



AGENDA

Greater Victoria Public Library Board Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

Date: Tuesday, February 24, 2026

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 on the unceded traditional territories of the Songhees and Xwseps'am (Esquimalt) Nations, the WSÁNEĆ Nations of STÁUTW (Tsawout) and WJOLÉP (Tsartlip), and the Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) Nation.

Colonization and systemic racism still impact the lives of Indigenous Peoples today. Their historical and cultural relationship with the land and sea continues as they steward these sacred lands as they have since time immemorial.

3. Welcome and Introductions

4. Consent Agenda

Motion to Approve

4.1. Approval of Agenda

4.2. Approval of Minutes – January 27, 2026 [Attachment 4.2](#)

4.3. Chair Report [Attachment 4.3](#)

4.4. CEO Report [Attachment 4.4](#)

4.5. Correspondence

4.5.1. Email from Patron received January 24, 2026 [Attachment 4.5.1](#)

4.5.2. Email from Patron received February 13 2026 [Attachment 4.5.2](#)

4.5.3. Email from Patron received February 17 2026 [Attachment 4.5.3](#)

5. Chair's Remarks

For Information

6. Presentations/Delegations`

6.1. L. Herriot & F. Herriot- Unaccompanied Children in GVPL

For Information

7. Business Arising from previous meeting:

7.1. Board Committees

7.1.1. 2026 Board Committee Memberships [Attachment 7.1.1](#)

7.1.2. 2026 Committee Meeting Schedule [Attachment 7.1.2](#)

7.1.3. 2026 Committee Priorities

For Information

For Information

For Discussion

8. New Business

8.1. 2026 Board Retreat

For Discussion

8.2. Canadian Urban Libraries Council Impact Study [Link](#)

For Information

9. In-Camera

Motion to Approve

10. Next Meeting Date

Tuesday March 24, 2026 12:00-1:00

11. Adjournment



MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
GVPL Central Branch, 735 Broughton Street
Community Meeting Room & MS Teams
January 27, 2026

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 (Chair)
Trustee S. Donaldson
Trustee D. Grove
Trustee R. Henderson
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 N. White (Vice- Chair)
Trustee M. Wey

Regrets:

Trustee G. Newton
Trustee R. Stromberg

Staff:

M. Sawa, CEO/Board Secretary
M. Collyer, Director Marketing & Communications
D. Fergusson-Hirmer, Director, People & Culture
S. Harrison, Acting Assistant Director, Service Design
R. Rogers, Acting Assistant Director, Collections and Technical Services
E. Russell, Recording Secretary
R. Baugniet, CUPE 410

Guest:

Mack Hardy, CEO, Affinity Bridge
Maria Perulero, Affinity Bridge

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 2026.

4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Trustee K. Roessingh; Seconded by Trustee D. Grove

THAT items 4.1 & 4.2 be approved, and items 4.3 to 4.5 be received for information.

4.1. Approval of Agenda

4.2. Approval of Minutes – December 16, 2025

4.3. CEO Report

4.4. 2026 Trustee Appointments by Municipality

4.5. 2026 GVPL 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 Khair and seconded by Trustee Roessingh,

THAT Trustee Duncan Cavens 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 Duncan Cavens 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 Khair and seconded by Trustee Lemon,

THAT Trustee Nik White be nominated for the position of Board Vice- Chair for a one-year term.

MOTION CARRIED.

A call for further nominations was made two times; Voting by general consent was conducted, and Trustee Nik White was elected as the Vice Chair of the Greater Victoria Public Library Board.

6. APPOINTMENT OF SIGNING OFFICERS

Moved by Trustee Kim and seconded by Trustee Roessingh,

THAT Board Chair Trustee D. Cavens and Board Vice Chair Trustee N. White be appointed as Signing Officers.

MOTION CARRIED.

7. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Board Chair, D. Cavens provided a brief overview of the anticipated activities of the board in 2026, and continuing advocacy work on both federal and provincial fronts.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1. Board Committees 2026

Trustee White and Trustee Roessingh provided an overview of the responsibilities and functions of the Planning and Policy Committee and Finance Committee. Trustees were reminded that they are welcome to attend meetings of both committees. Trustees were asked to confirm their preferred committee membership for the 2026 term before the next board meeting.

