

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PRINCE GEORGE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD  
HELD WEDNESDAY JANUARY 28, 2026 AT 7:00 PM  
MINI PURPOSE ROOM AT BOB HARKINS/ONLINE VIA ZOOM**

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Present: Anna Duff (Chair)  
Jenne Amell (Vice Chair)  
Sonia Sidhu  
Vash Ebbadi-Cook  
Louise Hanson  
Luke Spooner  
Jennifer Wilczek  
Kirsten Thomson

Also Present: Paul Burry (Library Director)  
Lyoshi LaMair (Manager of Finance & Facilities)  
Danielle Doucette (HR & Executive Assistant)

Regrets: Wendy Jael  
Joseph Jeffery  
Councillor Garth Frizzell

### **1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

- The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.
- Anna Duff shared a territorial acknowledgement of the unceded traditional lands of the Lheidli T'enneh people.

### **2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Motion: That the Library Board approve the minutes of the November 26, 2025 meeting as distributed. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**

### **3. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA**

**Motion: That the Library Board approve the agenda for the January 28, 2026 meeting as distributed. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**

### **4. ACCEPTANCE OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion: That the Library Board accept the Consent Agenda as distributed. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**

## **5. REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS**

### a) Board Chair Report – Anna Duff

- A cheque presentation from the PG Community Foundation was held at the library. It was a great opportunity to connect with a funder.
- City council has approved the budget. Thank you to everyone who contributed, and to Paul who did a significant amount of work on the presentation.

### b) Library Director – Paul Burry

#### **Improving the User Experience**

*Plan, deliver, and build awareness of library services and programs that respond to the needs of our community.*

- The annual New Year's celebrations were held on December 30<sup>th</sup> at the Bob Harkins Branch, with "Itty Bitty Boogie" (ages 0-5 years) attracting 108 participants, and the "Big Boogie" (all ages) drawing 94 attendees. As always, the bubble wrap dance floor was a huge success!
- The "Aim for the Stars" non-instructional day program on January 26<sup>th</sup> at the Bob Harkins Branch was attended by 36 children and caregivers. The event featured space-themed games and crafts.
- Youth Engagement Library Assistant Sarah Wildi was featured on a CKPG Today segment with Caden Fanshaw on December 1st, promoting the library's "Pen Pals" program for youth aged 8 to 12 years. The program encourages reading and literacy skills by pairing Prince George participants with letter writers from London Public Library in Ontario. 11 people attended the January 21<sup>st</sup> installment of the program.

#### **Expanding our Reach**

*Create opportunities for reaching community groups and individuals who are not regular users of the library.*

- The "Austen Affair" tea party program celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of Jane Austen was held on December 16<sup>th</sup> at the Bob Harkins Branch, featuring period costumes, tea and treats, readings from the author's works, and a showing of the film *Pride & Prejudice*. The program was attended by 36 people.
- The Library featured two showings in December of the film *UNDUing Stigma*, a documentary by local filmmaker karen m. highlighting the work being done in our community to uphold the safety and dignity of people living with addictions - work often led by those with lived experience. The film was shown at each branch and

included in-person remarks by the filmmaker, with 50 attendees viewing the film over the two showings.

- 12 people attended the “Spanish and English Conversation Exchange” program on January 21<sup>st</sup> at the Bob Harkins Branch.
- The After School Family Movie program continues to run on Friday afternoons at the Bob Harkins Branch, now featuring English captions and on-screen ASL interpretation courtesy of SignUp Media. The program attracted 31 attendees on January 9<sup>th</sup>, with 22 on January 16<sup>th</sup> and 37 on January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Developing Partnerships & Advocacy**

*Make connections and build relationships with community partners and library stakeholders representing the diversity of our region.*

- The Library partnered with the Prince George Airport to promote online card registrations for instant access to digital content in the YXS departure lounge, a story that was highlighted in several local news stories.
- Paul and Anna were joined by library board and staff members, Friends of the Library members, and community supporters for the library’s budget presentation to council on January 26<sup>th</sup>. The presentation was well received by council members, with Mayor Yu recognizing and thanking the large crowd of supporters filling the gallery.
- Paul is participating as a Learning Guide in the LLEAD9 leadership development program for library and information professionals that began in early January. The six month program includes a one week intensive retreat at Loon Lake Lodge in Maple Ridge from February 8-13.

