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**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2024****5:30PM - 7:30PM****Brighthouse Library Board Room****Board Present:**

Caty Liu, Chair  
Denise Hui, Vice Chair  
Chak Au, Council Liaison  
Jennifer Gervès-Keen  
Sherine Merhi  
Ritchie Po  
Ashley Sandhu  
Angeline Singh  
Yvonne Yong (5:35pm)

Susan Walters, Chief Librarian and  
Secretary to the Board

**Staff Present:**

Anne Bechard  
Charles Leung  
Eva Yu  
Iris Lee  
Lucy Fox  
Shaneena Rahman  
Shane Parmar  
Angela Lee  
Wendy Jang  
Cindy Ho  
Stephanie Vokey  
Kin Man Leung

**Guests:**

Qin (Richard) Ji

**Friends of the Library:**

Debby Newton

**Regrets:**

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**1. Call to Order and Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 pm with C. Liu providing the welcome.

The Library Board welcomed Jennifer Gervès-Keen, Ritchie Po, Ashley Sandhu and Angeline Singh as new members of Richmond Public Library (RPL)'s Board of Trustees. Board members, staff and the Friend of the Library Chair, D. Newton, did a round table introduction.

D. Newton also shared the Friends of the Library's final RPL 2023 donation total: \$37,000.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

MOVED: THAT, the agenda be approved as presented.

D. Hui/S. Merhi.....CARRIED

**3. Election of 2024 Chair and Vice Chair**

C. Liu explained the Board Chair and Vice-Chair annual election process and turned the meeting over to S. Walters to run the election. C. Liu put forth her name for the Chair nomination. No additional nominations were received. C. Liu was elected Chair of the Richmond Public Library Board.

S. Walters turned the meeting over to C. Liu to complete the elections. S. Merhi nominated D. Hui as Vice-Chair. No additional nominations were received. D. Hui was elected Vice-Chair of the Richmond Public Library Board.

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#### 4. Business Section

(a) Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOVED: THAT, the minutes of the regular meeting of November 29, 2023, be approved as presented.

S. Merhi/Y. Yong.....CARRIED

(b) Business Arising

None.

(c) Correspondence

- i. November 24, 2023 – Appointment of Council Representatives.
- ii. November 27-28, 2023 – RPL Trustee Appointment and Re-Appointment 2024 Letters.
- iii. December 5, 2023 – Letter from InterLINK Executive Director re: InterLINK Provisional Budget 2023.
- iv. December 15, 2023 – Letter to Richmond Community Foundation re FOL 2023 contribution to RPL Endowment Fund.
- v. December 18, 2023 – Letter from Richmond Community Foundation re RPL Endowment Fund

No inquiries on any correspondence.

#### 5. Presentation

(a) 2023 Library Directions Summary (C. Ho, W. Jang, A. Lee, K.M. Leung, S. Parmar and S. Vokey)

Library staff collectively presented key organizational goals for 2023, including departmental statistics for library visits, library card registrations, customer service inquiries, library card registrations, collection use, and communications and marketing. Staff also shared learnings from the year and some initial departmental goals for 2024.

Councillor Au inquired about the types of programs offered across RPL and new partnerships this year, noting that RPL's unique offerings should be celebrated and highlighted. S. Parmar shared several examples of programming offered at RPL. He also spoke to the re-engagement of program partners. The Board briefly discussed how community often wants to lead programs, and staff noted how RPL supports those requests.

The Board inquired about how the Instant Access Digital Library Card differs from the digital card offered during the pandemic. K.M. Leung spoke to the differences, and both the benefits and current limitations of the digital library card. Staff are looking into how to digitally transition customers from a digital card to a full-access account.

The Board suggested a reminder email when the 60-day cut-off for the digital card is imminent and cautioned against over-collecting personal information in case of a data breach.

#### 6. Community

(a) Councillor's Report

No report. Councillor Au noted he will be sharing a report at the next meeting.

(b) Friends of the Library (FOL) Report

D. Newton introduced the Friends of the Library (FOL), explained how all funds raised go towards the library other than their expenses to run the sales, shared the \$5 membership fee, and noted

their email process to members. The FOL store is now open three doors down from the Cambie branch, and a tour can be scheduled for Trustees.

The Whale of a Book Sale is coming up in March, and FOL noted the increasing costs associated with this popular community event.

In response to questions from the board, D. Newton explained that the FOL manages an email list without the support of a database or formal platform; shifting the Whale of a Book Sale to another location would still incur moving costs; and the event has not had sponsors in several years.

i. Membership

C. Liu inquired about membership payment. D. Newton noted that the application form is being updated and that FOL would bring that form to the next meeting for Trustees. D. Newton also thanked C. Liu for joining the FOL at their recent sale.