Trustee Donaldson will continue to serve as GVPL's board liaison for the IslandLink Library Federation Board through to the 2026 Annual General Meeting.

8.2. Greater Victoria Labour Relations Association (GVLRA) Representative and Alternate Appointments 2026

Moved by Trustee Khair; seconded by Trustee Roessingh

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 2026

MOTION CARRIED

8.3. Staff Presentation- GVPL Website, Phase One Completion

Guest M. Hardy, CEO of Affinity Bridge, provided a high-level summary of the progress achieved in the first phase of the GVPL.ca Website project. The presentation included an overview of the accomplishments so far and outlined the planned next steps as the project moves into Phase Two.

9. IN CAMERA

Moved by Trustee K. Roessingh; seconded by Trustee Ranjan

THAT the Board of Trustees move in camera

MOTION CARRIED

10. NEXT MEETING DATE:

February 24, 2026; 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

11. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Khair; Seconded by Trustee Lemon

THAT the January 27, 2026, Regular Board Meeting be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED

Board Chair

Board Secretary



This is my first report as Chair, and I want to begin by thanking Trustees for your support as I settle into the role. I'm particularly grateful to have been able to learn from past Chair Shahira Khair, and former Chair Andrew Appleton, who provided strong examples to follow.

I'd also like to thank Nik White for stepping forward as Vice-Chair. I'm very much looking forward to working closely with Nik over the coming year.

On January 29, CEO Maureen Sawa and I attended a Board Governance workshop organized by the Victoria Foundation. It was an excellent session — both a learning opportunity and a helpful reminder of the fundamentals of effective governance. We all do our best work, and can best support GVPL, when we have a clear understanding of our respective roles.

Thank you as well to Trustees who responded to the recent survey regarding committee preferences. I'm looking forward to working with committees as they take shape and begin their work.

Looking ahead, planning is underway for a Spring Board Retreat. I would like a key focus to be reviewing the Regional Service Delivery Plan and considering whether updates are warranted. We've heard a number of requests from member municipalities about alternative service delivery opportunities, which is a useful reminder of the diversity of the communities we serve and the importance of remaining responsive and flexible. Erika will be circulating a survey shortly regarding possible retreat dates, and I encourage Trustees to respond when it arrives.

Budget presentations to member municipalities are now underway. The Oak Bay presentation took place on February 17, with additional presentations scheduled for March: District of Saanich on March 5; Township of Esquimalt on March 9; City of Colwood on March 23; and District of Central Saanich on March 30. Thank you to everyone involved in preparing and delivering these presentations.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the resumption of Sunday opening hours at Central Branch, Saanich Centennial, and Juan de Fuca, which has been a Key Board priority for several years — and it's great to see it happening. I was at Central Branch on the first Sunday and it was wonderful to see so many happy faces and helpful staff. When things run smoothly, it's usually because a great deal of work has happened behind the scenes — my thanks to staff for their planning and effort.

Duncan



February 24, 2026

2026 Budget Presentations

2026 budget presentations to municipal councils continue through to March. In addition to February's presentation to the District of Oak Bay, presentations to the District of Saanich, Township of Esquimalt, City of Colwood and District of Central Saanich have been confirmed. 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.

Sunday Openings

Following the resumption of Sunday hours at the Central Branch, Sunday service has been extended to the Saanich Centennial Branch and the Juan de Fuca Branch. All three district branches are now open on Sundays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., further strengthening weekend access for our community. Planning for extending Sunday hours to additional locations is underway.

CBC Olympic and Paralympic Coverage

CBC/Radio-Canada has partnered with public libraries across the country to host free Olympic and Paralympic screenings from February 6-22 and March 6-15, 2026. As a result of this collaboration, we have brought back our *Community Living Room* series, offering live streaming of select Olympic and Paralympic events during February and March at library branches across the system. These drop-in gatherings are open to everyone, and provide opportunities for community connection and shared experience, reinforcing the library's role as an inclusive and welcoming public space. GVPL's streaming of Olympics coverage has been met with community excitement and local media attention, you can read the [Chek News article here](#).

