

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PRINCE GEORGE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD  
HELD WEDNESDAY MARCH 26, 2025 AT 6:30 PM  
KEITH GORDON ROOM AT BOB HARKINS/ONLINE VIA ZOOM**

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Present: Anna Duff (Chair)  
Jenne Amell (Vice Chair, on Zoom)  
Councillor Garth Frizzell  
Vash Ebbadi-Cook  
Sonia Sidhu  
Luke Spooner  
Joseph Jeffery  
Rahim Somani

Also Present: Paul Burry (Library Director)  
Larissa Clotildes (Manager of Communications & Engagement)  
Lyoshi LaMair (Manager of Finance & Facilities)

Regrets: Jenn Wilczek  
Councillor Wendy Jael

**6:30 pm Education Session**

*2024 Review of Incident Reports Presentation by Paul Burry, Library Director*

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

- The meeting was called to order at 7:10 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 February 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 March 26, 2025 meeting, amended to add: 6.f) Tariffs on Books & Other Library Materials.  
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**

- While on vacation in Los Angeles, Anna had the opportunity to experience an automated book sorter in use at the Beverly Hills Public Library.
- Anna has been working with Babs on the review for the Library Director. Thank you to everyone who has participated and given feedback. Babs had the opportunity to speak with some of the Director's peers in the library world in BC along with peers and colleagues in the City plus library staff. People are really appreciating and taking a note of how the board is carefully and thoughtfully going through this process to support our library director. Babs is expected to share the results with Paul and the board in May.
- Anna spoke with representatives from the auditors recently.
- Anna spoke with Paul regarding the Heritage Fair award that the library sponsors.

### **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 Community Seed Library launched on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Hosted in partnership with the Prince George Master Gardeners and the David Douglas Botanical Garden Society, the program offers a diverse selection of vegetable, flower, and herb seeds. Patrons may borrow up to five seed packets (each containing 5-20 seeds), grow their own healthy, affordable food, and then return some seeds in the fall to keep the cycle going. Seed starting workshops were held at both branches on March 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, with 28 participants split between the two sessions. The Library's facebook post about the Seed Library garnered 56,210 views, with 386 likes and 65 comments.
- Library staff hosted 7 different library tours at the Bob Harkins Branch during the month of March, introducing 176 visitors to the collections, programs, and services available at PGPL.
- 35 children attended the Art Lab program at the Nechako Branch on March 20<sup>th</sup> as part of the library's Spring Break activities.

#### **Expanding our Reach**

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

- The Prince George Symphony Youth Orchestra hosted a special concert at the Bob Harkins Branch on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Held in partnership with the Prince George Symphony Orchestra, the concert attracted 178 attendees. There were 782 visits to the downtown branch over the course of the day.
- PGPL was honoured by the Afro-Caribbean Society of Northern British Columbia (AFCAS) with the Society's Community Partnership Award. The award was presented to PGPL for providing a platform for cultural exchange, education, and community engagement. The award was accepted on behalf of PGPL by Charmaine Roisum and Omotayo Orebiyi at the Afro Caribbean Banquet on March 1st.
- The Library is partnering with the Railway & Forestry Museum to offer a new "Storywalk" program during March break. The program invites participants to enjoy a walk around the museum grounds while interacting with the story as it unfolds at various stops throughout the grounds. The story featured in the program is The Fox and the Forest Fire by Danny Popovici. Admission to the Museum grounds is free from March 15-28.
- The Brazilian Carnival event was held March 1<sup>st</sup> at the Bob Harkins Branch. There were 103 attendees who participated in a variety of activities celebrating Brazilian culture.

### **Developing Partnerships & Advocacy**

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

- PGPL hosted the Elder's Tea at the Bob Harkins Branch on March 6<sup>th</sup>, in partnership with UNBC, as a part of the Ut'loo Noye Khunni (Weaving Words Indigenous Storytelling Festival)
- Cariboo Regional District Manager of Libraries Anton Dounts spent the day with PGPL staff on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, taking advantage of the Peer2Peer initiative funded by the North Central Library Federation (NCLF). The program provides subsidies for library directors to travel to other member libraries in the region in support of knowledge sharing and professional development opportunities.
- Paul met with a consultant from Skeleton Crew Collective on March 6<sup>th</sup> as part of a stakeholder engagement project to develop a brand and marketing strategy for the container market, on behalf of Tourism PG.
- The members of the Association of BC Public Library Directors (ABCPLD) are working with other BC library associations and groups to formulate a sector response to the Canadian government's plan to impose a 25% tariff on books, magazines, and other printed material, as well as digital media published and printed in the United States. This change will have a significant impact on our ability to purchase materials for the Library's collection, even if purchased from Canadian sources.

