

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PRINCE GEORGE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
HELD WEDNESDAY JUNE 24, 2026 AT 6:30 PM
MINI PURPOSE ROOM AT BOB HARKINS/ONLINE VIA ZOOM**

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

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

Regrets: Wendy Jael

6:30 pm 2025 Incident Report Review Presentation

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- The meeting was called to order at 7:14 pm.
- Jennifer Wilczek shared a territorial acknowledgement of the unceded traditional lands of the Lheidli T'enneh people. Lh'uts'ut'en – a word for coming together, shared by Joseph Jeffrey.
- Congratulations to Darlene McIntosh who was the recipient of a Medal of Excellence in Reconciliation and Good Citizenship.

2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Motion: That the Library Board approve the minutes of the May 27, 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 June 24, 2026 meeting, with the addition of "Nechako Branch Lease Agreement" as item 6.(f). 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.

- Correspondence included a brief report that Paul prepared for Chris Dalio (Director of Finance at the City of Prince George), highlighting the history of provincial funding for PGPL and public libraries in BC. This will be added to a report outlining the various ways that the provincial government has offloaded costs onto municipalities.

5. REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS

a) Board Chair Report – Jennifer Wilczek

- Received notice from the prospective Lheidli T'enneh board representative that they would not be able to join the library board at this time. We are currently awaiting next steps from Executive Director Towfiq Islam.
- Paul and Jenn presented the 2025 Annual Report to City Council this past Monday. Thank you to everyone who attended. Presentation went well and good comments received. Received kudos from City Council on the work we have done in 2025.
- Paul and Jenne will be presenting a version of the report to the Regional District in July.

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.

- 40 people attended the "Happy Birthday Robert Munsch!" special story time at the Bob Harkins Branch on June 11th.
- A board game collection has been added to the Nechako Branch, and board games are now available to borrow at both branches of the library.

Expanding our Reach

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

- The Craft & Chat adult program was held at the Bob Harkins Branch on June 16th, National Knit in Public Day, attracting 20 participants.
- The Early Years Fair program was held in partnership with several community partner organizations on May 30th at the Bob Harkins Branch. 84 people attended the event.

- The Community Services Table continues to offer important information and support for marginalized community members, with point of need access to government and community resources. The June 2nd program at the Bob Harkins Branch featured the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, the Prince George Council of Seniors, Service Canada, Work BC, Northern Access Legal Clinic, and YWCA. 21 people interacted with the partner representatives.
- Nechako Branch program offerings continue to enjoy steady attendance numbers. There were 8 participants in the Naloxone Training program on June 11th at the branch, and 18 attendees for the Gentle Seated Tai Chi program on June 12th.
- Organized in partnership with the Prince George Eco Living Society, the "Bicycle Repair Café" adult program held on June 20th at the Bob Harkins Branch was attended by 20 people.

Developing Partnerships & Advocacy

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

- Paul and Board Chair Jennifer Wilczek presented the library's 2025 Annual Report to Prince George mayor and council on June 22nd. The presentation was well received and comments from council were very appreciative of the great work accomplished by library staff in 2025.
- Paul and Manager of Communications & Engagement Steve Hamilton attended the Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Breakfast on June 16th, where Prince George area MLAs presented an update from the BC Conservative Party.
- The library's 2026 provincial operating grant of \$217,745 was received on June 22nd. Although provincial funding for public libraries remains frozen at 14 million dollars, the grant formula has been updated to ensure that libraries with less than 40,000 in population receive the same level of funding that they got in 2025. This change has resulted in a \$2,000 reduction in the per capita operating grant amount for PGPL, which means that the provincial contribution to the library's revenue has decreased.
- Planning is underway for the 2027 Beyond Hope Library Conference, tentatively scheduled for June 7-8, 2027 at the Prince George Conference & Civic Centre.
- PGPL made a submission to the provincial government's Select Standing Committee on Finance & Government Services for 2027, making three proposals for new initiatives that could provide sustainable funding increases for public libraries across the province.