(c) Summary of Customer Comments

No inquiries.

7. Board – Items for Decision and/or Discussion

(a) Executive Summary of 2023 Preliminary Year-End Financials (E. Yu)

C. Liu noted that she met with E. Yu and S. Walters to discuss the financials in January, and the audit will be presented at the March Board Meeting. Strategic considerations for spending the remaining funds will be brought to the Board in March.

The funds previously allocated for CCTV will be reallocated to cybersecurity, as the City has supported the implementation of the CCTV equipment. This re-allocation does not need Board approval. The Board inquired in more detail about several IT projects, to which staff noted the following:

- RPL is partnering with the City of Richmond to pull fibre optic cables into the Cambie Library. That project is dependent on the City.
- The IT Department is working with its vendor to review and modernize existing processes and procedures that impact customer experience and service. The agreement is in place and will be billed by the hour once the vendor begins the work.
- As previously noted, CCTV will be acquired in partnership with the City.

(b) InterLINK Provisional Budget

S. Walters provided an overview of InterLINK for the new Trustees, noting how this consortium lends and borrows materials among 18 lower mainland public libraries. RPL is a lending library within the consortium and, as a result, pays a reduced annual membership fee. An RPL Trustee sits on InterLINK's Board and the Chief Librarian sits on the Administrator's Advisory Group.

MOVED: THAT, Richmond Public Library Board receives the Provisional 2024 InterLINK Budget as information.

D. Hui/A. Singh.....CARRIED

## 8. Standing Items

### (a) Roundtable Discussion

S. Mehri welcomed the new Trustees. D. Hui thanked S. Merhi for her involvement in RPL's Islamic Art Experience. S. Walters explained that this section of the meeting is a space to share news and information from any trainings, events, and/or library-related topics that the Trustees would like to bring forward.

### (b) Committee Appointments

C. Liu noted the vacancies on various RPL Board Committees and welcomed Trustees to put their names forward based on skillsets and interests, particularly for the two committees with current vacancies:

- **Governance Committee:** Reviews policies.
- **Finance Committee:** Holds fiduciary responsibilities.

All Committees vary in meeting frequency and time of year relevant to their work. Committee work can be streamlined through email, and members typically meet over Zoom to accommodate individual schedules.

C. Liu also explained the opportunities to sit on InterLINK and BCLTA's Boards, of which BCLTA's bulletin is on table for Trustee reference. The board noted both as opportunities to connect with fellow trustees and financial expertise is often a high priority; to date, four RPL Board Trustees have served as BCLTA treasurer. S. Merhi is currently the InterLINK representative. D. Hui noted that she is listed as an alternate for InterLINK and that finances are not her skillset.

Discussions continued, particularly around the Governance Committee, noting that diversity, equity and inclusion policies would fall under the Committee's purview, and a core policy review is of high priority going forward, with a focus on strengthening current policies to meet changing provincial, national and global landscapes on pertinent topics. With meeting rooms being built at the new Steveston Library, a meeting room policy will also be a high priority.

J. Gervès-Keen, R. Po and Y. Yong put their names forward for the Governance Committee.

The Board noted that further questions about each Committee can be sent to C. Liu or S. Walters.

In response to an inquiry from R.Po, staff noted that the meeting package is not shared publicly and personal information has been redacted.

### (c) Steveston Community Centre and Library

S. Walters further explained that this Committee's work has shifted to focus on operational planning. S. Walters and S. Rahman meet weekly with City staff and are beginning to consider things like staffing needs and facility hours of operations. The Steveston Community Society is an active partner in operations and will be included in planning meetings.

Conversations continue around the overall plan for services in the event of an early closure before taking possession of the new facility and how the library might be able to mobilize service with the RPL to Go Van.

(d) InterLINK Report

No InterLINK meeting was held in January. A report will be shared in February's meeting.

(e) Finance Committee

Nothing further to report beyond the previously presented 2023 Preliminary Year-End Financials.

(f) Fund Development Committee

D. Hui noted RPL Donors in the past three years all received an email from the Fund Development Committee (FDC) in late December. While the correlation between email recipients and conversion to donors is difficult, 39 donations were made between that email and year-end for a total of \$5,400. This follows 58 donations for a total of \$4,300, donated after the Chief Librarian's year-end email to cardholders earlier in the month, which focused on thanking them for their engagement with library services.

The year-end mailout had a digital focus in 2023, compared to FDC's physical mailout in 2022, in tandem with a more direct donation request email from the Chief Librarian. The 2023 email had a 75% open rate and a minuscule unsubscribe rate.

