



AGENDA

Greater Victoria Public Library Board Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

Date: Tuesday, April 22, 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 – March 25, 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. Letter to Federal Minister of Finance [Attachment 4.5.1](#)

5. Chair's Remarks

For Information

6. Business Arising from Previous Meeting

- 6.1. Board Retreat
- 6.2. Board Engagement Survey Results [Attachment 6.2](#)

For Information
For Discussion

7. Committee Reports

- 7.1. Finance Committee- Oral Report

For Information

8. Next Meeting Date

May 20, 2025 12:00pm – 1:00pm

9. Adjournment



MINUTES REGULAR BOARD MEETING

GVPL Central Branch, 735 Broughton Street

Community Meeting Room & MS Teams

March 25, 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 (Vice-Chair)
Trustee S. Donaldson
Trustee D. Grove
Trustee R. Henderson
Trustee S. Khair (Chair)
Trustee S. Kim
Trustee S. Lansdowne
Trustee G. Lemon
Trustee R. McClure
Trustee M. Morley
Trustee G. Newton
Trustee T. Phelps Bondaroff
Trustee R. Ranjan
Trustee K. Roessingh
Trustee R. Stromberg
Trustee N. White
Trustee M. Wey

Staff:

M. Sawa, CEO/Board Secretary
M. Barnes, Assistant Director, Finance
J. Gingera, Director, Systems Integration, Resource Management and IT
D. Wood, Executive Director, Library Services
E. Russell, Recording Secretary
R. Bagniet President, CUPE 410

1. CALL TO ORDER

S. Khair called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

2. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

S. Khair provided the Indigenous Acknowledgement.

3. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Request to remove the following from the Consent Agenda

4.3 Chair Report

4.4 CEO Report

These Items were moved to Item 5 Chair's Remarks.

Request to add BCLTA Response to Tariffs

This item was moved to New Business 8.2

Moved by Trustee Roessingh seconded by Trustee Lemon,

THAT items 4.1 & 4.2 be approved.

4.1 Approval of Agenda

4.2 Approval of Minutes – February 25, 2025

MOTION CARRIED

5. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair highlighted items from the Chair's report acknowledging the inaugural Planning and Policy committee meeting thanking Trustees White, Trustee Kim for accepting roles of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2025. The Budget presentations for the 2025 fiscal year conclude on March 31st with a presentation to Central Saanich Council.

M. Sawa shared with the board that the Nellie McClung Express branch will be opening on March 26, there will be an initial soft launch for the initial opening, as the branch has an smaller occupancy limit of 50 people in the branch, this is being managed by a people counter that displays the current number of people in the branch in real time. An update of the recruitment efforts underway for both frontline staff and the Director of People and Culture.

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

6.1. Board Engagement Survey

Trustee Khair thanked trustees for their response to the board engagement survey. A review of the responses will be compiled and share with trustees at the next meeting.

6.2. Board Retreat

Trustee Khair confirmed that the Spring Board Retreat will be held on Saturday May 10, 2025. The location is being finalized and will be confirmed before the next meeting. A high-level overview of the goals for the retreat was discussed.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1. Planning and Policy Committee

N. White shared that at the inaugural meeting of the committee held on March _____ he was appointed chair and Trustee Kim was appointed Vice Chair. He addressed the work ahead for 2025 will need to be prioritized and working groups will be struck, with the initial working group to develop the 2025-2027 Strategic Framework into a Strategic Plan. There are also a number of board policies that need to be reviewed and prioritized.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1. Provincial Public Library Grant Report

M. Sawa provided background about the Provincial Public Library Grant that is attached to the agenda as item 8.1. This document provides a report to The Province as to how the funding that has been received is being used. The Province reviews and assesses how GVPL utilizes the grants that have been provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

8.2. Canadian Retaliatory Tariffs Consultation

M. Sawa shared with trustees, the Federal Finance Department is conducting a consultation on the proposed retaliatory tariffs. These tariffs if implemented could impact books, printed materials, audio books, newspapers, and journals. Association British Columbia Public Library Directors and BC Library Trustees Association are encouraging as many stakeholders as possible to provide feedback to the survey. The proposed retaliatory tariff of 25% could impact the purchasing of books and significantly impact GVPL's overall budget.

