

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2024  
5:30PM - 8:30PM**

In-person with Zoom Videoconference Option  
Brighthouse Library Board Room

**Board Present:**

Caty Liu, Chair  
Denise Hui, Vice Chair  
Michael Wolfe, Alt. Council Liaison (5:39pm)  
Ashley Sandhu  
Angeline Singh (5:41pm)  
Jennifer Gervès-Keen  
Ritchie Po  
Sherine Merhi  
Yvonne Yong

**Staff Present:**

Anne Bechard  
Charles Leung  
Eva Yu  
Iris Lee  
Lucy Fox  
Shaneena Rahman  
Shane Parmar  
Kate Adams  
Ping He

**Guests:**

Emily Tang

**Friends of the Library:**

Bonnie Walker

Susan Walters, Chief Librarian and  
Secretary to the Board

**Regrets:**

Chak Au, Council Liaison

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**1. Call to Order and Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 5:32pm. C. Liu provided the welcome and introduced the guest in attendance, E. Tang.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

MOVED: THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

S. Merhi/J. Gervès-Keen.....CARRIED

**3. Business Section**

(a) Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOVED: THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of January 31, 2024, be approved as presented.

J. Gervès-Keen/A. Sandhu.....CARRIED

(b) Business Arising

None.

(c) Correspondence

- i. February 20, 2024 – Letter from Richmond Community Foundation re RPL 2023 Endowment Fund Statement  
No comments or questions.

#### 4. Presentations

##### (a) Role of the Librarian Presentation

Staff shared information on the librarian's role, including the scope and impact of their work and how the role has changed to support evolving community needs.

Board members asked about any current knowledge gaps in librarian staffing, to which staff responded that all RPL librarians have a wide range of professional skills, with some librarians focussed on services to target audiences. S. Walters shared that in recent years and with the support of City Council, RPL added two senior services and two children and family services librarian positions to address the greatest community need; librarian skills development is ongoing and there is a new focus to support neurodiverse community, which the Board can anticipate a presentation on in a future meeting.

##### (b) Freedom to Read Presentation

P. He presented on Freedom to Read Week (February 18-24), how librarians support freedom of expression and intellectual freedom, and the Request for Reconsideration process at RPL.

The Board discussed the Book Sanctuary initiative led by Chicago Public Library, and staff noted that they would investigate officially participating. D. Hui asked about RPL's connection to School District 38 (SD38) regarding book challenges. Staff explained that while both types of libraries report nationally on challenges and uphold intellectual freedom, the collection mandates differ between entities; a school library's collection supports the curriculum whereas a public library's collection can be much broader in scope. However, staff will continue to be aware of SD38's banned book list for context.

The Board also discussed challenges related to LGBTQ+ content and organized groups challenging collections. S. Walters noted the potential future impact on staff time for reviewing collection challenges and meeting room bookings. A policy and procedure review will be prioritized.

#### 5. Community

##### (a) Councillor's Report

Cllr. Wolfe shared updates on Pink Shirt Day and related City-wide events and initiatives, the Cultural Centre Annex opening, the rebuild of the First Nations bunkhouse at Britannia Shipyard, the Youth Advisory Committee, City grants approvals, and the support for two new outreach workers at the City.

He also noted that the Mayor provided another statement on Monday about the safe consumption site and reiterated that any further action would be taken by Vancouver Coastal Health; that Lansdowne Mall has received Phase 1 approval and when completed, it will include community amenity space; and that the Cultural Harmony Plan is on the agenda for the upcoming Planning Meeting, and the library is noted in several places throughout the report.

Cllr. Wolfe also shared that at a recent meeting, the Hamilton Advisory Committee continues to discuss library services in the area; particular concerns from the community are a) the limited three hours of library time available compared to previous, longer hours, and b) the location of the library space as it is not easy to see, and does not have a lot of space or displayed books.

In response to the Hamilton Advisory Committee's ongoing library discussions, S. Walters noted that in addition to pop-up library services on Saturdays, RPL staff are actively engaging with seniors and engaging with students during the week to support the Hamilton community's library needs, and that RPL will continue to advocate for a larger library space in the area.

Trustees further discussed the two new city outreach workers. Cllr. Wolfe shared that these new positions will work 9-5 hours and will support the case for further positions in the evenings and on weekends.

Trustees also discussed the new funding for asylum seekers, following an article D. Hui read featuring Cllr. Day. Cllr. Wolfe noted that this topic is being discussed next week within Council, particularly surrounding the potential for a site for asylum seekers on Sea Island.

(b) Friends of the Library (FOL) Report

B. Walker reintroduced FOL and noted the two recent sales at Cambie Library, which raised \$1,800. She noted the need for more donated books and shared that donations can be made at the FOL store on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and the Lynas Lane Recycling Centre. There is another book sale scheduled at the Thompson Community Centre on March 16 and 17.

(c) Summary of Customer Comments

No comments.

5. Board – Items for Decision and/or Discussion

(a) 2023 Provincial Library Grant Report

S. Walters explained the reporting requirement for all BC public libraries and noted that the report shares highlights from the year and the impact of provincial funding on library services for the Richmond community.

No comments or questions noted from the Board.

MOVED: THAT the Richmond Public Library Board endorse the 2023 Provincial Public Library Grant Report.

