



AGENDA

Greater Victoria Public Library Board Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

Date: Tuesday February 25, 2025
Time: 12:00-1:00 PM
Location: In Person: Community Room, Central Branch, 735 Broughton Street, Victoria, BC
Electronically: Microsoft Teams

1. Call to Order

2. Territorial Acknowledgement

Greater Victoria Public Library's service area is located within the traditional territories of many First Nations, known today as the Songhees First Nation and Xwsepsem (Esquimalt) First Nation, as well as the WSÁNEĆ Nations and Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) First Nation.

Their historical relationships with the land and sea continue to this day. It is an honour to work on these sacred lands that they have stewarded since time immemorial

3. Welcome and Introductions

4. Consent Agenda

Motion to Approve

- 4.1. Approval of Agenda
- 4.2. Approval of Minutes – January 28, 2025 [Attachment 4.2](#)
- 4.3. Chair's Report [Attachment 4.3](#)
- 4.4. CEO Report [Attachment 4.4](#)
- 4.5. Correspondence
 - 4.5.1. Patron letter received February 9, 2025 [Attachment 4.5.1](#)
 - 4.5.2. Patron letter received February 17, 2025 [Attachment 4.5.2](#)

5. Chair's Remarks

For Information

6. Business Arising from Previous Meeting

- 6.1. Board Committees
 - 6.1.1. 2025 Committee Membership [Attachment 6.1.1](#)
 - 6.1.2. 2025 Meeting Schedule [Attachment 6.1.2](#)
 - 6.1.3. 2025 Committee Priorities

For Information
For Discussion
For Discussion

7. New Business

- 7.1. Board Engagement
- 7.2. Public Library Grant Report 2024

For Discussion
For Information

8. Next Meeting Date

March 25, 2025 12:00pm – 1:00pm

9. Adjournment



MINUTES REGULAR BOARD MEETING

GVPL Central Branch, 735 Broughton Street
Community Meeting Room & MS Teams
January 28, 2025

A hybrid meeting of the Greater Victoria Public Library Board was held on the above date. The following individuals were in attendance:

Board Members:

Trustee A. Appleton
Trustee K. Boehnert
Trustee D. Cavens
Trustee S. Donaldson
Trustee D. Grove
Trustee S. Khair
Trustee S. Kim
Trustee S. Lansdowne
Trustee G. Lemon
Trustee R. McClure
Trustee M. Morley
Trustee T. Phelps Bondaroff
Trustee R. Ranjan
Trustee K. Roessingh
Trustee R. Stromberg
Trustee N. White
Trustee M. Wey

Regrets:

Trustee R. Henderson
Trustee G. Newton

Staff:

M. Sawa, CEO/Board Secretary
M. Barnes, Assistant Director, Finance
M. Collyer, Director, Marketing and Development
J. Gingera, Director, Systems Integration, Resource Management and IT
A. Shojaei, Assistant Director, Safety, Security, Facilities and Risk Management
D. Wood, Executive Director, Library Services
E. Russell, Recording Secretary
C. Ottenbreit, Vice President, CUPE 410

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Secretary M. Sawa called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

M. Sawa provided the Indigenous Acknowledgement.

3. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

M. Sawa welcomed trustees to the first meeting of 2025.

4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Request to remove the following items from the Consent Agenda:

- 4.3- CEO Report
- 4.6. Correspondence

These Items were removed from the consent Agenda and moved to New Business 9.3 and 9.4 respectively.

Moved by Trustee Appleton seconded by Trustee Roessingh

THAT items 4.1 & 4.2 be approved.
THAT Item 4.3 be received for information.

- 4.1 Approval of Minutes – December 10, 2024
- 4.2 Trustee Appointment by Municipality
- 4.3 2025 Board Meeting Dates

MOTION CARRIED

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

5.1. CHAIR

The Secretary called for nominations for Chair of the Greater Victoria Public Library Board

Moved by Trustee Lemon and seconded by Trustee Roessingh,

THAT Trustee Shahira Khair be nominated for the position of Board Chair for a one-year term.

MOTION CARRIED

A call for further nominations was made two times. There were no further nominations.

Voting by General Consent was conducted, and Trustee Shahira Khair was elected as Chair of the Greater Victoria Public Library Board.