Moved by Trustee Cavens and seconded by Trustee Lemon

THAT the Board Chair send a letter to the Minister of Finance regarding the impact of the proposed retaliatory tariffs.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE:

April 22, 2025; 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

10. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Lemon, Seconded by Trustee White,

THAT the March 25, 2025 Regular Board Meeting be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED

Board Chair

Board Secretary



Dear Board Members,

April is here, and with it comes National Poetry Month! A time to celebrate words and their ability to inspire and express emotions in ways that other forms of writing often cannot.

Some key updates from this past month:

NMe Branch Tour

On April 15, I had the pleasure of touring the Nellie McClung Express Branch alongside Vice-Chair Cavens and Mayor Murdock from the District of Saanich (coverage in the [Saanich News](#).) Staff were very kind to give us a tour before opening (many thanks to Darrell Joyce, Assistant Director, Library Services who led the tour!) The new express branch ensures continued access to library services in the community, while the old Nellie McClung Library undergoes redevelopment. Even though its a smaller footprint, there are extensive collections, a children's area, and express computer access. It was especially great to see the collection of foreign language titles being maintained to serve the diverse community!

Finance Committee

Our first Finance Committee meeting of the year took place on April 15. Karel Roessingh was elected as Chair and Scott Lansdowne as Vice-Chair. Many thanks to them both for serving in these important roles. Melina Barnes gave committee members an overview of important dates and processes for the year. An oral report on this meeting will be presented at the upcoming Board meeting on April 22.

2025-26 Budget Presentations

On March 31, Vice-Chair Cavens represented the Board in delivering our final budget presentation to the District of Central Saanich. With this presentation, all budget discussions for the year have successfully concluded. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all Board members involved in this process and to all the municipalities who invited us to present our budget this year.

Board Retreat Planning

On March 27, myself, the Vice-Chair and CEO met with Nik White, our newly appointed Chair of the Planning & Policy Committee. Our discussions focused on Board Retreat planning and policy reviews for the upcoming year.

Looking ahead, preparations for the Board Retreat scheduled for May 10 are well underway. More details will be discussed at our upcoming Board meeting on April 22 to finalize the agenda and objectives for this event.

Board Engagement Survey

Thanks to everyone who completed the Board Engagement Survey last month! A summary is provided in the agenda for the April 22 Board meeting. Overall, there are many positives to take away, but also

room for improvement to ensure that we plan our agendas thoughtfully - leaving room for discussion and for connecting the dots between board input and resulting action.

National Poetry Month 😊

In closing, and in honour of National Poetry month, I'm delighted to share a poem by Nikki Giovanni inspired by a love of libraires and found in her collection "*Acolytes: Poems.*"

A LIBRARY

(for Kelli Martin)

a Library Is:

*a place to be free
to be in space
to be in cave times
to be a cook
to be a crook
to be in love
to be unhappy
to be quick and smart
to be contained and cautious
to surf the rainbow
to sail the dreams
to be blue
to be jazz
to be wonderful
to be you
a place to be
yeah... to be*

Shahira



April has been a busy month for GVPL, with the opening weeks of the Nellie McClung Express Branch first and foremost on our minds, along with many events such as Poetry Month, One eRead Canada and B.C. Book Day which provided opportunities for GVPL staff to shine a light on library resources and services.

Nellie McClung Express Branch Opening

The Nellie McClung Express Branch officially opened on March 26. The opening went very smoothly and the day was filled with many smiling patrons exploring the space and reconnecting with library services in their neighborhood.

On April 15, we welcomed District of Saanich Mayor Dean Murdock and GVPL Board Chair, Shahira Khair and Vice-Chair, Duncan Cavens, along with local media to tour the new temporary branch. Following the visit, Mayor Murdock expressed his appreciation:

"I am so thoroughly impressed with how the branch turned out. They've really maximized the space and given it a sense that it's more than just a temporary space. It looks great and inviting."

In related news, on March 31st, the District of Saanich approved the Development Permit for the new library and housing project at the original Cedar Hill Road site. This marks an important milestone toward creating a modern, community-responsive library. While planning and construction continue, the District of Saanich is leading the project and will provide updates through its [project webpage](#).