### **Designing Welcoming Spaces**

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

- Paul and Manager of Finance & Facilities Lyoshi LaMair have been meeting with Heather Halwas and Hayden-James Berra of the City of Prince George to discuss a potential new lease agreement for the rental of the space in the Hart Mall used for the Nechako Branch.
- Various construction firms have been visiting the Bob Harkins Branch during the month of March to gather information needed to submit tenders for the renovation of the skylight above the main stairwell, which has been leaking for several months. The project is scheduled to start in May/June.
- The various submissions for the Teen Art Showcase are on display in the stairwell of the Bob Harkins Branch for the month of March. The awards reception will be held on April 5<sup>th</sup>.

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

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

- Alexis Redenbach of the Provincial Health Services Authority's Mobile Response Team has been providing assistance to the management team regarding developing guidelines for conducting critical incident debriefing.
- The Library's Joint Health & Safety Committee welcomed a new member to the committee, Community Engagement Library Assistant Victoria Ellis.
- Tia Dayman will be joining the PGPL team on March 31<sup>st</sup>, in the role of Youth Community Engagement Librarian. Tia is relocating to Prince George from Estevan, Saskatchewan to replace Larissa Clotildes, who is temporarily in the role of Manager of Communications & Engagement. Tia is covering for Larissa's upcoming parental leave.
- The session schedule for the 2025 Beyond Hope Library Conference has been finalized and the conference website has been made available for potential delegates: <https://beyondhope2025.sched.com/>. The schedule features 32 different sessions held over two days, with three library board members participating in session offerings. Simon Fraser University Dean of Libraries, and former UNBC University Librarian, Gohar Ashoughian, will join us to open the conference with the keynote address. Online conference registration will be available by the end of March.

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

- Garth reported that the Intergovernmental team is travelling to Victoria from April 28-30 to meet with provincial ministers, including Anne Kang and the minister responsible for public libraries. Those are sometimes much more effective than the multilateral meetings like UBCM & the North Central Local Government Association (NCLGA).
- The Intergovernmental committee are also looking into are housing systems that have been done in other communities, as well as an all-wood model for having a medical clinic that is administered by the city.
- Garth also attended the March Friends of the Library Board Meeting.

d) Library Advancement Committee

- The main focus of the March LAC meeting was the ongoing planning for the Deck Enhancement Open House, as well as developing a plan for board engagement opportunities over the next several months, both of which will be discussed later in the meeting agenda.

e) Governance Committee

- Anna reported that Financial Consultant Karen Stahl once again joined the Governance Committee meeting to review the financial statements and provide an update regarding the financial audit process.
- The committee also discussed a minor update to the Mobile Device Reimbursement Policy, which has been recommended for board approval and will be discussed later in the agenda.

f) Local History Committee

- The committee met in March to debrief from the Jeanne Clarke Awards ceremony held in February. Garth reported that Shirley Bond had reached out to congratulate the library on the success of the event.

g) Friends of the Library

- Garth reported that the Friends are planning a volunteer appreciation event to be held April 1<sup>st</sup>, and library board members are invited to attend. Invitations have been emailed.
- The Friends have 150 boxes of books in the storage containers, although some have sustained some water damage and will have to be discarded.
- The Friends have boxes of old paper records that they are planning to digitize.
- There was discussion of the suggestion that the FOTL purchase a laptop that would allow the membership list to be compiled and consulted during the library book sale.
- The Spring Book Sale is scheduled for April 24<sup>th</sup>.
- The proposal regarding the Dolly Parton Imagination Library has been rejected for now, due to cost and time considerations.

h) NCLF Board

- Vash reported that the NCLF AGM is confirmed for June 9<sup>th</sup>, to be held in person as part of the Beyond Hope Library Conference.

i) BCLTA

- BCLTA did not meet in March, but a letter expressing the Association's concerns about the implementation of tariffs on books and other library items was circulated to the membership and shared with the federal government.