Freedom to Read Week

Freedom to Read Week begins Sunday, February 22. Beyond displays and activities, this week is about helping the public understand why access to diverse ideas, perspectives, and materials matters, specifically books that have been challenged or banned. Educating our community on this work strengthens trust in public libraries, reinforces our shared professional values, and reminds us that supporting the freedom to read is a core part of the service we provide every day.

Black History Month

February is Black History Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the legacy, contributions, and ongoing impact of Black Canadian communities. The 2026 theme for Black History Month is: "30 Years of Black History Month: Honouring Black Brilliance Across Generations — From Nation Builders to Tomorrow's Visionaries." To mark this month, GVPL is sharing three curated booklists for [Adults](#), [Teens](#) and [Kids](#).

Lunar New Year

February also marks the Lunar New Year, welcoming the Year of the Fire Horse and providing an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the rich cultural traditions observed by many in our community. GVPL has prepared specially curated booklists for [adults](#), and [children](#), which highlight traditions, togetherness, and a spirit of new beginnings.

Indigenous Stories Book Club

The Indigenous Stories Book Club has resumed its monthly online meetings on Saturdays with Carmen Rodriguez de France, Associate Professor of Indigenous Education at the University of Victoria. GVPL is

delighted to partner with the University to present this book club which focuses on the works of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The next meeting is scheduled for March 21, 10-11:30 a.m.

Victoria at Dusk

Ship Point hosted a library information and activity table as part of events taking place over the Family Day long weekend in celebration of [Victoria at Dusk](#). Our participation in this type of event allows us to bring library resources, programs, and staff directly into the community. These interactions help build relationships and reinforce the library as a welcoming place for learning and connection wherever people gather. I would like to acknowledge and thank all staff who continue to work behind the scenes to identify opportunities and foster these relationships.

CULC National Impact Study

The [Canadian Urban Libraries Council has released a first-of-its-kind National Social Impact Study on urban public libraries](#). This study draws on input from more than 18,000 respondents across 26 urban library systems, including responses collected last summer from members of our community when we promoted the survey locally. As noted in the report's introduction, *"by placing the individual experience at the heart of the inquiry, the rich results of this study map several key outcomes around four compass points: emotional impact, social impact, intellectual impact and creative impact"*. The study was inspired by the pioneering work of the Toronto Public Library's Social Impact Study completed in 2023. I look forward to sharing key highlights of the report with trustees at the February Board Meeting.

Digital Resource News

Keeping up with the high demand for digital resources, this month we added three new digital resources that strengthen our support for newcomers, language learners, and those building confidence in English or French. **Road to IELTS General** offers free practice tests and interactive study tools for individuals preparing for work, study, or immigration. **CBC Corner** brings together trusted Canadian news and programming, curated specifically for public library users and available in multiple languages. **Mauril**, developed by CBC/Radio-Canada with support from the Government of Canada, uses authentic Canadian media to help learners build practical language skills at their own pace.

In addition, from February 9 to 22, GVPL offered unlimited, no-wait access to the first three titles in the *Heated Rivalry* series, as ebooks and audiobooks through Libby, by OverDrive. These titles have seen a significant surge in popularity in recent months, resulting in long waitlists at libraries across North America. GVPL's 'Fall in Love with Heated Rivalry' initiative has received [local media attention](#), joining other libraries in Canada and the U.S. that have made digital versions of the audiobook and ebook readily available to borrow.

Her Campus Article

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to a recent article published by [Her Campus](#), which highlights the many benefits of a library card, and specifically references GVPL. Written by a student contributor from the University of Victoria, the article reflects on how people use library services not only to save money but also to support learning and be entertained. It is a fun, well-written article, and a meaningful reminder of the role GVPL plays in directly supporting community access to knowledge, opportunity, and connection.

Maureen

[Attachment 4.5.1](#)

From: [REDACTED]
To: [CEO Office](#)
Subject: Refusal to order books -- anonymous response from GVPL staffer
Date: January 24, 2026 4:35:37 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 Board Members:

I have been an avid library user my entire life. I had my first library card at age 4 and have been an avid reader my entire life. Books have opened up worlds of understanding for me about issues, topics and positions that may be very different from what I originally understood or believed.

Whether in Toronto or here in Victoria, BC, whenever I have requested a book be ordered it was either already in the process of being ordered or my request was honoured promptly.

