Board of Trustees
Annual General Meeting
January 30, 2021
Agenda

9:30 am – 1:00 pm
Virtual: Zoom.us

Page

1. Call to Order

The Vancouver Island Regional Library Board of Trustees would like to acknowledge the traditional territories of the Indigenous peoples of each of the communities represented by the Trustees present at today's virtual meeting.

a) Opening Remarks
b) Roll Call
c) Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

2. VIRL Board of Trustees Orientation

3. Special Report: 2021 Nominating Committee Report — 5

4. Elections

a) Election of Chair
b) Election of Vice Chair
c) Election of Executive Committee

Meeting Recess – 15 min.

5. Agenda

a) Items to be Removed from Consent Business
b) Additions or Deletions
c) Approval of Agenda

6. Minutes

a) November 21, 2020 Board of Trustees Meeting Unapproved Minutes – *for approval* — **16**

7. Delegations (see Policy)

8. Business Arising

a) Procedural By-law Review — **22**

9. Finance

a) November 2020 Finance Report — **23**
b) November 2020 Reserves Report — **30**

10. Library Services & Planning

a) Recovery Update Report **34**
b) VIRL Performance Q4 2020 **37**

11. Facilities

a) Facility Projects Update **39**
b) Consolidated Facilities Master Plan Refresh Report **43**

12. New Business

a) Grant Application: COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream **48**
b) Seize the Moment: Working with the Province **50**

13. Consent Business

a) VIRL in the Media **58**
i. Library closure due to air quality issue, Chemainus Valley Courier, November 16, 2020 **59**
ii. Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District discusses the possibility of a second library, Port Alberni Valley News, November 18, 2020 **62**
iii. Sooke library enters next chapter with limited service re-opening, Sooke News Mirror, November 19, 2020 **65**
iv. LETTER: Sidney stuck with a third-rate library, Saanich News, November 20, 2020 **67**
v. LETTER: Sidney library services are excellent, Saanich News, December 25, 2020 **69**
vi. Briefs: Cumberland agrees to end hall lease with Lamplighters, Comox Valley Record, November 22, 2020 **70**
vii. No one suggested saying no to a new library, BC Local News, November 25, 2020 **74**
viii. City of Nanaimo's property tax discussions start with 3.3 per cent increase, The Lounge 99.9, November 25, 2020 **77**
ix. There must be some room for a second look, BC Local News, November 25, 2020 **79**
x. "at your library" in the north island eagle: new e-resources and new hours at the port hardy library, wmtc, November 29, 2020 **81**
xi. VIRL shipping digital packages to Vancouver Island care homes, My Coast Now, December 1, 2020 **82**
xii. RDN's proposed 2021 financial plan shows little change for Area B taxes, yahoo!news, December 1, 2020 **85**
xiii. Island libraries combating social isolation with 'digital care packages', Times Colonist, December 2, 2020 **87**
xiv. Nanaimo Harbourfront Library releases COVID-19-themed poetry anthology, Nanaimo News Bulletin, December 4, 2020 **88**

xv. Comox Valley Community Foundation contributes to library initiative, Comox Valley Record, December 7, 2020 **91**
xvi. Business notes: Christmas tree farms in Cowichan selling out this season, Cowichan Valley Citizen, December 18, 2020 **93**
xvii. Land exclusion boosts plans for library in North Saanich, Peninsula News Review, December 22, 2020 **98**
xviii. North Saanich councillor calls for 'urgency' on future of library services, Saanich News, December 23, 2020 **102**
xix. Year in Review Part Two, Chemainus Valley Courier, January 8, 2021 **106**
xx. Nanaimo Harbourfront Library seeks submissions for poetry contest, Nanaimo News Bulletin, January 12, 2021 **111**
xxi. Q & A on the Indian Act with Bob Joseph, Sooke PocketNews, January 13, 2021 **114**
xxii. Vancouver Island Regional Library hosts Q & A on Indian Act, Comox Valley Record, January 14, 2021 **116**
xxiii. Indigenous author explains Indian Act, Sooke News Mirror, January 14, 2021 **119**
xxiv. VIRL to host Q & A seminar about the Indian Act with author and Indigenous relations expert Bob Joseph, Campbell River Mirror, January 15, 2021 **121**
xxv. Q&A on the Indian Act with Bob Joseph open to Greater Victoria residents, Victoria News, January 17, 2021 **123**
xxvi. Tofino ready for next chapter of new library pursuit, Tofino-Ucluelet Westerly News, January 21, 2021 **125**
xxvii. VIRL launches online learning resource for students in Grades 3-12, My Comox Valley Now, January 21, 2021 **130**
xxviii. Author of 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act hosts virtual talk, Times Colonist, January 22, 2021 **132**

b) Correspondence **134**
i. Email to The Honourable John Horgan, Premier BC from B. Leigh, Chair and G. Wickstrom, Vice Chair, VIRL Board re: Libraries are Essential Services in BC, November 23, 2020 **135**
ii. Email to The Honourable J. Whiteside, Minister of Education from B. Leigh, Chair and G. Wickstrom, Vice Chair, VIRL Board re: Libraries are Essential Services in BC, November 26, 2020 **138**
iii. Letter to The Honourable J. Osborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs from The John Horgan, Premier BC re: Municipal Affairs Ministry mandate, November 26, 2020 **141**
iv. Email to VIRL Board from Library Customer re: Chemainus Library, December 1, 2020 **145**

v. Email to Library Customer from M. Legacy, Director of Library Services & Planning re: Chemainus Library, December 18, 2020 **146**
vi. Email to VIRL Board from Library Customer re: Grateful to VIRL Cowichan staff, December 3, 2020 **147**
vii. Email to Library Customer from B. Leigh, Chair, VIRL Board re: Grateful to VIRL Cowichan staff, December 18, 2020 **148**
viii. R. Bonanno, VIRL Executive Director, Retirement Announcement, December 21, 2020 **149**
ix. Email to R. Bonanno, Executive Director from J. Ketler, Chair, Comox Valley Regional District re: Service Appreciation Bonanno, December 23, 2020 **151**
x. Email to VIRL Board from R. Bonanno, Executive Director re: BC Extends Health Orders, January 8, 2021 **152**

c) Media Releases **153**
i. Grants allow VIRL to provide Digital Care Packages to combat isolation, December 1, 2020 **154**
ii. Give Library and Get Local this holiday season, December 10, 2020 **157**
iii. Q and A on the Indian Act with Bob Joseph, January 13, 2021 **161**
iv. Exciting new learning resource at VIRL for students from grades 3 – 12, January 20, 2021 **163**

14. In Camera

15. Adjournment

Next Meetings

February 26, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting
March 27, 2020 Board of Trustees Meeting

2021 Nominating Committee Report

Recommendation

The Nominating Committee recommends:

That the *2021 Nominating Committee Report* be received by the Board of Trustees.

Background

The Executive Committee consists of 11 members: Chair, Vice Chair, Past Chair, and eight members-at-large. In cases where the Chair and the Past Chair is the same person, a ninth member at-large shall be elected.

Slate of Candidates

The following Trustees have put their names forward:

Chair:	1. Brenda Leigh	Strathcona Regional District
	2. Gaby Wickstrom	Town of Port McNeill
Vice Chair:	1. Daniel Arbour	Comox Valley Regional District
Members-at-Large:	1. Penny Cote	Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District
	2. Vanessa Craig	Regional District of Nanaimo
	3. Colleen Evans	City of Campbell River
	4. Erin Hemmens	City of Nanaimo
	5. Lynda Llewellyn	Village of Tahsis
	6. Duncan McMaster	District of Tofino
	7. Brenda Patrick	Village of Gold River
	8. Evan Putterill	North Coast Regional District
	9. Fred Robertson	District of Port Hardy
	10. Debra Toporowski	Municipality of North Cowichan

Appended to this report are the candidate biographies.

Temporary Modifications to the 2021 Nominating Process due to COVID-19

It was approved at the Board of Trustees Meeting, November 21, 2020, to revise the 2021 AGM procedures to remove nominations from the floor. This included a deadline for all nominations to be submitted to the Nominating Committee prior to the deadline of January 8, 2021.

The Nominating Committee was entrusted with the necessity to provide a full slate of candidates for the Executive Committee, the Board Chair and Vice Chair.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Leigh
Chair, 2020 VIRL Board of Trustees

Gaby Wickstrom
Vice Chair, 2020 VIRL Board of Trustees

Penny Cote
Trustee, VIRL Board of Trustees

Board Chair

The Board Chair is elected by majority vote. The Chair serves until the next Inaugural Meeting and is eligible for re-election. Among other duties, the Chair:

- Encourages and facilitates discussion and the exchange of views and, if possible, to achieve consensus prior to putting an issue to a vote;
- Attends all meetings of the Board and Executive Committee;
- In conjunction with the Vice Chair, is responsible for the preparation of agendas for the Board and Executive Committee meetings, and meets with senior staff regularly prior to each meeting to review meeting agendas;
- Provides direction to the Executive Director on an interim basis;
- Jointly with the Vice Chair, is responsible for the review of the performance of the Executive Director on an annual basis; and
- Acts as the official representative of the Board to the media and at special events, including official openings, public consultations and presentations to municipal Councils in the VIRL service area.

Candidates for Board Chair

Brenda Leigh, Strathcona Regional District

I am pleased to let my name stand for re-election as Chair of the VIRL Board of Trustees for 2021. My qualifications include 14 years on the Library Board Executive, 4 years as Vice Chair and the past two years as Chair. I am entering my 28th year as an elected official, serving as Director for a large community of 5,000 known as Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake.

Of the many Boards, Committees and Commissions I have participated in over the years, greatest passion is for the Library Board. I am a huge supporter of libraries as they are one of the most important services provided to our communities. In my role on the Library Board as Chair and Vice Chair, I have visited most of our branches and have witnessed, first-hand, how much our communities appreciate their libraries.

I have been proud to be part of the Planning process that provided the rejuvenation of our whole Library system and provided 17 new branches over the past decade. I am very lucky to have had the opportunity to work with an amazingly dedicated Board and Executive, as well as our wonderful Executive Director to move our VIRL Library system towards a healthy and sustainable future.

I am very devoted to the work I do for our library system and I apply all of my best abilities to help produce relevant agendas, to chair meetings, to produce reports and communications to our Board and to outside Agencies and to accomplish the tasks that are part of the job of Chair. I am always reliable and can be counted on to look after our

collective interests at all times. Along with our Executive Committee, I have advocated for VIRL with the Provincial Government and with outside organizations, such as local government and UBCM/AVICC. I serve on the Executive of the BC Library Trustees' Association and I am aware of library issues around the Province and the challenges we face, especially in relation to Provincial funding. In short, I would be very happy to continue serving our Board of Trustees as Chair for 2021 and I look forward to a VIRL system that will come out of this pandemic year strong, healthy and resilient! Thank you for your consideration!
- Brenda Leigh

Gabriele Wickstrom, Town of Port McNeill

COVID has proven to be both a challenging and exciting time for VIRL. This organization has shown its resiliency by swiftly pivoting and adapting programing to help our communities through difficult circumstances. It is a testament to the exemplary employees we have and an open-minded Board willing to work together for the greater good.

My leadership strength is collaboration. With the upcoming retirement of our Executive Director, Rosemary Bonanno, I believe an inclusive Chair will help facilitate the development of a fresh vision that will allow our new Executive Director to take the exceptional work done under Rosemary's leadership to a whole new level. I see VIRL continuing to be a progressive library system others look to as an organizational leader.

For the past two years I have served as Vice Chair. Prior to this board appointment, I served 3 years as an Executive Committee Trustee from 2011 - 2014.

Chair experience includes:

- Vancouver Island North Tourism Advisory Committee
- Port McNeill & District Chamber of Commerce
- Town of Port McNeill in my role as Mayor

Thank you for considering my name for VIRL Chair.

Sincerely,
Gaby Wickstrom

Vice Chair

The Vice Chair:

- Presides at the Board meeting if the Chair is absent from the meeting, or for periods during which the Chair is present at the meeting but temporarily leaves the chair;
- Attends all meetings of the Board and Executive Committee;
- Has all the rights, duties and responsibilities of the Chair while presiding at Board meetings;
- Represents the interests and decisions of the Board to outside parties at Library, government and community events in the absence of the Chair; and
- In conjunction with the Board Chair, is responsible for the preparation of agendas for the Board and Executive Committee meetings, and meets with senior staff regularly prior to each meeting to review meeting agendas.

Candidate for Vice Chair

Daniel Arbour, Comox Valley Regional District

I serve as the Area Director for Baynes Sound, Hornby/Denman Islands at the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD). Since 2018, I have been the representative for the CVRD to VIRL as a Trustee, and on the Executive of the Vancouver Island Regional Library Board both years.

I believe the work of VIRL is amazing. With a presence in 38 communities, the organization exemplifies collaboration in service delivery at a regional scale. Forward-looking documents such as the Facilities Plan provide a predictable and methodic approach to the work of VIRL, while the Strategic Plan grounds the organization in our shared core values and ambitions.

In the coming year or two, the organization will need to continue to support our communities through the COVID era. In 2021, we will also go through a big change with the retirement of our Executive Director; the recruitment of a new one; and the launch of our Strategic Plan update.

As Vice Chair, I would see my role in providing focused attention to these matters; and on supporting the Chair, Executive, and leadership team. I will make the time for the role and be excited to serve VIRL in this capacity. For more info on my background, experience, and core competencies: https://www.linkedin.com/in/arbourdaniel/

Executive Committee Members-at-Large

The Executive Committee:

- Provides and make recommendations to the Board;
- Provides direction to the Executive Director on an interim basis.
- Is accountable for, and shall report to, the Board in respect to all actions/decisions made;
- Has the ability to disqualify an Executive Committee member from the committee if the member is absent from 2 consecutive Executive Committee meetings without prior approval.

Candidates for Members-at-Large

Penny Cote, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

Penny Cote, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) Electoral Area "D" Director. Serving my community for my 5th term between 2005 - today.

I am the Chair of the Alberni-Clayoquot Health Network, 1st Vice-President of the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) and an Executive Director on the Municipal Insurance Association (MIA).

In 2018, I was re-appointed by the ACRD to the Vancouver Island Regional Board of Trustees and part of the Executive. Previously I had served a full 8 year term on the VIRL Executive, where I had lobbied the Provincial Government annually at UBCM to increase granting support and had connected with other British Columbia Library Board members.

In 2020 continuing on with requests to the Province, I was part of the delegation that attended a meeting with the Honourable Rob Flemming, Minister of Education and staff regarding library funding and partnerships.

2020 has been an intense time for the world dealing with COVID-19 and as Board members we have been a part of VIRL standing strong through decisions leadership and management made to safely re-open our libraries for our staff and communities with incredibly improved virtual and outreach services all the while continuing on with building new libraries.

2021 will bring new challenges with the review of the VIRL strategic plan and continued mission, vision and values. I would like your re-appointment to the VIRL Executive to help support VIRL's strong future.

Vanessa Craig, Regional District of Nanaimo

I am the elected representative of Electoral Area B (Gabriola, Mudge, and DeCourcy Islands) and the Vice Chair of the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Board.

I am beginning my third year representing the RDN on the VIRL Board, bringing the perspective of both a small rural area and a large Regional District to my role as VIRL Trustee. I am requesting your support for my election to the Executive Committee of the VIRL Board.

I have extensive experience serving on the executive of governance bodies. I am entering my second year on the RDN Executive Committee; I also serve on many other committees, some as Chair. In my role as a professional biologist, I have been active for years on the College of Applied Biology (the regulator of professional biologists in the province) Council and its executive - I am currently on the executive in my capacity as Past President after serving two terms as President. In addition, I currently am the electoral area representative on the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities Executive Committee.

After two years on the VIRL Board, I feel I have a good understanding of VIRL operations and that I can be a useful contributor on the Executive Committee. With Mrs. Bonanno's impending retirement the Executive Committee will be tasked with the primary oversight of hiring her replacement, as well as dealing with challenges associated with COVID and updating the Facilities Master Plan. I would welcome the opportunity to expand my involvement with the VIRL Board by participating on the Executive Committee this year.

Colleen Evans, City of Campbell River

I welcome an opportunity to submit my name for consideration by the VIRL Board Nominating Committee. I was appointed in 2020 and again in 2021 by the City of Campbell River to be their VIRL representative and have a strong appreciation for the value of libraries in shaping our communities and region, defining culture and providing access as a learning hub.

Elected to Campbell River City Council in 2014, I was re-elected in 2018 and re-elected to AVICC Executive in 2020 as a Director at Large. I am also the co-chair of the Coastal Communities Social Procurement Initiative.

In my Council role, I've been appointed to diverse positions that include the Airport Review Select Committee; Tourism Advisory Committee; Culture, Recreation, Parks Commission; Strathcona Regional District; Comox Valley Regional Hospital District and Solid Waste Management Boards; Strathcona Gardens Commission and Community Health Network.

A long-standing volunteer, I've gained extensive governance, fund development and not for profit experience having served on local, regional and provincial boards that include the Museum of Campbell River; Tidemark Theatre; Community Foundations; North Island Employment Foundation Society (NIEFS); Vancouver Island Economic Alliance (VIEA);

and in my designation as CFRE, to the Association of Fundraising Professionals Vancouver Island (AFP). Most recently, I was elected as a Director to the Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island and serve as the co-founder of "100 Women Who Care Campbell River".

My business experience includes a ten-year tenure as CEO of the Campbell River Chamber of Commerce and national recognition in my role as a senior executive in the education, arts and health sectors and as an international award-winning recipient in diverse marketing and communications roles.

Erin Hemmens, City of Nanaimo

I entered municipal politics in 2018 following a 15 year career in community health.

At the city, I co-lead the Health and Housing file, working directly with provincial and federal partners as well as social service agencies and front line providers. I am also a Director with the Regional District of Nanaimo, serving on the Executive, Transit, Solid Waste and Parks & Trails Committees.

In the community, I am a mother to two young boys, an avid cyclist and a huge library user. As a volunteer, I co-lead an initiative with Equal Voice Central Vancouver Island to support young women considering leadership roles in their community and am a member of Nanaimo's Community Health Network Governance Committee.

I represent nearly a quarter of the population that VIRL serves and I welcome an opportunity to serve the VIRL Executive with my passion and dedication to community and life-long learning.

Lynda Llewellyn, Village of Tahsis

I have been on the VIRL board for 2 years and on the Executive for the past year.

I have been a user and advocate of libraries for most of my life.

I volunteered with the Edmonton Public Library for several years, helping with fundraisers and book sales.

I believe libraries are an essential service providing books, space and other items to the communities they serve.

Duncan McMaster, District of Tofino

Born & raised in Manchester, UK my house was next door to the local library (Stretford). To say that the library was my playground would not be an exaggeration.

I graduated in 1974 with B.Sc (Hons) in Geophysics from University of Liverpool, UK and went to work in the oil & gas industry as an exploration geophysicist. The majority of my career was spent in remote, international locations.

I emigrated to Canada in 1980 and was based out of Calgary while working internationally. Moved to Tofino in 2006 to open and run a Bed & Breakfast, while still commuting to Tunisia. Finally retired from oil & gas in 2008 and was elected to Tofino Council.

I have been the Tofino representative to VIRL for the past 2 years.

Brenda Patrick, Village of Gold River

I am a councillor for the Village of Gold River, have been appointed for a second term as a Vancouver Island Regional Library Trustee and have served one year on the VIRL Executive Committee.

I am committed to my community. Having full time employment I have served my community for 25 years as a part time paramedic, 7 years as the Community Emergency Planning Coordinator, and am a member of the Provincial Emergency Social Service for my community.

I am proud to have had the opportunity to be a part of the VIRL Executive and would happily be a part of the 2021 Executive.

Sincerely,
Brenda Patrick

Evan Putterill, North Coast Regional District

- Serving 3rd term as Electoral Area E Director on the North Coast Regional District & North West Regional Hospital Boards;
- Served 7 terms on the VIRL Board (2009-2014 & 2019-2020) and 2 terms on the VIRL Executive;
- Served on the executive of numerous public and non-profit boards; including (Chair) GwaiiTel, the community owned telecom on Haida Gwaii; the Misty Isles Economic Development Society; and as Chair of the North & Central Coast Ferry Advisory Committee;
- Serves as the North Coast Regional Representative on the NCLGA (North & Central BC Local Government Association);
- Works in aviation in a mid-size airport services company. Responsible for company operations at two airports, in addition to managing the companies leaning management system, safety management system, and document control program for approx. 300 employees at 9 airports; and
- Studied Human Geography and Public Administration at the University of Victoria.

Fred Robertson, District of Port Hardy

Biography

- Second term as an elected Councillor with the District of Port Hardy
- Teacher Librarian with SD #85 from 1989 - 2014
- Chair of the Parks, Recreation and Arts and Culture Committee
- Member of the First Nations' Relations Committee
- Member of the Wellness First Committee
- District of Port Hardy representative on the Vancouver Island Regional Vancouver Library Board
- District of Port Hardy representative on the North and Central Coast Ferry Advisory Committee
- Executive member of VIRL 2017 - 2020
- Vice Chair Mount Waddington Community Futures
- Executive Member North Island Training and Attraction Society
- Member since 1999 Vancouver Island North Woodlands Advisory Group
- Part Time Constituency Assistant for the North Island Constituency (Port Hardy Office)

Other Potentially Relevant Bits

- We have raised three boys on the North Island
- Active Minor Hockey Coach and Manager since 1995
- P.H. Minor Hockey Executive member for over 10 years (various positions)
- Elected member of the BCTF Executive Committee
- Elected to two terms (Vancouver Island Rep.) with the BC Teachers' Council
- Active with Old Timers' Hockey, fishing, firewooding, skiing and various other sports from which I have gradually (and somewhat reluctantly) retired

Debra Toporowski, Municipality of North Cowichan

My name is Debra Toporowski.

My traditional Cowichan name is Qwulti'stunaat. I was born and raised in the Cowichan Valley with a First Nation and Chinese Heritage. My grandparents are late Stephen Jack and late Rosie Peter (Billy) of Quamichan Village. My mother is Ethel Jack and my father is Howard Wong.

I am interested in staying on the VIRL Board as an Executive member. I am currently a full-time elected Councillor sitting on, both, Municipality of North Cowichan and Cowichan Tribes.

I formerly worked for Cowichan Tribes as the Executive Assistant for the Human Resources Department. Before that I was a Constituency Assistant to the Member of

Legislative Assembly of the Cowichan Valley for 12 years, my former employer had retired in 2017.

I have sat on various committees over the years with Cowichan Tribes, Audit & Finance, Health Advisory, Gaming, Justice, Fishing and Treaty committee, appointed to the Cowichan Watershed Board and Society, as well as weekly Low-Flows committee.

First Term elected Councillor for North Cowichan, I sit on Cowichan Valley Regional District Board and I am the Chair of the First Nations Relations Committee.

I believe that the skills and experiences I have gained at these positions make me an ideal candidate for Executive member.

