1 Board Retreat

7. Committee Reports
   7.1 Strategic Planning Working Group Update

8. New Business

9. Board Correspondence
   9.1 Letter to North Vancouver District Library Board – Attachment 9.1
   9.2 Letter to L. Takata – Attachment 9.2

10. Board Liaison Updates
    10.1 Friends of the Library
    10.2 BCLTA
    10.3 IslandLink Federation

11. Future Business

12. In Camera Meeting

13. Next Meeting Date
    May 25, 2021 12:00pm – 1:00pm

14. Adjournment
An electronic meeting of the Greater Victoria Public Library Board was held on the above date. The following individuals were in attendance:

**Board Members:**
- Trustee A. Appleton
- Trustee D. Begoray
- Trustee M. Boyd
- Trustee T. Chung
- Trustee E. Glover
- Trustee K. Harper
- Trustee A. Holthuis
- Trustee D. Kobayashi
- Trustee A. MacKinnon
- Trustee K. Roessingh
- Trustee K. Santini
- Trustee M. Sahlstrom
- Trustee D. Seaton
- Trustee B. Thompson
- Trustee J. Vermeulen

**Regrets:**
- Trustee M. Alto
- Trustee E. Beaton
- Trustee J. Davis
- Trustee G. Lemon

**Staff:**
- M. Sawa, CEO/Secretary
- P. McKinnon, Director Finance and Facilities
- D. Main, Director People and Culture
- A. Polinsky, Acting Director Communications and Development
- J. Windecker, Director Library Services, Innovation and Delivery
- D. Wood, Privacy Officer, Director, Planning, and IT
- A. Smart, Recording Secretary

1. **Call to Order**

   Trustee MacKinnon called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

2. **Indigenous Acknowledgement**

   Trustee MacKinnon provided the Indigenous acknowledgement.

3. **Chair’s Remarks**

   Trustee MacKinnon provided the Chair’s remarks.
4. Approval of Consent Agenda

Moved by Trustee Roessingh, Seconded by Trustee Thompson

THAT the March 23, 2021 consent agenda be approved

MOTION CARRIED

5. Officers’ Report

5.1 Chair Report
Trustee MacKinnon provided the Chair report.

5.2 CEO Report
M. Sawa, CEO provided the CEO report. The transition of RBdigital to OverDrive for digital magazines will begin the week of March 22, 2021 and conclude in June 2021.

6. Business arising from previous meeting

None

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Planning and Policy Committee Meeting March 16, 2021
Trustee Kobayashi provided a planning and policy committee report: Consultant and facilitator R. Jones, Partner, Dysart Jones is working with the committee to assist with strategic planning. The strategic planning working group membership was confirmed as follows: Trustees Alto, Appleton, Beaton, Begoray, Boyd, Chung, Davis, Glover, Harper, Holthuis, Kobayashi, Lemon, MacKinnon and Seaton. Trustee Appleton is the chair of the working group.

Trustee MacKinnon expressed his thank to all trustees who volunteered to participate in the working group.

7.2 Strategic Planning Working Group Update
Trustee Appleton presented the Strategic Planning Working Group report. The working group met on March 19, 2021. A discussion of assumptions and decision criteria was facilitated by R. Jones. Trustee Appleton thanked Trustee Davis for her work informing the discussion. Working group meeting notes are available on the board extranet.

Trustee MacKinnon thanked Trustees Kobayashi and Appleton for their leadership.

8. New Business

8.1 2020 Provincial Library Grants Report
Trustee MacKinnon introduced the 2020 Provincial Library Grants Report and Ms. Sawa provided additional background regarding content.

9. Board Correspondence

9.1 Patron letter to the Board – L. Takata
Trustee MacKinnon’s response to L. Takata was presented to the board for feedback.

10. Board Liaison Updates

10.1 Friends of the Library (FOL)

Trustee Santini provided a report on the current plans of the FOL.

10.2 BCLTA

Trustee Glover provided an update and encouraged trustees to peruse the latest BCLTA bulletin for information of interest.

10.3 IslandLink Federation

M. Sawa provided a report on behalf of Trustee Davis. GVPL staff participated in a social media platform training opportunity supported by IslandLink.

11. Future Business

Facilities Planning – Consultant’s Report

Trustee MacKinnon noted that a Regional Service Delivery Plan consultants’ report, completed in 2020, will be presented to the board at a future meeting.

12. In Camera Meeting

Moved by Trustee Kobayashi, Seconded by Trustee Appleton

THAT the Board move in-camera

MOTION CARRIED

13. Next Meeting Date

April 27, 2021 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

14. Adjournment

Moved by Trustee Kobayashi, Seconded by Trustee Roessingh

THAT the regular meeting of the board adjourn.

MOTION CARRIED

Meeting adjourned 1:00 p.m.
April 9, 2021

Lara Greguric, Board Chair
North Vancouver District Public Library
1277 Lynn Valley Road
North Vancouver, BC V7J 0A2

Dear Ms. Greguric:

On behalf of the Greater Victoria Public Library Board, I am writing to express our support and solidarity to everyone at North Vancouver District Public Library following the violent crime that touched your system last month. Our thoughts are with all the NVDPL staff and volunteers who were emotionally and physically affected by this heinous act.