5.2. VICE CHAIR

The Chair called for nominations for Vice Chair of the Greater Victoria Public Library Board.

Moved by Trustee Appleton and seconded by Trustee Lemon,

THAT Trustee Duncan Cavens be nominated for the position of Vice Chair for a one-year term.

MOTION CARRIED

A call for further nominations was made two times, there were no further nominations.

Voting by General Consent was conducted, and Trustee Duncan Cavens was elected as the Vice Chair of the Greater Victoria Public Library Board.

6. APPOINTMENT OF SIGNING OFFICERS

Moved by Trustee Appleton and seconded by Trustee Roessingh,

THAT Board Chair Trustee Khair and Board Vice Chair Trustee Cavens be appointed as Signing Officers.

MOTION CARRIED

7. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Shahira Khair acknowledged and thanked outgoing Chair Andrew Appleton. Looking forward to working with the Board on the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan and updating Key Board policies.

8. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

8.1. 2025-2027 Strategic Planning Framework

M. Sawa reviewed the 2025-2027 Strategic Planning Framework that was initially presented and approved at the November 26, 2024 Board meeting.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1. Board Committees and Liaison Opportunities 2025

Trustee Appleton provided an overview of the role of the Planning and Policy Committee. Trustee Cavens provided an overview of the role of the Finance Committee. Trustees were reminded that they are all welcome to participate in both committees.

Trustee Shelly Donaldson provided an overview of the IslandLink Library Federation and its mandate.

M. Sawa encouraged trustees to engage with the BC Library Trustees Association (BCLTA)

9.2. Greater Victoria Labour Relations Association (GVLRA) Representative and Alternate Appointments for 2025

Moved by Trustee Andrew and Seconded by Trustee Lemon,

THAT Trustees S. Kim and D. Cavens be appointed as GVPL representative and alternate respectively to the Greater Victoria Labour Relations Association Board for the term ending 31 December 2025

MOTION CARRIED

9.3. CEO Update

M. Sawa welcomed Amir Shojaei, GVPL's new Assistant Director, Safety, Security, Facilities and Risk Management, and introduced this new position to the board and reviewed his mandate. A. Shojaei provided highlights of the work he has done in his first few weeks in the position.

9.4. Correspondence

9.4.1. Patron letter received December 7, 2024

9.4.2. Patron letter received December 24, 2024

M. Sawa reviewed the two letters which were moved from the consent agenda to new business, both letters are requests for books that do not meet the criteria for selection into the GVPL collection. A review of the criteria was provided, The Planning and Policy Committee will be reviewing the related collection policy in 2025.

10. In Camera

Moved by Trustee Lansdowne, and Seconded by Trustee Lemon,

That the Board move In-Camera

MOTION CARRIED

11. NEXT MEETING DATE:

February 25, 2025; 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

12. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Kim, Seconded by Trustee White,

THAT the January 28, 2025 Regular Board Meeting be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED

Board Chair

Board Secretary



Dear Trustees,

February has been a busy month getting oriented to the role of Board Chair and filled with video meetings with our new Trustees. I am delighted to step into the role as a citizen representative and bring a fresh perspective. It is an honor to serve the community through this position, and I am enthusiastic about the journey ahead! As we work together to support the GVPL, I will be relying on each of you to share news and the goings-on in your respective communities, and please know that Vice-Chair Cavens and I are always open to meeting with all of you.

On that note, a special thank you to Duncan Cavens for stepping into the role of Vice-Chair. I am excited to work together to support the Board, library, and its patrons.

Welcome to our new Trustees! I have had the pleasure of meeting with each of you personally and welcoming you to the Board. It is truly inspiring to see the energy and expertise you all bring. Your diverse backgrounds and skills will undoubtedly enrich our discussions and help us navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. I am thrilled to have you on board and look forward to working together.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to everyone for signing up for our working groups and am looking forward to seeing the important work that these groups will undertake. Regardless of which groups you were placed on, Trustees are welcome to attend any of the working group meetings

The BC Library Trustees Association ([BCLTA](#)) is currently [holding nominations for their Board](#). In the past, a GVPL Board Trustee serving on the BCLTA Board has served as a valuable connection to the library community at a provincial level. Board members contribute to setting objectives and issues for BC's public libraries, build relationships at the provincial level, and generally work to support capacity building of BC's library trustees. If you are interested in applying, please contact Erika for more information. Candidate names must be submitted to the BCLTA by March 22nd.