Debra Toporowski ~ Qwulti'stunaat
Cowichan Tribes Councillor 2013 – 2021
North Cowichan Councillor 2018 – 2022

Minutes of the November 21, 2020 Board of Trustees Meeting

For Approval

Board of Trustees Meeting
November 21, 2020
Unapproved Minutes

Virtual: Zoom.us

Present:

Brenda Leigh, Strathcona RD (Chair)
Gaby Wickstrom, Port McNeill (Vice Chair)
Colleen Evans, Campbell River
Nicole Minions, Comox
Melanie McCollum (Alternate), Courtenay
Vickey Brown, Cumberland
Jenni Capps, Duncan
Brenda Patrick, Gold River
Jeff Virtanen, Ladysmith
Carolyne Austin, Lake Cowichan
Debra Toporowski, North Cowichan
Terry Carty, Masset
Erin Hemmens, Nanaimo
Jack McClintock, North Saanich
Teresa Patterson, Parksville
Bruce Lloyd, Port Alice
Ian Gould, Port Clements
Fred Robertson, Port Hardy
Jesse Embree, Queen Charlotte
Barbara Fallot, Sidney
Jeff Bateman, Sooke
Lynda Llewellyn, Tahsis
Duncan McMaster, Tofino
Marilyn McEwen, Ucluelet
Barb Lewis (Alternate), Zeballos
Penny Cote, Alberni / Clayoquot RD
Daniel Arbour, Comox Valley RD
Mike Hicks, Capital RD
Jayme Kennedy, Central Coast RD
Blaise Salmon, Cowichan Valley RD
Andrew Hory, Mount Waddington RD
Vanessa Craig, Nanaimo RD
Evan Putterill, North Coast RD
Andrew Fall, qathet RD

Regrets:

Ian Savage, Lantzville
Sharie Minions, Port Alberni
Scott Harrison (Alternate), Qualicum Beach
Norm Kirschner, Sayward

Staff:

Rosemary Bonanno, Executive Director
Anne O'Shea, Deputy Executive Director / COO
Joel Adams, Director of Finance
David Carson, Director of Corporate Communications & Strategic Initiatives
Lisa House, Director of Human Resources
Melissa Legacy, Director of Library Services & Planning
Melanie Barnum, Parliamentarian / Divisional Manager, Facilities
Mariah Patterson, Executive Assistant
Saho Lindberg, Administrative Assistant (Recorder)

Unapproved

1. Call to Order – 9:30am

The Vancouver Island Regional Library Board of Trustees would like to acknowledge the traditional territories of the Indigenous peoples of each of the communities represented by the Trustees present to today's virtual meeting.

a) Opening Remarks
The Chair welcomed everyone to the Board of Trustees meeting.

b) Roll Call
As above.

c) Declarations of Conflicts of Interest
d) None.

2. Agenda

a) Items to be Removed from Consent Business
None.

b) Additions or Deletions
None.

c) Approval of Agenda
Motion: Moved by Daniel Arbour / seconded by Barbara Fallot that the agenda be approved by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

3. Minutes

a) September 19, 2020 Board of Trustees Meeting Unapproved Minutes
Motion: Moved by Colleen Evans / seconded by Erin Hemmens that the *September 19, 2020 Board of Trustees Meeting Unapproved Minutes* be approved by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

b) October 23, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting Unapproved Minutes
Motion: Moved by Penny Cote / seconded by Brenda Patrick that the *October 23, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting Unapproved Minutes* be received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

Jeff Virtanen joined the meeting at 9:40am.

4. Delegations

No delegations.

5. Business Arising

a) Procedural By-law Review
Motion: Moved by Daniel Arbour / seconded by Nicole Minions that the *Procedural By-law Review* be received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

Motion: Moved by Gaby Wickstrom / seconded by Penny Cote that the Board of Trustees amend the VIRL Board Procedural By-law Section 5, Board Meetings to include the following clause:
"*In the event that a temporary closure of VIRL service locations will exceed 30 days or an event that would result in greater than 50% of the workforce being temporarily or permanently laid off,*

Unapproved

the Executive Director will request a Special Executive Committee Meeting to inform members of the financial impact to the budget, the impact to in-house services, the impact to customers and the impact to staff."

Motion: Moved by Andrew Fall / seconded by Erin Hemmens that the Board of Trustees give first reading to the following clause (see below) being added to Section 5, Board Meetings of the *Procedural By-Law*. Carried.

Motion: Moved by Andrew Fall / seconded by Erin Hemmens that the Board of Trustees give second reading to the following clause (see below) being added to Section 5, Board Meetings of the *Procedural By-Law*. Carried.

Motion: Moved by Andrew Fall / seconded by Colleen Evans that the Board of Trustees give third reading to the following clause (see below) being added to Section 5, Board Meetings of the *Procedural By-Law*. Carried.

The following clause to be added to Section 5, Board Meetings:
"*In the event that a temporary closure of VIRL service locations will exceed 30 days or an event that would result in greater than 50% of the workforce being temporarily or permanently laid off, the Executive Director will request a Special Executive Committee Meeting to inform members of the financial impact to the budget, the impact to in-house services, the impact to customers and the impact to staff."*

b) Recovery Update Report

Motion: Moved by Gaby Wickstrom / seconded by Daniel Arbour that the *Recovery Update Report* be received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

c) Sooke Site Servicing Report

Motion: Moved by Jeff Bateman / seconded by Penny Cote that the *Sooke Site Servicing Report* be received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

d) Revised VIRL Performance Q2 2020

Motion: Moved by Andrew Fall / seconded by Brenda Patrick that the *Revised VIRL Performance Q2 2020* report be received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

e) VIRL Performance Q3 2020

Motion: Moved by Daniel Arbour / seconded by Colleen Evans that the *VIRL Performance Q3 2020* report be received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

Unapproved

6. Finance

a) September 2020 Finance Report

Motion: Moved by Daniel Arbour / seconded by Nicole Minions that the *September 2020 Finance Report* be received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

b) September 2020 Reserves Report

Motion: Moved by Colleen Evans / seconded by Daniel Arbour that the *September 2020 Reserves Report* be received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

c) Facility Projects Update

Motion: Moved by Penny Cote / seconded by Jeff Bateman that the *Facility Projects Update* report be received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

7. New Business

a) 2021 Nominating Committee and Call for Nominations

Motion: Moved by Daniel Arbour / seconded by Penny Cote that the *2021 Nominating Committee and Call for Nominations* report be received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

Motion: Moved by Daniel Arbour / seconded by Gaby Wickstrom that the 2021 AGM nominating procedure be revised to eliminate nominations from the floor and to include a deadline for all nominations received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

b) 2021 Board of Trustees and Executive Committee Meeting Schedule

Motion: Moved by Colleen Evans / seconded by Erin Hemmens that the proposed *2021 Board of Trustees and Executive Committee Meeting Schedule* be received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

Motion: Moved by Andrew Fall / seconded by Erin Hemmens that the proposed *2021 Board of Trustees and Executive Committee Meeting Schedule* be adopted by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

8. Consent Business

Motion: Moved by Erin Hemmens / seconded by Nicole Minions that all *Consent Business* be received by the Board of Trustees. Carried.

Meeting recessed at 11:09am
Meeting reconvened at 11:18am

9. In Camera 11:18am

Motion: Moved by Erin Hemmens / seconded by Debra Toporowski that the Board of Trustees meeting move In Camera. Carried.

Motion: Moved by Gaby Wickstrom / seconded by Penny Cote that the Board of Trustees rise and report with the letter to the Premier and Minister of Health and the Executive Director's retirement letter and return to the open portion of the Board of Trustees meeting. Carried.

Unapproved

10. Adjournment – 12:57pm

Motion: Moved by Penny Cote / seconded by Colleen Evans that the meeting be adjourned. Carried.

Brenda Leigh Chair, Board of Trustees Vancouver Island Regional Library	Rosemary Bonanno, BA MLS Executive Director Vancouver Island Regional Library

Unapproved

Procedural By-law Review

Recommendation

The Executive Director, in consultation with the Parliamentarian, recommends:

That the *Procedural By-law Review* report be received by the Board of Trustees as information;

And

That the Board of Trustees refer the review of the Procedural By-law to the Executive Committee.

Background

In 2020, the Procedural By-law was open/revised to enable the Board to continue to conduct business. The purpose of the review would be to ensure all procedures new and old are closed and have logical ends.

Economic Impact

Revenue neutral at this time.

Communication Plan

Depending on the outcome of the review, steps will be taken to revise the By-law and post the new Procedural By-law on the Vancouver Island Regional Library website and the Trustee Portal.

Related to the Strategic Plan

The Plan will support the Board's Mission, Vision and Values thereby encompassing the Strategic Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Bonanno, BA MLS
Executive Director

Melanie Barnum
Parliamentarian | Divisional Manager, Facilities

November 2020 Finance Report

Recommendation

The Director of Finance, in consultation with the Executive Director, recommends:

That the *November 2020 Finance Report* be received by the Board of Trustees.

Background

Results to November 30, 2020 are presented for information. These reports do not follow the same format as annual audited statements as the focus is more on day to day operations. Vancouver Island Regional Library's (VIRL) revenues are predictable and therefore accurately represented. The November financial results reflect that operational revenues are in line with expectations and that expenditures are reasonable based on activities to date.

VIRL's operating deficit to the end of November is $618,202. VIRL's annual provincial grant was received in March, but this revenue is offset by the timing of certain expenditures that are recognized at the beginning of the year, such as insurance and software licensing, as well as the timing between incurring project spending and the associated revenue being recognized. At the end of November, project spending totalled $3,653,572, with transfers to revenue of $3,528,027. The Reserves Report includes information on the transactions within each reserve maintained by VIRL.

Statement 1 – Balance Sheet

At the end of November, the balance sheet shows that VIRL continues to have healthy reserves and sufficient operational funds. Cash and investments were approximately $2.9 million at the end of November. Refundable deposits relate primarily to deposits paid to local governments as part of construction projects, as well as security deposits included in rental agreements. Accounts Receivable, Assessments relate to the monthly recognition of levy revenue. Accounts Receivable, Other relates primarily to refundable GST and other non-levy receivables. We continue to maintain a small inventory of promotional sale items, and prepaid expenses represent the portion of contracts and other items that have been paid in 2020 but relate to services in future years.

The accounts payable balance at the end of November represents our current commitments at this date. Wages and deductions payable relate to accrued salaries and benefits. MFA Long Term Debt relates to borrowings incurred for capital projects at the Nanaimo North, Nanaimo Harbourfront, Lake Cowichan, Chemainus, and Haida Gwaii branches.

The surplus/equity section reflects capital accounts in order to present amortization as required by Public Sector accounting standards. Currently, approximately $23.0 million of our $53.7 million in assets have been amortized. The cost to replace those assets would be significantly above the original cost due to inflation.

Long term plans need to provide funding for these replacements. We are now in year nine of a fifteen-year funding requirement. Regular replacement of our base materials puts VIRL in a good position for the future.

Statements 2, 3, 4 - Revenue and Expenditures

November represents the eleventh of twelve months, so target expenditures to date are 92%. Significant items affecting the operating surplus at the end of November include:

- Levies to members are recognized on a monthly basis and represent 92% of the annual budget.
- Provincial operating grants for the year were received in March, with the additional technology grant of $43,061 received in April.
- Library Generated Revenue (fines, fees and charges, room rental, etc.) are below budget due to suspension of in-branch services.
- Total expenditures are below budget, representing 73% of total budget for the year.
- Operating expenditures are slightly above budget at 93% of total budget for the year.
- Insurance is at 106% as the full cost is recognized in January.
- Office, Postage, Maintenance, Travel, and Promotions are all on or below budget.
- Wages are just slightly above budget, but still in line with expectations.
- Library Materials are above budget but this is expected, as we try to slow our expenses as we approach the end of the year.
- Consulting, Utilities and Branch Costs are above budget, due to timing of expenditures.
- Appropriations are on budget at 92%.

As the Board is aware, in-branch services were suspended for all branches in March. To date VIRL has seen operational savings of approximately $300,000 on costs in areas such as travel, office expenses and promotions. These savings are offset by additional expenditures of approximately $110,000 required for safety equipment, additional cleaning supplies, installation of plexi-glass at all service desks, and other costs directly related to COVID. As the salaries for most employees were extended into July, and then most returned from layoff, there are no significant savings for wages and benefits.

Factoring in the year-to-date savings and expenditures discussed above, forecasted annual underspending in travel, Board expenses and other areas, and the $25,000 reduction in source deductions required to be remitted based on the Federal Temporary Wage Subsidy program, we are forecasting operating savings to the end of the year of approximately $300,000. This figure will change as more information becomes known.

Conclusion

VIRL's finances indicate that results are in line with expectations and significant projects are currently either complete or underway.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Adams, CPA CA
Director of Finance

Rosemary Bonanno, BA MLS
Executive Director

Consolidated Balance Sheet
(Unaudited) November 30, 2020

Statement 1

ASSETS		
Cash and Investments		2,911,793
Refundable Deposits		384,240
Accounts Receivable, Assessments		2,124,542
Accounts Receivable, Other		418,163
Inventory		12,896
Prepaid Expenses		352,774
Current Assets		**6,204,407**
Buildings	23,415,682	
Accumulated Amortization - Buildings	(4,018,442)	19,397,240
Furniture and Equipment	5,646,272	
Accumulated Amortization - Furniture and Equipment	(4,235,204)	1,411,068
Computer Equipment	4,786,131	
Accumulated Amortization - Computer Equipment	(4,343,142)	442,990
Vehicles	468,362	
Accumulated Amortization - Vehicles	(314,605)	153,756
Books	15,094,473	
Accumulated Amortization - Books	(8,529,020)	6,565,454
Leasehold Improvements	3,733,553	
Accumulated Amortization - Leasehold Improvements	(1,827,065)	1,906,488
Work in Progress		286,906
Land		295,731
Fixed Assets		**30,459,633**
Total Assets		**36,664,040**
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable		1,487,247
Reserves		5,831,595
Wages & Deductions Payable		1,517,998
Friends Groups Fundraising		15,596
Deferred Revenue Fundraising		511,454
MFA Long Term Debt		18,457,703
Total Liabilities		**27,821,595**
SURPLUS / EQUITY		
Opening Surplus	(20,998,986)	(20,998,986)
Surplus (Deficit) Year to Date	-	(618,202)
Current Year excluding Amortization	(618,202)	
Total Surplus to Date		**(21,617,187)**
Equity in Assets		30,459,633
Total Surplus - Equity in Assets		**8,842,445**
TOTAL Liabilities Surplus Equity		**36,664,040**

Statement of Revenue and Expenditures (Unaudited)

Statement 2

For The 11 Months Ending November 30, 2020

	ANNUAL BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD	YTD = 92%	Variance
	$	$		$
REVENUE				
Levies to Members	24,050,683	22,046,459	92%	(2,004,224)
Prov Rev Share and Per Capita	1,308,218	1,282,481	98%	(25,737)
General Revenue	145,000	24,517	17%	(120,483)
Library Generated Revenue	452,000	154,719	34%	(297,281)
	25,955,901	**23,508,177**	**91%**	**(2,447,724)**
Draws on Reserves	6,186,874	3,528,027	57%	(2,658,847)
Grant Revenue	-	92,422	0%	92,422
Borrowed Funds	6,000,000	-	0%	(6,000,000)
	38,142,775	**27,128,626**	**71%**	**(11,014,149)**
EXPENDITURES				
Operating Expenditures	25,789,531	24,093,256	93%	(1,696,275)
Projects and Reserve Spending	12,353,244	3,653,572	30%	(8,699,672)
	38,142,775	**27,746,828**	**73%**	**(10,395,947)**
NET POSITION	**-**	**(618,202)**		**(618,202)**

Expenditures by Nature of Expense

(Unaudited)

Statement 3

For The 11 Months Ending November 30, 2020

	ANNUAL BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD	YTD = 92%	VARIANCE
Wages & Benefits	14,444,868	13,475,698	93%	969,170
Office, Photocopier & Supplies	191,630	159,993	83%	31,637
Postage, Mail & Courier	107,500	68,692	64%	38,808
Utilities and Telecommunications	123,000	115,950	94%	7,050
Computer Costs	577,450	553,396	96%	24,054
Building and Equipment Maint.	174,434	123,331	71%	51,103
Travel and Vehicle Operation	313,500	127,843	41%	185,657
Training and Workshops	97,000	91,941	95%	5,059
Consulting and Professional Fees	195,447	267,289	137%	(71,842)
Insurance	125,000	132,877	106%	(7,877)
Promotion and Advertising	105,250	66,604	63%	38,646
Branch Discretionary Material	30,600	23,012	75%	7,588
Appropriations	3,514,468	3,229,811	92%	284,657
Branch Costs	2,800,859	2,711,615	97%	89,244
Library Materials	2,913,525	2,846,389	98%	67,136
Bank and Service Charges	75,000	81,168	108%	(6,168)
Fundraising	-	5,415	0%	(5,415)
Grant Expenses		12,232	0%	(12,232)
Operating Expenditures	**25,789,531**	**24,093,256**	**93%**	**1,696,275**
Projects and Reserve Spending	12,353,244	3,653,572	30%	8,699,672
Total Expenditures	**38,142,775**	**27,746,828**	**73%**	**10,395,947**

Expenditures by Division (Unaudited)

Statement 4

For The 11 Months Ending November 30, 2020

	ANNUAL BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD	YTD = 92%	VARIANCE
Executive Director's Office	563,083	559,691	99%	3,392
Board Expenses	90,821	31,497	35%	59,323
Systems & Networks	1,089,536	1,016,041	93%	73,495
Communication Stategic Initiative	646,107	555,379	86%	90,728
Technical Services	609,754	527,467	87%	82,287
Finance Accounting	799,778	737,704	92%	62,074
Purchasing	275,677	263,241	95%	12,436
Branch Costs	4,415,334	4,234,912	96%	180,423
Shipping & Receiving	321,456	282,508	88%	38,948
Employee Benefits	3,185,035	2,874,717	90%	310,318
Human Resources	505,596	430,628	85%	74,968
Materials	2,955,275	2,874,759	97%	80,516
Inter-Library Loans	4,446	1,291	29%	3,155
Library Branch Services	6,813,167	6,455,965	95%	357,202
Appropriations	3,514,468	3,229,811	92%	284,657
Fundraising	0	5,415	0%	(5,415)
Grant Expenses	0	12,232	0%	(12,232)
Operating Expenditures	**25,789,531**	**24,093,256**	93%	**1,696,275**
Projects and Reserve Spending	12,353,244	3,653,572	30%	8,699,672
Total Expenditures	**38,142,775**	**27,746,828**	**73%**	**10,395,947**

November 2020 Reserves Report

Recommendation

The Director of Finance, in consultation with the Executive Director, recommends:

That the *November 2020 Reserves Report* be received by the Board of Trustees.

Background

The Board is provided with updated Reserves information each meeting. The report shows all activity in the reserves for the year to the date of preparation. Interest earned is credited to each reserve as it is received. Appropriations to reserves are recognized on a monthly basis. Transfers from reserves are recorded when projects are substantially complete.

Economic Impact

The economic impact of this is in the ability of Vancouver Island Regional Library to meet its long term planning objectives.

Communication Plan

None required.

Related to the Strategic Plan

This report relates to our strategic priority on communication with stakeholders in general, and to the other priorities where financing to accomplish plans will affect our ability to deliver quality services, facilities and operations.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Adams, CPA CA
Director of Finance

Rosemary Bonanno, BA MLS
Executive Director

Reserve Balances as at November 30, 2020

Outfitting New / Expanded Facilities		
	2020 Budget	**Actual To November 30**
Previous Year Balance		**2,352,409**
Contributions into reserve	1,926,371	1,765,830
Interest earned		3,474
Drawdown for expenditures	(3,381,874)	(2,183,843)
November Balance		**1,937,880**

This reserve is used to fund projects for new and upgraded branches as part of the Consolidated Facilities Master Plan, including construction costs, shelving, furnishings, equipment, and repayment of MFA borrowings.

Long Term Maintenance		
	2020 Budget	**Actual To November 30**
Previous Year Balance		**2,634,647**
Contributions into reserve	758,097	694,922
Interest earned		2,726
Drawdown for expenditures	(2,050,000)	(864,900)
November Balance		**2,467,395**

This reserve, first established in 2005, is funded by the levies under the CFMP. It is dedicated to expenditures related to facilities maintenance, as well as smaller renovations at branches.

Furnishings and Equipment		
	2020 Budget	**Actual To November 30**
Previous Year Balance		**335,440**
Contributions into reserve	300,000	275,000
Interest earned		410
Drawdown for expenditures	(300,000)	(112,292)
November Balance		**498,558**

This reserve is for the replacement of furnishings and equipment. Drawdowns to date are for F&E purchases at branches and administration.

Vehicle Replacement		
	2020 Budget	**Actual To November 30**
Previous Year Balance		**48,275**
Contributions into reserve	30,000	27,500
Interest earned		72
Drawdown for expenditures	(55,000)	-
November Balance		**75,847**

This reserve is for replacement of VIRL's vehicles. It allows for replacement of vans and trucks as required. Practice is to replace at 10 years or 300,000 kilometers, whichever occurs first.

Systems and Network Replacement		
	2020 Budget	**Actual To November 30**
Previous Year Balance		**75,213**
Contributions into reserve	450,000	412,500
Transfer from ILS Reserve		170,357
Interest earned		274
Drawdown for expenditures	(450,000)	(256,991)
November Balance		**401,353**

This reserve is for the replacement of network infrastructure, personal computers, workstations, circulation, and other electronic based equipment.

Integrated Library System Replacement		
	2020 Budget	**Actual To November 30**
Previous Year Balance		**124,396**
Contributions into reserve	50,000	45,833
Interest earned		128
Drawdown for expenditures		-
Balance		**170,357**
Transfer to Reserve for Systems and Network Replacement		(170,357)
November Balance		**-**

This reserve is for implementation fees related to the replacement of the Integrated Library System, the basic platform upon which the Library Lending System operates from.

VIRL's ILS contract with its current vendor (Innovative) was set to expire at the end of 2020. VIRL posted a tender call for vendors that could provide the same custom configurations and other fundamental requirements of its ILS, and its current vendor was successful. This allows VIRL to maintain its existing ILS, which means that no implementation fees will be required until at least the end of the current 5-year term in 2025. The remaining funds in the ILS reserve have been transferred to the Reserve for Systems and Network Replacement to fund ongoing projects and improvements to VIRL's infrastructure and equipment.

Human Resources		
	2020 Budget	**Actual To November 30**
Previous Year Balance		**70,076**
Interest earned		63
November Balance		**70,138**

This reserve was established with approval of the Board in 2005 for the purpose of settling Human Resource issues.

Compensated Absences		
	2020 Budget	**Actual To November 30**
Previous Year Balance		**285,736**
Interest earned		258
Drawdown for expenditures		(110,000)
November Balance		**175,994**

This reserve was established under public section accounting standards to cover costs associated with the use of accrued employee sick leave and other associated direct costs in the event of a widespread or catastrophic illness that affects VIRL staff. This reserve will only be withdrawn in the event that a significant amount of accrued sick leave is used in a short amount of time. It is not used to cover normal use of accrued sick leave. At the end of 2019, $508,627 was recorded as a liability in the financial statements, representing accrued sick leave earned by employees as at that date.

$110,000 has been drawn down to date in 2020, representing the direct costs associated with VIRL's response to COVID-19. This includes purchases of additional personal protective equipment (PPE), installation of plexi-glass at all service locations, computer expenses to support staff working from home, and other direct expenses.

Salaries		
	2020 Budget	**Actual To November 30**
Previous Year Balance		**204,134**
Interest earned		297
Drawdown for expenditures		-
November Balance		**204,431**

This reserve will be used to fund salary costs in future years, including the cost of additional staffing required as part of expanding branch sizes.

TOTAL - Reserves as at November 30, 2020: **$5,831,595**

Recovery Update Report

Recommendation

The Director of Library Services and Planning, in consultation with the Executive Director, recommends:

That the *Recovery Update Report* be received by the Board of Trustees.

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the suspension of all Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) in-branch services as of March 17, 2020. The VIRL Recovery Plan was implemented in May which outlined a phased approach to resuming library services, factoring in the BC Restart Plan and WorkSafe BC Protocols for Arts and Culture Facilities Reopening. The primary consideration every step of the way is the health and safety of staff and the public, while providing services that libraries are uniquely positioned to offer in our communities.

Phases of Recovery

Phase 1: Branch Preparation

Safety assessments and facility inspections are required at all branches along with staff training on new safety protocols. This was completed at all of our locations during the month of June to prepare for Phase 2.

Phase 2: Takeout Service

Takeout service offers customers a safe opportunity to pick up items reserved ahead of time. Staff serve customers at the door of the branch one at a time, sometimes with scheduled appointments. All locations are currently offering takeout of library materials to their communities.

Phase 3: Graduated Openings

In this phase there are two approaches. One approach for larger spaces is to initially offer a Walkthrough service. The second approach for smaller spaces is to offer a Sit Down service. Both approaches require a new risk assessment and have significant safety precautions in place regarding physical distancing, limited touch points, and reduced capacity.

Phases 4 and 5: Increased Opening and Full Service

This will not happen until there is a significant decrease in risk or a treatment and/or vaccine is available. Timelines will be determined after implementing and assessing Phase 3 and with direction from Provincial Health authorities.