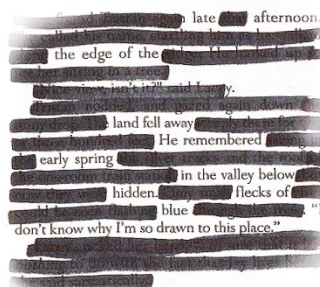
National Poetry Month

April is National Poetry Month, and we are inviting the community to get creative with blackout poetry. This engaging activity encourages participants to take an existing text, select key words, and black out the rest to create a poem. Since 1998, National Poetry Month has celebrated the role of poetry in Canadian culture, and this activity offers a fun and accessible way for people of all ages to take part.

APRIL IS POETRY MONTH

We invite you to explore your inner poet and visit any of our branches to try your hand at creating a **Blackout Poem**.

Established in Canada in 1998 by the League of Canadian Poets, National Poetry Month takes place every April and brings together schools, publishers, booksellers, literary organizations, libraries, communities and poets from across the country to celebrate poetry and its vital place in Canada's culture.



One eRead/Un Livre!

During the month of April over 1000 Canadian libraries, including GVPL, are participating in One eRead/Un Livre – a digital, bilingual annual virtual book club organized by the Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC). During the month of April, public library users across Canada have unlimited access to this year's selected title, 'Valid'

by Chris Bergeron. 'Valid' will be available in April without waitlists or holds so that all Canadians can read along at the same time. For more information regarding this initiative see [One eRead Canada's website](#)

Association of Vancouver Island & Coastal Communities (AVICC) Convention

The Annual General Meeting & Convention of the Association of Vancouver Island & Coastal Communities (AVICC) took place April 11-13 in Nanaimo. For the third consecutive year, GVPL co-hosted a library information table to promote the essential role of public libraries in B.C. with our colleagues from the Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) system. Feedback from delegates was extremely positive and we appreciated the enthusiastic support of the GVPL board trustees who were in attendance.

2025 Budget Presentations

As referenced in the Board Chair's Report, we completed our series of 2025 budget presentations to member municipal councils in late March. These are invaluable opportunities to showcase the range and depth of library services available throughout our service area. We greatly appreciate the feedback received from council members at these meetings.

Emerging Local Authors Collection (ELAC)

The countdown to the launch of our 2025 Emerging Local Authors Collection (ELAC) has begun. GVPL will be celebrating ELAC's 10th anniversary with a special public event on Saturday, May 24, from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm in the Central Branch Courtyard. This event will launch the 2025 collection and honour the contributions of authors from the previous nine years, marking a decade of celebrating local literary talent.

B.C. Book Day

On April 15, GVPL joined libraries and literary organizations across the province in celebrating BC Book Day, an annual event that recognizes the authors, publishers, and literary voices shaping British Columbia's cultural identity. To mark the occasion, we shared curated reading lists on social media, highlighting works by local authors and BC publishers. BC Book Day is a timely reminder of the vital role libraries play in amplifying diverse voices, fostering a vibrant reading culture, and supporting the local literary sector.

gvpl.ca

Earlier this month, to improve accessibility, we updated our public Domain Name System (DNS) to ensure that gvpl.ca consistently appears in browser address bars, replacing the previous sirsidynix.net URL. There will be no impact on bookmarks or existing links...

Maureen



**GREATER VICTORIA
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Attachment 4.5.1

March 28, 2025

Shahira Khair
Board Chair, Greater Victoria Public Library
735 Broughton St.
Victoria, BC, V8W 3H2

Re: Notice of Intent to Impose Counter Tariffs

Dear Minister Champagne,

On behalf of the Greater Victoria Public Library (GVPL), I am writing to provide feedback on the impact of tariffs on Canadian institutions. We appreciate the opportunity to provide stakeholder feedback during the comment period that has been provided.

While our Board supports a strong response to the United States' tariff threats, we hold serious concerns regarding the inclusion of U.S. manufactured books, newspapers, magazines, DVDs and CDs, and other cultural goods in the proposed round of countermeasure tariffs. Historically, cultural goods have been exempt from tariffs in recognition of their critical role in supporting a well-informed and educated society.

