Richmond Public Library

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2025
5:30PM - 7:30PM
Brighouse Library Board Room

Board Present:
Denise Hui, Chair
Councillor Michael Wolfe
Gina Mahil
Sherine Merhi
Jacqueline Morrison
Jennifer Gervès-Keen
Angeline Singh
Bryan Tisdall
Angelica Victoria

Susan Walters, Chief Librarian and Secretary to the Board

Staff Present:
Anne Bechard
Charles Leung
Eva Yu
Kevin Samara
Mark Dawson
Shaneena Rahman

Friends of the Library:
None

Guests:
None

Call to Order and Welcome
The meeting was called to order at 5:33pm.

D. Hui welcomed new trustees G. Mahil and B. Tisdall and noted that the September Board meeting will be rescheduled to September 23, 2026. Library staff did a roundtable of introductions.

The welcome was provided by J. Gervès-Keen.

2. **Approval of Agenda**
MOVED: THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

J. Gervès-Keen/A. Singh..............CARRIED

3. **Election of 2026 Board Chair and Vice Chair**
Elections were held with the board appointing D. Hui as Board Chair and J. Gervès-Keen as Vice Chair.

4. **Business Section**
(a) Approval of Meeting Minutes
MOVED: THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of November 26, 2025, be approved.

J. Gervès-Keen/J. Morrison.............CARRIED

(b) Business Arising
None.

(c) Correspondence
Correspondence was received on November 26, 2025, from the City Clerks Office, notifying the Board Chair that Councillor Michael Wolfe has been appointed as the Council Liaison to the Library Board with Councillor Alexa Loo appointed as the Alternate Council Liaison. These appointments are for 12 months.

Correspondence was also received from the Richmond Community Foundation regarding the library's Endowment Fund Investment Income and from the InterLINK Executive Director regarding the federation's 2026 Provisional Budget. A copy of a letter of appreciation for an in-kind donation was shared with the Board.

4. Presentations

(a) Freedom To Read

P. He presented on Freedom To Read Week which runs from February 22-28. Libraries across Canada use this annual program to highlight the importance of Intellectual Freedom as a core value of our society. P. He shared information on challenges to materials, rising trends, and RPL's approach to handling community concerns.

P. He responded to questions from the Board, noting that Requests for Reconsideration have been made for print books and not digital versions and that the Dr. Seuss titles were weeded on condition during a period of challenges given the stereotypes present in many titles. Some Dr. Seuss titles were retained and moved to the adult collection with discussion notes for reading with children. S. Walters will post the link to the Centre for Free Expression's *Canadian Library Challenges Database* on the Board's SharePoint site.

P. He left the meeting at 6:12pm.

6. Community

(a) Councillor's Report

Councillor Wolfe shared updates from Council and Committee meetings, noting that Councillor Au, a past Council Liaison to the library board will be stepping down on February 1 to focus on his role as MP Richmond Centre-Marpole. Also of note is that at the January Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting, the First Nations Building Committee approved Terms of Reference to confirm roles and responsibilities and allow for representation from the Musqueam Indian Band. The Chair noted appreciation for the library being mentioned in City strategies.

(b) Friends of the Library (FOL) Report

The Chair noted that earlier this evening, the FOL Executive had their photo taken with a giant cheque for $45,000.00 representing their 2026 donation. The Board noted their on-going appreciation for the FOL's continued support of the Library.

7. Board – Items for Decision and/or Discussion

(a) 2026 InterLINK Provisional Budget

S. Merhi provided some background on how the reciprocal lending between InterLINK libraries is funded and S. Walters noted that while our member levy is increasing for 2026, RPL continues to be a net lender library which continues to offset costs to RPL.

MOVED: THAT the Richmond Public Library Board receives the Provisional 2026 InterLINK Budget as an item for information.

J. Morrison/A. Victoria.............CARRIED

(b) Executive Summary of 2025 Preliminary Year End Financials

E. Yu provided the Library Board with a summary of preliminary year end financials.

(c) Board Policy
J. Gervès-Keen and A. Singh presented the Intellectual Freedom Policy.

