

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PRINCE GEORGE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD  
HELD WEDNESDAY MARCH 25, 2026 AT 7:00 PM  
MINI PURPOSE ROOM AT BOB HARKINS/ONLINE VIA ZOOM**

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Present: Jennifer Wilczek (Chair)  
Jenne Amell (Vice Chair)  
Sonia Sidhu  
Louise Hanson  
Luke Spooner  
Anna Duff  
Kirsten Thomson  
Joseph Jeffery

Also Present: Paul Burry (Library Director)  
Danielle Doucette (HR & Executive Assistant)  
Karen Stahl (Accounting Consultant)

Regrets: Wendy Jael  
Vash Ebbadi-Cook  
Councillor Garth Frizzell

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

- The meeting was called to order at 6:59 pm.
- Jenne Amell 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 February 25, 2026 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 March 25, 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.**

- Removed local history minutes
- Discussion item 6c was added
- New Business item 7a changed from February to April

#### 5. REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS

##### a) Board Chair Report – Jennifer Wilczek

- Met with Paul and reviewed the calendar of events for the year.
- Continuing with the transition as the new Board Chair. Ensuring the appropriate documents are signed.
- Emailed Lheidli T'enneh Chief and Executive Director to suggest a meeting to discuss the progress and status of the Cooperation Agreement. We are awaiting a response.

##### 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.*

- On March 25<sup>th</sup>, the library's internet provider BCNET is upgrading PGPL's existing connectivity at the Bob Harkins Branch from a 100 mbps connection to a 1 gbps fibre connection. This will provide additional bandwidth and improve the library's public internet service.
- The 2026 launch of the Community Seed Library was held on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Seed starting workshops were held at both branches.
- The "Devil's Club Workshop" program runs 4 times from March 24-25. The program, held in partnership with the UNBC Office of Indigenous Initiatives, features information about the medicinal properties and cultural importance of the plant, with participants invited to craft their own painted jewelry using recently harvested Devil's Club "beads." There were 18 and 22 participants at the two sessions held on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

###### **Expanding our Reach**

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

- Library staff put together a care package for the staff of the Tumbler Ridge Public Library, in support of their efforts to continue providing library services in the

aftermath of the tragedy in that community. Anna and Garth delivered the package to the library on March 14<sup>th</sup>.

- 23 people attended the “Songs for Seniors” sing-along outreach program at the Rainbow Adult Day Centre on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The program is led by Engagement Library Assistant Raghu Lokanathan.
- The “Imagination Station” program, held in partnership with Two Rivers Gallery, attracted 21 participants on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The preschool program series combines story times with art activities that seek to bring an element of the story to life for participants.
- An IMSS tour of the Bob Harkins Branch on March 13<sup>th</sup> introduced 22 newcomers to Prince George to library services.
- Online library card applications in January and February increased by over 40% over the previous year, likely as a result of the promotional campaign running at the Prince George Airport.
- 90 people took advantage of the Spring Break kick off “Pop-Up Play Time” program at the Bob Harkins Branch on March 16<sup>th</sup>. The day long drop in session featured foam blocks, keva planks, lego, puzzles, magnet tiles, toddler balance beams, colourful rock balance beams, board games, and piano. The branch has averaged over 550 visits per day during March Break.

### **Developing Partnerships & Advocacy**

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

- The “Steam in the Stacks” science program, hosted in partnership with UNBC Active Minds attracted 14 participants at the Bob Harkins Branch on March 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Paul and Manager of Communications & Engagement Steve Hamilton attended the “Building a Stronger Prince George Through Strategic Tourism” Chamber of Commerce event on March 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Ramada Hotel.
- Paul and Steve met with Robert Doane of CBC Radio and Marnie Hamagami of Theatre NorthWest on March 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss a possible partnership that would bring community story telling programs to CBC Radio listeners. The initiative would be part of CBC’s “Collab” program that partners with public libraries across Canada to promote and amplify community voices.
- PGPL has registered to participate in the inaugural “FriendRaiser” event hosted by the Prince George Community Foundation. The expo style event brings together non-profit organizations, donors, and community members in one shared space, creating opportunities to showcase the work of organizations, expand networks, and connect with new supporters in the community.

### **Designing Welcoming Spaces**

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

- There have been a number of recent service interruptions at the Bob Harkins Branch due to elevator malfunctions/repairs, including one outage that impacted access by EMTs responding to a 911 call for an unresponsive patron. The Bob Harkins Branch passed a surprise fire inspection on March 23<sup>rd</sup> with “No Violations Noted.”
- PGPL began accepting submissions for the 2026 Teen Art Showcase in mid-March. Art submission will be displayed in the main stairwell of the Bob Harkins Branch during the month of April.