Public libraries play a vital role in providing equitable access to knowledge, education, and community resources. While the GVPL prioritizes the purchase of Canadian content and use of Canadian distributors, the Canadian publishing industry relies heavily on U.S. production and warehousing. A 25% tariff on these materials would strain already limited budgets for libraries across Canada, reducing access to important educational and recreational materials and programs for Canadians of all ages.

In light of these concerns, we urge the federal government to reconsider the inclusion of items 4901 – 4905; 8523; and 9504 in the proposed counter-tariff measures.

We appreciate the government's commitment to protecting Canadian interests in trade negotiations and respectfully request that the needs of public libraries be taken in to account in your considerations.

Thank you for consideration.

Sincerely,

Shahira Khair,
Board Chair, Greater Victoria Public Library

Administration & Central Branch 735 Broughton St, Victoria, BC V8W 3H2 • **Customer Service:** 250 940-4875 gvpl.ca

Bruce Hutchison Branch • Central Saanich Branch • Emily Carr Branch • Esquimalt Branch • Goudy Branch • Juan de Fuca Branch
Langford Heritage Branch • Nellie McClung Branch • Oak Bay Branch • Saanich Centennial Branch • sɔwɛŋxʷəŋ tənɛxʷ James Bay Branch



GVPL Board Engagement Survey

This document summarizes the main findings of the GVPL Board Engagement Survey. The feedback offers insights into board meeting satisfaction, engagement, utilization of skills, and suggestions for improvement. The survey was open to responses from March 03 – 25, 2025 and received responses from 13/19 board members.

Board Meeting Satisfaction and Effectiveness

- **Overall feedback is generally positive.** A majority of respondents are satisfied with the overall structure and effectiveness of our board meetings (Figure 1).
- An important consideration is that nearly 50% of survey respondents are new to the Board, serving less than 1-year (Figure 2). This is reflected in many comments, for example *“Have attended two meetings so far, so far I'm impressed with structure and organization.”*
- Comments from longer-tenured Board Members reflect our well prepared and organized meetings. *“I am very satisfied with the structure and effectiveness of our board meetings. They are consistently well-organized, start on time, and run smoothly. The staff is always well-prepared and informed, contributing to productive discussions. The meetings maintain a professional yet welcoming atmosphere, making participation easy and engaging.”*
- Areas for improvement are suggested in several comments including:
 - Creating more opportunities for discussion
 - Providing better feedback mechanisms (e.g. clearer explanation of how input in Board input influences strategy or budget decisions)
- In terms of frequency and format of meetings, respondents are generally satisfied with one hour meetings over the lunch hour, mostly for convenience. Several suggestions are made to either front-load items for discussion in the agenda, or to extend meeting lengths when needed to ensure there is sufficient time for fulsome discussion.

Engagement During Board Meetings:

- **Strong feelings of engagement:** A majority of respondents report feeling engaged during meetings, indicating their contributions are valued and heard (Figure 3).
- Comments received show an appreciation for the time and space for Board Members to ask questions and respect for staff knowledge. *“While I may not always have questions or contributions, I actively listen and find the discussions informative. I feel engaged through learning and staying informed, even if I don't always have something to add.”*
- The hybrid nature of meetings may impact contributions from some, although the greater accessibility is appreciated *“There is a limitation to being online for meetings, but it's also much better than not being able to attend!”*

- More education on the role and responsibility of the Board may improve positive forms of engagement. At least one respondent feels unsure how to appropriately engage during meetings *“I often struggle to know how to engage. I would like to ask more questions, but struggle to think of anything relevant to ask.”* Another respondent provides the following suggestion *“Given the nature of some of the comments that are made by board members, it may be helpful to review or include as part of the board's orientation of new members the different role between board members and administration, as well as the difference between a governance or strategic board and a “working board”.*
- A stronger definition or clarification of the role of a "citizen representative" was requested by one respondent as one way to improve engagement.