Questions arose about perhaps emailing donors more often and what frequency is appropriate. A. Singh inquired about a comparison to 2022's donations, which are hard to track given the medium of a physical mailout compared to inherent metrics on email platforms.

D. Hui also highlighted the donors featured in the FDC email, who have committed to three \$5,000 donations between 2023-2025.

(g) Governance Committee

No report.

(h) Strategic Planning Committee

The Strategic Planning public consultation survey is live, and promotion is ongoing. The survey is available on the City's Let's Talk platform and does not require a login to the site to be able to complete it.

The project's consultants have sent a mailout to 33,000 occupant postcodes; posters are being displayed in each library and community centre, handouts are displayed at each branch, and nametags have been provided to all library staff. The City has also supported by sharing the survey through a Let'sTalk email and digital transit ads at 6 bus shelters in Richmond.

Workshops are currently being set up for community feedback: 4 that are open to the community – children and families, youth, seniors, and newcomers – and 1 that is restricted to vulnerable community service providers.

The project consultants are also working to reach out to Musqueam, and S. Walters is meeting with the City's new Manager of Indigenous Relations. The Board recognizes that this work may take time.

The goal is to reach several thousand respondents whose feedback will further inform the strategic plan expected in April.

**9. Chief Librarian's Report**

S. Walters noted that current priorities are to ensure all Board Members are set up for 2024 and to move strategic planning work forward. Work also continues with the BC Library Partners and other public libraries to advocate for continued, permanent funding from the province. S. Walters noted that there will be a follow-up meeting with Minister Kang from the initial meeting in late 2023 which is featured in the BCLTA Bulletin on table.

**10. Operations****(a) Collections and Customer Service Delivery**

S. Merhi congratulated staff on the new study rooms and the Community Connectors program. D. Hui inquired about customer interest in the Brighthouse Library (BHB) meeting pods and timelines for implementation; S. Walters noted that RPL is waiting on an electrician to complete the power and network connection; further pods are also being set up on the second floor.

There is ongoing excitement at BHB for the new lobby gathering space, which is 99% complete. The space will be available for customers to sit, study, and meet up, and food and drink are permitted as with all RPL locations. Three self-checkouts will be moved back into that space, with a further self-checkout upstairs and another in the children's space.

As RPL is often a space for Richmond's vulnerable community to seek warmth and shelter, and with continued population growth throughout the community, the Board noted a particular interest in how this space may be used going forward. They discussed the ongoing growth City-wide that RPL may need to consider when it comes to library facility and space needs.

**(b) Community Development and Service Design**

No inquiries.

**(c) Innovation and Learning Development**

No inquiries.

**(d) Information Technology Operations**

No inquiries.

**(e) Marketing and Public Relations *(shared quarterly)***

C. Liu inquired about the shift from tracking media mentions. Staff noted that, given the hours required for manual tracking and the cost of a digital platform to do that work, this would not be a priority in 2024. Instead, the marketing team will focus on strengthening relationships with current media contacts and building new relationships with further media outlets. A new metric will be set around this work for 2024.

S. Mehri noted that RPL is featured in Richmond News calendar. The Board encouraged RPL staff to think creatively about what is shared in the media.

Y. Yong inquired about what social media channels RPL uses, as the Library Directions presentation focused on Facebook and Instagram. L. Fox noted that the marketing team is currently active on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, YouTube and WeChat; with a new social media strategy for 2024, the focus will shift to growing the audience on Instagram and leveraging LinkedIn to share more professional development opportunities and relevant newcomer programs. Y. Yong noted that RPL is often spoken about on Reddit and may be a platform for staff to consider.

The Board discussed promotion and engagement within Richmond schools, which staff actively collaborate on. S. Walters participates in joint City and SD38 meetings, RPL's library card campaign targeting Grades 1,4 and 8 students continues, and the IT Department is actively considering innovative ways to partner with the School District for a more seamless card registration process. The Board also discussed teaching students the value of libraries overall and how the library is an important community asset for learning about misinformation and cyber safety.

- (f) Human Resources  
No inquiries.

**11. Items Included for Information**

- (a) Operational Statistics Q4 2023  
No inquiries.

**12. Other Business**

C. Liu shared reminders about two upcoming BHB events (the Children's Art Festival and the Lunar New Year Celebration in February) and reminded Trustees to complete the RPL public consultation survey.

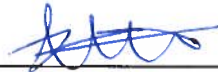
**Next Meeting**

The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 5:30 pm.**

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.

CHAIR



CHIEF LIBRARIAN