Designing Welcoming Spaces

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

- The library has several displays at both branches celebrating Pride month at PGPL, including various book displays and one in the main stairwell at the Bob Harkins Branch.
- The “Exploring the Knowledge Garden” all ages program was held at the Bob Harkins Branch on June 5th. Organized in partnership with City of Prince George Parks Dept., the Prince George Master Gardeners, and the David Douglas Botanical Garden Society, the program was attended by 36 people.
- The broken window in the parking level entrance to the Bob Harkins Branch was repaired on June 11th.
- The Nechako Branch was closed on June 6th due to a staffing shortage from illness. The branch also closed several hours early on June 12th due to a power outage in the Hart.

Strengthening Staff Communications & Relationships

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

- Responsibility for security functions and staff at the library have moved from the Manager of Finance & Facilities to the Manager of Customer Experience & Service Delivery. Implemented on June 1st, the change highlights the ongoing importance of security services in the overall quality of customer experiences and interactions at the library, but it also reflects an increase in workload for the Manager of Finance & Facilities position caused by changes to the Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSAS) and an increase in facilities related tasks that were formerly performed by staff at the City of Prince George. The change will help to ensure that safety and security remain top priorities in the organization.

c) City Council Representative – Garth Frizzell

- The Annual Report presentation went really well and Garth thanked everyone for their patience that evening. The board has kept the budget healthy and alive. It was noted that everything asked of the library board in previous presentations has been delivered. Councillor Sampson praised library staff in the community for being excellent ambassadors. The gallery was filled with many library supporters which is always great to see.
- On June 4th City Council went to a meeting of Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Workshops, meetings, and a visit to AMII (Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute) to discuss why AI literacy matters, terminology, responsible AI governance, and AI opportunities.

- On July 14th the City of Prince George and partners will hold an event to fight against human trafficking. Prince George is the only municipality to join the Human Trafficking Prevention Network of British Columbia. The event is hosted by Truckers Against Trafficking.
- July 27th is the Stronger Cities Network meeting which will be held in Prince George at the library. Prince George was selected as a pilot community in the province to participate in the effort to reduce online hate and radicalization. The meeting will be attended by provincial representatives along with the Stronger Cities international CEO.
- August will move into campaign season for City Council, and Garth is not sure what his role will look like in the next few months.

d) Library Advancement Committee

- Paul and Steve provided updates on fundraising efforts as outlined in Media Report. Committee discussed what fundraising initiative the board could focus on, with the the fundraising target for the All Hands On Deck project being reached. We want to be intentional with the momentum and community engagement we are experiencing. Will discuss project ideas at the next committee meeting.
- Not a lot of movement with the deck upgrade at this point, just awaiting further information from the City.
- Reminder for trustees involved in engagement opportunities and attending an event in the community, that it's important to try to develop a story about a library program, initiative, or service, or something you love about the library. Having 1-2 stories like that to draw on when you are talking to community members is valuable.
- Steve continues to work with Northern Health on a promotional campaign similar to the one at the airport, highlighting online collections and card application process for users unable to visit the library in person.

e) Governance Committee

- Reviewed financials and Lyoshi provided an update on processes being upgraded, including analysis of budget variances in wages and benefits, along with administration expenses.
- There were significant costs for consulting/professional services as part of the grievance arbitration process (more than \$10,000).
- No news to share on the Nechako lease when we met.

f) Local History Committee

- No update.

g) Friends of the Library

- No meeting until September. Garth will attend as the alternate.

h) NCLF Board

- Reminder that NCLF board has approved dedicated funding for indigenous initiatives. This could be used to subsidize PGPL's Indigenous Space initiative.
- There is also a development fund for trustees and library staff, which could be used for AMII training if there is interest.
- NCLF also subsidizes staff/trustee travel to other libraries for educational opportunities.
- Provincial federations were among those that lost some provincial funding in the recent change to the funding formula, which may have some impact on future budgets for NCLF.