Skills and Expertise of Board Members

- **GVPL has a large and accomplished Board.** Many members listed their skills available for the GVPL to draw upon.
- **Varied Perceptions and Feedback:** Members have varying perspectives on whether their skills and expertise are effectively utilized during Board meetings and activities (Figure 4).
- The feedback highlights a diverse range of skills and expertise on the board, including:
 - Experiences as library users
 - Experience on boards
 - Community engagement
 - Government relations (particularly with the province)
 - Policy development and writing
 - Analytical and problem-solving skills
 - Advocacy, research, and outreach
 - Communications (media relations, crisis communications, promotion)
 - Fundraising (grant writing, donor relations, etc.)
 - Governance and accountability
 - Organizational psychology
 - Strategic planning
 - Sustainability

Summary:

This feedback provides valuable insights for the GVPL to consider as they strive for a positive and inclusive board culture. Addressing the suggestions related to discussion, feedback loops, and clarity of roles could further enhance the positive experiences already reported by many board members.

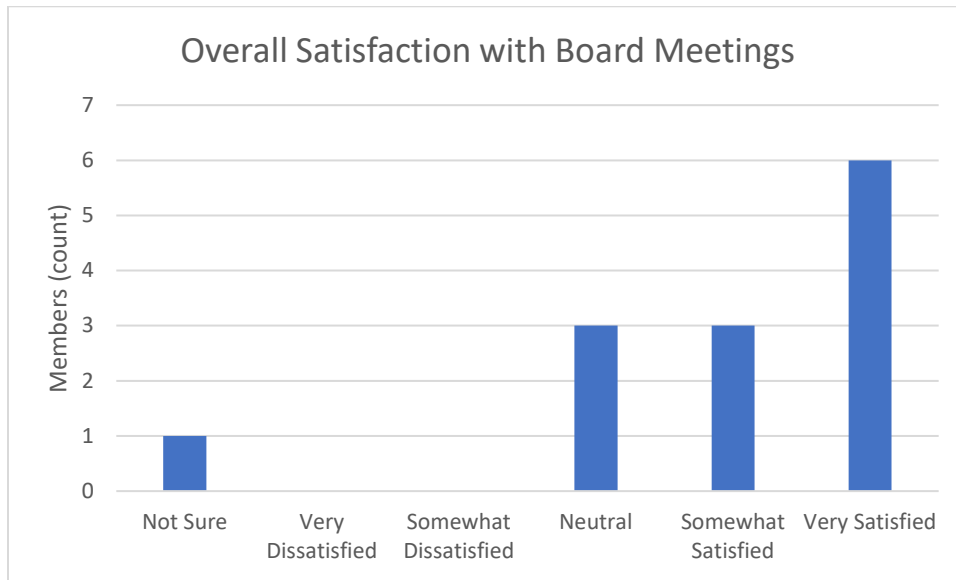


Figure 1. Response breakdown for Q. 3 “How satisfied are you with the overall structure and effectiveness of our board meetings”

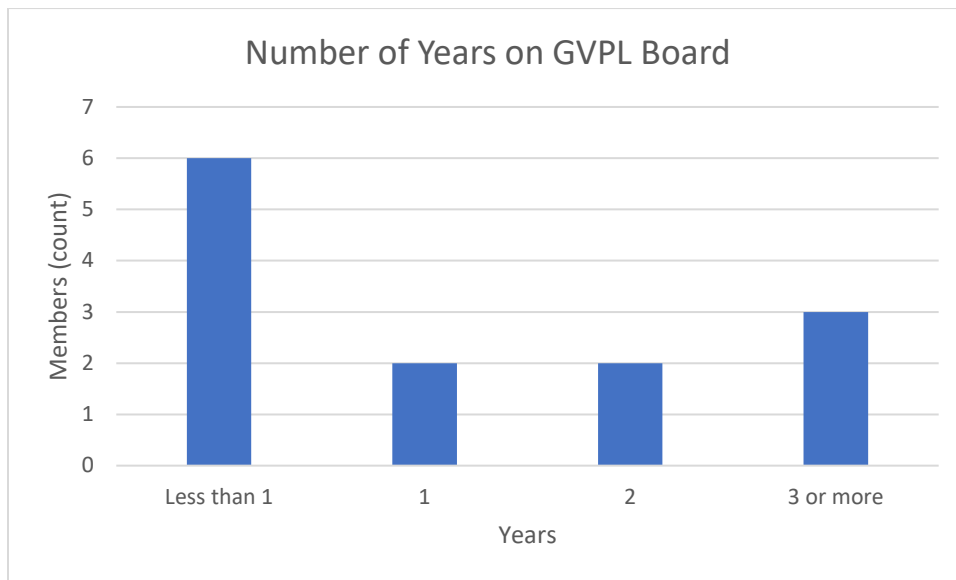


Figure 2. Response breakdown for Q. 2 “Number of years on the GVPL Board”