Thus, I was disgusted and annoyed to get two emails last Friday from an anonymous email account at the GVPL informing me that they would NOT be ordering two books I requested.

I had only had this problem once before with the Greater Victoria Public Library, when I requested the Real Anthony Fauci book be ordered. When the anonymous staffer refused to order it, I went to the Facebook page of the GVPL and quoted the policy and the book was ordered. However, now there is no way to make posts on this page. I did message them explaining the situation.

Just so you know, libraries across Canada have ordered this book, including the Toronto Public Library. Why should Victorians not be allowed to read these books? Not everyone can afford to buy new books -- that's the reason we have public libraries.

These days, freedom of speech and thought are under attack. Canadian citizens have a right to be informed about the facts from all sides of any given issue.

I am requesting that these two books be ordered.

Grave Error

How the Media Misled Us (and the Truth About Residential Schools)

Authors: CP Champion and Tom Flanagan

and: Dead Wrong

How Canada Got the Residential School Story So Wrong

Author: CP Champion.

I believe that the refusal to order these books violates the GVPL policy on Intellectual Freedom

https://gvpl.ca/client/en_US/default/?rm=POLICY+V.1+-+10%7C%7C%7C1%7C%7C%7C0%7C%7C%7Ctrue&dt=list

I believe that this section is pertinent to my request "

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and facilitate access to constitutionally protected expressions of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, including those which

some individuals and groups consider unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, in accordance with their mandates and professional values and standards, libraries provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and foster free expression and the right to safe and welcoming places and conditions. To this end, libraries make available their public spaces and services to individuals and groups without discrimination.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and defend privacy in the individual's pursuit of expressive content. To this end, libraries protect the identities and activities of library users except when required by the courts to cede them.

Furthermore, in accordance with established library policies, procedures and due process, libraries resist efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups."

I look forward to a response that indicates that Board members adhere to the above policy and direct staff to order these two books promptly.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Carol Auld

cc interested and concerned citizens

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

Attachment 4.5.2

From: [Lindsay Herriot](#)
 To: [REDACTED]
 Subject: Rights of Unaccompanied Children in GVPL
 Date: February 13, 2026 9:21:04 AM

Some people who received this message 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.] ***

To the GVPL Board:

I am writing with regards to an incident at Oak Bay Library on 12 February, 2025 relating to unaccompanied children. My oldest child, who has been accessing multiple GVPL branches independently and unaccompanied since she was 8 years old was approached by a staff member who asked her age. When she responded that she is 9, she was asked as to the whereabouts of her parents, and when she said that her mother would be arriving shortly, staff asked to wait with her until I got there.

Upon my arrival, I expressed confusion to the two staff who were now chaperoning my child, as both of them have known my child to access the branch independently for more than a year. They explained that a new operating procedure was adopted in September 2025 which prohibits unaccompanied children under the age of 10 in order to protect their safety. When I asked for a written copy of this procedure, I was told that it was internal and therefore not available to the public.

I am alarmed and dismayed by this secretive new procedure, as it appears to contradict the [GVPL's Policy 1.8](#), which states «... that library users who are children and teens have the same rights and responsibilities as adult library users.” This unwritten procedure also directly contravenes Canadian Federation of Library Association's [Statement on Libraries and the Intellectual Freedom of Children & Youth](#) which reads, in part:

“Library users of every age have their own unique sets of values, maturity levels and cognitive abilities. Libraries do not make assumptions or judgements about their users, nor do they impose arbitrary limitations upon access to library services. Minors therefore should not be restricted from accessing services on the basis of their age, and no service should be excluded on the chance that it might be accessed by minors... All people, regardless of age, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality. Libraries respect and defend the privacy and personal autonomy of children and youth in selecting their own services... Library staff are not responsible for children and do not act in a parental capacity. Libraries will not restrict the access of children or youth to library services,

except for those restricted by law.”

