

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PRINCE GEORGE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD  
HELD WEDNESDAY MAY 28, 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)  
Councillor Garth Frizzell  
Jenn Wilczek  
Vash Ebbadi-Cook  
Sonia Sidhu  
Luke Spooner  
Joseph Jeffery

Also Present: Paul Burry (Library Director)  
Lyoshi LaMair (Manager of Finance & Facilities)  
Karen Stahl (Financial Consultant, on Zoom)

Regrets: Councillor Wendy Jael  
Rahim Somani

**6:30 pm 2024 Year in Review Presentation**

*2024 Year in Review Presentation by Library Director Paul Burry*

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

- The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.
- Joseph Jeffery 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 April 23, 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 May 28, 2025 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

- Anna participated in the “All Hands on Deck” engagement event at the library on April 26<sup>th</sup>, and was impressed by the community’s enthusiasm for the possibilities for upgrading and making use of the deck space.
- Anna represented the board at the launch event for the “The Way We Hear it” exhibit that is on display in the library during the month of May, in honour of National Speech and Hearing Month.
- Anna attended the Library Director Succession Planning online workshop hosted by BCLTA on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, which offered practical tools to support trustees and directors as they plan for director succession.

##### 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.*

- PGPL is activating the use of the Emergency User Profile for the 2025 fire season. Emergency profiles allow free access to all library services for individuals and families that have been evacuated to Prince George from disaster-affected areas.
- The Teen Writer’s Circle program on May 20<sup>th</sup> at the Bob Harkins Branch was attended by 15 youth aged 13-18, a record attendance for that program and an exceptionally high turnout for a teen program in general.
- The Magical Creatures Workshop on May 17<sup>th</sup> was attended by 41 people. This was an all-ages/intergenerational crafting program.
- The Puzzle Swap on May 10<sup>th</sup> attracted 89 participants.

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

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

- *The Way We Hear It* exhibit is on display in the Bob Harkins Branch during the month of May, in recognition of the Speech and Hearing Month. The exhibit has been toured by a number of school tour classes visiting the library. Volunteers from the Northern BC Hearing

Society visit regularly to check on the exhibit, and have referred several families and small groups to visit the library and explore it. Anecdotal reports indicate that the exhibit is resonating with visitors, including comments overheard from those exploring the exhibit.

- The Youth Engagement Team continues to leverage monthly scavenger hunts as a tool of highlighting diversity and inclusivity. The April hunt highlighted the French language, while May features American Sign Language. Scavenger hunt guides are available on the table at the entrance to the Keith Gordon Room. Sarah Wildi, Youth Engagement Library Assistant, will deliver a presentation on using passive programs as DEI tools at the Beyond Hope Conference.

### **Developing Partnerships & Advocacy**

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

- Paul and Manager of Collections & Technology Chris Field met with staff of the UNBC Archives on April 30<sup>th</sup> to discuss potential for future collaboration between the two organizations.
- Tia Dayman (Youth Engagement Librarian), Laura Weisgarber (Youth Collections Librarian), and Victoria Ellis (Customer Experience Coordinator) attended an after-school event at Ron Brent Elementary, where they provided library card services, information, and free books (discards) to students. Every student got a book and a brochure about upcoming programs. 4 new library patron accounts were created.
- On May 2<sup>nd</sup> Tia Dayman attended the Ron Brent Indigenous Crafts Fair and interacted with 70 students, teachers, and parents.
- Paul participated in the recruitment process for a new executive director of the Association of BC Public Library Directors (ABCPLD), in his capacity as Secretary/Treasurer of the Association. Terry Harrison is joining as the new Executive Director of ABCPLD. Terry is the Former Chief of Staff for the Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation with the BC provincial government, and brings a strong foundation of advocacy and government relations to ABCPLD.
- 7 class tours with approximately 150 students visited the Bob Harkins Branch from April 29-May 28.
- Elizabeth Hannah, Adult Engagement Library Assistant, delivered a library tour to the staff of Tourism PG. The tour was specially designed to orient Tourism staff to library services that may be of interest to visitors to our city, including free internet/wifi, BC OneCard service, and paid/temporary resident memberships.
- Manager of Communications & Engagement Larissa Clotildes recently met with representatives from the Powell River Public Library regarding *The Way We Hear It* exhibit, to answer questions about PGPL's experience hosting the exhibit as they are planning to host it at their library.
- The Government Benefits Clinic hosted on May 12-13 helped 29 people access essential services such as identification needs, housing applications, tax services, and information about government benefits and services. This program was half by-appointment and half drop-in and was designed specifically for people facing extensive barriers to service.