Virtual Services

Due to the impact of COVID-19, many people find themselves accessing more services online. Our customers look to the Library to provide access to new and interesting virtual services they can use from home. To date, we have increased our offering of electronic resources and databases to support reading, entertainment, and access to lifelong learning.

A Virtual Services Project Team was formed to create a framework to grow virtual services and online programming as a dynamic long-term service for our customers. This project calls upon staff in all branches to create new and exciting programs and online content for our customers. These online programs are promoted through an enhanced programming calendar on the VIRL website, shared as Facebook events and archived on YouTube, with expansion into other virtual platforms as appropriate, creating a notable library of virtual, convenient, on-demand content for customers. Virtual information services, including the info@virl.bc.ca email and 1-877 help line will continue with the addition of branch staff answering phone and email inquiries directly.

A Virtual Services Strategy has been drafted based on the work of the Project Team and the future goals of the service. This will be implemented in Q1 of 2021.

Current State of Reopening

Staff have been working hard to reopen branches. As of Friday, January 22, 2021, all but three branches are open at Phase 3 levels of service.

Services include*:

- Access to physical collections
- Access to holds pick up and self checkout
- Assistance from staff in the branch for information needs and in-person checkout
- Access to computers, printing, and photocopying services
- Washroom access
- Access to external book returns
- Ongoing takeout services for those who prefer it

***Access varies from branch to branch dependant on space and capacity.**

The branches at Phase 2 are: Hornby Island (moving to Phase 3 in February), Cortes Island (moving to Phase 3 when HVAC work is complete), and Union Bay (will remain at Phase 2 indefinitely due to the small size of the branch and capacity limitations).

Next Steps

As the overall COVID picture in the province changes week to week, VIRL is well prepared to respond to new direction, restrictions, and orders from the Provincial Health Authority. The Recovery Plan was designed so services could move between the phases, ensuring there is always some level of service to our communities.

For instance, if branches offering Walkthrough or Sit Down service have to scale back contact with the public due to increased restrictions, they can move back to Takeout service very easily, as everything is already in place. Likewise, virtual services and programs can continue regardless of increased restrictions.

Any transition to a new phase is contingent upon the completion of a thorough risk assessment and job safety analysis for each location. The space may require new signage, furniture removal or layout revisions, or updated cleaning procedures/contracts.

Phase 4 will see increased services such as limited in-person programming, increased capacity, and access to meeting rooms and study rooms. Moving to this phase is dependent on direction from the Provincial Health Authority.

Economic Impact

No additional impact.

Communication Plan

Branch and virtual service updates are shared with staff via our Intranet as new developments occur. Branches moving into Phase 3 and new virtual services available to customers are promoted on our social media platforms, website, and via media releases, where applicable.

Related to the Strategic Plan

Community

VIRL commits to providing a "vibrant, welcoming place for people of all socioeconomic groups, cultures and literacy levels". During COVID-19, we continue to provide a welcoming space for our communities to engage.

Collect. Connect. Collaborate. Create.

VIRL commits to "provide our communities with access to the information they need". During COVID-19, we will continue to connect our communities to the information they need through virtual services and limited branch access.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Legacy, BA MLIS
Director of Library Services and Planning

Rosemary Bonanno, BA MLS
Executive Director

VIRL Performance Q4 2020

Recommendation

The Director of Library Services and Planning, in consultation with the Executive Director, recommends:

That the *VIRL Performance Q4 2020* report be received by the Board of Trustees.

Background

In 2020, Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) introduced a new quarterly performance scorecard, which is shared with the Board of Trustees in the first meeting following the end of each quarter. In March, VIRL's operations were disrupted by the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic. As a result, many of the measures used in the recently designed scorecard were not able to be captured or put within context for Q2 or Q3 2020. This report provides an update on the branch specific Q4 activities in lieu of the scorecard.

Q4 2020 Trends

Membership

- New membership continued to grow in 2020 with just over 12,000 new memberships. 82% were adult, 12% were children, and 6% were other types of membership (e.g. BC One Card, Non-resident, Homebound)

Online Visits

- Throughout 2020 we saw more and more visitors via the VIRL website, library catalogue and social media sites. Overall, we saw over 1.4 million visitors online in 2020.

Programs

- Program offerings continue virtually. During Q4 programs included children's storytimes, babytimes, and outdoor story walks; adult events like author talks and book clubs; and tech help and eSports for all ages.
- In October our Storytime Corner Facebook Group grew to more than 360 members.
- Our YouTube channel reached 100 subscribers in November. Customers have been very appreciative of online storytime, commenting "Thank you! We missed storytime so much! My three-year-old just said, "oh good, I want to watch it again!"

- Overall, 972 virtual programs, events, and workshops were offered in 2020 with over 16,000 attendees.

Q4 News & Happenings

- Give Library was launched once again during the holiday season. This year VIRL partnered with local retail outlets across the island to offer a free library card as the perfect stocking stuffer for anyone who loves books, movies, music, games and so much more!
- In October, the Creativity Commons started offering 3D printing via online request. Customers can email their digital file to Creativity Commons staff, who will print the item and then send it to their home branch. Branch staff notify the customer when it's available for pick up. To date, nearly 400 items have been requested for 3D printing. The most popular item is a nose clip for masks.

Communication Plan

Results for the last quarter will be posted internally.

Related to the Strategic Plan

Performance and outcome measures help us gauge progress and deliver on our Mission: to enrich lives and communities through universal access to knowledge, lifelong learning, and literacy.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Legacy, BA MLIS
Director of Library Services and Planning

Rosemary Bonanno, BA MLS
Executive Director

Facility Projects Update

Recommendation

The Director of Finance, in consultation with the Executive Director, recommends:

That the *Facility Projects Update* report be received by the Board of Trustees.

Background

A summary of active capital projects is included as an appendix to this report. The report includes projects identified in VIRL's capital plan, as well as projects at branches that come up during the course of operations.

Projects are categorized by type, including:

New Build
New Builds are the construction of a new library branch as opposed to a "refresh" or "refurbishment" of an already existing branch. A new build is designed to become a community destination that inspires, innovates, and renews. VIRL's Woss and Sooke branches are defined as New Build projects.

Refurbishment
Refurbishments are considered "bigger scope" renovations/upgrades to an already existing branch, and will often require consultation with a design firm prior to the commencement of renovations.

Refurbishment projects often require public consultation to gather feedback from the branch community. These projects could also impact service, temporarily closing the branch until upgrades are completed. In some cases, a temporary facility may be acquired. Refurbishments could include: major repair work, alterations, conversions, extensions and modernizations.

Refresh
Refresh projects are those that improve an existing branch or facility through minor or moderate cosmetic renovations. Examples of these types of upgrades could include new flooring, paint, furniture replacement, etc.

The branch may also be temporarily closed until upgrades are completed. The upgrades made to VIRL's Parksville branch in 2019 are defined as a Refresh.

Economic Impact

In 2010, the Board approved additional levies for the funding of facilities and correction of deferred maintenance issues, and affirmed this again in September 2020 with adoption of the 2021 budget.

Related to the Strategic Plan

Principle 3 – Places & Spaces: Vancouver Island Regional Library branches will be welcoming places and community hubs for the informational, inspirational, cultural, and recreational needs and interests of our diverse customers and communities. One of the ways we plan to reach this goal is by creating larger, fully accessible and welcoming branches.

It is also related to our **Values** – **Stewardship & Accountability** – in which VIRL has been entrusted with public resources, and we optimize these resources through responsible and effective management and fiscal integrity.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Bonanno, BA MLS
Executive Director

Joel Adams, CPA CA
Director of Finance

Vancouver Island Regional Library
Summary of Active Capital Projects

Legend		
Current Status	**Current Phase**	
Not yet started	A	Pre-Planning
On track	B	Planning / Design
Behind schedule	C	Tendering / Evaluation
Delayed/cancelled	D	In Construction
	E	Completed

Project Type / Branch Name	Description	Current Status	Current Phase	Current Phase Completion - Estimated Quarter	Project Completion - Estimated Quarter	Comments / Next Steps
Prototype						
Woss	Construction of new 1,400 sq ft library branch		E - Complete	Complete	N/A	New Woss branch opened in December 2020
Masset	Construction of new 2,750 sq ft prorotype library branch		B - Planning / Design	Q1 2021	Q2 2022	VIRL's consultants are working on the planning and tender documents and have coordinated various items with the Village of Masset
Tahsis	VIRL is submitting a grant application for construction of a 1,400 sq ft prototype branch on the site previously identified by Tahsis Council		A - Pre-Planning	Q3 2021	Q4 2021	Grant decisions will be made by the Ministry in Q2 2021
Sandspit						Council to provide potential sites for review by VIRL
Tofino						Council to provide potential sites for review by VIRL
New Build						
Sooke	Construction of new 13,000 sq ft branch		D - In Construction	Q4 2021	Q1 2022	Construction commenced in October 2020
Campbell River	Construction of new 20,000 sq ft branch at the site of the current branch		A - Pre-Planning	2021 Q1	Q4 2022	Campbell River is reponsible for demolition and site preparation, and VIRL is responsible for construction. Planning meetings between VIRL and Campbell River are occuring
North Saanich	North Saanich Council previously proposed a new library on the site of the Panorama Recreation Centre, which is part of the Agricultural Land Reserve					
Refurbishment						
Port Alberni	Full renovation of interior space. Reworking of floorplan to ensure maximum use of space and full services provided to the public		B - Planning / Design	Q2 2021	Q4 2021	Unknown structural impacts have delayed project planning. Revised plans have been received from the architect and are being reviewed by staff
Courtenay	Full renovation of interior space. Additional scoping to be completed as part of project planning.		A - Pre-Planning	Q1 2021	Q4 2021	This project was originally budgeted for 2020. VIRL submitted a grant application for funding in 2019, and the decision that VIRL's application was not successful was communicated in April 2020. Based on the impact of COVID and staff capacity at that time, this project is now reflected as a 2021 project. Internal kickoff meeting has been completed and planning documents will be sent to architect in early 2021
Cowichan Lake	Funding provided in 2021 capital plan to re-cover flooring in the branch to address issues that have appeared since construction		A - Pre-Planning	Q3 2021	Q4 2021	

Vancouver Island Regional Library
Summary of Active Capital Projects

Legend		
Current Status	**Current Phase**	
Not yet started	A	Pre-Planning
On track	B	Planning / Design
Behind schedule	C	Tendering / Evaluation
Delayed/cancelled	D	In Construction
	E	Completed

Project Type / Branch Name	Description	Current Status	Current Phase	Current Phase Completion - Estimated Quarter	Project Completion - Estimated Quarter	Comments / Next Steps
Refresh						
Gabriola Island	Creation of new multipurpose room		E - Complete	Complete		
Port Alice	Funding identified in 2020 capital plan for updates to the branch		B - Planning / Design	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Project was delayed due to COVID but is moving forward with planning
Gold River	Funding identified in 2020 capital plan for updates to the branch		B - Planning / Design	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Project was delayed due to COVID but is moving forward with planning
South Cowichan	Funding identified in 2020 capital plan for updates to the branch		B - Planning / Design	Q1 2021	Q2 2021	Project was delayed due to COVID but is moving forward with planning
Nanaimo Harbourfront	Washroom renovation to meet needs for accessibility		B - Planning / Design		TBD	Waiting on revised designs from architect
Ladysmith	Repairs to public washrooms to address functionality and design		E - Complete	Complete		
Port McNeill	Funding in 2021 capital plan for updates to the branch					VIRL staff are working on planning documents
Sointula	Funding in 2021 capital plan for updates to the branch					VIRL staff are working on planning documents
Bowser	Funding in 2021 capital plan for updates to the branch					VIRL staff are working on planning documents
Port Clements	Funding in 2021 capital plan for updates to the branch					VIRL staff are working on planning documents

Consolidated Facilities Master Plan Refresh Report

Recommendation

The Executive Director, in consultation with the 2020 Executive Committee, recommends:

That the *Consolidated Facilities Master Plan Refresh Report* be received by the Board of Trustees;

And

That the Board of Trustees approve the strategy outlined in this report;

And

That the report be referred back to the Executive Committee for further development.

Background

On February 28, 2020, the Executive Committee approved the report of the Executive Director to refresh the Consolidated Facilities Master Plan (CFMP), to take advantage of the strategic planning community engagement scheduled for the last quarter of 2020 and extend the plan to 2025 to coincide with the extension of the capital levies.

On March 16, 2020, the project was put in abeyance to deal with the declared national state of emergency brought on by the spread of COVID-19.

Over the last eight months, the Board has focused on developing a Recovery Program that would meet the needs of Vancouver Island Regional Library's (VIRL) diverse service area; that could evolve or roll back depending on the pandemic. Staff turned their attentions to developing alternative services that meet the needs of our communities. A robust virtual offering was deployed. Saying that, Capital Projects were not cancelled. Timelines were revised to meet provincial mandates. Maintenance and repairs were commissioned and completed. The prototype branch was deployed in Woss opening to the community under COVID protocols on December 2020. Work continued on the construction drawings for Masset and an RFP was let and a contractor was awarded for the construction of Sooke.

The Board was able to do this due to the content, relevance and strategies within the CFMP. In 2009, the Board retained the services of David Narne & Associates in partnership with Diamond/Schmitt Architects to review the state of all service locations regarding outstanding maintenance, plus policies and strategies to enable the Board to deliver 21st Century library services to member jurisdictions.

The findings and recommendations of the report were overwhelming. The Board did not have the financial capacity or the staffing capacity to implement such a plan. The Board debated at great length prior to directing staff to develop:

- A baseline and strategy forward
- Financial plan to implement CFMP recommendations
- Develop a financial strategy that was realistic and sustainable
- Timeline

The Board developed from the findings of the Narne/Diamond Schmitt report the recommendations bridged the old to the new and ensured a path forward. Priorities were established by health, safety, and ergonomics, separation of deferred maintenance items from long term facility planning, and they embraced the unique urban/rural mix of service locations.

Consolidated Facilities Master Plan (CFMP)

These are the recommendations outlined in the Consolidated Facilities Master Plan (CFMP):

1. That future development of library facilities include a target branch size of 2750 square feet or 0.6 square feet per capita, recognizing that this target may need to be adjusted for smaller rural communities;
2. That an annual additional maintenance, fixtures, furniture & equipment levy of 1% per year be added to the budget, with the allocations split 5/8ths to maintenance and 3/8ths to furniture, fixtures and equipment until such times as funding of $8.00/sf, indexed by CPI, is achieved;
3. That an additional facility reserve levy of 1.25% per year be added to the annual budget until such time that the pent up demand is satisfied;
4. That existing sites which are undersized be grandfathered in their present geographic location until such time as population increases warrant replacement, and that grandfathered branches be maintained with a focus on WCB and health & safety issues subject to funding provided by the additional maintenance levy above, and that priority maintenance be given to the rural branches as identified in the CFMP report;
5. That rural branches be prioritized on a weighted basis (10% population 30% date of most recent move/work, 30% compliance with minimum requirements, 30% physical condition) as outlined in this report;
6. That one or more as necessary rural and one urban branch per year be considered by the Board for expansion or replacement when requested by the local jurisdiction;

7. That local jurisdictions develop a joint VIRL/jurisdictional building committee for design of new or expanded space;
8. That urban branches be prioritized based on percentage of population served, and that the priority list, together with service model guidelines, be shared with the jurisdictions;
9. That new/expansion proposals be dealt with on a case by case basis and be initiated at the political level by the participating jurisdiction. Subject to VIRL board approval, and with VIRL staff involvement, jurisdictions may proceed with development and approval of plans;
10. That Wellington/North Nanaimo be considered as a unit in order to address the most chronically underserved population of the system;
11. That the Nanaimo North area be considered for a branch at Central Services, and that the Regional District of Nanaimo and City of Nanaimo be requested to source funding.

Prototype Library Program

Figure 3.1.4 2750 sf Prototype Library Program

	Total Area (SF)	Description/Standard
Collection Space	1000	15,000 books @ 15bk/sf
Circulation Desk	150	
Public Access Catalogues	40	
User Seating	240	8 seats x 30sf
Children's Area	300	12% of area
Teen Area	100	4% of area
Public Access Computer Space	100	4 users
Work / Storage Room	250	11% of library area
Washrooms	80	1 male 1 female
Multi-Purpose		
Circulation	490	19% of net area
Total	2,750	

The Board's first Prototype design was launch in Sayward in 2019. The community embraced this third space fully and completely.

Next Steps: Retooling Stronger Than Ever. Together.

Over the years, the Board of Trustees has developed and implemented progressive and strong strategies and policies. The best practices, standards and strategies within the CFMP are deliverable and relevant strategies for today and tomorrow.

The Board could conduct an internal refresh using the strategies outlined in *Stronger Than Ever*. As part of the Executive Committee's work, the following items can be addressed:

- Relevance of the Facility Policy. North American libraries have eliminated specific policies, and rolled standards and best practices into a facility master plan.
- Review size development formula
- Review "the list"

Economic Impact

Revenue neutral at this stage. If the Board choses to retain the services of a third-party consultant to develop a long-range facility plan estimates indicate the report would cost anywhere from $45,000 to $60,000. In house expertise could augment the scope of the consultants brief thereby reducing the cost.

Communication Plan

Once the Board has approved the report internal and external strategies will be developed by the Director of Communications and Strategic Initiatives.

Related to the Strategic Plan

Principle 3: Places & Spaces

Service locations are key gathering spaces within our member jurisdictions. Libraries are no longer simply repositories for books. They are much more. They provide that third space in the community that goes far beyond the typical quality of life service.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Bonanno, BA MLS	Joel Adams, CPA CA
Executive Director	Director of Finance

Grant Application: COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream

Recommendation

The Director of Finance, in consultation with the Executive Director, recommends:

That the *Grant Application: COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream* report be received by the Board of Trustees;

And

That the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:
Vancouver Island Regional Library will submit an application under the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream for the Tahsis prototype branch.

Background

The Province of British Columbia and Canada have partnered to develop the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) as part of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) in response to the effects of COVID-19 on communities across the province. CVRIS supports projects that:

- Provide retrofits, repairs and upgrades to local government and Indigenous government buildings, health infrastructure and educational infrastructure
- Support development of active transportation networks
- Allow communities to improve their infrastructure to increase the resiliency and efficiency in preventing the spread of COVID-19 (including protective screens and ability to physically distance)
- Complete disaster mitigation and adaptation infrastructure projects

On December 1, 2020, the Canadian and British Columbian governments committed up to $80.29 million towards the intake of CVRIS to support cost-sharing of infrastructure projects in communities across the province. CVRIS is designed to target projects starting before September 30, 2021 and completing by December 31, 2021. Remote communities are able to extend projects a further year with a project end date of December 31, 2022.

The programs provide grant funding for up to 100% of eligible capital projects. As a not-for-profit organization, Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) is eligible to submit one application.

CVRIS Program

VIRL has reviewed the requirements and identified that construction of a prototype branch in Tahsis best fits with the CVRIS program. VIRL's experience with prototype branches in Sayward and Woss allow for a streamlined planning and tendering process, and the builds to date have provided a short enough construction window to meet the program requirements of completion by December 31, 2021. Additionally, Tahsis Council had previously identified a site for a new library and continue to be committed to providing that site at no cost.

Based on the criteria established in the program guide, Tahsis does not meet the definition of a "remote community" and so is not able to extend the completion date to December 31, 2022.

Economic Impact

As part of the program requirements, if approved VIRL will be responsible to fund construction costs and claim for project expenses after completion of construction. There are adequate reserve funds to temporarily incur these costs.

Related to the Strategic Plan

Principle 3 – Places & Spaces: Vancouver Island Regional Library branches will be welcoming places and community hubs for the informational, inspirational, cultural, and recreational needs and interests of our diverse customers and communities. One of the ways we plan to reach this goal is by creating larger, fully accessible and welcoming branches.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Bonanno, BA MLS
Executive Director

Joel Adams, CPA CA
Director of Finance

Seize the Moment: Working with the Province

Recommendation

The Executive Director, in consultation with the Director of Communications & Strategic Initiatives, recommends:

That the *Seize the Moment: Working with the Province* report be received by the Board of Trustees;

And

That the Board of Trustees refer the report to the Executive Committee for development of a VIRL strategy.

Background

The recent Provincial Election ushered in a new generation of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) to govern our province, as well as reinstating many familiar names. Many of these MLAs are acquainted with the Board and staff of Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL). (See appended charts.)

Names like Josie Osborne, previous Mayor of Tofino, long time library advocate, and now the Minister of Municipal Affairs (which libraries are now part of) and MLA for Mid Island-Pacific Rim; Adam Walker, recent VIRL Trustee, new MLA for Parksville-Qualicum, and Parliamentary Secretary for the New Economy; Ronna-Rae Leonard, previous Board Chair, current MLA for Courtenay-Comox, and Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors to the Minister of Health.

In the case of Municipal Affairs specifically, the stated responsibility of the Ministry is to "take leadership in supporting local governments and residents to build vibrant and healthy communities that are well governed, liveable, safe, economically resilient, and socially and environmentally responsible." Libraries can and should play a key role in helping the Ministry deliver on its responsibilities. After all, libraries are open and welcoming. They level the playing field by providing equal and unencumbered access to tools, technologies, knowledge, and learning opportunities. We are literally in the business of building stronger, more connected communities — whether you live in Sayward, Sooke, Sandspit or somewhere in between, libraries are at the centre of liveable, vibrant communities.

As Trustees, there is an opportunity, right now, to harness the deep connections and support for VIRL at the provincial level. You've already made great progress. Here's a snapshot of how you've already been successful:

- By meeting with then Minister of Education, Rob Fleming, to discuss library funding
- By taking part in campaigns to raise awareness about inequities libraries face when purchasing digital content
- By meeting with the current Minister of Health, Adrian Dix, to discuss libraries as essential services
- By passing resolutions at UBCM for more funding and support of libraries
- By submitting to and being included in the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services Report on the Budget 2021

With so many supporters in influential positions in government, this is a moment we can seize and emerge as a leader in BC libraries. Through your past advocacy efforts, you already have the attention of decision makers in Victoria — now is the time to cement libraries in general, and VIRL specifically, as vital community institutions that need to be supported and valued at higher levels of government.

In 2021, the Executive Committee has an opportunity to pursue this unprecedented access to provincial decision makers and work with staff on an advocacy strategy to help you execute this crucial component of your role as trustees.

This is an exciting time to be a Trustee with Vancouver Island Regional Library.

Economic Impact

Revenue neutral at this stage.

Communication Plan

The plan is twofold: the development of the advocacy plan by the Executive Committee and the subsequent approval by the Board. Development of internal and external strategies.

Related to the Strategic Plan

The Plan will support the Board's Mission, Vision and Values thereby encompassing the Strategic Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Bonanno, BA MLS
Executive Director

David Carson
Director of Corporate Communications & Strategic Initiatives

Names, Contact Information, Ministry Responsibilities		
Ministry	**Minister**	**Ministry Responsibilities**
Municipal Affairs	**Honourable Josie Osborne** Minister of Municipal Affairs Parliament Buildings Victoria, BC V8V 1X4 Phone: 250-387-2283 MAH.Minister@gov.bc.ca	The Ministry of Municipal Affairs takes leadership in supporting local governments and residents to build vibrant and healthy communities that are well governed, liveable, safe, economically resilient, and socially and environmentally responsible.
Education	**Honourable Jennifer Whiteside** Minister of Education Parliament Buildings Victoria, BC V8V 1X4 Phone: 250-356-8247 EDUC.Minister@gov.bc.ca	The ministry's role is to provide leadership and funding to the K-12 education system, through governance, legislation, policy and standards. Specific roles and responsibilities are set out under the School Act, Independent School Act, Teachers Act, Library Act, First Nations Education Act, and accompanying regulations. Public education is critical to reconciliation. The ministry, with the overarching guidance of Indigenous experts, organizations and Indigenous government representatives, is committed to building an education system that serves Indigenous students well.
Children and Family Development	**Honourable Mitzi Dean** Minister of Children and Family Development Parliament Buildings Victoria, BC V8V 1X4 Phone: 250-387-1977 MCF.Minister@gov.bc.ca	The Ministry of Children and Family Development's primary focus is to support all children and youth in British Columbia to live in safe, healthy and nurturing families and be strongly connected to their communities and culture. The Ministry is also responsible for developing universal, affordable, accessible, quality and inclusive child care. The Ministry supports the well-being of children, youth and families in British Columbia by providing services that are accessible, inclusive, and culturally respectful.
Social Development and Poverty Reduction	**Honourable Nicholas Simons** Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Parliament Buildings Victoria, BC V8V 1X4 Phone: 250-356-7750 SDPR.Minister@gov.bc.ca	The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction focuses on providing British Columbians in need with a system of supports to help them achieve their social and economic potential.