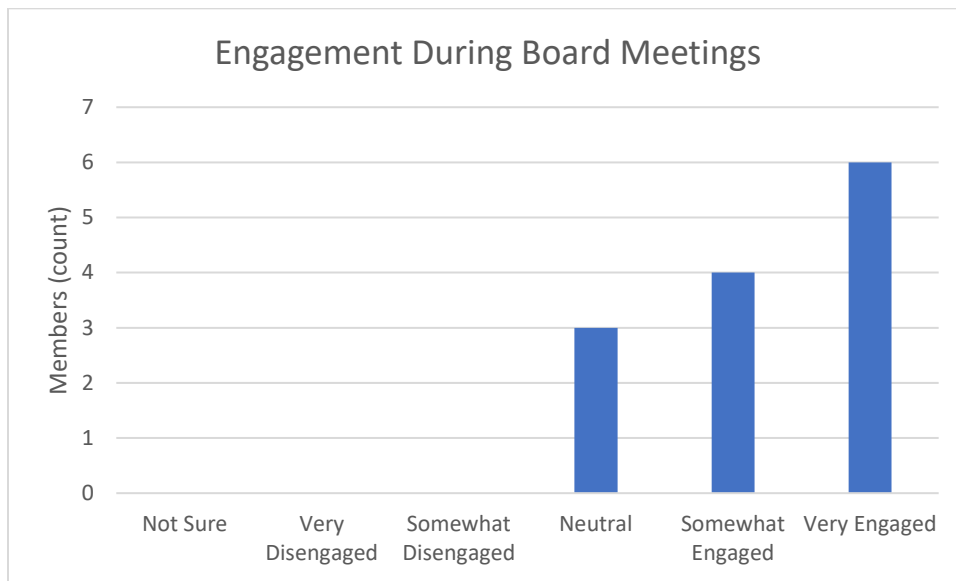


Figure 3. Response breakdown for Q. 5 “How engaged do you feel during our board meetings? (Ie - do you feel that your contributions are valued and heard?)”

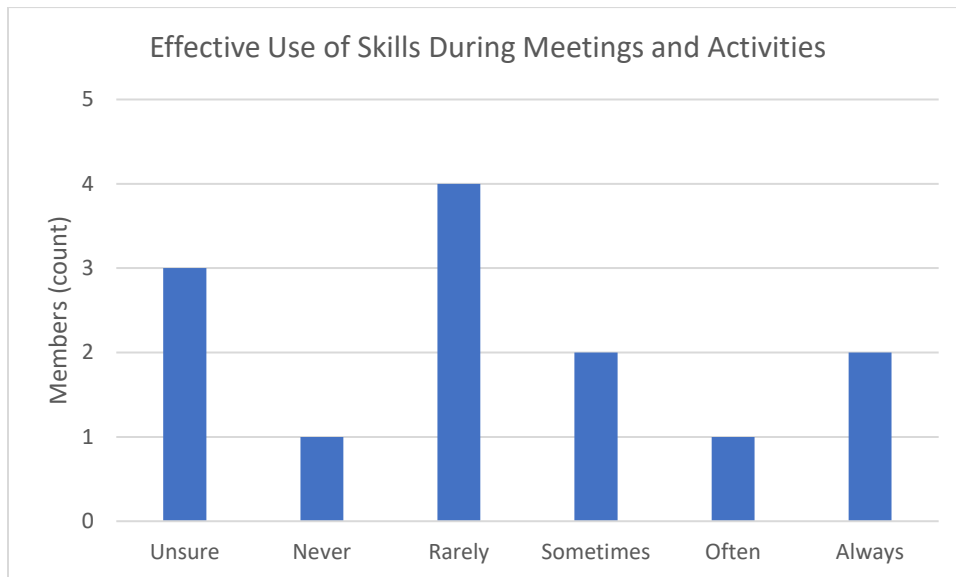


Figure 4. Response breakdown for Q. 9 “Do you feel that your skills and expertise are being effectively utilized during meetings and or activities?”