



# from the Board Table

## Intro

On Saturday, April 25, 2020, the Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) Board of Trustees convened for a historic, virtual meeting in response to the physical distancing measures from COVID-19. Trustees were quick to adapt to this change of format and fell into a rhythm of receiving and moving reports, and engaging in thoughtful and thorough discussions.

In the process, the Board passed a Special Rule of Order: Virtual and Teleconference Participation to conduct the first-of-its-kind virtual meeting, before moving three readings to amend the VIRL Board Procedural By-Law to allow for virtual meetings moving forward. Many Trustees, especially those who live in more remote areas, expressed hope that online meeting attendance could become a permanent fixture of future meetings.

## 2020 Provincial Grants Report



In addition to providing an overview of how provincial funding remains unchanged over 2019, this report also highlighted a one-time \$3 million funding injection from the Province supporting digital resources and services. Thanks to this grant, VIRL received just over \$43k and has earmarked an exciting new crafting database to help customers explore their creative pursuits.



# Facilities Updates



## Campbell River

Strathcona Regional District has approved funding for the new branch. VIRL is in discussion with City of Campbell River staff to move the project forward.

## Courtenay

Now that VIRL has received word that we did not receive funding from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, planning can proceed using Capital Funding.

## Masset

Consultants are currently working on the design, floorplan, and other planning and tender documents.

## North Saanich

The proposed site at the Panorama Centre is part of the Agricultural Land Reserve. North Saanich is in conversation with the Agricultural Land Commission about a path forward.

## Port Alberni

The architect has developed some preliminary floor plans and other drawings for discussion and comment. VIRL and the architect have established a process for continuing the planning process while all parties are working remotely.

## Sandspit

Discussions are on hold while some issues related to the use of the space are resolved.

# Facilities Updates cont.



## Sooke

The building permit has been approved, and construction will be tendered, evaluated and awarded after the pre-qualification for general contractors review is complete.

## Tahsis

Potential sites for a new branch are currently being assessed by Tahsis Council.

## Tofino

Tofino Council is reviewing shovel-ready potential sites.

## Woss

The Village of Woss has identified the new branch site. VIRL has commenced with the planning work in preparation of a prototype branch. Construction will be tendered in the near future.





# Stepping up in Response to COVID-19

**New and Expanded Digital Services:** When in-branch services were temporarily suspended in mid-March as a result of COVID-19, the digital resources in VIRL's eLibrary took centre stage to keep customers engaged, entertained and informed. This report provided a snapshot of the increased access to the eLibrary and the service improvements that staff brought on board as VIRL pivoted to meet the challenges of this unique situation.

Highlights include:

- 50% increase in eBooks borrowing (increase of 494 eBooks downloaded each day)
- 30% increase in eAudiobook borrowing (increase of 162 eAudiobooks downloaded each day)
- 19% increase in digital magazines checked out each day
- 15% increase in movies, TV shows and music streamed daily
- 15% increased use of online learning through Lynda.com

VIRL responded to this demand by expanding the number of always-available eBooks and eAudiobooks through OverDrive and RBDigital, increasing access to the popular AcornTV streaming platforms and Kanopy, and more.

Online registration was also quickly brought on board. By March 27, VIRL was signing up new members and within the first three weeks of the service, we registered 842 new customers. High demand continues and more than 1,300 people have now been signed up to take advantage of VIRL's digital resources.

# Stepping up in Response to COVID-19

## **Leaning on our Partners during COVID-19 Pandemic**

VIRL continues to find new and innovative ways to get the word out about the services and resources being offered to communities while in-branch services are temporarily suspended. Dozens of organizations and individuals — from senior's homes to postsecondary institutions and school districts, Chambers of Commerce to government contacts and Indigenous communities — have taken up the cause of promoting VIRL to their networks.

Staff have also connected with celebrities and influencers and setting up opportunities for them to further promote the library during the in-branch service suspension.

## **Information Services and Programming During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The Board received a report on the plans, to date, to implement alternative services while in-branch service is temporarily suspended. This includes information services to customers via telephone, email and video conferencing; online Storytimes and other programs; and online book clubs.