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

- Engagement staff members were on a program break from February 23<sup>rd</sup> to March 14<sup>th</sup>, preparing for the additional programs and visitors that the library experiences during the March break for School District 57.
- BCLA has released an updated Statement on Intellectual Freedom, integrating some significant changes, including acknowledging for the first time “that some points of view are damaging to individuals, communities, and the library’s relationship with them.” The statement also establishes that “practicing intellectual freedom is the professional duty of libraries and library workers, and they should be protected from harassment or persecution for doing their jobs.”
- PGPL is partnering with UNBC Library, CNC Library, and Literacy Prince George to host a public screening of the film “*The Librarians*” at CNC on May 7<sup>th</sup>. The 2025 documentary film follows librarians in Texas, Florida, and other states as they unite to combat book banning efforts in the United States.

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

- No update

#### d) Library Advancement Committee

- The PGCF is hosting a “FriendRaiser” expo style event in Prince George on April 16<sup>th</sup> and has invited a PGPL board member to make a brief presentation about partnering with the PGCF and being a grant award recipient. Jen and Anna will determine between them who is able to attend.
- Planning to invest money from the PGCF grant award in a GIC, to ensure that we’re earning interest on the grant funds until they are needed for the project.
- Tap to donate funds are now being directed to general operations and not the “All Hands on Deck” project, since the fundraising goal has been reached.
- The committee will be testing the use of Microsoft Teams instead of Zoom for future meetings, so that the AI transcription, minute-taking, and meeting summary features of the software can be evaluated.
- A UNBC engineering student with architectural experience has volunteered to assist with design of the deck space and is working on design drawings for the project.

e) Governance Committee

- The monthly financial statements have been updated so that they are easier for the board to review and understand.
- The updated “funding report” is still being worked on and will be included in the next monthly financial statements.
- The audit is still being worked on, but the committee has been updated on its progress. The audit process is going well overall, although there has been some extra work created for PGPL staff, due to the use of AI by KPMG.
- The committee discussed some potential changes being considered for the library’s organizational structure and management portfolios, to ensure that workloads and capacity are balanced and manageable for the management team members.

f) Local History Committee

- The minutes from the last meeting are in progress, but they cover all of the debriefing information from the 2026 Jeanne Clarke Awards, so that this information can be integrated into the planning for next year’s event.

g) Friends of the Library

- Louise was able to join in person for the last meeting.
- The FOTL is in a good financial position.
- The book sale is scheduled for April 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. They are on track with volunteers and marketing for the event, including new t-shirts that will be available for sale.
- The board is continuing to work on records digitization, and exploring recognition awards for long term members.

h) NCLF Board

- No update. In person Board meeting coming up in May in Prince George.

i) BCLTA

- Anna and Garth travelled to Tumbler Ridge on March 14<sup>th</sup> to deliver a care package from the BCLTA and PGPL, along with other organizations. The Library Director Paula was in the library and invited them in for a chat. She shared about the library being a safe place for the community as they continue to deal with the effects of the recent traumatic incident.
- AGM is coming up next month
- Anna is attending the BCLA library conference on behalf of BCLTA in April.

## 6. DISCUSSION/DECISION ITEMS

a) Approve Financial Statements to February 28, 2026

**Motion: That the Library Board approve the financial statements to February 28, 2026. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**

b) New Website Review and Launch

Manager of Collections & Technology Chris Field has recorded a presentation about the new website launch and features, and has made it available for board members to review on the Board Sharepoint site. Board members expressed their positive feedback on the look and functionality of the new website.

c) 2026 Board Engagement Schedule

Manager of Communications & Engagement Steve Hamilton has drafted a schedule of summer events that would benefit from board member participation. The schedule is now available to board members on the Sharepoint site, and will be updated as necessary. If board members are aware of dates on which they would be available to volunteer at these community events, they are asked to email Paul so that he can update the schedule. The shifts will likely be arranged in 2 hour blocks, but those details are not yet finalized.

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

a) Committee Meetings in April

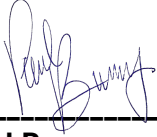
- Library Advancement – April 8<sup>th</sup> – 12:00 online
- Governance Committee – April 20<sup>th</sup> – 4:30pm online. Kirsten and Luke are unavailable. Will discuss alternative dates with Lyoshi. Joseph is unavailable the week before, Kirsten is unavailable that week.
- Board Meeting – April 22<sup>nd</sup> 6:30 Online/KGR. Audited financial statement presentation by KPMG.

b) Board Look Ahead

- Plan to present to RDFFG Board in June

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: That the Library Board adjourn the Board meeting at 8:05 pm. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**



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



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**Jennifer Wilczek**  
**Board Chair**