Ministry	Ministry Mandate
Municipal Affairs	• Work with UBCM and local government elected leaders to support their communities through the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery. • Improve local communities' ability to respond to the COVID-19 crisis by launching the new Strengthening Community Fund to enable local governments to apply for funding to help them tackle street disorder, cleanliness and public safety, and improve their ability to respond to challenges posed to businesses and neighbourhoods by homelessness. • Work with cabinet colleagues to redouble our government's efforts to streamline foreign credential assessments processed by various regulatory bodies and health-related colleges to ensure immigrants can more easily strengthen language skills and access job opportunities in their field of training. • With support from the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing, work to bring down the cost of housing for people by streamlining and modernizing development permitting and approvals. • Work with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to support economic recovery in communities across B.C. by continuing to build important infrastructure projects, including through StrongerBC and the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. • With support from the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, lead work on the Integrated Transportation and Development Strategy to ensure greater alignment between transportation and land-use planning. • Support the work of the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing and the Minister of Finance to continue work to provide relief for commercial tenants with triplenet leases who are paying high property taxes. • Support the work of the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including those living in encampments. • Support the work of the Minister of Finance to establish Property Assessed Clean Energy financing.
	General Responsibilities
	• Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants • Community charters and other local government policy and legislation • Community gaming grants • Credential Assessment Improvement Fund development • Immigration and refugee services • Integrated transportation and development strategy (with MOTI and ENV) • Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan – federal/provincial Community Culture and Recreation; Northern Communities; CleanBC Communities Fund; and Environmental Quality Fund administration • **Libraries** • Local government funding transfers and services • Local government planning and infrastructure financial assistance • Provincial Nominee Program • Strengthening Community Fund • University Endowment Lands special account administration • WelcomeBC (shared with MA)

Education	• Ensure quality public education continues to be delivered during and after the COVID-19 pandemic through implementation of appropriate guidelines to ensure safety. • Support COVID-19 recovery by fast-tracking improvements to online and remote learning, including investing in more computers and tablets, more training for teachers and support staff, and new ways to improve social e-learning to promote group interactions between students and teachers. • Work with the Minister of Children and Family Development and the Minister of State for Child Care to integrate child care into the broader learning environment by developing a strategy to move delivery of child care into the Ministry of Education by 2023. • Support the Minister of State for Child Care and the Minister of Children and Family Development to work toward providing universal access to before and after school care, prioritizing care on school grounds so parents know their children are safe at one place for the full work day. • Continue to invest in new and modernized schools, including focusing on meeting seismic requirements and climate change and energy efficiency standards as set out in our CleanBC plan. • With support from the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, lead work to put more Indigenous languages into B.C.'s curriculum. • Build on investments into mental health supports for students and staff to better support children and youth with special needs and their families, so everyone involved in our kids' learning gets the help they need. • To help make sure students are properly fed for learning, work with school districts to create more local school meal programs based on district data and priorities, and work with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to integrate Feed BC into this plan so that districts can include locally grown food. • Continue to take the pressure off parents to fundraise while giving students safe, accessible playgrounds by expanding our government's Playground Fund to more schools. • Deliver targeted investments to help make sure students have the classroom supplies they need to succeed, so parents and teachers don't have to pay the full cost out-of-pocket. • Support the work of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to provide dedicated mental health teams in school districts.
	General Responsibilities
	• Curriculum, assessment and reporting • Independent and offshore schools • K-12 funding and financial reporting • K-12 standards and accountability • Literacy and official languages in education • Open School BC • Playground equipment program • Public school capital and seismic program • Scholarships • Scholarships, grants, bursaries and awards, including BC Training and Education Savings Program special account grants • School capital planning

	• Special needs inclusive education • StrongStart BC early learning centres • Teacher certification, regulation and administration of Teachers Act Special Account
Children and Family Development	• Continue to support children, youth and families through the COVID-19 response and recovery. • Continue to work with Indigenous partners and the federal government to reform the child welfare system, including implementing the new federal Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families and the principles of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and continuing to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in care. • Support families involved with the child welfare system by focusing on family preservation and keeping children and youth connected to their communities and culture, while working to ensure that in cases where children and youth come into care, consideration of their individual needs determine their placement. • Build on our expanded supports for young adults in care, with particular attention to supporting the transition to independence and ensuring supports reach all youth. • Improve support for families of children with special needs, ensuring that the new Child and Youth with Special Needs framework is designed to serve the needs of a broad range of families. • Work with the Minister of Education and the Minister of State for Child Care to integrate child care into the broader learning environment by developing a strategy to move delivery of child care into the Ministry of Education by 2023. • Support the Minister of State for Child Care and the Minister of Education to work toward providing universal access to before and after school care, prioritizing care on school grounds so parents know their children are safe at one place for the full work day. • Support the work of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to continue addressing mental health concerns early by rolling out new mental health and addictions care initiatives for children and youth, and ensure these programs are aligned with and support the work of the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. • Support the work of the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training to expand tuition waivers to all former youth in care, regardless of age. • Support the work of the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including those living in encampments.
	General Responsibilities
	• Adoption services • Child Care financial assistance and services, including Child Care BC 1 • Child safety, family support and children-in-care services • Child and youth mental health services • Children and youth with special needs framework and services • Community-based child and youth mental health • Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy

	• Early childhood development • Foster care • Indigenous child and family development • Provincial Office of Domestic Violence • Service delivery administration, policy, integrated case management, quality assurance and other system supports • Youth justice, custody and forensic psychiatric services
Social Development and Poverty Reduction	• Continue to be responsive to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and work with your cabinet colleagues to support an inclusive economic recovery. • Build on our government's Poverty Reduction Plan, TogetherBC, and the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Basic Income to determine the best approach and path forward to reducing poverty long-term and providing opportunities for jobs and skills training. • Continue to work with people across the province to develop and introduce comprehensive accessibility legislation in Spring 2021 to open doors to opportunity and participation. • With support from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, lead work to increase food security for people in need by expanding government support to food banks and developing program partnerships with food producers, grocery stores and not-for-profits to develop discounted food market, food recovery and food redistribution programs. • Build on the work of so many around the province to make B.C. a global leader in the fight to end period poverty by creating a multi-sectoral Period Poverty Task Force to develop a comprehensive, long-term response to period poverty in B.C. • Continue work on the Reimagining Community Inclusion Initiative to improve services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. • Support the work of the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including those living in encampments.
	General Responsibilities
	• Accessibility • Adult community living services • BC Bus Pass Program for seniors and low income • Community employment partnerships • Employment programs, WorkBC employment centres and Labour Market Development Agreement • Healthy Kids program • Income assistance and supports • Provincial disability strategy • Re-Imagining Community Inclusion Initiative • Seniors supplement • Social innovation and partnerships • Temporary, disability and supplementary assistance and supports • TogetherBC poverty reduction strategy • Transition Planning for Youth & Young Adults

Ministry Budgets, Funding / Grants, Jurisdictions & Populations Served		
Ministry	**Areas, Organizations, etc. under their Jurisdictions**	**Targeted Populations Served**
Education	• Improvements to online and remote learning • Improvements to social eLearning • Literacy and official languages • Mental Health supports	• Children & Youth • Special Needs • Students
Municipal Affairs	• Foreign Credential Assessments • Important infrastructure projects • Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program • Libraries • Strengthening Community Fund (NEW) • Strengthening language skills and accessing job opportunities • StrongerBC	• Foreign workers • Job Seekers • People experiencing homelessness or living in encampments • Skilled immigrants
Children and Family Development	• Special Needs supports • Mental Health supports	• Children and Youth in care • Children with Special Needs • First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families • People experiencing homelessness or living in encampments • Students • Victims of domestic violence • Youth justice, custody, and forensic psychiatric services
Social Development and Poverty Reduction	• Community employment partnerships • Re-Imagining Community Inclusion Initiative • Expert Panel on Basic Income • Period Poverty Task Force	• Adult community living services • Job Seekers • People experiencing homelessness or living in encampments • Persons with Disabilities • Seniors • Youth & Young Adults

Other:

BC Government Funding & Grants page

VIRL in the Media

The entrance to the Chemainus library. (Photo by Don Bodger)

Library closure due to air quality issue

Mayor Siebring provided an explanation about a mix-up in materials during contractor remedial work

DON BODGER / Nov. 16, 2020 12:30 p.m. / LOCAL NEWS

North Cowichan Mayor Al Siebring has cleared the air on the situation pertaining to the closure of the Chemainus library last week.

Even though he emphasized North Cowichan does not operate the library and actually has nothing to do with it, Siebring did some checking when prompted by the public and provided details in a Facebook post.

“There were a few things on a ‘deficiency list’ from the construction project that had to be finished,” he indicated. “The contractor was back on site last week to deal with those, but there was some kind of mix-up with the material they were using to do some of the remedial work.

“That led to concerns about air quality in the building. Out of an abundance of caution, they kept the building closed pending another check of the air quality issues on Monday. If they get the all clear as expected, the building will be re-opened (this) week.”

The rumour mill was swirling, but “VIRL (Vancouver Island Regional Library) tells me this was unequivocally not an issue related to COVID,” Siebring concluded.

BOOKS | COMMUNITY

Get local stories you won't find anywhere else right to your inbox.

Sign up here

Extra work was done to install a canopy in the front of the Chemainus library. (Photo by Don Bodger)

Work to install a canopy on the Chemainus library was intended to be completed months ago, but was delayed due to COVID. (Photo by Don Bodger)

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District discusses the possibility of a second library

Topic will come to future board meeting

ELENA RARDON / Nov. 18, 2020 9:00 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS

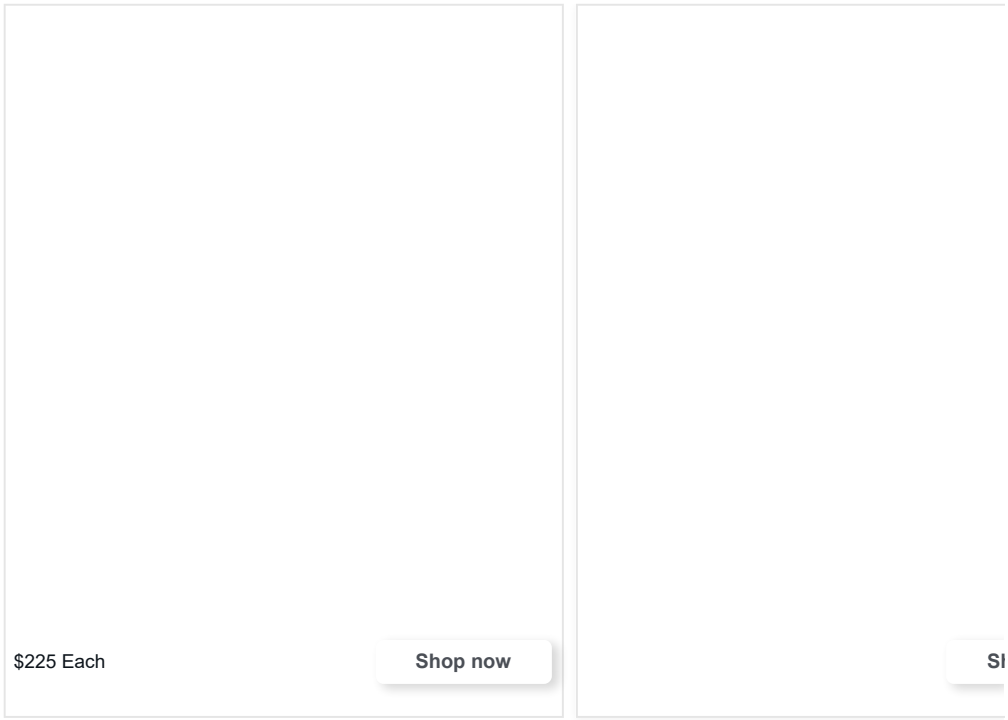
Is the Alberni Valley big enough to have more than one library? Directors with the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District think so.

Directors last week discussed the possibility of adding another library branch to the Alberni Valley.

Beaver Creek director John McNabb brought up the possibility during a Thursday, Nov. 12 board meeting, referencing the fact that Sayward—a small community on North Vancouver Island—recently opened a new library.

ADVERTISEMENT

Sponsored by ***Jowsey's Furniture***



“We’ve got one library, it’s in the City of Port Alberni,” said McNabb. “When you look at some of these other communities, they’ve got libraries all over the place. I’m thinking about the logistics of actually putting one on the Beaufort, Beaver Creek, Cherry Creek border somewhere. I don’t know what the demand for that would be.”

He pointed out that the ACRD is already contributing money to Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) for the Port Alberni branch.

Sproat Lake director Penny Cote, who sits on the VIRL board, said the use of libraries has been going up.

“With COVID, we heard the outcry from communities to open up the library again,” she said. “It seems that there’s a lot more people that love it than don’t have a use for it. Students

are relying on it, with COVID. Seniors use it for social and to use internet."

Mayor Sharie Minions pointed out that the city pays between $700,000 to $800,000 a year towards the library under the provincial government's Library Act. "It is a significant cost that we are paying to have one library," she said. "I think there is a very reasonable discussion to be had about do we have the population base, in this Valley, for a second library, and if so, where that library should be."

Minions added that she has had conversations with Rosemary Bonanno, VIRL's executive director, about contributing land or a building site for a second branch.

"We've paused those conversations during COVID," she said. "I would be happy to have those conversations on a regional basis…to see if there's a more suitable location in the regional district. If so, we could push together."

ACRD board chair John Jack suggested putting something on an agenda at a future meeting in order to have a larger discussion about Port Alberni's library.

---

elena.rardon@albernivalleynews.com

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter

ALBERNI-CLAYOQUOT REGIONAL DISTRICT

Get local stories you won't find anywhere else right to your inbox.

Sign up here

Peter Maguire, library manager of the Vancouver Island Regional Library's Sooke branch, says the doors are open to members of the public, but only five inside at a time. (Aaron Guillen/News Staff)

Sooke library enters next chapter with limited service re-opening

Limited sit-down service available two hours a day from Tuesday through Saturday

AARON GUILLEN / Nov. 19, 2020 2:40 p.m. / COMMUNITY

The Vancouver Island Library has turned the page and reopened its Sooke branch – with limited services.

Customers have access to 30-minute computer sessions, DVD and display browsing and longer book drop-off hours, on top of takeout service.

All visitors to the branch, located at 2065 Anna Marie Rd., must wear masks . There is a limit of five customers in the library.

“The idea to reduce face-to-face interaction,” said Peter Maguire, library manager. “We found that there’s a lot of tight corners in the branch down some aisles.”

Maguire said customers are encouraged to use the self-checkout machines and have a library card with them at the branch.

All late fees have been waived, but staff ask customers to return and renew materials on time, so everyone has the chance to get their hands on a new item. The book drop is open for returns from Tuesday at noon until Friday at 5 p.m.

The library is open for limited sit-down service on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 2 to 4 p.m. and Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to noon.

For a complete breakdown of operating hours, including expanded takeout services, head over to virl.bc.ca/branches/sooke/.

READ MORE: Construction set to begin on new Sooke library

ALSO READ: Sooke Region Museum reopens to visitors

Do you have a story tip? Email: vnc.editorial@blackpress.ca.

Follow us on Twitter and Instagram, and like us on Facebook.

BOOKS | SOOKE

LETTER: Sidney stuck with a third-rate library

Nov. 20, 2020 5:30 p.m. / LETTERS / OPINION

Your readers should know that the Sidney council has delayed any discussion about a library review until the fourth quarter of 2022.

What could possibly be more important than libraries? Books are what people rely on when not socializing. Books and book clubs keep people sane in this pandemic. This much needed review on libraries affects all citizens in Sidney and North Saanich and has long range consequences for all of us.

The mayor recently informed me of the 2021 strategic plan without reviewing our library. It seems that the Library Act and its time frame are being used as an excuse by the council not to deal with this issue. I understand COVID is an unexpected pressure on the Town of Sidney, but we need to keep vital infrastructure, like our library, strong and up to date. The

recent library cosmetic makeover (necessitated by safety standard concerns) had nothing to do with the issues of the quality of our library services.

I am very disappointed in this political decision council has made regarding libraries, particularly since I have been discussing libraries with individual council members who have remained on the current council since 2017. It is totally within the council's power to start earlier on a library review, before this council's mandate expires. It is ridiculous to make this issue into a two-term process.

Sidney continues to spend more than $750,000 a year, along with North Saanich spending a like amount, for our one building, and outdated collection. Coun. Wainwright has presented spreadsheets proving we will save money by changing library systems. The savings would easily pay for the earlier referendum.

With this decision by council, any changes to the library agreement will not even be initiated until 2024 at best. That's absurd and we can do better.

I am very disappointed in this decision. They call Sidney a book town and we still have a third-rate library.

Robyn Quaintance

Sidney

Get local stories you won't find anywhere else right to your inbox.

Sign up here

LETTER: Sidney library services are excellent

Dec. 25, 2020 7:30 p.m. / LETTERS / OPINION

I would like to voice my disagreement with Robyn Quaintance regarding her comments about our Sidney Library, Dec. 17 Letter to the Editor ‘Sidney stuck with third-rate library.’ I’ve been a regular patron (approximately weekly) of this branch since 1992, first as a Saanichton resident and later, and to this day, as a resident of Sidney.

I consider both the catalogue and their services to be very good, including request services and Interlibrary Loan, and I believe they’ve been doing an excellent job dealing with the current pandemic. As well, the staff have always been very pleasant and obliging and I’m curious to know what Ms. Quaintance’s specific complaints are.

Shirley Page

The Lamplighters wants to end its lease with the village. Photo by Mike Chouinard

Briefs: Cumberland agrees to end hall lease with Lamplighters

Council aims to add more daytime meetings in 2021 for seniors

MIKE CHOUINARD / Nov. 22, 2020 1:30 p.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS

Cumberland council agreed to end a lease for the first-floor area of Buchanan Hall of the Cultural Centre.

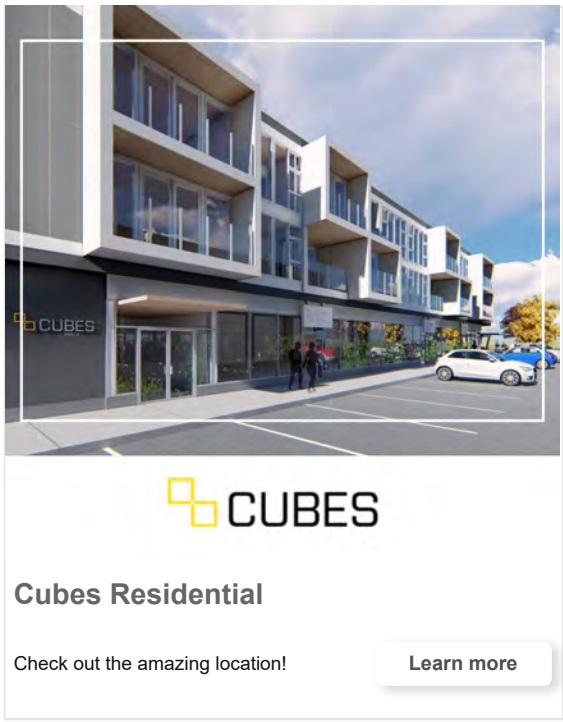
At a meeting earlier this month, council received a written request from the Cumberland Lamplighters O.A.P. #51 asking to surrender its contract to look after the space it uses.

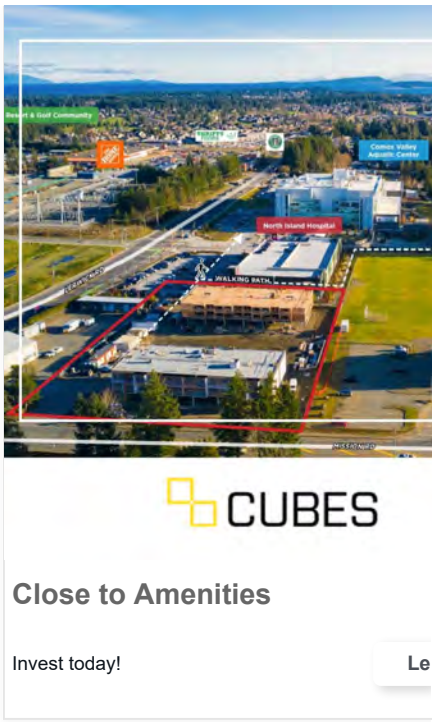
Coun. Gwyn Sproule asked about the reasons for the change. Mayor Leslie Baird responded that her understanding was that the group has been getting smaller in numbers.

ADVERTISEMENT

Sponsored by ***Dark Horse Holdings Ltd.***

Dark Horse Holdings Ltd is a Victoria company developing CUBES as rental apartments and ground level leasable commercial space as a family investment.





“They don’t want the responsibility of the building any longer,” she said.

CAO Clayton Postings told council that village staff will create a long-term use plan for the space.

Regional transportation plan

The Village of Cumberland is leaning toward a new memorandum of understanding with its municipal neighbours and the regional district on a regional transportation plan.

At a meeting on Nov. 9, council responded to a letter from the Comox Valley Regional District asking the community to consider approval of an MOU. The aim is to consider ways to better connect transportation links between communities in the region.

“I think it’s important to move to the next step,” said Coun. Vickey Brown.

The letter actually came from Jesse Ketler, the Cumberland councillor who chairs the CVRD board. She said the idea for the plan originally arose through a cycling committee, so the plan would build on work that is already happening, as opposed to setting up a brand-new committee. Transportation principles are already incorporated into the Regional Growth Strategy.

The draft MOU makes reference to improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, as well as increasing public transit use and developing an inter-regional transportation system for moving people and goods.

“We do need to start thinking about how we connect our communities,” Ketler told the rest of council.

2021 meeting schedule

Council approved a schedule for meetings during the coming year at its Nov. 9 meeting.

Typically they hold regular council meetings twice a month, with some variations for the summer and the Christmas season. The list also includes proposed Village Hall meetings, which are less formal than regular council meetings, as well as committee of the whole meetings or open houses, particularly around budget preparations.

One of the priorities was to hold some of these additional meetings at earlier times during the day in order to make it easier for seniors to attend.

At the same meeting, council also made some appointments for council positions, including acting mayor. From now through January 2021, council member Jesse Ketler will be acting mayor, followed by Vickey Brown from February through April, Sean Sullivan from May through July and Gwyn Sproule from August through October.

RELATED STORY: Cumberland holds its first live-stream meeting

Added to the list of committees and boards on which council members sit was Brown as trustee to the Vancouver Island Regional Library Board, with Sproule as an alternate, and Mayor Leslie Board to the Alleyway Sign Project committee.

---

mike.chouinard@comoxvalleyrecord.com

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

CUMBERLAND

Get local stories you won't find anywhere else right to your inbox.

Sign up here

No one suggested saying no to a new library

Re: City should consider "fresh alternative" to library plan – Campbell River Mirror Nov. 9, 2020

Nov. 25, 2020 12:00 a.m. / OPINION

LETTERS

Re: City should consider "fresh alternative" to library plan – Campbell River Mirror Nov. 9, 2020

This letter is in direct response to the letter written by Dan Samson of the Cedar and Cypress Property Group, printed in the Campbell River Mirror.

Kudos to the group for bringing the issue of the new library forward once again. While we certainly agree with them that the current mayor and council should be applauded for their commitment to invest in the downtown core, we also would like to reiterate their request that the city reconsider the location of the $14 million investment for a new library.

In addition, kudos go out to Mr. Mailman who, with considerable investment has now made the area around St. Ann's and Alder Street an area of pride for all. One landlord has since been able to rent space that sat vacant for over 20 years. Good news for the City of Campbell River.