- Paul and Larissa Clotildes met with City of Prince George staff on April 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss the library's role in the work of the Heritage Commission.

### **Designing Welcoming Spaces**

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

- PG Quilter's Guild is displaying their annual exhibit in the main stairwell. This year's display is massive, with 27 display pieces, most of them full-sized quilts.
- The Knowledge Garden has opened for the 2025 season. Gardeners from the City of PG planted the vegetable garden on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Staff are making plans to use the garden for programming throughout the spring and summer.
- Sunday openings at the Bob Harkins Branch are paused for the summer months, between the May long weekend and the Labour Day long weekend. There was an average of 230 visitors to the branch on Sundays in the first five months of 2025.
- The broken glass separating the two study rooms at the Bob Harkins Branch has been repaired.

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

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

- Paul attended a Library Director Succession Planning webinar on May 1<sup>st</sup>, hosted by the BC Library Trustees Association (BCLTA) and led by Anne O'Shea of Craft Strategic.
- Victoria Ellis, recently promoted to the position Customer Experience Coordinator, is using her Community Engagement background to improve communication and coordination between the Customer Experience and Community Engagement teams. She ran a workshop with Nechako staff teaching them how to input program statistics to improve data recording. She has also continued to provide email summaries of upcoming weekend programs to ensure Saturday staff are equipped to answer questions about and direct patrons to weekend programs and events.
- A number of library staff members travelled to Nanaimo on May 7-9 to participate in the BC Library Conference. The conference provided an excellent opportunity for PGPL staff to develop their professional networks and learn more about the variety of creative programs and services being offered in BC libraries.
- Steve Hamilton has been hired in the role of Manager of Communications & Engagement, providing coverage for Larissa Clotildes while she is away on maternity leave.
- Invitations to register for Beyond Hope Conference sessions will be sent out to library staff this week. There are 116 people registered for the conference. Both branches of the library are closed to the public on Monday June 9<sup>th</sup> to permit staff to attend conference sessions.

c) City Council Representative – Garth Frizzell

- Garth reported on the recent meetings between the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and provincial MLAs in Victoria, including government ministers and the premier. Garth brought forth the issue of sustainable provincial funding for public libraries. The week-long series of meetings in Victoria were effective, as they offered sufficient time to hold productive discussions on important topics. The meetings included a signing ceremony in honour of Prince George becoming the first local government to join the Human Trafficking Prevention Network of British Columbia. The City will be working to educate staff and community members in how to identify the signs of human trafficking, and the library may be a valuable resource in providing access to information and a venue to help raise awareness of this important issue.
- Garth shared some information regarding the efforts of the Committee on Citizen Recognition to identify potential ways that the City could honour citizens who make positive contributions to their community. The upgraded deck space at the Bob Harkins Branch was suggested as a potential location where the names of honoured citizens etched into concrete could be publicly displayed.
- The 2026 NCLGA conference is scheduled to take place in Prince George, offering an opportunity to continue public library advocacy efforts at local governmental association meetings.