There is also already GVPL policy protecting the safety of children, as with patrons of all ages, outlined in [Policy 1.8](#), including:

When using the library, you are expected to:

- Respect patrons and staff, their diversity, and their use of the Library;
- Respect people’s privacy when taking photos or videos for personal use;

To ensure a safe and welcoming experience for everyone using the Library, some behaviours are considered unacceptable, and are prohibited in the Library, including:

- Interfering with others’ use of Library spaces;
- Intimidating, threatening, or abusing other individuals or groups;
- Sexually harassing staff or other Library users;
- Engaging in illegal activity;
- Engaging in disruptive behaviour;
- Behaving in a sexually offensive or explicit manner;

It seems like an unreasonable and dramatic infringement on children’s freedom, autonomy, and right to access public spaces independently to have a blanket ban on unaccompanied children under the age of 10. I invite the Board to consider directing staff to follow the examples of the [High River Library](#) and the [Lillooet Public Library Association](#) as much more nuanced, evidence-based approaches to respecting the dignity of unaccompanied children in the library.

My 9 year old child and I are planning to attend the next GVPL Board meeting on Tuesday, 24 February at 12pm. Can a discussion of policies and procedures pertaining to unaccompanied children please be added to the agenda?

Further Reading:

[The Anxious Generation](#)

[1979 Kindergarten Readiness Checklist](#)

[Let Grow](#)

[Free Range Kids](#)

Thank you,

Lindsay

Dr. Lindsay Herriot (she/her/elle)

Adjunct Assistant Professor

School of Child and Youth Care; Faculty of Education

University of Victoria

HSD B102, PO BOX 1700, Victoria, BC V8W 2Y2

Inclusion Teacher, École Central Middle School
Greater Victoria School District #61

From: [Lindsay Herriot](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Rights of Unaccompanied Children in GVPL
Date: February 17, 2026 8:39:38 AM

Some people who received this message 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.] ***

Hello again all, and apologies for the second email,

My 9-year-old has prepared a letter that she would like to read at the February 24th board meeting so that the board can better understand how this new procedure is affecting children under the age of 10 themselves. As a practicing special education teacher here in Victoria, I also have a short (less than 2 minutes) letter I'd like to read about how the procedure will have negative, unintended consequences for some of our most vulnerable children, including those who seek refuge, safety, belonging, and positive stimulation after school at the library when they do not have these things in their homes.

Could my child (named Finnegan Herriot) and I please be added to the agenda for the February 24th meeting? My school district requires written confirmation of this so that I can be released to attend.

Thanks,
Lindsay

Dr. Lindsay Herriot (she/her/elle)

Adjunct Assistant Professor

School of Child and Youth Care; Faculty of Education

University of Victoria

HSD B102, PO BOX 1700, Victoria, BC V8W 2Y2

Inclusion Teacher, École Central Middle School

Greater Victoria School District #61



GVPL Board Committee Membership 2026

Finance Committee	
Chair-	
Vice-Chair	
Andrew Appleton	District of Oak Bay
Gordon Newton	District of Central Saanich
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
Krista Boehnert	District of Saanich
Duncan Cavens- Ex-officio	Township of Esquimalt
Nik White- Ex-officio	District of Saanich
Policy and Planning Committee	
Chair-	
Vice-Chair	
David Grove	City of Colwood
Teale Phelps Bondaroff	District of Saanich
Gery Lemon	Town of View Royal
Mark Morley	City of Langford
Rebecca McClure	City of Langford
Ryan Henderson	City of Victoria
Shahira Khair	City of Victoria
Shelly Donaldson	District of Metchosin
Susan Kim	City of Victoria
Duncan Cavens- Ex-officio	Township of Esquimalt
Nik White- Ex-officio	District of Saanich



Proposed 2026 GVPL Board Committee Meeting Dates

2026 Finance Committee

April 14, 2026 12-1	Inaugural Committee Meeting
May 12, 2026 12-1	2025 Fiscal Year End
August 18 2026 12-1:30	Budget Fiscal 2026 and Five-Year Financial Plan: First Draft
September 29, 2026 12-1:30	Budget Fiscal 2026 and Five-Year Financial Plan: Final Draft

2026 Planning and Policy Committee

March 10, 2026 12:00-1:00	Inaugural Committee Meeting
April 21, 2026 12:00-1:00	Regular P&P meeting
June 9, 2026 12:00-1:00	Regular P&P meeting
Sept 15, 2026 12:00-1:00	Regular P&P meeting
Oct 20, 2026 12:00-1:00	Regular P&P meeting