In a statement from an article printed Oct. 28, 2020 where Mayor Adams is quoted, "This 14 million is the Vancouver Island Regional Library Board's money," the Mayor

continues. “If we choose to say ‘No, we don’t want it,’ they will take that 14 million – as they have for the past eight years and build a facility elsewhere on Vancouver Island.”

Hold on! Did anyone hear anyone suggest that the City of Campbell River say “No” to the new library? Of course not. Residents have expressed concern vocally and in writing to mayor and council since August and perhaps earlier that the new library would be better placed in a different location. No-one has ever suggested saying no.

While the money may, in fact, be coming from the Vancouver Island Regional Library board, the taxpayers of Campbell River have contributed dearly to the library with their property taxes.

Due to the current situation of the pandemic, library patrons have not had full access to the library and their services for months. Now, should the library be torn down at a cost of approximately $1 million of Campbell River taxpayers money? Once again, the patrons will not have access. Is this reflected in our taxes for next year with a proposed increase of 2.85 per cent? Perhaps these patrons should be expressing their concerns to the current mayor and council.

As the Cedar and Cypress group indicated, “the existing library building, which would likely cost in the 2.5 million range to replace, would be preserved and could be repurposed for the art gallery. As well, a further $1 million cost to the city to demolish the existing building would not be spent. How can this not be a win-win situation for all concerned?

Should you not only look at the money savings to the city, just look at how the site of the former “Rose Bowl” would be the best location that money could buy. The lot is large enough to house the library on one floor, enabling all persons to be able to access all that is offered. It only makes sense to have all library services on one floor. There would be a wonderful library built on what has been a building in disrepair (the Rose Bowl). This location would be easily accessible to the other cultural facilities on offer in the downtown core, the art gallery (currently the library) and the Tidemark Theatre. These are all in addition to the Community Centre which would be a mere few hundred feet away.

It only makes sense to utilize facilities that we currently have. There is no need to tear down a perfectly good building, leaving the citizens of Campbell River once again without a library, under the current proposal.

To all mayor and council who may be considering running in Campbell River’s next election, may we suggest that you take this and run with it? Elected officials need to be accountable to those who elect them and if we have to wait a few years for a new library, do we really care?

Prior to breaking ground, or buildings, there is no shame nor is it ever too late to have second thoughts.

In closing, I would like to indicate that perhaps the $225,000 that the City of Campbell River has decided to inject into the downtown safety concerns, that a portion of those funds be used to develop a proper plan for the future of the downtown going forward cohesively.

Ted Arbour

City of Nanaimo’s property tax discussions start with 3.3 per cent increase

Parksville, BC, Canada / The Lounge 99.9
NanaimoNewsNOW Staff
Nov 25, 2020 5:43 PM

NANAIMO - The tough task of creating a municipal budget during a global pandemic has begun.

Nanaimo councillors started a lengthy process on Wednesday, Nov. 25 during an all-day finance and audit committee discussion. They heard from many departments, including finance and Nanaimo RCMP.

The 2021 property tax increase is currently projected at 3.3 per cent. One per cent of the increase is the annual amount set aside for asset management, which funds the maintenance and replacement of City infrastructure.

User fees for water are slated to rise the most at 7.5 per cent, followed by sanitation at 5.8 per cent and sewer user fees at 4 per cent.

The average Nanaimo taxpayer, based on a home assessed at roughly $527,000 by BC Assessment, will pay an additional $132 in 2021. This is a rise to $3,242 from last year’s $3,110.

This does not include fees for the Regional District of Nanaimo, school district, Vancouver Island Regional Library and hospital.

General manager of corporate services Shelley Legin told councillors staff were keenly aware of the pressure they were under when creating their department budgets.

“We reduced operating expenditures across the board. Every budget holder was asked to tighten their belt and we took hundreds of small amounts out of the budget,” Legin said.

Increases to the Nanaimo RCMP budget and City wages are considered the key drivers behind the 2021 budget.

The property tax increase was initially slated to be around 6 per cent to compensate for lost City revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City is expected to lose nearly $4.7 million in revenues, nearly half of which is from the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre.

The City received a $6.7 million lifeline from the federal government in November.

The money must be fully used in 2020 to cover the loss of revenues from casinos, parking and recreation centres, such as the aquatic centre. The federal funding can also be used to cover expenditures such as increased fees for dumping waste at the landfill given the higher amount of recycling placed on the curb and higher costs of custodial work during the pandemic.

The federal funding is slated to be used instead of the $3 million set aside into reserves by councillors earlier in the pandemic. The Special Initiatives Reserves is now planned to reduce property taxes, reinstate three new positions with the City and help pay for delayed infrastructure projects.

Legin said crafting a City of Nanaimo budget for 2021 was difficult, as they tried to balance recovery from the rough year while planning for more difficult times ahead.

"We do believe COVID-19 is still an unknown. We don't know how long it's going to persist and we think there should be some contingency in 2021 and 2022 to deal with the persistence of COVID-19."

The 3.3 per cent property tax increase is expected to change as councillors hear from departments and debate additional staffing at City Hall.

Two management positions and additional RCMP resources are currently not included in the budget.

The special finance and audit committee meetings continue every Wednesday until Dec. 4, culminating with an e-town hall on Dec. 7 for the public to provide input.

info@nanaimonewsnow.com

On Twitter: @nanaimonewsnow

Contact Us | Privacy Policy | Terms Of Service | Contest Rules

Copyright © 2020. All rights reserved.

POWERED BY SoCast Digital growth made easy.

There must be some room for a second look

In response to Dan Samson's letter of Nov. 4, I wish to highly recommend that the Regional Library Board take that second look at this proposal.

Nov. 25, 2020 12:00 a.m. / OPINION

LETTERS

In response to Dan Samson’s letter of Nov. 4, I wish to highly recommend that the Regional Library Board take that second look at this proposal.

RELATED: City should consider fresh alternative to the library plan

It might be totally logical that the Library Board does not have to think outside of the box when working towards the modernization of their locations. Other cities may not have additional better opportunities or plans other than simply tearing down and rebuilding.

The suggestion that if our city does not move forward with their plan, then an improvement in Campbell River would go to the end of their list, is just simply too autocratic. As was said, there must be some room for that second look. More complex? Yes. Better? Yes. Might delay the Library Board’s schedule? Maybe.

RELATED: Mayor of Campbell River addresses concerns surrounding new library funding

A response from the board to the city with an explanation as to why their schedule is more important than considering an alternate plan I think is required.

Barry Watchorn

CAMPBELL RIVER MIRROR

wmtc

we move to canada

11.29.2020

"at your library" in the north island eagle: new e-resources and new hours at the port hardy library

New E-Resources – and New Hours at the Port Hardy Library

The Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) has added some terrific new e-resources to our catalogue.

If you read this column, you've read a lot about e-resources. VIRL gives you access to digital tools that focus and it's all free. All you need is a library card.

Our newest e-resource is **Clicklaw**. Clicklaw provides legal information and education, specifically for people in BC. The law affects our lives in countless ways, and Clicklaw can help you understand your rights and your options. It's kept updated with the most current laws, and can connect you to expert knowledge and advice.

Some of the categories of information in Clicklaw are money (debt, pensions, benefits), families (divorce, abuse, wills), housing (landlords, tenants, neighbours), consumer (contractors, warranties, lending, credit), and employment (hiring and firing, harassment, benefits). These are just a few examples.

Clicklaw is also a great resource for anyone who wants to teach others about the law, or to raise awareness of how various laws impact us. Teachers, counselors, and community activists may find this very useful. You can also search under a specific community or group that you identify with – Indigenous, women, people with disabilities, seniors, or newcomers.

Another priceless e-resource is **Consumer Reports**. Consumer Reports is best known for its independent, unbiased reviews of cars, appliances, and other expensive items. They don't accept advertising, and their reviews are based on strict, scientific testing.

I know what you might be thinking: the internet is full of user reviews – doesn't that make Consumer Reports obsolete? Anything but.

There's an onslaught of information on the internet, but who can you trust? How much of the information is valid, verified, real? Consumer Reports can help you cut through so much confusing, conflicting information. It can help you understand food labeling, how to keep your identity safe, financial scams, chemical exposure – even the latest news about COVID-19. And it's available free, through your library.

If you're interested in either Clicklaw or Consumer Reports, but you don't know how to get started, visit your local VIRL branch. Even though we're only offering "Takeout" service, staff can still help you get started – six feet apart, and wearing masks, but we'll do our best!

Port Hardy: Improved Open Hours

If you love the Port Hardy library, we have good news! In response to customer requests, we've shifted our open hours to give you more access to the library at times when you are available.

The Port Hardy Library will now be open with continuous hours (that is, no closure for lunch or dinner) on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and will be open until 8 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Come and visit us! Even though we can't welcome you through our doors, we'll still be very happy to see you, and we'll help you find what you need.

Posted by laura k at 11/29/2020 10:18:00 AM
Labels: "at your library" column, becoming a librarian, know your rights, life in a small town, my writing

No comments:

Post a Comment

Newer Post Home Older Post

Subscribe to: Post Comments (Atom)

As a settler in Port Hardy, I live on the unceded traditional territory of the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples, specifically the Kwakiutl nation, whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
Margaret Mead

You may never know what results come of your action, but if you do nothing, there will be no result.
Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

There is a tendency to think that what we see in the present moment will continue. We forget how often we have been astonished by the sudden crumbling of institutions, by extraordinary changes in people's thoughts, by unexpected eruptions of rebellion against tyrannies, by the quick collapse of systems of power that seemed invincible.
Howard Zinn

From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.
Karl Marx

subscribe to wmtc:

Posts
Comments

follow by email:

Email address... Submit

wmtc on flickr

my fibromyalgia blog

Photo supplied by Vancouver Island Regional Library

Long-term care residents will soon be able to connect virtually with their loved ones, thanks to a series of local grants.

The grants from community foundations are helping the Vancouver Island Regional Library combat social isolation in care homes.

The library is using the money to provide digital care packages, including Chromebooks, Chromecast, Smart TVs, and internet subsidies.

It's reached out to 65 care facilities — 26 have already confirmed their interest and are getting a care package.

Communities with participating facilities include Nanaimo, Qualicum Beach, Parksville, Masset, Port Alberni, and the Comox Valley.

VIRL staff have recently turned their attention to other facilities and organizations that would benefit from these resources, including youth centres, outreach organizations, and more.

"By offering digital tools and resources, we're building resilience, and providing the means for people to connect with loved ones, take advantage of VIRL's digital resources, participate in virtual library events, and build important digital literacy skills," says Anne O'Shea, VIRL's deputy executive director

and COO.

“In the era of COVID-19, social connections and digital access are crucially important. I would like to thank all of the participating Community Foundations for supporting this important undertaking for our communities.”

A breakdown of the digital packages include:

- **Chromebooks**: simple to use laptops that provide access to important cloud-based apps;
- **Chromecasts**: Devices that allow Smart TVs to cast the screens of tablets and smartphones;
- **Smart TVs**: Flat screen TVs with internet access and the ability to cast from other devices;
- **Internet subsidies**: Help with the monthly cost of maintaining an internet subscription for a six-month period.

Support: Staff and residents will receive support from library staff to set up their digital care packages, connect to library services and learn about the hundreds of thousands of eBooks, audiobooks, TV shows, movies and classes available online through virl.bc.ca.

The first partner facility to receive its package was Qualicum Manor in Qualicum Beach.

The long term care facility requested and received a Smart TV, Chromebook and Chromecast for its residents.

“We are incredibly grateful to have received our digital care package courtesy of VIRL,” say Leanne Brown and Lonnie Smith, activity directors at Qualicum Manor.

“We look forward to sharing these valuable resources with our residents and helping them get more comfortable and acclimatized with this important technology.”

Equipment for the other partner facilities has arrived and digital care packages are being prepared to be shipped.

To date, VIRL has received $56,516 in funding from the following Community Foundations:

Alberni Valley Community Foundation – $6,441

Comox Valley Community Foundation – $7,145

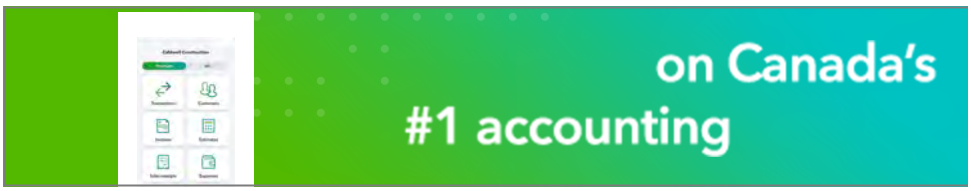
Gwaii Trust – $3,175

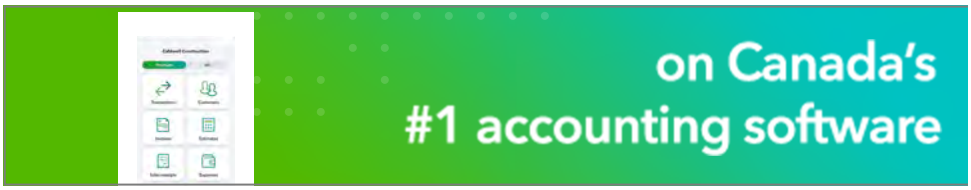
Nanaimo Foundation – $21,435

Parksville Qualicum Community Foundation – $8,320

Victoria Foundation – $10,000

The funding is part of the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund, totalling $350 million nationwide.





RECENT POSTS

Strong buyer demand for Vancouver Island homes hampered by low inventory

Wednesday, Dec. 2nd, 2020

B.C reports another 656 new cases of COVID-19

Wednesday, Dec. 2nd, 2020

Local Journalism Initiative

RDN's proposed 2021 financial plan shows little change for Area B taxes

Tue., December 1, 2020, 10:55 a.m. PST · 3 min read

Staff presented the Regional District of Nanaimo's proposed 2021-25 Financial Plan to the Committee of the Whole Nov. 24, and it shows a near-zero change over 2020 for Electoral Area B (Gabriola, Mudge, DeCourcy).

The estimated general services property tax change for Area B would see a total requisition increase of $34,164. The proposed increase to general services property tax is less than one dollar with no change for the regional parcel tax. That would put the 2021 property tax for an average home (valued at $419,176) sitting at $418, a three-dollar increase. That number will be updated once property value assessments are released by BC Assessment on Dec. 31.

For Area B, community parks account for the largest increase for 2021 followed by solid waste management and regional parks operations. Decreases are slated for the Gabriola taxi saver program, recreation and transit contribution.

The community park projects for Area B planned for 2021 are the completion of the Village Way Path, construction of Huxley Community Skate Park and a 707 Community Park fire study. Other projects include an Area B evacuation route plan.

TRENDING

1. I tried Roots' bestselling lightweight face masks — here's why they're my new favourites for winter
2. Jennifer Garner's rainbow sneakers are on sale — and they have rave reviews
3. B.C.'s COVID-19 surge strongest in areas outside Lower Mainland
4. Man injured after vehicle plunges nine metres off BC Ferries ramp to pavement
5. Toronto FC coach Greg Vanney steps down, says it's the right time to move on

Click to find out more about a new promotion

that was approved in February 2020.

Total operating expenses sit at $129 million.

Property and parcel taxes make up 35 per cent of revenues.

There are some areas of the tax requisition the RDN has no control over, such as the Vancouver Island Regional Library contribution, which will increase by $50,560 over last year, and emergency 911 services, which will increase by $17,865.

Capital projects planned for 2021 are budgeted to cost $56.5 million. Projects that Area B contributes to include $1.02 million for landfill-related purchases and upgrades and $681,000 for regional parks.

Among the $10 million in funds already approved for external organizations are $5,000 for the Gabriola Arts Council, $136,788 for the Gabriola Community Bus Foundation, $65,000 for the Gabriola Island Chamber of Commerce for southern community economic development, $16,000 for the Gabriola Museum & Archive Society for Area B's Port Theatre contribution, $78,705 for the Gabriola

Story continues

Our goal is to create a safe and engaging place for users to connect over interests and passions. In order to improve our community experience, we are temporarily suspending article commenting.

LATEST STORIES

The Canadian Press

TIMES COLONIST

Island libraries combating social isolation with 'digital care packages'

Roxanne Egan-Elliott / Times Colonist
DECEMBER 2, 2020 06:00 AM

The Vancouver Island Regional Library is distributing “digital care packages” to care homes to help people connect with loved ones and the outside world.

The library is offering packages including a laptop, smart TV and streaming device to residential care facilities, such as long-term care homes for seniors, transition houses for women escaping abusive relationships, shelters and recovery centres.

Packages include internet subsidies to ensure a stable connection and support from library staff to learn how to access ebooks, audio books, classes and TV shows offered through the library.

Staff members will also help residents who want to learn how to connect with loved ones through video calls and email.

“I think it’s so important right now. People are feeling very isolated and it was an opportunity we saw to reach out,” said Anne O’Shea, the library’s deputy executive director and chief operating officer.

The library, which serves the Island outside of Greater Victoria, along with Sooke and Sidney, Haida Gwaii and the Central Coast, has approached 60 facilities on the Island with care package offers. Twenty-six have expressed interest and are awaiting a delivery.

The first recipient was Qualicum Manor, a long-term care facility with 60 units in Qualicum Beach. They received a smart TV, laptop and streaming device.

The facility’s activity directors, Leanne Brown and Lonnie Smith, said they’re grateful for the donated items and they look forward to sharing the new resources with residents.

Care packages are being prepared for facilities in Nanaimo, Qualicum Beach, Parksville, Port Alberni, the Comox Valley and Haida Gwaii.

The library has started connecting with day facilities as well, including outreach organizations and youth centres.

Funding of more than $50,000 so far for the technology comes from six community foundations: Alberni Valley Community Foundation, Comox Valley Community Foundation, Gwaii Trust, Nanaimo Foundation, Parksville Qualicum Community Foundation and Victoria Foundation.

The library is contributing staff time to help residents learn how to use the new technology.

regan-elliott@timescolonist.com

© 2020 Copyright Times Colonist

Creativity Commons manger Jonathon Bigelow is printing copies of ‘Alone but Not Alone: Poetry in Isolation’ using the Nanaimo Harbourfront Library’s Espresso Book Machine. (Photo courtesy Corinne Shortridge)

Nanaimo Harbourfront Library releases COVID-19-themed poetry anthology

‘Alone but Not Alone: Poetry in Isolation’ features poets from across the Vancouver Island region

JOSEF JACOBSON / Dec. 4, 2020 3:45 p.m. / ENTERTAINMENT / LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT

A new Vancouver Island poetry anthology is capturing life in isolation during COVID-19.

On Dec. 5 the Nanaimo Harbourfront Library Creativity Commons is holding an online book launch for its latest publication, *Alone but Not Alone: Poetry in Isolation*. The book features 70 poems by 42 poets from Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii and the Gulf Islands, including more than a

dozen from the Nanaimo area. There are even some poets who live on the Island but are currently isolating in other parts of Canada and overseas.

“This was an idea I put together during the lockdown period to try to bring more people together, so even though we’re isolated, we’re feeling connected in some way,” Creativity Commons manager Jonathon Bigelow said.

ADVERTISEMENT

Poets of any age or experience level were welcome and as a result the book includes poets laureate and poets being published for the first time. In his call for submissions, Bigelow asked for poets to present works that reflected upon their feelings and experiences during the pandemic. That theme was interpreted broadly as intended and the collection features poems that are joyous and sorrowful, humorous and truthful.

“With poetry and the arts I try to keep it on point and vague in a way that people can talk about their story,” he said. “The idea was to try to collect a general story from people during this time and what they’re experiencing.”

Bigelow said it was a fun project to work on and “it brings people together in a nice way during trying times.” This will be particularly evident when poets from across the Island region unite online to read their poems during the book launch.

“We’re all going through this period of isolation and keeping apart and this was just a nice way to get to know people from all over Vancouver Island and all the way up to Haida Gwaii and get to interact and spend time together in a way that you wouldn’t normally have had the opportunity,” Bigelow said.

Copies of *Alone but Not Alone* are being added to the Nanaimo Harbourfront Library collection and can be requested through any Vancouver Island Regional Library branch. They will also be available for purchase from Creativity Commons.

WHAT’S ON … *Alone but Not Alone: Poetry in Isolation* book launch takes place over Zoom on Saturday, Dec. 5 at 11 a.m. Email Creativity Commons at cc@virl.bc.ca to request a meeting link.

---

arts@nanaimobulletin.com

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter

LITERATURE

The VIRL Connects initiative is providing digital care packages and support to community members most in need. Photo supplied

Comox Valley Community Foundation contributes to library initiative

Dec. 7, 2020 2:30 p.m. / COMMUNITY

The Comox Valley Community Foundation is among six organizations to provide digital care packages to help the Vancouver Island Regional Library combat isolation by increasing digital literacy in care homes and other facilities.

The CVCF donated $7,145 to the VIRL Connects program.

“By offering digital tools and resources, we’re building resilience, and providing the means for people to connect with loved ones, take advantage of VIRL’s digital resources, participate in virtual library events, and build important digital literacy skills,” Anne O’Shea, VIRL’s deputy executive director and COO said in a news release. “In the era of COVID-19, social connections and digital access are crucially important.

I would like to thank all of the participating community foundations for supporting this important undertaking for our communities."

The VIRL Connects initiative is providing digital care packages and support to community members most in need. The program provides a range of services and technologies in the digital care packages, including:

•Chromebooks: simple to use laptops that provide access to important cloud-based apps;

•Chromecasts: Devices that allow Smart TVs to cast the screens of tablets and smartphones;

•Smart TVs: Flat screen TVs with internet access and the ability to cast from other devices;

•Internet Subsidies: Help with the monthly cost of maintaining an internet subscription for a six-month period;

•Support: Staff and residents will receive support from library staff to set up digital care packages, connect to library services, and learn about the hundreds of thousands of eBooks, audiobooks, TV shows, movies and classes available online through virl.bc.ca.

Get local stories you won't find anywhere else right to your inbox.

Sign up here

Read more below

Business notes: Christmas tree farms in Cowichan selling out this season

Check in with Cowichan's business community

ROBERT BARRON / Dec. 18, 2020 5:45 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS

Like everything else related to Christmas this year, Christmas tree sellers in the Cowichan Valley are having a hard time keeping up with demand.

Lakes Road Tree Farm has had to close early for the season after selling out of trees that were grown for this holiday period, and other Christmas tree farms are getting to the end of their inventories as well.

Terry Flatt, one of the owners at Cowichan Valley Christmas Trees, located on Webdon Road in Duncan, said business has been extremely brisk this year.

She said the tree farm opened early for business this festive season after people stopped by inquiring about buying Christmas trees just after Remembrance Day.

“We’re normally fairly busy each Christmas season, but it’s been much busier than usual this year and it began much earlier,” Flatt said.

“I think it’s because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that people are looking to do something special this Christmas season after such a bad year. Many people who usually travel elsewhere for Christmas are staying home this year, and that adds to our business as well. We’re already getting close to the end of the trees we have to sell.”

••••

Duncan’s Red Arrow Brewing Company is undergoing an expansion.

Brewmaster/co-owner Chris Gress said Red Arrow is adding a kitchen and bathrooms to support a lounge in the front section of the building, located on Chaster Road, and the total expansion is 900 sq. ft. over two floors.

The work began in October and is expected to be completed early in the new year.

Gress said it’s the second phase of the company’s expansion plan, which began with a revamping of the patio last year.

He said Red Arrow is looking forward to life and business after the COVID-19 pandemic finally ends.

“We want to provide another location for people to enjoy local craft beer, good food and good friends,” Gress said.

“We’re always looking for ways to better serve the local community and bring people in to enjoy our sports courts and other amenities, and this will add to that. We really appreciate the great community support we have always received.”

••••

Fields department store and Swordfern Boutique in Lake Cowichan have partnered with the Vancouver Island Regional Library to encourage people to give library cards as gifts and stocking stuffers this holiday season.

Fields and Swordfern Boutique are two of many businesses, from Bella Coola to Sooke, to partner with VIRL in the initiative.

The VIRL is encouraging people to visit any of the participating business and grab some beautifully packaged library cards which make the perfect stocking stuffer for the book lover, film fanatic, gamer, music fan, newshound, language lover, or lifelong learner on their holiday gift lists.