MOVED: THAT the Richmond Public Library Board adopt the Intellectual Freedom Policy.

A. Victoria/D. Hui............CARRIED

(d) Strategic Plan 2024-2028: 2025 Q4 Progress Report
S. Walters noted that while some items may have a finite completion, many become an ongoing function of our organizational business. Ongoing training and best practices review support continuous improvement. The board noted appreciation for the composition of this report.

(e) Incident Reports: Statistics and Trends 2023-2025
The board noted the comprehensiveness of the report and staff role in maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for community. S. Walters confirmed that a facilities Code of Conduct is posted at all libraries and shared that a 6-month customer suspension (physical assault) was processed recently; there is an appeal process. A. Bechard provided clarification on the categories Missing Person and Unattended Child. The board identified interest in grouping the metrics between what organizational policies and training can influence and incidents like medical emergencies that are beyond staff control.

(f) 2025 Operational Statistics
S. Walters shared that Q1 2026 reporting will look different as IT implements prior board feedback to review for clarity and content. The board noted that Q4 Stats would have been impacted by the purge of inactive library accounts and closure of the Steveston Library and subsequent move to the Easthope Hub. C. Leung confirmed that a note will be added for reference and answered questions about gate count metrics. In response to a question from the Board regarding benchmarks, S. Walters noted data is collected provincially and nationally.

8. Standing Items

(a) Roundtable Discussion
The board shared that the Islamic Art Experience was well attended and that feedback from Community Helpers, in this instance Transit Police, is very positive regarding their participation at the library's storytime program. S. Rahman answered questions around the locking of the book return bin at Easthope Hub and it was noted that a fun sign to welcome community into the space to return their items would be welcomed. Staff will follow up on this initiative.

(b) Committee Appointments
The board discussed the various committees with the Board Chair confirming the following appointments for 2026:

Governance Committee: A. Singh (C), B. Tisdall and A. Victoria
Finance Committee: J. Morrison (C) and A. Singh
Human Resources Committee: D. Hui (C), J. Gervès-Keen and B. Tisdall
Fund Development Committee: S. Merhi, J. Morrison and G. Mahil (chair TBD)
InterLINK: G. Mahil and A. Victoria (alternate)

M. Dawson shared information about upcoming events that will create advocacy opportunities for the Board and Fund Development Committee to consider.

(c) Steveston Community Centre and Library
S. Rahman shared that the temporary Easthope location has already reached 60% of the usage levels of the Steveston library. For the new library, the project team is concentrating on the procurement of furniture, fixtures and equipment, and reviewing positions for imminent recruitment.

(d) InterLINK Report
S. Walters noted the dates of the 2026 meetings: February 24, April 28, September 29 and November 24.

(e) Finance Committee
See item 7.0b.

(f) Fund Development Committee
No update.

(g) Governance Committee
See item 7.0c.

9. Chief Librarian's Report

S. Walters shared that she has been prioritizing the 2026 Organizational Workplan. Six projects were identified as priorities by the exempt team with a manager lead for each: policy review, organizational structure, new Steveston Library service, customer experience (service/programs), expanding marketing reach, and data analysis/metrics review.

A. Bechard will be presenting to library students at the iSchool (UBC) in February, a practicum library student is expected this spring, and in response to a question from the Board, K. Samara confirmed the library is a niche market and that HR is strategizing to expand our recruitment reach where possible. We expect Q1 to be a busy period of recruitment in light of recent retirements and a review of our organizational structure given strategic priorities.

10. Operations

(a) Library Operations Highlights Report
No questions.

(b) Marketing Annual Report
No questions.

11. Items Included for Information

(a) Trustees were invited to join the FOL membership.
(b) Trustees were invited to attend the Black History Month celebration and the Richard Van Camp storytelling and film screening program.

12. Other Business

(a) The Trustee Code of Conduct policy will be circulated for review and the accompanying statement for trustees to sign will be shared via DocuSign. S. Walters will follow up with the Board over the next several days.

Next Meeting
The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for **February 25, 2026, 5:30pm.**

Adjournment
There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

CHAIR_______________________

CHIEF LIBRARIAN Swalter _______________________