d) Library Advancement Committee

- Jenn provided an update from the May LAC meeting. The “All Hands on Deck” Open House event was a big success, with between 120 and 150 people either visiting the deck space or interacting with staff or volunteers about the initiative. To date, more than 170 survey responses have been submitted. The survey is available until June 13<sup>th</sup>, and is being promoted again on the library’s social media channels.
- With the survey available until June 13<sup>th</sup>, and the Beyond Hope Conference scheduled for June 9-10, the committee decided to postpone the June LAC meeting and meet in July instead, when the summary report of the survey data will be available to the committee for review.
- The tap to donate service is ready to launch, and will be in use early in June.

e) Governance Committee

- Anna provided an update on the May Governance meeting, which included the development of an Action Plan to address the issues raised by the auditors in the Management Letter, to be discussed later in this meeting.
- The committee also discussed the Nechako Branch Lease Renewal process, with discussions ongoing between the Mall Manager and library staff regarding the counter proposal sent by the library. There was a question about a clause in the original lease regarding the load limit on the floor of the branch, and library staff confirmed that the existing library shelving does not exceed that limit. Once the Mall owners respond to the library’s counter proposal, we will have a better idea of what the Lease will look like and hopefully have an agreement in place soon.

- The 2025 Trustee Development Plan was discussed, with the committee confirming a consultant who is able to join the June board meeting to make a presentation on understanding financial statements.

f) Local History Committee

- No Report

g) Friends of the Library

- Jenne provided an update from the May Friends of the Library board meeting, where proposed dates for the Fall book sale were discussed.
- There was also discussion of simplifying the membership application process.
- The archived FOTL records have now been digitized.
- They are still working to recover access to their Instagram account.
- There was also discussion about using the size and growth of the FOTL membership numbers to help advocate for the importance of the library to its funding partners.

h) NCLF Board

- Vash confirmed that the NCLF AGM is scheduled for June 8<sup>th</sup>, to be held in person as part of the Beyond Hope Library Conference. There is also a training session scheduled for that day, focused on policy development. The pre-conference sessions will take place at the conference hotel, the Courtyard Marriott.
- Vash will be raising the issue of collaborating with member libraries in smaller communities in the region, taking full advantage of the Federation funding for training and professional development, so that all the libraries in the region benefit from these opportunities.

i) BCLTA

- The contract term of interim Executive Director of BCLTA, Christine Middlemass, has been extended for an additional 6 months.

## 6. DISCUSSION/DECISION ITEMS

a) Financial Statements to April 30, 2025

Financial Consultant Karen Stahl joined the meeting on Zoom to review the Financial Statements to April 30, 2025 with board members.

**Motion: That the Library Board approve the financial statements to April 30, 2025 as recommended by the Governance Committee. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**

b) Library Rebranding Project

The library's new Recruitment sub-brand was shared with board members. The recruitment section of the library's new website, and other recruiting documents, will be consistently branded to highlight the benefits and advantages of being a PGPL team member. This represents a significant upgrade on the current job page available on the library's website.

Paul also highlighted the recent meetings with Splash Media, in which the Bob Harkins Branch was toured to identify areas and features of the facility where the new branding and colours could be integrated into the space.

c) 2024 Management Letter Action Plan

Financial consultant Karen Stahl reviewed the library's progress on addressing the issues raised by the auditors in the Management Letter that was included with the 2024 financial audit process.

Karen, along with Manager of Finance & Facilities Lyoshi LaMair, has developed an Action Plan to track progress on resolving the concerns raised in the Management Letter. The Action Plan was shared with board members and will be updated and reviewed with board members going forward.

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

a) Committee Meetings for June

- Library Advancement Committee – no meeting in June
- Local History Committee – no meeting
- Governance Committee – June 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm
- Board Meeting – June 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm (Understanding Financial Statements Presentation)

b) Board Look Ahead

- Beyond Hope Library Conference, June 9-10
- National Indigenous Peoples Day, June 21<sup>st</sup>
- 2024 Annual Report Presentation to Council, June 23<sup>rd</sup>

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion: That the Library Board adjourn the Board meeting at 8:27 pm. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion was carried.**



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



**Anna Duff**  
**Chair**