i) BCLTA

- BCLTA AGM was held on June 10th. There were no resolutions received and everything went smoothly.
- There were four new directors acclaimed – representing Surrey, Squamish, Port Moody, and Vancouver. Previously there was a significant representation from smaller rural libraries on the board, and now there is a shift to more metro/urban libraries, which is providing more balance. This was the first AGM for new president Tracey Therrien.
- The board had significant discussion of Alberta's Bill 28 at its last board meeting, and during the most recent board meeting 3 motions were approved:
 - 1 – BCLTA expresses strong opposition to Alberta Bill 28, The Municipal Affairs and Housing Statutes Amendment Act 2026, which would transfer authority over public library collections and customer access from locally appointed library boards and professional library staff to provincial government ministers
 - 2 - The BCLTA board reaffirm its commitment to intellectual freedom, customer privacy, equitable access to information, and the principle of local governance of public libraries consistent with the intent of section 2B of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
 - 3 – Communicate the intent of this resolution to the Coalition of Alberta Public Libraries, the Canadian Federation of the Library Associations, the Canadian Urban Libraries Council, and various other people.
- Unsure if BCLTA is still doing trustee awards, as there is nothing updated on the website. Have emailed Tracey and currently awaiting a response.

6. DISCUSSION/DECISION ITEMS

a) Approve Finance Statements to April 30, 2026

Motion: That the Library Board approve the financial statements to April 30, 2026. The motion was approved and seconded. The motion was carried.

b) Updated Policy 2.12 Security Camera System

Motion: That the Library Board approve the updated Policy 2.12 Security Camera System as presented. The motion was approved and seconded. The motion was carried.

c) Strategic Planning Process

There was discussion of the strategic planning process proposed by the consultant we have been working with, who was concerned about a one-hour session with the board not being sufficient to cover everything that needs to be addressed. The library director expressed concern about the cost of the strategic planning process, given other planned expenses in the professional services budget line for 2026. The board agreed to postpone the project and review later in the fall, when the library's financial position for year end will be clearer.

d) Organizational Structure Update

Changes have been made to the organizational structure and reporting relationships. The Security functions and direct reports have been shifted from Manager of Finance & Facilities to Manager of Customer Experience & Service Delivery. This change helps support the increased workload of the manager of Finance & Facilities due to the implementation of new accounting and payroll software, as well as changes to the Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSAS). The change also allows us to align our safety/security with overall customer service experience.

e) 2026 Board Engagement Schedule

The updated Engagement Schedule was shared with board members. PGPL has withdrawn participation in 2026 Summerfest due to staff capacity limitations. The schedule has been updated to reflect the change. There are still a few shifts available to be filled, so board members able to attend one of the events should email Paul to confirm.

f) Nechako Branch Lease Agreement

The status of the draft lease agreement for the Nechako Branch was discussed. We are still awaiting a response to some questions about the lease from the Mall ownership. There was concern expressed about obtaining board approval for the final draft of the agreement, given the uncertainty of Garth's status with the upcoming municipal election.

Motion: that the Library Board approve the delegation of the authority to sign the final lease agreement for the Nechako Branch to Library Director Paul Burry. The motion was withdrawn. No vote taken.

The motion was discussed and there was agreement that the board should review and approve the updated lease agreement, with a vote by email if necessary. Paul will send the updated draft to the board once the agreement language has been finalized. It was also noted that the Library Act requires that the Library Board obtain "the prior approval of the municipal council" before it can "lease land or buildings for library purposes." Garth will refer this issue to City Manager Walter Babicz and follow up with the library director to confirm next steps.

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

a) Committee Meetings in August

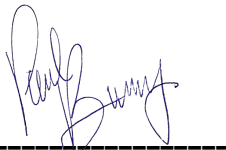
- Keeping the same day/time for the governance meeting in August, noting that some committee members may be unable to attend. Will adjust if needed.
- 7:00 start for a board meeting in August as there is no strategic planning session.

b) Board Look Ahead

- No notes.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: That the Library Board adjourn the Board meeting at 8:41 pm. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.



Paul Burry
Library Director



Jennifer Wilczek
Board Chair