

Minutes of the VPL Board Services, Finance & Human Resources Committee In Camera Meeting held following the Regular Meeting on Wednesday, February 19, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom video call.

Present: Parveen Mangat
Karen Spears
Ziming Yang — Chair

Absent: Tim Bottomer
Joshua Davidson
Victor Huang

Management

Present: Dawn Ibey — Interim Chief Librarian & CEO
Kay Cahill — Director, Information Technology & Collections
Alicia Cheng — Acting Director, Central Library & Public Service
Julia Morrison — Director, Corporate Services & CFO
Carol Nelson — Director, Planning & Communications
Balwinder Rai — Director, Human Resources

Guest: Amir Abbey — President, CUPE 391

Recording

Secretary: Chrysalyn Tolentino — Executive Assistant

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Committee Chair Yang acknowledged that our work takes place on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

ADMINISTRATION:**1. Approval and Additions to the Agenda**

Moved by Parveen Mangat

THAT the Committee approve the regular meeting agenda as amended.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Minutes

The Committee Chair presented the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held February 19, 2025 for approval by the Committee.

Moved by Parveen Mangat

THAT the draft minutes of the Regular Meeting held February 19, 2025 be approved as received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

FINANCIALS

3. Review of External Audits and Evaluations

Julia Morrison, Corporate Services Director & CFO, reported on external audits and examinations of the Library's finances and operations, excluding routine evaluations by staff. The City's Internal Audit group also conducts annual tests as part of SOFI preparations. The Auditor General may audit the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) if requested by the Board, with a potential audit in 2026.

Trustees noted that the Collingwood Branch did not pass the Accessibility Audit conducted in 2019 and asked if there are plans to update the elevators in this facility to meet the audit standards. Staff responded that while upgrades have been made to Collingwood, elevator access to the staff room cannot be addressed in the current building. The plan is to wait for future developer-led construction of a new building that Collingwood could move into. The redevelopment of Collingwood has been identified in the Facilities Redevelopment Plan.

Trustees also asked about a 2026 audit by the Auditor General. Staff explained the Board could request it and provided examples of possible audits. Trustees directed Morrison and Interim Chief Librarian & CEO Ibey to seek suggestions from the Auditor General and inquiry about the timeline for requests from the Board.

Moved by Karen Spears

THAT the Committee recommend that the Board receive this report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

SERVICES

4. Intellectual Freedom Challenges

Kay Cahill, Director of Information Technology & Collections highlighted and summarized the intellectual freedom challenges in 2024. She noted that in 2024, 15 vandalism incidents were reported. 14 of the titles had permanent vandalism of the title; 1 title had been censored through the addition of stickers. Of the 15 titles, 14 were adult titles or materials and 1 was a children's title. The titles covered a range of topics including Middle Eastern history and politics and LGBTQ+ topics.

Trustees asked about the difference between vandalism and damaged, and also inquired if staff will replace the book "Truth About Muhammed". Director Cahill responded that vandalism is intentional and noted that VPL will not replace the book as it has not been circulating for some time and was weeded on this basis.

Moved by Karen Spears

THAT the Committee receive this report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

NEW BUSINESS

5. Tariffs

Kay Cahill, Director of Information Technology & Collections, informed the Committee that VPL learned today that adult and children's books, newspapers and magazines will become subject to Canadian counter tariffs when these come into effect on April 2nd. This has the potential to have a significant impact on the purchasing power of VPL's materials budget.

The Canadian Urban Library Council (CULC) is preparing a statement on the impact these tariffs, as are other organizations in the library sector and publishing industry.

Trustees inquired whether the counter tariffs would affect digital materials. Kay replied that this it appears not currently, but that we do not have enough information at this early stage to confirm this definitively. Trustees requested that staff continue to update the Board with data on the potential impacts as they are understood. Staff noted that once more information is available, they could provide a report at the May Library Board meeting to assist the Board in understanding the effects of these tariffs and efforts to mitigate impact.

ADJOURN

Moved by Karen Spears

There being no further business, the Chair declared the Regular meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Ziming Yang, Chair

Dawn Ibey, Secretary