In the spirit of more communication, the CEO, Vice-Chair, and I will be sending out a Board engagement survey in the next few weeks. This survey is intended to give you an opportunity to let us know how you feel about your participation on the Board, and how the ways in which you'd like to contribute going forward. Your feedback will be invaluable in creating an inclusive and supportive environment for everyone. Keep an eye out for the survey link in an email and please take the time to share your thoughts and insights.

As always, suggestions to the CEO or Board Chair are welcome for any topics you would like to raise. Your input is vital in helping us address the needs and concerns of our community. Please do not hesitate to reach out with your ideas, questions, or feedback.

Shahira



2025 Budget Presentations

2025 budget presentations to municipal councils continue through to March. Dates have been confirmed for the District of Oak Bay (February 28), the District of Saanich (March 6), the Township of Esquimalt (March 10), and the District of Central Saanich (March 24). These presentations are a great opportunity for GVPL to update our municipal partners on the benefits of our shared service model and respond to questions regarding local and system-wide service initiatives.

Nellie McClung Express Branch

While it was anticipated that the Nellie McClung Express Branch, at 3561 Shelbourne Street, would be opening in mid-February, please note that GVPL is awaiting final confirmation on the opening date. It is now expected that the Nellie McClung Express Branch will open in March. We continue to work closely with the District of Saanich and are committed to opening the branch as soon as possible. Once a date is confirmed, it will be shared on gvpl.ca and our social media channels. We look forward to welcoming the community to the Nellie McClung Express Branch soon.

Inter Library Loan

I am pleased to report that GVPL's InterLibrary Loan (ILLO) service is scheduled to resume on March 12. The update will be shared on gvpl.ca for our patrons. We appreciate the patience of our patrons during the pause in service due to staffing limitations which will be addressed in a current recruitment process.

ID Clinics @ GVPL

On February 11, we concluded the 2024/2025 Trans ID Clinic series at the Central Branch, held in collaboration with Pro Bono Students Canada – UVic Chapter. These clinics provide vital support for transgender and gender-diverse individuals seeking name and gender marker changes. Over four sessions between October 2024 and February 2025, 64 individuals were assisted. This service, alongside our monthly ID Clinics in partnership with the Community Social Planning Council, underscores our commitment to equity and inclusion. I am pleased to share that plans are already underway to continue these clinics this fall.

Ontario Library Association (OLA) Super Conference 2025

Earlier this month two of our librarians, represented GVPL at the Ontario Library Association (OLA) conference in Toronto. They co-presented "Let's Talk Tech Toys! Let's Talk STEM Learning in Libraries" alongside a librarian from Vancouver Public Library. Their session drew an audience of 120 attendees, showcasing innovative ways to integrate technology and play into library programming. This work strengthens our role in digital literacy and creative learning for all ages.

Black History Month

February is Black History Month and this year's theme, Black Legacy and Leadership, honours the contributions of Black Canadians while uplifting future generations. GVPL has compiled [booklists](#) for all ages to celebrate Black history, culture, and voices.

Freedom to Read Week (February 23-March 1)

GVPL joins libraries, educators, content creators, policy makers and publishers across Canada to promote Freedom to Read Week <https://www.freedomtoread.ca/> This annual event encourages Canadians to think about and reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom, raising awareness and generating discussions of book titles that have been banned or challenged in public or school libraries.

Poetry Workshop Series with Marie Metaphor Specht, City of Victoria's Poet Laureate

Starting this month, GVPL is hosting a Poetry Workshop Series in partnership with Victoria's Poet Laureate, Marie Metaphor Specht, building on the success of last year's Poetry in Light workshops. This initiative reflects our commitment to accessible arts and cultural programming that fosters creativity, self-expression, and lifelong learning. Held at the sx̱w̱eṉx̱w̱əŋ təṉəx̱w̱ James Bay Branch, the workshops are open to participants aged 14 and older, welcoming both new and experienced writers. The series includes two distinct workshops: The Role of Deep Listening in Poetics (February 27 and March 1), exploring how listening enhances writing, and The Art of Being Heard (March 20 and 22), focusing on building confidence in sharing poetry aloud. By hosting these workshops, GVPL continues to provide opportunities for creative growth and meaningful artistic participation, supporting its goals of community engagement and lifelong learning.