VIRL library branches are stocked with “Give Library” bookmarks which would also make a great stocking stuffer, or addition to a new book.

The bookmarks include a QR code so people can sign up on the spot using VIRL’s online registration system.

“We decided to try something a little different this year to help attract more people into local businesses,” said Natasha Bartlett, VIRL’s divisional manager of marketing and communications.

“Businesses everywhere have been struggling for months as a result of the pandemic, we’re hoping to help bring people in to these businesses and increase awareness and interest in the library with this campaign. We’re thrilled to have so many businesses taking part.”

Read more below

A library card can be used at any of VIRL’s 39 branches and gives cardholders instant access to millions of books, thousands of ebooks and audiobooks, streaming movies, downloadable and streaming mp3 music, magazines and newspapers from around the world, free access to Lynda.com to learn photography, graphic design, and more, and learning a new language online with Mango Languages.

••••

Sands Funeral Chapel in Duncan invites people to its Virtual Christmas Candlelight Service which can be viewed through the month of December on its website at sandsduncan.ca.

Funeral director Ginette Sylvianne Aubin said that Christmas is a time of grief for those who have suffered the loss of loved ones.

She said when carefully acknowledged and validated, the grief some people are experiencing during the holidays can be a helpful stage in the reconciliation of loss, and Sands hopes the candlelight service can provide guidance during these unprecedented times when social distancing protocols are keeping people from gathering.

“The inability to mourn the loss of your loved one in traditional ways has become a particularly heartbreaking challenge,” Aubin said.

“Simple gestures, such as the warmth of a friend’s hug, which can bring us comfort, can’t be extended nor can they be received. These acts of kindness that so often help us heal our grief have become a tremendous void in our lives.”

••••

The Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction has increased accessibility to WorkBC’s wage subsidy program.

Johnna Puusa, a labour market information specialist with WorkBC Cowichan, said WorkBC is no longer limited to offering subsidies only to people who have an EI history, but can offer it to every unemployed citizen eligible to work in B.C.

She said this really widens the scope and will make it easier than ever for employers with full time job opportunities to take advantage of the program.

Puusa said another fantastic change is the ability to use the subsidy to recall laid-off employees.

“An additional new aspect of the wage subsidy program is that the subsidy amounts have changed, with larger subsidies available to priority groups, including youths aged 16-30, and people with disabilities,” she said.

“The application guide outlines employer criteria, provides details on the subsidy ranges, FAQ and application tips. An excellent feature designed to streamline the process is the ability to apply online on our website, using a candidate you’ve selected or requesting us to recommend someone for the position.”

••••

Think “Island Good” when holiday shopping and send a “taste of Vancouver Island” to isolated friends and relatives anywhere in the world.

More than ever this Christmas season, people are shopping locally when purchasing gifts for the holidays.

The Island Good brand and website is a simple, headache-free way to source Island Good products and retailers. Customers can order an Island Good Gift Box and have its shipped anywhere around the globe.

Read more below

Net Proceeds in Support of Make-A-Wish

ORDER TODAY!

Make-A-Wish BRITISH COLUMBIA & YUKON CANADA

Black Press Media

BRAVE FACE

Current boxes include the Breakfast Box with Level Ground Trading Coffee, Stonehouse Teas, Saltspring Kitchen Co. fruit spread Gathering Place Trading dried fruit and Singing Bowl Granola and the Pantry Box with Saltspring Kitchen Co. Spread and more Island goodies.

There are even dog and cat food boxes full of St Jean's Cannery Healthy Shores pet food.

Customers can also create their own themed gift, exploring the list of Island Good producers at islandgood.ca and let their imaginations take hold.

"Our Island Good producers and retailers are continuing to find innovative ways to ensure you can shop safely," said a message on the website.

"Most producers are providing online shopping and many offer free shipping when you purchase over a certain amount of dollars."

---

robert.barron@cowichanvalleycitizen.com

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter

LOCAL BUSINESS

Get local stories you won't find anywhere else right to your inbox.

Sign up here

Plans for a library near the Panorama Recreation Centre received a boost after the Agricultural Land Commission approved North Saanich's application to exclude 6.4 hectares (almost 16 acres) from the ALR. (Wolf Depner/News Staff)

Land exclusion boosts plans for library in North Saanich

ALC says proposed location for new library unsuitable for agriculture

WOLF DEPNER / Dec. 22, 2020 11:45 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS

A provincial body has given plans for a new library in North Saanich near the Panorama Recreation Centre a major boost.

The Agricultural Land Commission has approved North Saanich's application to exclude 6.4 hectares (almost 16 acres) from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The property slated for exclusion lies in the northwest corner of the lot containing the Panorama Recreation Centre. With the exclusion, North Saanich can now subdivide the smaller lot from its parent lot, thereby allowing the establishment of a library on a separate, transferable title of land.

“This is good news,” said Mayor Geoff Orr of the ALR’s decision.

ADVERTISEMENT

Sponsored by ***Metro Liquor***

Metro Liquor is a growing chain of seven Specialty Liquor Stores in Kelowna, Victoria, and Tsawwassen Commons.

RELATED: Public submissions show large opposition to library plans in North Saanich

RELATED:North Saanich residents to comment on library plans

The public heard Monday that the municipality will now explore the possibility of bringing a “community facility with Vancouver Island Regional Library service” to the location. Staff have previously signalled an openness toward other options.

Previous plans had identified the northwest corner of the current recreation centre as the preferred location for a new library, which according to staff “would complement the

existing community facilities on site and would be accessible to residents of North Saanich, Sidney, and Central Saanich," as per an earlier report.

The ALC had rejected non-farm use of the site for a library in April 2019. But if the commission said no then, it also signalled that it could support an exclusion application, now a fait accompli.

The ALC said in its decision that the property "is not suitable for agricultural use due to its cumulative historical uses (45 years) and site coverage for community recreational use (buildings and parking lots)." Accordingly, there "is no agricultural rationale for the retention of the property in the ALR."

A public hearing held in the summer revealed large public opposition (but also some support) for a new library, with critics expressing concern about the impact on the ALR among other points.

RELATED: North Saanich submits ALR exclusion despite large opposition

But the ALC appeared to reject that argument. The commission said in its ruling that "the majority of correspondence expressed concern regarding losing green space rather than agricultural land," adding that "concerns regarding green space and planned development of the (property) would be more appropriately addressed by the (municipality)."

Council, including Coun. Brett Smyth who had previously opposed the exclusion application, voted to forward the ALC's decision to staff with the subject now becoming part of

council’s upcoming strategic planning session on Dec. 10 with the broader future of library services as shared with Sidney on the agenda.

While Smyth acknowledged his previous opposition, he said there is no further need for positioning.

“The residents will get a chance to weigh in on whatever might happen in the future,” he said.

Do you have a story tip? Email: vnc.editorial@blackpress.ca.

Follow us on Twitter and Instagram, and like us on Facebook.

wolfgang.depner@peninsulanewsreview.com

Get local stories you won't find anywhere else right to your inbox.

Sign up here

(Black Press Media File)

North Saanich councillor calls for ‘urgency’ on future of library services

Coun. Heather Gartshore’s appeal comes after council tasked staff with review

WOLF DEPNER / Dec. 23, 2020 5:30 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS

As North Saanich considers the future of library services in the municipality, one councillor called for a speedy resolution to the issue.

“It’s not an emergency, but I do feel there is some urgency for us to keep the foot on the gas on this one moving forward, because we have been at this for so long,” said Coun. Heather Gartshore last week. She made that comment as council held a special committee of the whole meeting to review the municipality’s strategic plan of 2020 and help prepare the strategic plan for 2021. That plan will now include a review of library services.

While the subject has been on the municipality's broader agenda for several years, it gained additional urgency earlier this month when the Agricultural Land Commission approved an exclusion request from the district for a portion of the land on which the Panorama Recreation Centre sits.

ADVERTISEMENT

Sponsored by ***Nexgen Hearing***

The widest selection of the most discreet and advanced hearing aid styles. With 3 locations in Saanich to help you find your perfect fit!

The municipality had previously identified the excluded property as the site for a new library designed to improve library services in the municipality. While North Saanich shares the Sidney location of the Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) system with the Town of Sidney, VIRL considers the municipality under-served.

Perhaps the most concrete expression of this fact is VIRL's long-standing promise to fund construction of a new library at that location. Last week's announcement clears a major

hurdle for the realization of that project with the important addendum that North Saanich has also contemplated other uses for the site.

But as with any large project sitting on the drawing board for some time, circumstances change, starting with concerns that the municipality might not be getting full value for its membership in VIRL, a question now undergoing additional study after council tasked staff to review not only the current concept for a new VIRL facility but also discuss VIRL services compared to those offered by the Greater Victoria Public Library (GVPL).

RELATED: Public submissions show large opposition to library plans in North Saanich

Coun. Jack McClintock, council's liaison with VIRL, warned that any delays to VIRL's offer may end up costing North Saanich by dropping down on VIRL's priority list, a scenario that also exists should North Saanich join GVPL. He also warned of potential service disruptions in case of a change. Garthshore and Coun. Celia Stock echoed the concerns of McClintock, who will meet with VIRL officials in February.

But if Garthshore and others urged timely action, while calling for additional public consultation, the public also heard from Coun. Murray Weisenberger, who argued that the real urgency lies "in getting value for our dollars."

North Saanich's application to the ALC revealed some support but also considerable opposition to the proposed library.

Coun. Patricia Pearson, meanwhile, raised the possibility of creating additional child care space at the location.

Finally, North Saanich has to consider developments in Sidney, which pushed its own review of library services into the fourth quarter of 2022. Weisenberger said his preference is for a satellite facility in North Saanich and an expanded facility in Sidney. Gartshore acknowledged North Saanich's partnership with Sidney, but also noted North Saanich does not necessarily have to wait on its neighbour.

Mayor Geoff Orr said during the discussion that "nothing has been determined yet," having said earlier that any decision about leaving the VIRL would trigger a referendum followed by a transition period.

"The earliest I believe would still be January 2023, if we were do something," he said. Sidney, if it were to depart VIRL, could follow in 2024, he said.

Do you have a story tip? Email: vnc.editorial@blackpress.ca.

Follow us on Twitter and Instagram, and like us on Facebook.

wolfgang.depner@peninsulanewsreview.com

David Carson, director of corporate communications for the Vancouver Island Regional Library, at the podium for the Chemainus library's official opening. (Photo by Don Bodger)

Year in Review Part Two

The top stories that happened in 2020 in the Chemainus Valley

DON BODGER / Jan. 8, 2021 9:46 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS

There were plenty of big stories around the Chemainus Valley in 2020 and our top five in this second of a two-part Year in Review series states that case very clearly.

Of course, none of us had any idea at the beginning of the year how different it would be at the end. There were some major issues happening in the early months, even before COVID restrictions hit, as you'll see in No. 5 through No. 1 of our reverse countdown.

5. The new Chemainus Library grand opening

There was a packed crowd for the long-anticipated event on March 7. It signified the beginning of a new chapter for the branch of the Vancouver Island Regional Library in the midst of a downtown Chemainus revival.

Related story: Official opening puts importance of new Chemainus library into perspective

Little did anyone know that less than two weeks later it would be shut down, along with most other major businesses and public spaces due to COVID-19.

The library opening was a huge community celebration. There were ceremonial speeches, cake, entertainment and a chance to look over all the amenities that many had already started to familiarize themselves with since the building opened on Jan. 13.

David Carson, director of corporate communications for the VIRL, pointed out about 1,000 people went through the doors during the first two days after the branch opened; 6,000 book checkouts occurred in January; and 200 people signed up for library cards in January and February.

“From the moment the doors opened, the response from the community has been immediate and overwhelmingly positive,” said Carson.

4. The end of the Western Forest Products labour dispute

It looked like a dispute between Western Forest Products and the United Steelworkers Local 1-1937 at WFP mills, including the Chemainus sawmill, that began on July 1, 2019 might continue to drag on.

Related story: End of long strike could finally be near for Chemainus and other WFP employees

But then a tentative agreement was reached in early February and the two sides ended their often bitter dispute. The working relationship since between WFP and the union has been very amicable, making everyone wonder why the strike wound up lasting so long.

Both sides felt concessions had been made along the way, but it took seven and a half long months before a deal ended the stalemate.

“Our union is extremely proud of our members’ solidarity in this extended struggle to achieve a fair collective agreement with WFP and their associated contractors,” said Brian Butler, president of Local 1-1937.

The eventual deal finally provided some stability for the company and workers to move forward and leave the hardships that resulted from the shutdown behind.

3. Chemainus Road Corridor Upgrade Project

This project was first and foremost on the minds of residents throughout the year because the work continued virtually non-stop. It was something motorists, pedestrians and business people dealt with on a daily basis, with interruptions to traffic flow and just a huge undertaking changing the complexion of the town.

Related story: First phase of the Chemainus Road Corridor Upgrade nearing completion

After Copcan Civil Ltd. of Nanaimo completed the Stage 1 underground utility work, Milestone Equipment Contracting Inc., also of Nanaimo, was awarded the contract for the second phase that is still going on with a completion date now anticipated for mid-February.

The finishing touches being provided include: the new roundabout at River Road; sidewalks; landscaping and rain gardens; signage; lighting; and new fencing on the east side of Chemainus Road.

There were some horrific weather events that altered the work schedule, particularly in October when torrential rain ripped up the road and left huge potholes that had to be repaired before paving could begin.

Frustration was expressed at times. Residents gave each other lessons on how to drive in the new roundabout and it’s been remarkable to people how busy the corridor is when traffic flow was disrupted. Most agree the changes will be so beneficial to the town in the long term in so many ways.

2. Chemainus River flash flooding

A downpour of rain started walloping the region on the evening of Jan. 31. By the early-morning hours of Feb. 1 the area around Westholme and on the Trans Canada Highway toward Mount Sicker Road had experienced massive flooding.

Some residents in the Halalt First Nation and in Westholme had mere moments to get out of their homes before being engulfed in water. Many homes were uninhabitable for quite some time and Russell Farm Market & Garden Centre sustained extensive water damage that closed the business for several months.

Related story: Chemainus, Crofton area in recovery mode after massive rainstorm

Many stayed temporarily at a Cowichan Valley Regional District emergency centre at the Cowichan Community Centre in Duncan or with relatives. The floods brought the major concerns about logjams and gravel bars along the Chemainus River to the forefront again.

Related story: Russell Farm Market refurbishing for spring opening well underway

Little has been done over the years to correct the problem of the river finding new paths to overcome the obstacles that lead to the flooding, with so many jurisdictions involved.

The Municipality of North Cowichan at least did some work during the summer to clear logjams under the Chemainus River Bridge on Chemainus Road. But there's much work that needs to be done on the part of the federal and provincial governments to alleviate the situation so homeowners in the area aren't at risk every year for what seems to be more frequent heavy rainstorms in the winter.

1. Everything COVID

It all began around mid-March as concerns about the spread of the coronavirus suddenly hit home. There was a mass shutdown of businesses and public facilities until the situation could be further assessed.

We were quite fortunate in Central Vancouver Island to have limited cases in the beginning, but precautions were taken to ensure the virus didn't get out of control as was being seen in other jurisdictions.

Different industries and businesses were affected in different ways. Grocery stores were booming with the need for essential food and health care industry workers were run off their feet while other businesses and services shut down entirely.

There was some initial panic that led to impulse buying of products such as toilet paper, but we were continually reminded it wasn't necessary because manufacturers still maintained the supply chain of those items.

Locally, there were many stories of people stepping up to help others in need, particularly the elderly as the pandemic went on. Young folks gave cookies to health care workers while others made masks or face shields to distribute to the community.

Related story: It's clear face shields are an important piece of personal protective equipment

Plenty of inspiration came out of the most difficult time most of us have ever known.

HISTORY

North Cowichan Mayor Al Siebring conducts the ribbon-cutting at the new Chemainus library's official grand opening, with some help from his little friends Mia Sampson, 7, Weston Magee, 6, and Annabella Sampson, 10. (Photo by Don Bodger)

Nanaimo Harbourfront Library librarian April Ripley is organizing a competition to create a booklet of Vancouver Island poetry. (Josef Jacobson/News Bulletin)

Nanaimo Harbourfront Library seeks submissions for poetry contest

Winning entries to be part of booklet released for National Poetry Month

JOSEF JACOBSON / Jan. 12, 2021 2:30 p.m. / ENTERTAINMENT / LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT

The Nanaimo Harbourfront Library is putting together a poetry booklet for this year's National Poetry Month and it's looking for poems to fill the pages.

This month the library announced it is accepting submissions for its Poem in Your Pocket contest. Poets from across the Vancouver Island Regional Library area, which includes Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and Haida Gwaii, have until March 5 to submit one poem to the competition, with winners being included in the booklet.

“Judging poetry, it’s always somewhat subjective,” said Harbourfront librarian April Ripley, who organized the contest. “But we’re just going to be picking our favourites as far as ones that we think are highest quality and that we like the best.”

Poem in Your Pocket Day, happening in April, is an annual program organized by the Academy of American Poets. The League of Canadian Poets describes it as “an international movement that encourages folks to centre poetry within their daily interactions.”

Ripley said the event is meant to encourage people to share poetry with each other.

“It’s something that I know branches have done before, giving out poetry, but this year I especially wanted to solicit some local content and really focus on the local writers,” she said. “So I thought a contest was a good way to get people’s attention and get people to send their stuff in to us so that we can highlight it.”

Ripley said the library typically holds in-branch events like poetry readings during poetry month, and the Poem in Your Pocket contest is a kind of “substitute” for the programming they are unable to offer this year due to COVID-19.

The contest is open to poets of all levels of experience and Ripley asks even unpublished poets to put their work forward.

“We want to focus on local content and encouraging people who are just starting out as well,” Ripley said. “So this is a great opportunity just get it out there and get a feel for the process of submitting.”

The poetry booklets will be available at all VIRL branches and as a digital download this April, National Poetry Month. For more information about the contest, click here.

---

arts@nanaimobulletin.com

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter

LITERATURE

Q & A on the Indian Act with Bob Joseph

January 13, 2021

Bob Joseph. Image credit: VIRL

The Vancouver Island Regional Library is hosting a Q & A on the Indian Act with Bob Joseph.

- **Thursday, January 28, 2021**
- Time:2:00 pm – 3:30 pm
- Branch: Sooke, All
- Venue: Virtual Zoom Webinar

Join for a live virtual conversation and Q&A with Bob Joseph, Indigenous relations expert and bestselling autho of 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act.

Bob Joseph is a member of the Gwawa'enuxw Nation, Gayaxala (Thunderbird) clan, and the founder and president of Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., which offers training on Indigenous relations to government and corporate clients. Based on a viral article, 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act is the essentia

guide to understanding the legal document and its repercussions on generations of Indigenous Peoples, written by a leading cultural sensitivity trainer.

Space for this event is limited so be sure to register soon. A zoom link will be sent to those registered prior to the event.

Attendees are encouraged to read *21 Things You May Not Know About The Indian Act* and watch an interview with journalist, Steve Paikin prior to the event.

News indigenous permalink [https://sooke.pocketnews.ca/q-a-on-the-indian-act-with-bob-joseph/

Comments

***Q & A on the Indian Act with Bob Joseph* — No Comments**

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. Learn how your comment data is processed.

© 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 PocketNews - *Weaver Xtreme Theme* Privacy

Bob Joseph is a member of the Gwawa'enuxw Nation, Gayaxala (Thunderbird) clan, and is the founder and president of Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. Photo supplied

Vancouver Island Regional Library hosts Q & A on Indian Act

Jan. 14, 2021 8:30 a.m. / COMMUNITY

Vancouver Island Regional Library is hosting a free online event with Indigenous Relations expert and bestselling author of 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act, Bob Joseph.

The Jan. 28 virtual seminar, called a Q and A on the Indian Act with Bob Joseph, will include a presentation from Joseph and an opportunity for attendees to ask questions.

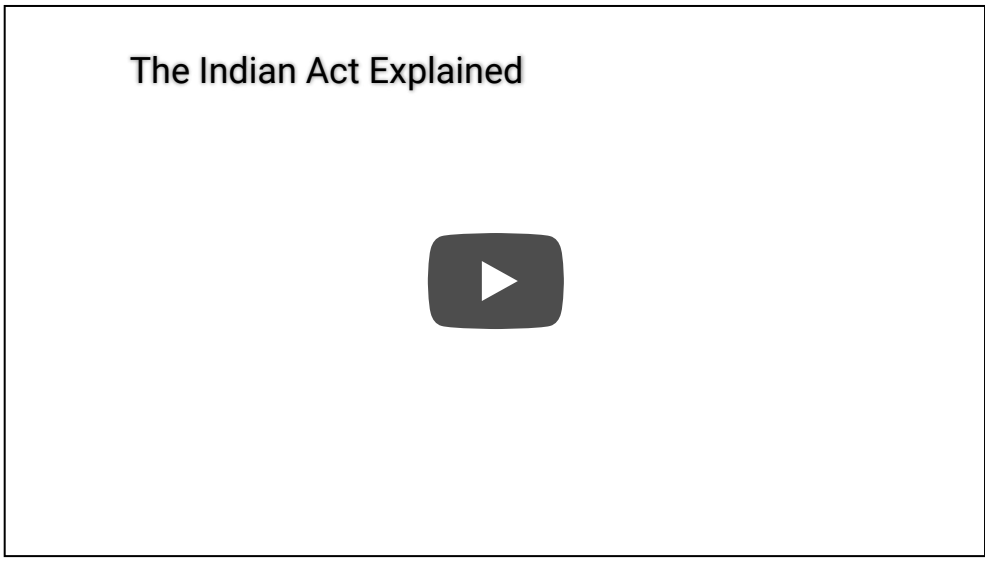
"We are honored to have such an acclaimed and respected scholar and writer partner with us on this important topic," says Melissa Legacy, VIRL's Director of Library Services and Planning. "Bob's presentations are informative, thought-provoking, insightful, entertaining, and accessible — they

shed a clear light on a dark chapter in our history, and provide us with opportunities to learn from the past as we strive for a better future.”

Joseph is a member of the Gwawa’enuxw Nation, Gayaxala (Thunderbird) clan, and the founder/president of Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., which offers training on Indigenous relations to government and corporate clients. His aforementioned book is an essential guide to understanding the legal document and its repercussions on generations of Indigenous Peoples.

Space for this event is limited so prompt registration is encouraged. A zoom link will be sent to those who register.

Attendees are encouraged to read 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act, or watch the following interview with journalist Steve Paikin prior to the event:



The official welcome will be presented by Dr. Evelyn Voyageur. She is Musgamakw Dzawada’enuxw, a fluent Kwak’wala speaker, and respected matriarch. The event starts at 2 p.m., Thursday, Jan 28. It will be moderated by VIRL Customer Service Librarian, Jessica Humphries.

Register at virl.bc.ca/event/bob-joseph/

Bestselling author Bob Joseph is being featured at a Q & A about the Indian Act, in partnership with Vancouver Island Regional Library. The virtual event takes place from 2 to 3:30 p.m. on Jan. 28. (Courtesy of Vancouver Island Regional Library)

Indigenous author explains Indian Act

Bob Joseph to join free virtual event on Jan. 28 at 2 p.m.

SOOKE NEWS STAFF / Jan. 14, 2021 5:30 p.m. / COMMUNITY

How were Indigenous peoples affected by not being allowed to perform potlatches, make land claims without government permission or speak their native language for decades?

Author Bob Joseph will help answer those questions and more during a Q&A about the Indian Act on Jan. 28, held in partnership with the Vancouver Island Regional Library.

The Indian Act was a Canadian law that tried to eliminate the cultural, social, economic, and political individuality of the Indigenous peoples in 1876.

ADVERTISEMENT

Joseph, who wrote award-winning bestseller 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act, is a member of the Gwawa’enuxw Nation and Gayaxala (Thunderbird) clan.

“We are honored to have such an acclaimed, respected scholar and writer partner with us on this important topic,” said Melissa Legacy, VIRL’s director of library services and planning.

“Bob’s presentations are informative, thought-provoking, insightful, entertaining, and accessible — they shed a clear light on a dark chapter in our history, and provide us with opportunities to learn from the past as we strive for a better future.”