## 6. DISCUSSION/DECISION ITEMS

### a) Financial Statements to December 31, 2024

Financial Consultant Karen Stahl joined the meeting on Zoom to review the Financial Statements to December 31, 2024 with board members. Karen confirmed that the auditors are still booking entries, which may result in additional adjustments to these statements, especially around the revenue from the provincial enhancement grant. Because of that, the Governance Committee have recommended that the financial statements should be received as is, but not recommended for approval by the board.

**Motion: That the Library Board receive the financial statements to December 31, 2024 as recommended by the Governance Committee. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**

### b) Board Member Information for E-Payment Vendor

Paul reminded board members regarding the request for consent to share contact information with our e-payment vendor, as part of the process to verify the Library's status as a legitimate non-profit organization. This registration is needed to enable online payment for Beyond Hope Conference attendees. Paul asked board members to respond to the email to provide consent.

### c) Updated Mobile Device Reimbursement Policy

Board members reviewed the Mobile Device Reimbursement Policy, to which a minor amendment has been made reflecting the fact that the reimbursement is considered a taxable benefit by the Canada Revenue Agency.

**Motion: That the Library Board approve the updated Policy 6.22 Mobile Device Reimbursement, as recommended by the Governance Committee. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**

### d) Nechako Branch Lease Agreement

Board members reviewed the draft Lease Agreement for the Nechako Branch. The current lease is between the City of Prince George and the Hart Mall, and the lease terms have not been updated in over 20 years. The Mall management would like to negotiate a new lease amount and commit the library to a five-year agreement. The City would like the agreement to be made directly between the Mall and Library, so that the City is not involved in the various maintenance and repair issues that arise. There is some concern regarding a five-year commitment given the frequency of maintenance issues that have resulted in a number of branch closures. There is also concern regarding how the Library will pay for the cost increases to the lease amount given that these negotiations were not initiated until after the 2024 Library Budget had already been submitted. A number of suggestions were made that would provide options for the library to resolve these concerns. Paul will continue to work with City staff to make progress on the negotiations.

e) Upcoming Board Engagement Opportunities

Manager of Communications & Engagement Larissa Clotildes has developed a schedule of engagement opportunities for board members to participate in some upcoming library events over the next few months. Larissa reviewed the draft schedule with the Board. One of the key events is the planned Deck Enhancement Open House scheduled for April 26<sup>th</sup>. This event is part of the Library Advancement Committee's efforts to launch the fundraising project to add enhancements to the deck space at the Bob Harkins Branch. The Open House will invite community members to go onto the deck to experience the space for themselves, and provide opportunities to contribute feedback on what they would like to see on the deck. The details of this event are still being discussed by the Library Advancement Committee, but more information will be shared over the coming weeks. If board members are able to attend one or more events, they can let Larissa or Paul know and the schedule will be updated to ensure that each event has adequate coverage. We thank all board members for helping to support library events in the community.

f) Tariffs on Books & Other Library Materials

The Board discussed the potential impact of the planned counter tariffs on goods produced in the United States, which could include a 25% tariff on books and other library materials. Since the majority of newly published library materials, including by Canadian authors and publishers, are produced in the United States, the tariffs would have a significant negative impact on the Library's ability to purchase new books and other items. A number of options were suggested for how the Board could respond to this challenge.

**Motion: That the Library Board direct the Library Director to draft a letter outlining the Board's concerns with the proposed tariffs on books and other library materials, regarding the impact on libraries and their budgets, to be submitted to the federal Finance Ministry. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**

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

a) Committee Meetings for April

- Library Advancement Committee – April 8<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm
- Local History Committee – no meeting
- Governance Committee – April 15<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm
- Board Meeting – April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 pm (2024 Audited Financial Statements Presentation)

b) Board Look Ahead

- Deck Engagement Open House – April 26<sup>th</sup>, time to be determined

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: That the Library Board adjourn the Board meeting at 9:13 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**  
**Chair**