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

(b) Draft 2024 Board Calendar and Work Plan

C. Liu shared the five priorities for the Board in 2024 and asked the Board for further comments or additions.

A. Sandhu noted an interest in trustee business cards and name tags. She also suggested a rotational model for trustee connections to city councillors whereby the trustees would rotate their primary contact with Council each year. This would support longevity through trustee turnover and strengthen relationships between the board and Council. Other ideas were also discussed.

Trustees also discussed the upcoming BCLA Conference and staff will share information about trustee registration shortly.

(c) Review of 2023 Operations

D. Hui asked about tracking inquiries on social media. Staff noted that questions are limited and infrequent and therefore not tracked formally. Trustees then discussed the difference in library visits compared to 2019, to which staff explained that RPL is continuing to steadily build back to pre-pandemic levels. Staff also noted that programming numbers showcased strong community engagement and indicated the ongoing trend towards increased circulation and virtual/hybrid programming.

Trustees highlighted the impact of the new Brighthouse lobby space and how further provincial funding could support similar improvements in other RPL spaces.

**6. Standing Items**

(a) Roundtable Discussion

Y. Yong shared that the Children's Art Festival was lively and busy, with lots of activities for families. She appreciated the French and English concerts, the variety of arts and crafts, and the friendly volunteers and staff.

Cllr. Wolfe left the meeting at 7:09pm.

J. Gervès-Keen shared her experience at RPL's Black History Month presentation with author Sheila Murray, stating that the content was insightful and engaging despite a limited turnout from the community. Staff indicated ongoing marketing and promotional efforts to ensure registrations and conversions to attendance.

(b) Steveston Community Centre and Library

Staff are working closely with City staff to operationalize the new facility and starting to plan what the move may involve. Weekly meetings are held to progress the work and ensure that recommendations are ultimately presented to Council for decision-making.

(c) InterLINK Report

S. Merhi shared that the first meeting was held yesterday, and the Chair and Treasurer were chosen; they are still looking for a Vice-Chair.

Trustees discussed ongoing conversations about multilingual collections at BC libraries. S. Walters noted that she is meeting with other lower mainland libraries in regards to focussing collections and services based on demographic data and at the neighbourhood level. InterLINK would continue to provide support by helping to move materials between member libraries. More information to be shared in late Q2.

S. Merhi left the room at 7:16pm.

(d) Finance Committee

A. Sandhu has joined the committee. The next meeting will be in March to review the 2023 Audit Findings and Audited Financial Statement with KPMG.

(e) Fund Development Committee

None.

(f) Governance Committee

The first meeting is being scheduled so policies can be brought forward at the March Board Meeting. S. Walters will bring forward the work plan to the committee.

(g) Strategic Planning Committee

Public consultation has now ended, with 80 responses recorded for the staff survey, 3,292 community responses to the Let's Talk Richmond survey, and 59 participants across 5 workshops (families, youth, seniors, newcomers, and Non-Profit Organizations serving vulnerable populations).

D. Hui inquired about the return on investment of the outreach initiatives and whether the 3,292 was a sufficient return. Staff noted that this was a successful return and that a key feature of the survey was the removal of registration barriers for survey completion. Staff stated this was a fulsome survey that took time to complete, and the number of responses will provide very meaningful feedback, particularly the open-ended questions.

C. Liu noted the date of the strategic planning workshop: Saturday, March 23, from 9:00-1:00pm.

**7. Chief Librarian's Report**

February saw several events hosted at RPL, including the Lunar New Year event, with a gate count of over 2,300. On Family Day, the Children's Art Festival saw 8,000+ attendees.

The Brighthouse lobby renovation was completed and opened for public use this month. It has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the community. Library visitors of all ages are utilizing the space for various activities, and the success of this project will guide space optimization efforts at other libraries. Café service is being explored as customers have expressed their desire for refreshments while in the space.

S. Merhi returned at 7:22pm.

Bill 46, part of the province's housing strategy, has been introduced to streamline housing and infrastructure development in high-growth areas. Of particular interest to the library is the Amenity Cost Charges (ACCs), which allow municipalities to collect funds for capital costs of facilities like libraries, tied to new developments, and related to growth rather than renovation or rebuild projects. The library can use the 2018 space needs study to inform the City's upcoming work aligning with the bill's requirements; this information must be provided by June. The library board may want to consider a facility needs study in the next few months to support future library development.

S. Walters presented to the Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee about the strategic plan public consultation on February 21. Questions were posed regarding senior services, multilingual services, intellectual freedom, and accessibility. The Committee noted their ongoing support of the library.

**8. Operations**

(a) Collections and Customer Service Delivery

Staff clarified that the report concerns the Special Collection on Chinese Culture. Once complete, 9,000 items will be available for searching via an online catalogue, with the remainder of other subjects being phased into future plans. The Special collection will be housed in the room beside Brighthouse's administration office and promoted nationwide.

Trustees discussed advocacy for a larger library space to showcase complete special collections.

(b) Community Development and Service Design

A. Bechard clarified that Nintendo Switches are available on loan from the library for the upcoming SmashBros gaming event. This is a community-led event, following successful smaller events at Cambie Library.

(c) Customer Experience and Community Branch Services

None.

(d) Innovation and Learning Development

None.

(e) Information Technology Operations

None.

(f) Marketing and Communications

None.

9. Items Included for Information

None.

10. Other Business

None.

**Next Meeting**

The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 5:30pm.**

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:41pm.

CHAIR



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CHIEF LIBRARIAN



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