The online event on Jan. 28 at 2 p.m. has limited space, so those interested are encouraged to RSVP for free at: https://virl.bc.ca/event/bob-joseph/

Bob Joseph the bestselling author of 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act and an Indigenous relations expert will be present for an interactive virtual seminar hosted by the Vancouver Island Regional Library. (Submitted photo)

VIRL to host Q & A seminar about the Indian Act with author and Indigenous relations expert Bob Joseph

To register for the Zoom seminar scheduled for Jan.28, visit Vancouver Island Regional Library's website

BINNY PAUL, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER / Jan. 15, 2021 4:34 p.m. / COMMUNITY

On Jan. 28 you get to ask bestselling author Bob Joseph 21 questions and more about the Indian Act.

The expert on Indigenous relations and author of 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act is attending an interactive virtual seminar hosted by the Vancouver Island Regional Library.

The free virtual seminar, called ‘Q and A on the Indian Act with Bob Joseph’, will include a presentation from the author and an opportunity for attendees to ask him questions.

Joseph is a member of the Gwawa’enuxw Nation, Gayaxala (Thunderbird) clan, and the founder and president of Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., which offers training on Indigenous relations to government and corporate clients.

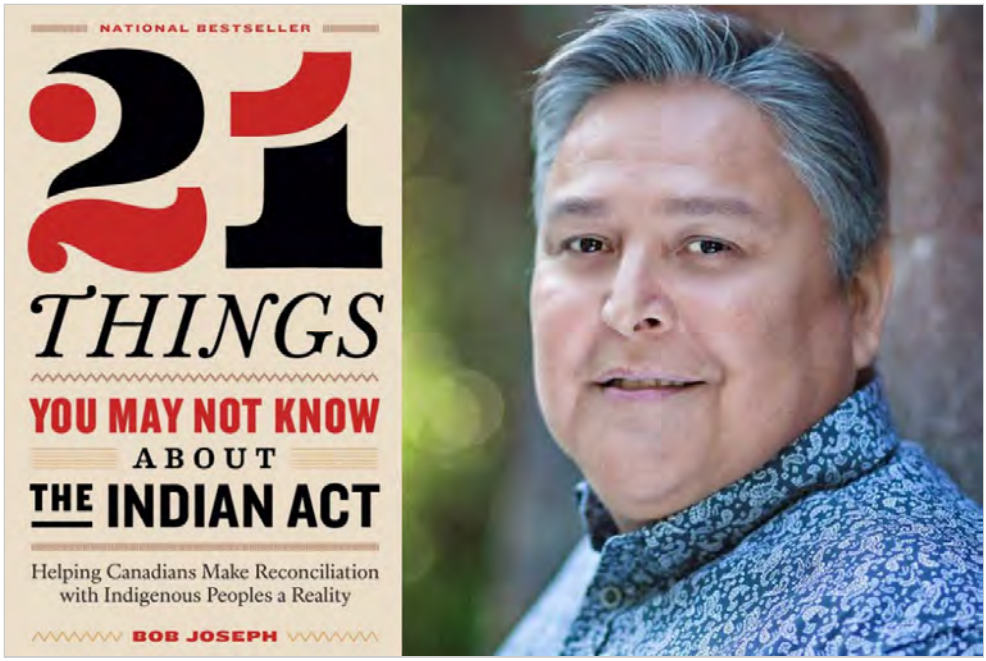
His book is the essential guide to understanding the legal document and its repercussions on generations of Indigenous Peoples.

“We are honored to have such an acclaimed and respected scholar and writer partner with us on this important topic,” said Melissa Legacy, VIRL’s director of library services and planning.

“Bob’s presentations are informative, thought-provoking, insightful, entertaining, and accessible — they shed a clear light on a dark chapter in our history, and provide us with opportunities to learn from the past as we strive for a better future,” she said.

The Zoom meeting starts at 2 p.m. on Jan. 28 and registrations can be done on the VIRL website

EDUCATION | FIRST NATIONS



Bob Joseph, author of 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act, will be available for a Q&A through the Vancouver Island Regional Library Jan. 28. (Courtesy of Vancouver Island Regional Library)

Q&A on the Indian Act with Bob Joseph open to Greater Victoria residents

Bob Joseph is the author of 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act

JANE SKRYPNEK / Jan. 17, 2021 2:30 p.m. / COMMUNITY

Greater Victoria residents will soon have the chance to set their questions to bestselling novelist of 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act, Bob Joseph.

Hosted by Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL), Joseph will be presenting a virtual seminar and taking questions during a limited-capacity Zoom event on Jan. 28 at 2 p.m.

“Bob’s presentations are informative, thought-provoking, insightful, entertaining, and accessible — they shed a clear light on a dark chapter in our history, and provide us with

opportunities to learn from the past as we strive for a better future," Melissa Legacy, VIRL director of library services and planning, said.

RELATED: Victoria museum releases more than 16,000 historical images of Indigenous life

Joseph decided to write 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act after an article of his on the subject went viral and he realized there was a real desire from Canadians to understand a piece of history they are rarely taught. As founder of Indigenous Corporate Training, Joseph said he would often notice during training sessions that people knew Indigenous history dates from the start of colonization and more recent ones like the Oka Crisis, but very few knew about the Indian Act.

In his book, Joseph focuses on 21 parts of the legal document that was first introduced in 1876, such as denying Indigenous women status if they married a non-Indian man, introducing residential schools, establishing the band council system and renaming Indigenous people with European names. Joseph's Indigenous name is K'axwsumala'galis. He is a member of the Gwawa'enuxw Nation and Gayaxala (Thunderbird) clan.

Because space for Joseph's event is limited, interested people are asked to register ahead at virl.bc.ca.

RELATED: Canada's first Indigenous-led coast guard auxiliary patrols B.C.'s rugged coast

---

Do you have a story tip? Email: jane.skrypnek@blackpress.ca.

Read more below

Tofino's library is currently located in the basement of the Tofino Legion building but talks are underway to build a brand new facility. (Andrew Bailey photo)

Tofino ready for next chapter of new library pursuit

"There is no spike in taxes."

ANDREW BAILEY / Jan. 21, 2021 8:30 a.m. / COMMUNITY

Tofino is ready for the next chapter in its saga to bring a new library to town, as long as enough residents can agree on where to put it.

Snowbirds
Wealth Management
RAYMOND JAMES®

The current library is housed in the basement of the Tofino Legion, but Tofino's council and district office has long been in pursuit of a new facility and the Vancouver Island Regional Library Board seems to be on the same page.

"We know for a fact that there's interest at the district level for a new library to be built and we share that interest…We're in conversation with the district and, if all goes well and they can find some land that's suitable and there's interest to move forward, then we can continue that conversation," VIRL's director of communications David Carson told the Westerly News.

"Our libraries truly are key community destinations. People can go there to conduct business meetings, meet with friends or just to take advantage of the myriad of great programming that happens nowadays at libraries. They really are dynamic, vibrant, essential community spaces and we know that Tofino is ready for a new library."

The district has identified three potential locations for a new library: Katie Monks Memorial Park at 181 First Street, a spot next to the community hall at 351 Arnet Road and the parking lot behind the municipal office at 391 Main Street.

Tofino CAO Bob MacPherson acknowledged that each site being considered "has its warts," noting that the community hall and municipal office sites would prevent future developments of other potential facilities and the Katie Monks site would require removing significant vegetation.

He said a key element in the new library's location is its proximity to other amenities.

"We're trying to think in terms of either a downtown location or a location up by the community hall so that the library is co-located with other uses," he said. "In my mind, the co-location around other things is an important factor."

A survey was circulated in December asking residents which of the three locations they preferred. The results of that survey are being tabulated and are expected to be presented to council during a Committee of the Whole meeting

in February or March.

Read more below

MacPherson said the survey sparked dialogue within the community and shed light on the public's interest in a new library.

"It was not intended to be a conversation starter, it has turned out that way though, which has been a really nice side effect," he said.

"There's work to do and I think the district, staff and council are ready to work with both VIRL as well as our community to find a library that maybe isn't perfect for everybody, but provides the library service that this community deserves."

VIRL's director of finance Joel Adams told the Westerly that in order for Tofino to move ahead, a location must be presented to the board and the site must be cleared and ready to develop.

"We always want it to be serviced and shovel-ready, so that would be the responsibility of the municipality to ensure that's the case and then, assuming it's supported by our board as part of our capital plan, we would look to what makes sense in terms of whether we go to a long-term borrowing model or we use our own reserves and we would move forward," he said.

He explained that, outside of paying to prepare a site for construction, the district would not bear the brunt of the new library's price tag as VIRL would cover the building costs through its capital plan, which draws funding from each of its members.

"There is no spike in taxes," Adams said. "We have a capital plan that drives our decisions and we decide for each of our projects whether we're going to pay for it through our capital reserves or we are going to go through a long-term borrowing process."

He added that that funding model has led to nearly 20 new or significantly upgraded library facilities across the Island since 2011.

“We’ve got lots more on the go,” he said. “It’s really allowed us to tackle a lot of improvements to our service areas that we wouldn’t have been able to do just through raising the funds in each service location. It allows us to pool those costs and accomplish more with those dollars than we would be able to individually.”

He reiterated that Tofino is on VIRL’s list of potential capital projects, but stressed that that list is not prioritized and a variety of factors are in play in terms of getting a project going.

Read more below

“Certainly we’ve had conversations over the years with Tofino about a number of different plans and a number of different sites. I think we’ll get there, but we’re not quite there yet,” he said.

“We’re waiting until we have a site chosen by the municipality that we can take a look at and agree that it does meet our needs. We don’t really have a project in a traditional sense because we don’t really know what it’s going to look like…I think we all want to move forward with something but, until we have that decision on the site, we don’t really have anything to review and make a decision on.”

He cautioned that even if Tofino picks a site in short order, a variety of hurdles would still need to be cleared before a defined timeline takes shape.

“It’s certainly not going to happen overnight, but we have a good process in place for moving things along as quickly as we can,” he said.

“We’ve been talking with them for a number of years, gone through a few different versions of plans and sites and, of course, once they get a site in mind and have made a decision about that, they’re going to be expecting work to start right away. That’s how it’s been with every community where we’ve had these long-term planning projects before we get anywhere near shovels in the ground.”

---

andrew.bailey@westerlynews.ca

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter

READ MORE: Tofino waits for new library

READ MORE: Book returned to Vancouver Island library 42 years overdue

READ MORE: The strangest things ever returned to B.C. public library

LITERATURE | TOFINO,

Get local stories you won't find anywhere else right to your inbox.

Sign up here

5°C CLOUDY ›
Powered by Vista Radio Ltd.

menu

MYCOMOXVALLEYNOW

NEWS ALERT SIGN UP

98.9 Jet FM

NEWS

VIRL launches online learning resource for students in Grades 3-12

SHARE ON:

Troy Landreville, staff Thursday, Jan. 21st, 2021

5℃ CLOUDY ›
Powered by Vista Radio Ltd.

Hands on keyboards. (Vista Radio stock photo)

The Vancouver Island Regional Library has a new tool to help students and their parents navigate the pandemic.

It has unveiled a new online resource called SOLARO, which includes practice tests, study materials, and more for students in Grades 3 to 12.

“The pandemic has created challenges for students and families across our service area,” says Louise Broadley, VIRL’s Divisional Manager of Collections and Support Services.

“With SOLARO, we now have a resource that will benefit students in some of the most crucial learning years, and help set B.C students up for success. We are thrilled to offer this free service to anyone with a VIRL library card.”

Based on the B.C. curriculum, students and home learners in Grades 3 to 12 can now access study materials and practice tests in English/Language Arts, math, and science with their VIRL library card.

Learners can also create personalized flashcards and study notes.

In addition to SOLARO, VIRL also offers a suite of other learning resources for students, educators, and parents.

All of these are available on VIRL’s home learning page here.

TIMES COLONIST

Author of 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act hosts virtual talk

Roxanne Egan-Elliott / Times Colonist
JANUARY 22, 2021 06:00 AM

Best-selling author and Indigenous relations expert Bob Joseph finds people are often shocked when they learn of the restrictions imposed on First Nations through the original Indian Act in 1876. He hopes teaching others about the act will create a collective understanding of history and an interest in reconciliation. PHOTO COURTESY OF BOB JOSEPH

Bob Joseph was giving one of his first workshops on Indigenous culture and history in the mid-90s when a woman came up to him sobbing after a presentation on residential schools.

She said she couldn't sit through the talk anymore, because she couldn't believe what he was saying.

"She said: 'There's no way my church would do this. There's no way my church would take the kids and put them in these schools and run these schools.' It was so hard for her to believe it. It was unbelievable," said Joseph, who is hosting a virtual talk and Q&A through the Vancouver Island Regional Library on Jan. 28 to share some of the surprising elements of the laws that govern Indigenous people, governments and lands.

The best-selling author of 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act says the participants in his workshops these days tend to know a lot more about residential schools, but people are still caught off guard by the Indian Act.

In his more than two decades as an Indigenous awareness trainer, Joseph said, he has noticed people are often shocked by what's contained in the act. "Sometimes anger, sometimes really upset."

The Indian Act, which has been significantly updated since it was created in 1876, originally contained provisions prohibiting pool hall owners from admitting First Nations people, declared potlatch and other cultural ceremonies illegal, and restricted First Nations people from leaving their reserves without permission from a government agent.

Joseph believes the act needs to go, arguing it has created a relationship in which Indigenous communities are dependent on the federal government. "It's designed for forced cultural assimilation, and it really can't do much more than that," he said.

What he wants instead is the right to self-determination, self-government and self-reliance.

"If we can dismantle the Indian Act in this lifetime, not the next, I think we can go a long way to solving some of the other challenges that we continue to have," said Joseph, whose 2018 book was based on his blog post by the same name that went viral, garnering more than 55,000 views in the first month after it was published.

The founder and president of Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., which runs workshops on colonization for corporate, government and individual clients, he believes the way to achieve reconciliation with First understanding of history, including the history of the relationship between Indigenous pe

He wants participants to bring the conversation to their families, friends, places of worshi

"I think it's important work to let them know that there is a lot of hope for reconciliation," Gayaxala, or Thunderbird, clan of the Gwawa'enuxw Nation.

ADVERTISEMENT

He sees hope in the fact that schools and universities are embracing Indigenous cultures and history, and young people are increasingly interested in advocating for reconciliation.

Anyone interested in participating in the virtual talk should register for the event through the Vancouver Island Regional Library. The talk takes place on Jan. 28 from 2 to 3:3o p.m. More than 400 people have already registered for the event, which is capped at 500 spaces.

regan-elliott@timescolonist.com

© 2021 Copyright Times Colonist

Correspondence

Administration
Box 3333 | 6250 Hammond Bay Road
Nanaimo, BC Canada V9R 5N3
t: 250.758.4697 **f:** 250.758.2482
e: info@virl.bc.ca **w:** www.virl.bc.ca

November 23, 2020

The Honourable John Horgan, MLA
Premier of British Columbia
West Annex, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
Original sent via email: john.horgan.mla@leg.bc.ca

Dear Premier,

Re: Libraries are Essential Services in BC

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us in ways we previously thought unimaginable. In the process, the pandemic has laid bare large portions of our society who were not equipped with the resources, technology, or ability to adapt to a world with fewer physical connections, and an ever increasing reliance on digital tools and skills. These inequities are not the result of COVID-19, but the pandemic has cast them under a stark spotlight.

BC's libraries are ideally positioned to confront these challenges. We are able to remove barriers that lead to social isolation by providing the technology, resources and expertise needed to facilitate access to government and community services, while bringing people together to build community connections.

The services and spaces Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) offers are of vital importance to the 38 communities we serve. VIRL has the means and the strategies to serve our customers safely, and to adjust our services in accordance with public health measures. We have implemented a phased Recovery Plan purposefully designed to be responsive and quick to pivot.

All VIRL service locations are open. In almost every branch, this means the doors are open, the collections are browsed in person and online, and in many cases, public computers are available. We can very quickly adjust our Recovery Plan to meet local circumstances.

Libraries also play a crucial role in providing access to important resources. Through public funds, we allow people to get lost in a book, learn a new skill, stream a thought-provoking film, and so much more. During the pandemic, these escapes and opportunities are so important for the ongoing mental health and wellbeing of British Columbians.

For so many in our province, libraries are an essential service. We heard this time and time again during the first wave and subsequent shutdowns. Over the past few months, we have learned so much and we are well equipped to continue to safely offer our services to our Island communities.

As the province continues to assess the ongoing risks presented by COVID's second wave, we ask you to consider libraries as essential during the pandemic and that you preserve our ability to operate during any further COVID-19 restrictions. Similar to other service providers listed in BC's List of COVID-19 Essential Services, libraries provide daily services essential to economically disadvantaged and otherwise vulnerable individuals including seniors, children, and individuals with disabilities.

We are a vital community service and we can help ensure even the most vulnerable needs will be met as your government strives to "build back better". We know we can continue to safely reduce barriers, keep people entertained, and play an important role in combatting some of the pandemic's most pressing social challenges, including the ongoing and pervasive mental health challenges impacting our communities and community members.

The Vancouver Island Regional Library Board of Trustees, encourages you to consider libraries an essential part of the community ecosystem — one which can assist in every phase of our province's reopening and recovery. In closing, we invite you to watch these two short videos — the first illustrates the value and importance of libraries to community members during COVID-19, and the second showcases our staff and spaces as dynamic, vital, and safe.

Thank you for considering our request. If you have any questions or require additional information, please reach out at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Brenda Leigh
Chair, VIRL Board of Trustees

Gaby Wickstrom
Vice Chair, VIRL Board of Trustees

cc: The Honourable Adrian Dix, MLA, Minister of Health
Colleen Evans, VIRL Board Trustee, City of Campbell River
Nicole Minions, VIRL Board Trustee, Town of Comox
Manno Theos, VIRL Board Trustee, City of Courtenay
Vickey Brown, VIRL Board Trustee, Village of Cumberland
Jenni Capps, VIRL Board Trustee, City of Duncan
Brenda Patrick, VIRL Board Trustee, Village of Gold River
Jeff Virtanen, VIRL Board Trustee, Town of Ladysmith
Carolyne Austin, VIRL Board Trustee, Town of Lake Cowichan
Ian Savage, VIRL Board Trustee, District of Lantzville
Terry Carty, VIRL Board Trustee, Village of Masset
Erin Hemmens, VIRL Board Trustee, City of Nanaimo
Debra Toporowski, VIRL Board Trustee, Municipality of North Cowichan
Jack McClintock, VIRL Board Trustee, District of North Saanich
Teresa Patterson, VIRL Board Trustee, City of Parksville
Sharie Minions, VIRL Board Trustee, City of Port Alberni
Bruce Lloyd, VIRL Board Trustee, Village of Port Alice

Ian Gould, VIRL Board Trustee, Village of Port Clements
Fred Robertson, VIRL Board Trustee, District of Port Hardy
Scott Harrison, VIRL Board Trustee, Town of Qualicum Beach
Jesse Embree, VIRL Board Trustee, Village of Queen Charlotte
Norm Kirschner, VIRL Board Trustee, Village of Sayward
Barbara Fallot, VIRL Board Trustee, Town of Sidney
Jeff Bateman, VIRL Board Trustee, District of Sooke
Lynda Llewellyn, VIRL Board Trustee, Village of Tahsis
Duncan McMaster, VIRL Board Trustee, District of Tofino
Marilyn McEwen, VIRL Board Trustee, District of Ucluelet
Barb Lewis, VIRL Board Trustee, Village of Zeballos
Penny Cote, VIRL Board Trustee, Alberni/Clayoquot Regional District
Mike Hicks, VIRL Board Trustee, Capital Regional District
Jayme Kennedy, VIRL Board Trustee, Central Coast Regional District
Daniel Arbour, VIRL Board Trustee, Comox Valley Regional District
Blaise Salmon, VIRL Board Trustee, Cowichan Valley Regional District
Andrew Hory, VIRL Board Trustee, Mt. Waddington Regional District
Vanessa Craig, VIRL Board Trustee, Regional District of Nanaimo
Evan Putterill, VIRL Board Trustee, North Coast Regional District
Andrew Fall, VIRL Board Trustee, qathet Regional District
Rosemary Bonanno, Executive Director, VIRL
VIRL Executive Leadership Group

Administration
Box 3333 | 6250 Hammond Bay Road
Nanaimo, BC Canada V9R 5N3
t: 250.758.4697 **f:** 250.758.2482
e: info@virl.bc.ca **w:** www.virl.bc.ca

November 26, 2020

The Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, MLA
Minister of Education
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
Original sent via email: educ.minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister,

Re: Libraries are Essential Services in BC

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us in ways we previously thought unimaginable. In the process, the pandemic has laid bare large portions of our society who were not equipped with the resources, technology, or ability to adapt to a world with fewer physical connections, and an ever increasing reliance on digital tools and skills. These inequities are not the result of COVID-19, but the pandemic has cast them under a stark spotlight.

BC's libraries are ideally positioned to confront these challenges. We are able to remove barriers that lead to social isolation by providing the technology, resources and expertise needed to facilitate access to government and community services, while bringing people together to build community connections.

The services and spaces Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) offers are of vital importance to the 38 communities we serve. VIRL has the means and the strategies to serve our customers safely, and to adjust our services in accordance with public health measures. We have implemented a phased Recovery Plan purposefully designed to be responsive and quick to pivot.

All VIRL service locations are open. In almost every branch, this means the doors are open, the collections are browsed in person and online, and in many cases, public computers are available. We can very quickly adjust our Recovery Plan to meet local circumstances.

Libraries also play a crucial role in providing access to important resources. Through public funds, we allow people to get lost in a book, learn a new skill, stream a thought-provoking film, and so much more. During the pandemic, these escapes and opportunities are so important for the ongoing mental health and wellbeing of British Columbians.

For so many in our province, libraries are an essential service. We heard this time and time again during the first wave and subsequent shutdowns. Over the past few months, we have learned so much and we are well equipped to continue to safely offer our services to our Island communities.

As the province continues to assess the ongoing risks presented by COVID's second wave, we ask you to consider libraries as essential during the pandemic and that you preserve our ability to operate during any further COVID-19 restrictions. Similar to other service providers listed in BC's List of COVID-19 Essential Services, libraries provide daily services essential to economically disadvantaged and otherwise vulnerable individuals including seniors, children, and individuals with disabilities.

We are a vital community service and we can help ensure even the most vulnerable needs will be met as your government strives to "build back better". We know we can continue to safely reduce barriers, keep people entertained, and play an important role in combatting some of the pandemic's most pressing social challenges, including the ongoing and pervasive mental health challenges impacting our communities and community members.

The Vancouver Island Regional Library Board of Trustees, encourages you to consider libraries an essential part of the community ecosystem — one which can assist in every phase of our province's reopening and recovery. In closing, we invite you to watch these two short videos — the first illustrates the value and importance of libraries to community members during COVID-19, and the second showcases our staff and spaces as dynamic, vital, and safe.