Maureen

Attachment 4.5.1

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Message to share with board: not opening on Sundays hurts vulnerable patrons
Date: February 9, 2025 12:47:36 PM

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

*** [This message originated from outside GVPL. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.] ***

Dear Greater Victoria Public Library,

I take this step of writing to you because the library administration has been, alternately, non-committal and non-responses in addressing my concern, and I am hoping you can help the public access the libraries that they are supporting.

Typically, as you know, the library has several branches with Sunday afternoon hours. Since the fall, signs have been posted indicating that staff shortages prevent Sunday openings and that it is hoped winter Sunday hours will resume.

It is now nearly the middle of February, with no indication that the situation is being fixed.

Why are all branches still closed on Sunday afternoons? What is the library's administration doing to make good on their commitment to address this problem?

I work with vulnerable people who work six days a week; the curtailed evening hours and the absence of Sunday hours is making it challenging for my first-generation college students to access the libraries and computer resources that they need. It's making it harder for new arrivals in Canada to access language learning resources. These are folks who work *very* hard and have limited free time. Please prioritize their needs.

Many thanks.

[REDACTED]

Attachment 4.5.2

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Ongoing frustration with lack of interlibrary loans
Date: February 17, 2025 4:36:23 PM

You don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

*** [This message originated from outside GVPL. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.] ***

Dear [REDACTED]

I am a regular user of the Oak Bay branch of the GVPL. Recently I have been very frustrated with GVPL's ongoing failure to reinstate the inter-library loan service - it has been six months or more since I was able to take out an inter-library loan.

The GVPL website cites "ongoing staffing issues" as a reason for cutting this service. However, if there are staffing issues it would be more equitable to cut a small percentage across all services, not cut out one service altogether. The inability to access inter-library loans is all the more galling as GVPL has been divesting its books for several years now. As a result, some small town libraries in BC boast larger stocks than Victoria. The only way residents of Victoria are able to access these books (which used to be available right here) is through inter-library loans. This is a priceless and irreplaceable service, as even a used book costs upward of \$10.

I wish to bring this issue to the Board's attention. We all pay for the library through our taxes and it's not acceptable to just reduce the level of service (similar to what the grocery chain are doing by keeping the prices down but reducing the weight of the product). It is time for the Board to step up and demand that GVPL deliver on its mandate. If a bigger budget is required, then the library should negotiate with the city about it, not quietly drop services.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Victoria



GVPL Board Committee Appointments 2025

Policy and Planning Committee

Chair-	TBD
Vice- Chair	TBD
David Grove	City of Colwood
Dr. Teale Phelps Bondaroff	District of Saanich
Gery Lemon	Town of View Royal
Krista Boehnert	District of Saanich
Nik White	District of Saanich
Rebecca McClure	City of Langford
Ryan Richard Henderson	City of Victoria
Shelly Donaldson	District of Metchosin
Susan Kim	City of Victoria
Shahira Khair- Ex officio	District of Saanich
Duncan Cavens- Ex-officio	Township of Esquimalt

Finance Committee

Chair-	TBD
Vice Chair-	TBD
Andrew Appleton	District of Oak Bay
Gordon Newton	District of Central Saanich
Jonathan Mark Morley	City of Langford
Karel Roessingh	District of Highlands
Melody Wey	City of Victoria
Ramesh Ranjan	City of Victoria
Rhiannon Stromberg	District of Saanich
Scott Lansdowne	City of Victoria
Shahira Khair- Ex officio	District of Saanich
Duncan Cavens- Ex-officio	Township of Esquimalt



2025 Proposed Finance Committee Meeting Dates

April 15, 2025	Inaugural Committee Meeting
May 13, 2025	2024 Fiscal Year End
August 19 2025	Budget Fiscal 2026 and Five-Year Financial Plan: First Draft
October 7, 2025	Budget Fiscal 2026 and Five-Year Financial Plan: Final Draft

2025 Proposed Planning and Policy Committee Meeting Dates

TBC	Inaugural Committee Meeting
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