Libraries are the heart of their communities. We know that you are grieving with your community and that you will be there for the community as it starts to recover from this shocking incident.

Please know that you are part of our library community and we want to support you as you heal from this trauma. We are here and ready to assist you. Please reach out at any time.

Sincerely,

Andy MacKinnon
Chair, Greater Victoria Public Library Board

cc. Kulvir Mann, Board Vice Chair, NVDPL
Jacqueline van Dyk, Director of Library Services, NVDPL
Maureen Sawa, Chief Executive Officer, GVPL
April 21, 2021

Dear Ms. Takata,

Thank you for your letter of February 23, 2021 to the GVPL Board of Trustees. I welcome the opportunity to respond to your comments and concerns, which were initially discussed at our March 23, 2021 Board meeting and again in the context of our April 10 Board planning retreat.

As the GVPL Board, we acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional territories of the WSÁNEĆ and the Lekwungen-speaking peoples and serve the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and the Scia’new, Tsartlip and Tsawout First Nations.

We also recognize that the public health emergencies that BC is currently facing, the COVID-19 pandemic and the opioid overdose crisis, have exacerbated profound disparities among communities on bases such as class, race, gender, or sexuality, resulting in challenges in relation to employment, housing, health and well-being, among many others.

As an organization, GVPL is guided by its mission, vision and values that include inclusiveness, service excellence, innovation, collaboration with our community, and public accountability. GVPL remains committed to living out these values and by our actions, to demonstrating our ability to learn and grow as an organization.

I turn to addressing the concerns you raised more specifically.

**Hours of Operation** – When the COVID-19 pandemic first struck, GVPL developed its service restoration plan considering provincial public health orders, our facilities, technology infrastructure and staffing, and the logistics of the public accessing library services across our ten-municipality system. Difficult decisions needed to be made, based on the resources and information available at the time.

Upon first re-opening, GVPL offered limited in-person service as the library adjusted to the new requirements of operating in a COVID-19 environment. Library open hours were extended gradually and at present, all twelve GVPL branches are open at 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. six days a week and all branches offer at least one evening per week to 7 pm.
Public Access to the Collection - When GVPL re-opened its physical branches, the service restoration plan prioritized public access to the entire collection via the website and holds system. As a result, all 650,000 items in the physical collection could be placed on hold and delivered to any branch for pickup. This approach provided a substantial degree of choice, as well as supported the borrowing needs and preferences of many, though admittedly not all, community members. Going forward, GVPL will continue to work to improve the ability to browse and borrow from the physical collection at all branches.

Access to Washrooms and Other Public Spaces - Other, more challenging, components of the GVPL service restoration plan included washroom access, public computer availability and more access to public spaces in a manner consistent with BC’s public health orders. With regards to washroom access, staff were required to reconfigure space to accommodate new safety protocols. Physically distanced staff workspaces made some washrooms temporarily inaccessible. Washroom access has now been restored in 10 of 12 branches.

Computer & Internet Access - GVPL is in the middle of a comprehensive effort to replace aging digital infrastructure, including new hardware and software for all public computers and kiosks. This complex upgrade is part of a multi-year project that has been negatively impacted due to staff turnover, COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and supply chain delays. The implementation of this necessary system-wide technology upgrade has delayed the availability of computer service to the public. Staff are re-introducing new equipment at all GVPL locations on a branch-by-branch basis. At present, public computer access is available at six branches and the remaining six locations will soon provide similar service. We know that providing equitable access to information and fostering digital literacy skills is a key role for public libraries.

Transparency and Accountability – You raised concerns about the representativeness of the GVPL Board. Under BC’s Library Act, the GVPL Board is a Municipal library board with ten member municipalities. Municipalities can appoint a prescribed number of Trustees based on a per capita formula, including councillors and, in some instances, citizen members. While individually and collectively, our Board reflects different lived experiences, we acknowledge the inherent privilege in the current structure of the GVPL Board. Our Board has a responsibility to consider what steps we can take to further inclusiveness, one of GVPL’s values and we take this responsibility seriously. Increasing participation at the Board and senior staff level from Indigenous, Black and racialized minorities, as well as other marginalized and vulnerable communities, will be a priority for the Board as we incorporate long-term equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA) planning into board policy review and development. The
absence of a clearly articulated Board policy on diversity, equity, inclusion and access is a gap that we will begin to address this year. Such a policy will inform our review of service delivery and strategic priorities as GVPL, and the communities we serve, navigate the COVID-19 recovery.

Your letter raises broad questions about library services, including responsiveness to community needs, that go beyond the immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. GVPL aims to offer engaging, inclusive services through its community-inspired service model. In addition to the work accomplished in support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action, through collections, changes to subject headings, and programming and engagement, GVPL staff are committed to the creation and ongoing support of a truly inclusive and welcoming organization for staff and community members. The GVPL Board will continue to support staff at all levels, and the organization as a whole, as we learn what it means to be a diverse, inclusive, equitable and accessible organization now and into the future.

Again, thank you for your letter which has provided us with timely and useful feedback. We know how important GVPL is to you and to all members of our community. As a public library, we are committed to supporting literacy and lifelong learning for everyone in our community.

Sincerely,

Andy MacKinnon
Chair, GVPL Board