### **Designing Welcoming Spaces**

*Create safe, attractive, inclusive library spaces that the community can take pride in.*

- The “All Hands on Deck” fundraising initiative achieved its \$100,000 donation target, with a donation from the Prince George Community Foundation in the amount of \$100,000. A media conference and cheque presentation ceremony was held on January 8<sup>th</sup> at the Bob Harkins Branch.
- The skylight replacement project at the Bob Harkins Branch was completed in early December, with the scaffolding dismantled and removed on December 18<sup>th</sup>. We are grateful to the City of Prince George and Datoff Construction for ensuring the work was completed quickly and with minimal disruption to library services.
- Library signage at both branches is being updated to incorporate the new branding, logo, and colours, including the vinyl wrap on the glass of the stairwell of the main entrance at the Bob Harkins Branch, which features the full gradient of the new brand colours.
- The new library website is nearing completion and will be ready to launch in early February. We are grateful to Web Developer Nathan Reinheimer and the members of the Website Committee for their hard work to totally overhaul and refresh the

library's web presence.

### **Strengthening Staff Communications & Relationships**

*Promote and support collaborative relationships among library staff, encouraging a culture of cooperation and innovation.*

- PGPL held its annual Staff Appreciation & Development Day on December 1<sup>st</sup> at the Bob Harkins Branch, featuring the session "Setting Clear Boundaries: How to Approach Challenging Interactions with Confidence and Compassion" by facilitator Andrea Freeman. We thank the library trustees who took time out of their day to attend the luncheon.
- A meeting of the Joint Union-Management Committee is scheduled for January 29<sup>th</sup> at the Bob Harkins Branch of the library.

#### c) City Council Representative – Garth Frizzell

- No update.

#### d) Library Advancement Committee

- A partnership with YXS has kicked off to raise awareness of the library's offerings of digital resources.
- New grants are coming including Raise a Reader and other grants
- The committee reviewed the terms of reference but did not make any changes.
- Discussed the meeting schedule for the year. Paul will not be at the next meeting, Steve will step in.
- All Hands on Deck fundraising goal was achieved. Discussed next steps which will include working with the city to ensure accessibility is prioritized. City admin has requested that tangible plans for what the space might look like will assist their planning process. Library can begin working on design plans.
- A fundraising event in the spring on the deck (possibly early June) is in discussion. This would be an opportunity to thank the community for their support and celebrate.
- There is early discussion regarding the use of the civic plaza for more events, which could increase opportunities for the library.
- Continue to encourage people to come downtown and utilize our space

#### e) Governance Committee

- Meeting was cancelled.

#### f) Local History Committee

- Planning is well underway for the Jeanne Clarke awards. Multiple venues were considered and we are moving forward with the Civic Centre. We have received lots of in-kind donations, the largest of which was the AV services.
- Award recipients have been short listed, and communication has gone out to request their attendance. As an alternative, we are creating a video montage for those that would like to send a message, but are unable to attend in person.
- We are looking into alternate ways to get the word out about nominations throughout the year, which could be thru different events or groups. We are also looking at making it more accessible so that nominations can be made outside of the current written nomination.
- The committee has invited Anna to once again be the master of ceremonies for the Jeanne Clarke awards. Anna has accepted.
- Mike Gouchie was nominated in the publication category and also offered to perform during the event.
- We will be inviting an elder to come and do the traditional welcome.

#### g) Friends of the Library

- The Friends has submitted their annual report as required by the BC Societies Act.
- The Friends are in a strong financial position, with \$13,812.39 in fund following the recent donations of \$10,000.00 towards the All Hands on Deck project and \$1,300.00 towards the renovation of the aquarium cabinetry.
- Updates to the Friends bank accounts have been made to include the new signing authorities.
- Book sale dates for this year are April 16-18, and October 15-17.
- Ken and Lyla are retiring and the Friends are looking for an appropriate way to recognize their contributions.
- Committee members attending the City Council budget meeting to show support.
- Grateful for the thank you card for the donation.
- Working on refining processes and digitization.

#### h) NCLF Board

- No update. Next meeting will be in the Spring.

