



Minutes of the VPL Board Governance Committee Regular Meeting held at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, June 15, 2020 via video call.

Present: Jennifer Chan
Kurt Heinrich
Rebecca Jules
Kevin Lowe – Chair
Raji Mangat
Rhonda Sherwood

Staff: Carol Nelson – Director, Planning & Communication

Recording Secretary: Christina de Castell – Chief Librarian

Committee Chair Lowe acknowledged that our work takes place on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. He commented on the interesting time of governance in terms of COVID-19, Black Lives Matter and anti-racism, and that among these human rights issue we should reflect on how we can bring these important lenses into policy work.

ADMINISTRATION:

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Raji Mangat

THAT the Committee approve the Governance Committee meeting agenda.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Minutes

The Chief Librarian presented the draft minutes of the meeting held December 11, 2019 for approval by the Committee.

Moved by Jennifer Chan

THAT the draft minutes of the meeting held December 11, 2019 be approved as amended.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES & PROCEDURES

3. Governance Committee Terms of Reference

Christina de Castell identified that the Terms of Reference for the Governance Committee states that the Committee is comprised of the two Vice Chairs, the CRPD Chair and the SFHR Chair, and the appointment of a Governance Committee Chair who does not also hold one of those positions is not currently contemplated in the Committee's Terms of Reference. Christina suggested the Committee may want to consider allowing for exceptions. Raji noted she had also identified this and trustees agreed to add an exception to allow for variation in Committee composition. Kurt identified a typo for correction. Rebecca observed that trustees were told everyone is welcome to come to Governance meetings, and that for this to happen, everyone needs to receive the invitation and agenda. Christina will ensure this happens in future.

Kevin identified that the responsibilities should be ensuring orientation and training programs occur for Board members, rather than providing them. He also inquired which committee covers risk management and liability, and Christina and Rhonda confirmed this is SFHR. Christina will provide these amendments for review at the next Governance meeting.

Moved by Rhonda Sherwood

THAT the Committee receive the report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Policy Management Framework

Carol Nelson introduced the framework, which describes how we manage policies at VPL. It provides definitions, defines our relationship with City of Vancouver policies, and outlines the process for how to manage, develop and update our policies. She noted that the Governance Committee provided updates and input on an earlier draft of this document in the Spring of 2019. This version incorporates those amendments.

Raji thanked staff for putting this together and thoughtfully incorporating trustees' feedback. Rhonda commended staff on the approach and informative nature of the document. Kevin suggested including the role of the Board in the roles, and noted that this is a standard policy development process. He asked how we can consider other ways of knowing, being and doing in our approach, and challenge ourselves to think about doing things differently given the ways policy has failed certain populations. He also noted we could strengthen the research through consultation and partnership depending on the policy. Carol commented this lens will be important as we go forward with reviewing individual policies.

Jennifer asked about the timing of our policy review relative to the review of parallel City of Vancouver policies by City Council, and Christina provided examples of how this has generally been handled for different types of policies, such as for sponsorship, financial policies, and administrative IT policies.

Moved by Rhonda Sherwood

THAT the Committee receive the report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Christina asked if trustees would like the full Board to receive the document for information at this time, with an amendment to address challenging ourselves to go beyond traditional policy development approaches. Raji noted that this would support everyone's greater capacity and understanding of VPL policies.

Moved by Raji Mangat

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

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Board Policy Review

Carol Nelson commented that this report lists existing policies and provides recommended priorities for review. As with the report above, this was originally slated to come forward in March. As a result of the pandemic we have identified the need for a new pandemic response policy, which will now be the highest priority and will come forward to the Board in July. We have deemed 5 other policies high priority with review to begin in the Fall of 2020.

Jennifer asked about the proposed pandemic response policy and whether it should be broadened to include other situations such as earthquakes. The Chief Librarian commented that such other Board-level policies are desirable in the long term, but the pandemic response policy is what is needed first. The Chief Librarian also noted that VPL currently does have better policies for closures around emergencies like earthquakes or snow, although as Jennifer noted, these are operational rather than Board-level policies.

Rebecca noted the quantity of work ahead and asked about considering policies addressing workplace safety and visitor safety as higher priority. Raji observed the value of reviewing policies in groups that are logically clustered together, in the way public space and programming are, and noted she had referenced the financial reserves policy recently and would suggest it be ranked higher. Trustees expressed interest in rescinding Board policies

that are purely operational in nature as a group, and noting the date when a policy is scheduled for review now that a 5 year interval is set.

Christina noted that the next step is review by the SFHR and CRPD committees, and that this is planned in July, following which the report would come to the Board.

Moved by Rhonda Sherwood

THAT the Committee receive the report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

<Trustee Rebecca Jules left the meeting at 5:51 p.m.>

6. Chief Librarian Performance Review

Christina de Castell noted the process is robust with quite a lot more consultation with both external parties and staff than she believes is usual based on other similar roles, and the burden could be lessened on external individuals. Raji noted that the current process doesn't necessarily give the Board the information it most needs, and she is in favour of revisiting the consultation, particularly the external and the quantity. Rhonda commented that trustees had discussed looking into a consultant and BCLTA had not been able to provide a recommendation. Jennifer noted that the procedures undertaken should not conflict with the written Chief Librarian Performance Review policy, unless such policy were to be revised. Kurt commented that knowing what the Chief Librarian finds valuable in the feedback would be helpful, and Christina advised that feedback from managers and trustees through the evaluation is the most valuable, because it helps her understand how she is doing at supporting those who rely on her, and these groups are less likely to provide feedback directly, whereas the directors generally are able to provide feedback through regular weekly meetings.

Raji, Kevin and Rhonda agreed to be the Chief Librarian performance review committee this year, and they will consider the questions and report back at the next meeting. Jennifer thanked them for volunteering and offered to review any documents as needed. Christina will consult with some other large urban libraries on their process and update the group.

Moved by Raji Mangat

THAT the Committee receive the report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

BOARD DEVELOPMENT & RECRUITMENT

7. Board Recruitment Plan and Process

Christina de Castell introduced the report and identified a need to provide more information to prospective trustees. She recommended an information session for candidates before they apply, and gave an overview of how the trustee application process works now. Rhonda agreed that an information session would be very valuable, and Raji noted this should be right before applications open or early in the period. She also noted trustees should attend and offer to answer follow up questions. Would be good to have a trustee attend and that applicants be able to ask questions of them there or after. Trustees identified several opportunities for improved information, including explaining the timeline after application, transparency in the time commitment as more than 2 evenings per month, and identifying other commitments to VPL events, liaison with Council, training opportunities, and participation with the BCLTA. Rebecca noted ways we could reach people who are not online because they rely on libraries for computer access, such as posters at Carnegie and promoting through our partners, and that we could do more to ensure diversity on our board.

Trustees further discussed the time commitment, and Rhonda identified similar issues with other City committees. Christina identified that she will work with the City to adjust the application to better convey the time commitment involved.

Kevin notes we need to manage expectations around the number of actual spaces given potential re-applications, and Jennifer observed we should all encourage trustees to re-apply.

Moved by Raji Mangat

THAT the Committee receive the report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURN

Moved by Jennifer Chan

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Kevin Lowe, Chair

Christina de Castell, Secretary