# Business Arising

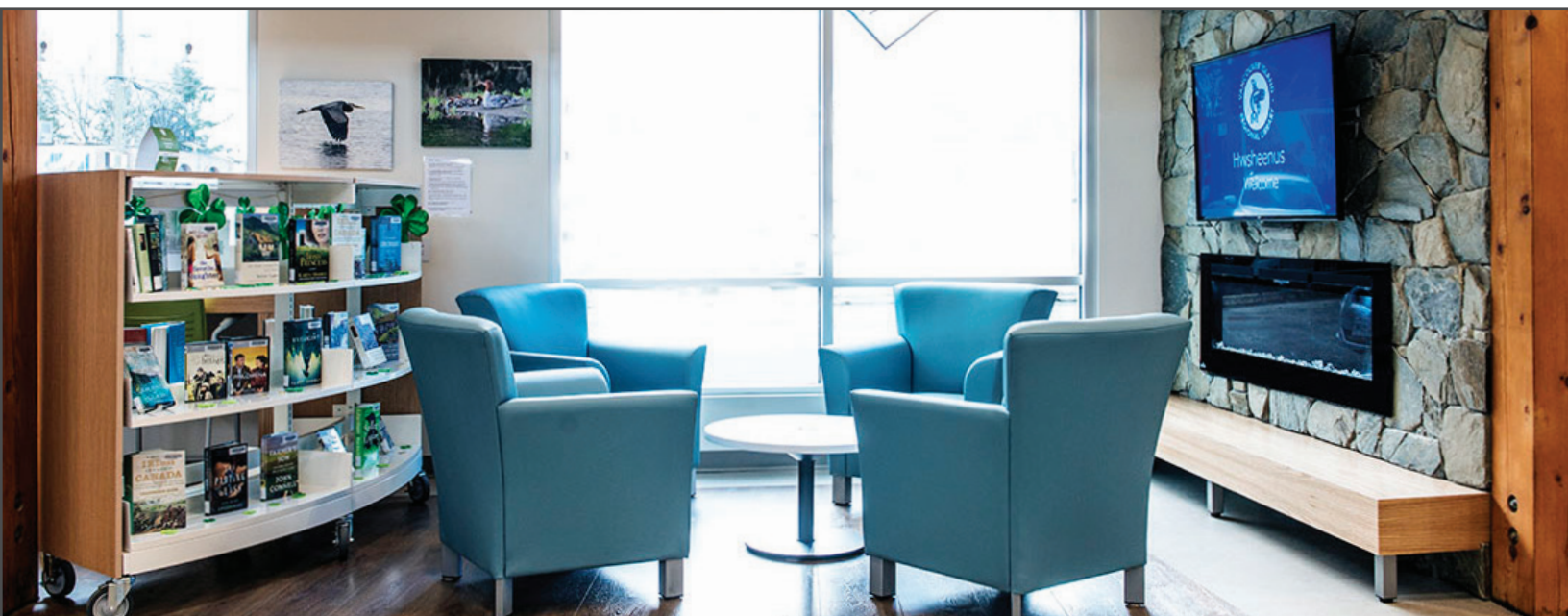
## COVID-19 Government Support Programs

This report highlighted the range of federal and provincial supports currently in place to help citizens, businesses and other organizations during these difficult times. On the federal side, VIRL is investigating whether we can apply for the Temporary Wage Subsidy program. We will continue to monitor and apply for supports as they arise.

## HR and Health and Safety Report

In response to the challenges of COVID-19, this reports provided an overview of the work VIRL and the two unions (CUPE and BCGEU) have completed together to ensure open lines of communication with each other and staff.

The report also provided information about a potential partnership with the Nanaimo Division of Family Practice and Chamber of Commerce for VIRL to provide 3D printers to assist in the production of personal protective equipment (PPE).





# Strategic Plan

The Board moved to defer planning to 2021 in response to challenges brought about by COVID-19.