#### i) BCLTA

- No update.

## 6. DISCUSSION/DECISION ITEMS

### a) Election of 2026 Board Chair and Vice-Chair

Anna is beginning her final year on the board, and is stepping down as Chair so that she can support the new Chair during her last year. Jennifer Wilczek was nominated and agreed to the nomination. Three rounds of nominations were called, with no other nominations coming forward. Jennifer was declared the new Board Chair by acclamation. Congratulations to Jen.

The call for nominations for Vice-Chair was issued three times, with Jenne Amell nominated to continue in her role as Vice-Chair. Jenne accepted the nomination and was acclaimed as Vice-Chair. Congratulations Jenne.

### b) 2026 Committee Assignments

Committee and Liaison assignments were discussed with board members.

Governance Committee – As Board Chair, Jennifer Wilczek also becomes Chair of the Governance Committee; Kirsten Thomson has joined the committee, with Anna Duff, Luke Spooner, and Joseph Jeffery agreeing to continue as committee members.

Library Advancement Committee – Anna Duff and Louise Hanson volunteered to join the committee; Jennifer Wilczek will attend and chair the next meeting, but a new Chair will be selected during the meeting; Vash Ebbadi-Cook, Sonia Sidhu, and Luke Spooner agreed to continue as committee members.

Local History Committee – Vash Ebbadi-Cook has agreed to continue as Chair of the committee, with Garth Frizzell, Anna Duff, and Jenne Amell continuing as committee members; Louise Hanson has joined the committee.

Friends of the Library Liaison – Jenne Amell agreed to continue as liaison for the Friends; Louise Hanson agreed to act as an alternate when needed.

NCLF – Vash Ebbadi-Cook will continue as NCLF Board Member/Liaison; Sonia Sidhu, Joseph Jeffery, and Kirsten Thomson have agreed to act as alternate, as needed.

### c) 2026 Budget Presentation to Council

Paul and Anna presented the 2026 Budget to City Council. The gallery was full and we received messages from community members showing their support. During the meeting, Mayor Yu asked for those in the gallery to raise their hands if they were in attendance for the library, to which the majority of the room did. Council member seemed to appreciate that the presentation supplied what they had requested from the library, including additional usage data to demonstrate the value for investment. The City requested that

Paul attend a council meeting today to answer additional questions. Council voted immediately afterward, and the budget was unanimously approved.

d) Fund Accounting Report for Financial Statements

Financial consultant Karen Stahl joined the meeting to share a proposal for the library board to consider an alternative approach to how donations are handled by the library's accounting system. The proposal would cease the practice of treating donations from community members as restricted funds that can only be spent with the approval of the board. Other than maintaining a restricted fund for the Board's "Current Campaign" fundraising initiative ("All Hands on Deck" for example), donations should be incorporated into library operations funding, to be used as needed. This would also honour the intent of the donors, who contribute funding to the library expecting it to be used as needed to support library services, programs, collections, and facilities. It would also allow the library to include donated funds as part of the calculation of internally generated revenue during the budget process.

**Motion: That the Library Board adopt the three recommendations included in the proposal, as presented, maintaining the "Current Campaign" as the only restricted fund for donations. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**

e) Jeanne Clarke Awards for Local History

**Motion: That the Library Board approve the Local History Committee recommendations for the two publication award winners and the two service award winners. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**

f) Request for Naming Rights for the Deck Enhancement Project

**Motion: That the Library Board approve the request of the Prince George Community Foundation to officially name the enhanced deck space at the Bob Harkins Branch the "Prince George Community Foundation Deck," in honour of their \$100,000 donation to the fundraising project. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**

## 7. OTHER/NEW BUSINESS (SCHEDULE/ASSIGN TO COMMITTEE)

### a) Board Look Ahead

Adjust the Governance Committee Meetings to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at 4:30pm. The committee will confirm the February meeting date as it is a statutory holiday.

Photographer is scheduled for board photos at 6:30 pm prior to the February meeting. The Friends of the Library will also be invited to take their group photo.

Jeanne Clarke awards ceremony is February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: That the Library Board adjourn the Board meeting at 8:51 pm. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**



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**Paul Burry**  
**Library Director**



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**Anna Duff**  
**Board Chair**