Thank you for considering our request. If you have any questions or require additional information, please reach out at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Brenda Leigh
Chair, VIRL Board of Trustees

Gaby Wickstrom
Vice Chair, VIRL Board of Trustees

cc: The Honourable Adrian Dix, MLA, Minister of Health
Andy Adams, Mayor, City of Campbell River
Russ John Arnott, Mayor, Town of Comox
Bob Wells, Mayor, City of Courtenay
Leslie Baird, Mayor, Village of Cumberland
Michelle Staples, Mayor, City of Duncan
Brad Unger, Mayor, Village of Gold River
Aaron Stone, Mayor, Town of Ladysmith
Rod Peters, Mayor, Town of Lake Cowichan
Mark Swain, Mayor, District of Lantzville
Barry Pages, Mayor, Village of Masset
Leonard Krog, Mayor, City of Nanaimo
Al Siebring, Mayor, Municipality of North Cowichan
Geoff Orr, Mayor, District of North Saanich
Ed Mayne, Mayor, City of Parksville
Sharie Minions, Mayor, City of Port Alberni
Kevin Cameron, Mayor, Village of Port Alice

Douglas Daugert, Mayor, Village of Port Clements
Dennis Dugas, Mayor, District of Port Hardy
Gaby Wickstrom, Mayor, Town of Port McNeill
Brian Wiese, Mayor, Town of Qualicum Beach
Kris Olsen, Mayor, Village of Queen Charlotte
Mark Baker, Mayor, Village of Sayward
Cliff McNeil-Smith, Mayor, Town of Sidney
Maja Tait, Mayor, District of Sooke
Martin Davis, Mayor, Village of Tahsis
Britt Chalmers, Acting Mayor, District of Tofino
Mayco Noel, Mayor, District of Ucluelet
Julie Colborne, Mayor, Village of Zeballos
John Jack, Chair, Alberni/Clayoquot Regional District
Colin Plant, Chair, Capital Regional District
Samuel Schooner, Chair, Central Coast Regional District
Jesse Ketler, Chair, Comox Valley Regional District
Aaron Stone, Chair, Cowichan Valley Regional District
Andrew Hory, Chair, Mt. Waddington Regional District
Ian Thorpe, Chair, Regional District of Nanaimo
Barry Pages, Chair, North Coast Regional District
Patrick Brabazon, Chair, qathet Regional District
Michele Babchuk, Chair, Strathcona Regional District
Rosemary Bonanno, Executive Director, VIRL
VIRL Executive Leadership Group

BRITISH COLUMBIA

November 26, 2020

Honourable Josie Osborne
Minister of Municipal Affairs
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Osborne:

Thank you for agreeing to serve British Columbians as Minister of Municipal Affairs. You are taking on this responsibility at a time when people in our province face significant challenges as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 has turned the lives of British Columbians upside down. None of us expected to face the challenges of the past number of months, yet British Columbians have demonstrated incredible resilience, time and time again. We will get through the pandemic and its aftereffects by building on this resilience and focusing on what matters most to people.

British Columbians voted for a government focused on their priorities: fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, providing better health care for people and families, delivering affordability and security in our communities, and investing in good jobs and livelihoods in a clean-energy future.

I expect you – and the work of your ministry – to focus on the commitments detailed in our platform, *Working for You*, along with the following foundational principles:

- **Putting people first**: Since 2017, our government has focused on making decisions to meet people's needs. That focus drove our work in our first term and will continue to be our priority. British Columbians are counting on the government to keep them safe and to build an economic recovery that works for everyone, not just those at the top. Keeping people at the centre of everything we do means protecting and enhancing the public services people rely on and working to make life more affordable for everyone.

- **Lasting and meaningful reconciliation:** Reconciliation is an ongoing process and a shared responsibility for us all. The unanimous passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* was a significant step forward in this journey. True

…/2

Office of the Premier

Web Site: www.gov.bc.ca

Mailing Address: PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Location: Parliament Buildings Victoria

reconciliation will take time and ongoing commitment to work with Indigenous peoples as they move toward self-determination. Our government – and every ministry – must remain focused on creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to be full partners in our economy and providing a clear and sustainable path for everyone to work toward lasting reconciliation.

- **Equity and anti-racism:** Our province's history, identity and strength are rooted in its diverse population. Yet racialized and marginalized people face historic and present-day barriers that limit their full participation in their communities, workplaces, government and their lives. Our government has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic discrimination in all its forms – and every ministry has a role in this work. While our caucus elected a record number of women, more work remains to address gender equity. Delivering on our commitments to address racial discrimination will require a commitment by all of government to ensure increased IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) representation within the public service, including in government appointments. Our efforts to address systemic discrimination must also inform policy and budget decisions by reviewing all decisions through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens.

- **A better future through fighting climate change:** In 2018, our government launched our CleanBC climate action plan. CleanBC puts British Columbia on the path to a cleaner, better future by building a low-carbon economy with new clean-energy jobs and opportunities, protecting our air, land and water and supporting communities to prepare for climate impacts. It is every Minister's responsibility to ensure your ministry's work continues to achieve CleanBC's goals.

- **A strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone:** We will continue our work to support British Columbians through the pandemic and the economic recovery by investing in health care, getting people back to work, helping businesses and communities, and building the clean, innovative economy of the future. Our plan will train the workforce of tomorrow, help businesses hire and grow and invest in the infrastructure needed to build our province.

The pandemic has reminded us that we're strongest when we work together. Delivering on our commitments to people will require a coordinated effort with your cabinet and caucus colleagues, supported by the skilled professionals in the public service. You will also support your cabinet colleagues to do their work, particularly where commitments cross ministry lines.

British Columbians expect their elected representatives to work together to advance the broader public good despite their partisan perspectives. That means seeking out, fostering and championing good ideas, regardless of their origin. I expect you to reach out to elected members from all parties as you deliver on your mandate. Further, you will build thoughtful and sustained relationships through public and stakeholder engagement plans that connect with people to incorporate their perspectives early in the policy development process. These plans must include measurable outcomes and ensure active dialogue and ongoing outreach in your ministry's actions and priorities.

…/3

Over the course of our mandate, I expect you will make progress on the following items:

- Work with UBCM and local government elected leaders to support their communities through the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery.

- Improve local communities' ability to respond to the COVID-19 crisis by launching the new Strengthening Community Fund to enable local governments to apply for funding to help them tackle street disorder, cleanliness and public safety, and improve their ability to respond to challenges posed to businesses and neighbourhoods by homelessness.

- Work with cabinet colleagues to redouble our government's efforts to streamline foreign credential assessments processed by various regulatory bodies and health-related colleges to make sure immigrants can more easily strengthen their language skills and access job opportunities in their field of training.

- With support from the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing, work to bring down the cost of housing for people by streamlining and modernizing development permitting and approvals.

- Work with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to support economic recovery in communities across B.C. by continuing to build important infrastructure projects, including through StrongerBC and the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

- With support from the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, lead work on the Integrated Transportation and Development Strategy to ensure greater alignment between transportation and land-use planning.

- Support the work of the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing and the Minister of Finance to continue work to provide relief for commercial tenants with triple-net leases who are paying high property taxes.

- Support the work of the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Housing to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including those living in encampments.

- Support the work of the Minister of Finance to establish Property Assessed Clean Energy financing.

Our work as a government must continually evolve to meet the changing needs of people in this province. Issues not contemplated in this letter will come forward for government action and I ask you to bring such matters forward for consideration by the Planning and Priorities Committee of cabinet, with the expectation that any proposed initiatives will be subject to the usual cabinet and Treasury Board oversight. Your ministry's priorities must reflect our government's overall strategic plan as determined by cabinet.

All cabinet members are expected to review, understand, and act according to the *Members' Conflict of Interest Act* and conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity. As a minister

…/4

of the Crown, your conduct will reflect not only on you but on cabinet and our government. You are responsible for providing strong, professional and ethical leadership within cabinet and your ministry. You will establish a collaborative working relationship with your deputy minister and the public servants under their direction who provide the professional, non-partisan advice that is fundamental to delivering on our government's priorities. You must ensure your minister's office meets the highest standards for integrity and provides a respectful and rewarding environment for all staff.

My commitment to all British Columbians is to do my level best to make sure people's lives are better, safer and more affordable. I believe the challenges we face can and will be overcome by working together. By way of this letter, I am expressing my faith that people can expect the same commitment from you.

Sincerely,

John Horgan
Premier

Mariah Patterson

Subject: Chemainus Library

From: [redacted] >
Sent: December 1, 2020 3:07 PM
To: Board Communications <BoardCommunications@virl.bc.ca>
Subject: Chemainus Library

Hello. I am hoping you will direct this to the proper channels of communication. I have been so disppointed with the staff at the new library. I have yet to have a successful visit at my branch. The lady [redacted] is nearly impossible to understand with her mask on and she has yet to know what she is doing when I have requested support with a lost library card, my books that were online ordered, how to assist me when the rules changed so we could enter the library, on 4 occasions my library books state online that they are raedy for pickup and when I get there they are not there and she doesn't know what to do.....and a few other minor annoyances. I certainly understand the covid situation but not incompetence at this level. Today 4 staff were on and this woman and another staff ran around in "circles" trying to convince me that even if my computer said there were books in that in fact they were not in and then to turn around and say well maybe, And then check to find them somewhere else, only to tell me they were just to competent!! Seriously, covid is not time for me to be "hanging" around while they are not getting things done. I am saddened to write this as it is not my nature to do so, but today was just enough! Once I would like to go to my library and understand the staff and also receive my books. Thank you for listening.
[redacted]

Sent from my iPad

Administration
Box 3333 | 6250 Hammond Bay Road
Nanaimo, BC Canada V9R 5N3
t: 250.758.4697 **f:** 250.758.2482
e: info@virl.bc.ca **w:** www.virl.bc.ca

December 18, 2020

[redacted]
Original via email: [redacted]

Dear [redacted],

Re: Chemainus Library

Your email was forwarded to my attention for follow-up.

Thank you for reaching out with your concerns about the service you received at the Chemainus branch of Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL). I spoke with the branch's Customer Service Librarian and she was able to convey the following information:

- There is a challenge communicating clearly with a mask on when behind Plexiglas. Staff have been reminded about the importance of speaking clearly to customers in light of these challenges.
- We have moved forward to ensure all staff receive the most recent training opportunities (including how to resolve an issue with our digital catalogue and holds notifications).
- Staff will ensure, each morning, that all holds for the day are in proper order.

The pandemic is creating ongoing challenges for staff, but rest assured, we are committed to providing the highest possible customer service.

If I can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Melissa Legacy
Director, Library Services and Planning

cc: VIRL Board of Trustees
Executive Leadership Group
Assistant Director, Experience & Engagement, Central

From: [redacted]
To: Board Communications
Subject: grateful to VIRL Cowichan staff
Date: December 3, 2020 4:27:31 PM

Hello VIRL Board,
A good news tale….Yesterday I accidently dropped the birthday card to our granddaughter into the Cowichan branch return slot along with a dvd. I discovered my mistake when I got to the post office to get a stamp for the envelope…..no card/envelope, which was already addressed. By then the library was closed.
Back I go to the library today, hoping they had the card. Well they didn't…because they had already put a stamp on it and mailed it. Such kindness and thoughtfulness of the staff should be recognized. I am so grateful.
~ [redacted]

Administration
Box 3333 | 6250 Hammond Bay Road
Nanaimo, BC Canada V9R 5N3
t: 250.758.4697 **f:** 250.758.2482
e: info@virl.bc.ca **w:** www.virl.bc.ca

December 18, 2020

[redacted]
Original via Email: [redacted]

Dear [redacted],

Re: Grateful to VIRL Cowichan staff

Thank you so much for sending the Board this wonderful note. I was not surprised in the least to read of the exemplary service you received at our Cowichan branch. VIRL staff truly are amazing!

I hope your granddaughter has the happiest of birthdays and we look forward to seeing you both soon at the library.

All the best to you and yours this holiday season.

Sincerely,

Brenda Leigh
Chair, VIRL Board of Trustees

cc: VIRL Board of Trustees
Executive Leadership Group

Administration
Box 3333 | 6250 Hammond Bay Road
Nanaimo, BC Canada V9R 5N3
t: 250.758.4697 **f:** 250.758.2482
e: info@virl.bc.ca **w:** www.virl.bc.ca

December 21, 2020

VIRL Executive Director Rosemary Bonanno Announces Retirement

On behalf of the Board of Trustees for Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL), I announce the retirement of our Executive Director, Rosemary Bonanno, effective September 10, 2021. I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the exceptional leadership, passion, and dedication that Rosemary has provided to VIRL, our organization, and the communities we serve.

Rosemary has left an indelible mark of success on every library system she has led over her career, from East Gwillimbury Public Library, to Vaughan Public Libraries, and then Vancouver Island Regional Library. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of her achievements. While at East Gwillimbury Public Library, she received the Ministers Award for Excellence for developing a marketing strategy for small libraries. During her tenure at Vaughan Public Libraries, she was awarded the Ontario Library Association's W.J. Robertson Medallion for Librarian of the Year. With international partners, *Global Librarian* was deployed to offer reference service 24x7 in Vaughan Ontario, Surrey British Columbia, South Hampton United Kingdom, and Eastern Regional Libraries in Melbourne Australia. The initiative was recognized by Industry Canada for its innovation.

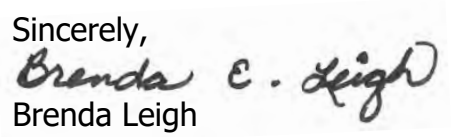
When Rosemary took the helm at VIRL in 2007, she found herself overseeing a vast library system in need of inspiration, innovation, and renewal. Since her arrival, she has steered the organization through a great process of renewal and reorganization. VIRL has become a true leader and has been recognized on the provincial, national, and international stages. In 2015, *Librarians on the Radio* was the recipient of the British Columbia Library Association's (BCLA) Advocacy and Marketing Merit Award. The following year, the same program was bestowed the American Library Associations (ALA) Presidential Citation for Innovation in International Library Programing. In 2019, a system wide initiative, called Indigenous Voices, was recognized as an important part of VIRL's efforts to facilitate reconciliation for Indigenous and non-Indigenous members. It won both BCLA's Building Better Communities Award and the ALA's Presidential Citation for Innovative International Programming.

Throughout her career, Rosemary has advocated that libraries are "quality of Life" services at the centre of all communities. Libraries are great equalizers, gathering places, one-stop destinations for a great diversity of needs and interests. During her tenure, the Board developed, approved, and implemented a Facilities Master Plan that plotted a sustainable path for the development of VIRL service locations. Since the Master Plan was adopted in 2010, Rosemary has overseen the construction and refurbishment of 17 branches in communities across VIRL's service area. It is not just the larger communities that have benefitted from Rosemary's achievements. Smaller, remote, and rural communities are also seeing, first hand, her commitment to leading library services. Under Rosemary's leadership, VIRL launched a Rural Library Prototype Branch, a sustainable, scalable philosophy to building that allows VIRL to construct new branches in many of our small and isolated communities.

These are just some of the things Rosemary has accomplished in her impressive career. On behalf of all VIRL Trustees, it brings me great pleasure to thank Rosemary for all she has done for our library system over the past 14 years. She has built an incredible foundation for continued growth and success in the future!

We wish you all the best in your retirement.

Sincerely,



Brenda Leigh
Chair, VIRL Board of Trustees

Vancouver Island Regional Library covers a vast geographic area of 42,000 km^2, with 39 branches from Sooke and Sidney in the south to Port Hardy, Haida Gwaii and the Central Coast. Our system includes a mix of urban, rural, and remote communities working together to enrich lives and provide universal access to knowledge, lifelong learning and literacy.

Office of the Chair

770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay, BC V9N 0G8
Tel: 250-334-6000 Fax: 250-334-4358
Toll free: 1-800-331-6007
www.comoxvalleyrd.ca

Comox Valley REGIONAL DISTRICT

File: 7960-01

December 22, 2020

Sent via email only: executivedirector@virl.bc.ca

Rosemary Bonanno
Executive Director
Vancouver Island Regional Library
Box 3333 - 6250 Hammond Bay Road
Nanaimo, BC Canada V9R 5N3

Dear Ms. Bonanno:

Re: Retirement

Congratulations on your pending retirement!

Your commitment to implement change, and growth within the Vancouver Island Regional Library system is commendable. The improvements made to access to library services within our entire region benefits individuals and as a community.

On behalf of the Comox Valley Regional District board we wish you all the best for 2021 and on your well-deserved retirement.

Sincerely,

Jesse Ketler
Chair

cc: Brenda Leigh, Chair, Vancouver Island Regional Library Board of Trustees

Administration
Box 3333 | 6250 Hammond Bay Road
Nanaimo, BC Canada V9R 5N3
t: 250.758.4697 **f:** 250.758.2482
e: info@virl.bc.ca **w:** www.virl.bc.ca

January 8, 2021

Re: Province extends health orders another month

On January 7, Dr. Bonnie Henry extended the province's health orders by another month, until February 5 at midnight. The province is currently seeing a growing number of cases as we are now two weeks removed from Christmas.

Our branches can continue to safely serve our customers and communities. Staff are doing an exemplary job of continuing to safely provide vital library services to our customers, and are to be commended for their efforts and commitment.

Staff have been reminded to maintain, as Dr. Henry describes it, "layers of protection" while at work: this means wearing masks, maintaining proper physical distances, ensuring our surfaces are sanitized frequently, washing our hands often and thoroughly, and not coming to work if they have any symptoms that could be COVID-related.

The latest updates from Dr. Henry are available on the Ministry of Health website: https://news.gov.bc.ca/ministries/health.

We will continue to watch and respond to the directives of Dr. Henry.

Wishing everyone health and safety.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Bonanno
Executive Director

cc: VIRL Board of Trustees
Executive Leadership Group

Media Releases

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grants allow VIRL to provide Digital Care Packages to combat isolation

Tuesday, December 1, 2020 – A series of grants from local Community Foundations is allowing Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) to help combat social isolation and foster increased digital literacy in care homes and other facilities in our service area. The VIRL Connects initiative is providing digital care packages and support to some of our community members most in need.

"By offering digital tools and resources, we're building resilience, and providing the means for people to connect with loved ones, take advantage of VIRL's digital resources, participate in virtual library events, and build important digital literacy skills," says Anne O'Shea, VIRL's Deputy Executive Director and COO. "In the era of COVID-19, social connections and digital access are crucially important. I would like to thank all of the participating Community Foundations for supporting this important undertaking for our communities."

VIRL Connects provides a range of services and technologies in the digital care packages, including:

- **Chromebooks**: simple to use laptops that provide access to important cloud-based apps
- **Chromecasts**: Devices that allow Smart TVs to cast the screens of tablets and smartphones
- **Smart TVs**: Flat screen TVs with internet access and the ability to cast from other devices
- **Internet Subsidies**: Help with the monthly cost of maintaining an internet subscription for a six-month period
- **Support**: Staff and residents will receive support from library staff to set up their digital care packages, connect to library services and learn about the hundreds of thousands of eBooks, audiobooks, TV shows, movies and classes available online through virl.bc.ca

The first partner facility to receive its package was Qualicum Manor in Qualicum Beach. The long term care facility requested and received a Smart TV, Chromebook and Chromecast for its residents.

"We are incredibly grateful to have received our digital care package courtesy of VIRL," say Leanne Brown and Lonnie Smith, Activity Directors at Qualicum Manor. "We look forward to sharing these valuable resources with our residents and helping them get more comfortable and acclimatized with this important technology."

Equipment for the other partner facilities has arrived and digital care packages are being prepared to be shipped. VIRL has reached out to 65 care facilities — 26 have already confirmed their interest and are being issued a care package. Communities with participating facilities include Nanaimo, Qualicum Beach, Parksville, Masset, Port Alberni, and the Comox Valley.

VIRL staff have recently turned their attention to other facilities and organizations that would benefit from these resources, including youth centres, outreach organizations, and more.

To date, VIRL has received $56,516 in funding from the following Community Foundations:

- Alberni Valley Community Foundation $6,441
- Comox Valley Community Foundation $7,145
- Gwaii Trust $3,175
- Nanaimo Foundation $21,435
- Parksville Qualicum Community Foundation $8,320
- Victoria Foundation $10,000

The funding is part of the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund, totaling $350 million nationwide.

Additional updates will be provided as they become available. A photo is provided below.

########

Media Contact
David Carson, Director, Corporate Communications and Strategic Initiatives
Cell: 250.327.3651
Email: dcarson@virl.bc.ca

VIRLConnects
Digital Care Packages from Your Library

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Give Library and Get Local this holiday season

Thursday, December 10, 2020 – The library is the gift that keeps on giving and giving and giving. This year, Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) is partnering with businesses from Bella Coola to Sooke to Give Library this holiday season. Visit any participating business and grab some beautifully packaged library cards — they're the perfect stocking stuffer for the book lover, film fanatic, gamer, music fan, newshound, language lover, or lifelong learner on your holiday gift list.

VIRL library branches are stocked with Give Library bookmarks which would also make a great stocking stuffer, or addition to a new book. The bookmarks include a QR code so people can sign up on the spot using VIRL's online registration system.

"We decided to try something a little different this year to help attract more people into local businesses," says Natasha Bartlett, VIRL's Divisional Manager of Marketing and Communications. "Businesses everywhere have been struggling for months as a result of the pandemic — we're hoping to help bring people in to these businesses and increase awareness and interest in the library with this campaign. We're thrilled to have so many businesses taking part."

The perfect stocking stuffer, a library card can be used at any of our 39 branches and gives cardholders instant access to:

- Millions of books
- Thousands of ebooks and audiobooks
- Streaming movies
- Downloadable and streaming mp3 music
- Magazines and newspapers from around the world
- Free access to Lynda.com to learn photography, graphic design, and more
- Learning a new language online with Mango Languages

Participating businesses:

Bella Coola
Townsite Ace Hardware
635 Cliff Street
(250) 799-5353

Cowichan Lake
Fields
33 South Shore Road
(250)749-7795

Sword Fern Boutique
89 South Shore Road
(250)932-2220

Campbell River
French Creek Collective
990 Shoppers Row
(250)914-0355

Berwick by the Sea
1353 16 Ave
(250) 850-1353

Banners Restaurant
1319 Shoppers Row
(250)286-6711

The Island Grind
801 Hilchey Road
(250)418-4401

Cumberland
Cumberland Bakery
2747 Dunsmuir Avenue
(250)336-2411

Masset
The Ground Gallery & Coffee House
1599 Main Street
(250)626-5251

Nanaimo
Country Club Mall
3200 N Island Hwy,
(250)758-5544

Lucid
35 Commercial Street
(250)753-3571

North Town Mall – London Drugs
4750 Rutherford Road Suite 175,
(250)760-2030

Woodgrove Mall
North, 6631 Island Hwy,
(250) 390-2721

Port Hardy
Fields
8950 Granville Street
(250)949-9222

The Book Nook at Café Guido
7135 Market Street
(250)949-9808

Port McNeill
Fields
43-1705 Campbell Way
(250)956-4465

Queen Charlotte City
Queen B's Café
3208 Wharf Street
(250)559-4463

Sidney
Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea
9811 Seaport Place

(250)665-7511

Sooke
Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce
6631 Sooke Road #1A
(250)642-6112

The Stick in the Mud
6715 Eustace Road
778-352-0077

Tofino
Clarity Integrated Health Studio
922 Tree Frog Lane

Mark Hobson Gallery
366 Campbell Street
(250)725-3120

Picnic Charcuterie
700 Industrial Way
(250)889-5738

The Factory
102-551 Campbell Street
(250)266-1052

Local chambers of commerce were instrumental in getting word out about this campaign to local businesses in VIRL's service area.

More information about Give Library is available at https://virl.bc.ca/give/.

########

Media Contact
David Carson, Director, Corporate Communications and Strategic Initiatives
Cell: 250.327.3651
Email: dcarson@virl.bc.ca

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Q and A on the *Indian Act* with Bob Joseph

Wednesday, January 13, 2021 – Vancouver Island Regional Library is hosting a free online event with Indigenous Relations expert and bestselling author of *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act*, Bob Joseph. This virtual seminar, called a Q and A on the *Indian Act* with Bob Joseph, will include a presentation from Bob and an opportunity for attendees to ask questions to him.

When: Thursday, January 28, starting at 2pm
Where: Hosted virtually on Zoom
How: Click here to register

"We are honored to have such an acclaimed and respected scholar and writer partner with us on this important topic," says Melissa Legacy, VIRL's Director of Library Services and Planning. "Bob's presentations are informative, thought-provoking, insightful, entertaining, and accessible — they shed a clear light on a dark chapter in our history, and provide us with opportunities to learn from the past as we strive for a better future."

Bob Joseph is a member of the Gwawa'enuxw Nation, Gayaxala (Thunderbird) clan, and the founder and president of Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., which offers training on Indigenous relations to government and corporate clients. His book, *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act* is the essential guide to understanding the legal document and its repercussions on generations of Indigenous Peoples.

Space for this event is limited so prompt registration is encouraged. A zoom link will be sent to those registered prior to the event.

Attendees are encouraged to read *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act* and/or watch this interview with journalist, Steve Paikin prior to the event.

The official welcome will be presented by Dr. Evelyn Voyageur. She is Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw, a fluent Kwak'wala speaker, and respected matriarch. The event will be moderated by VIRL Customer Service Librarian, Jessica Humphries.

########

Media Contact
David Carson, Director, Corporate Communications and Strategic Initiatives
Cell: 250.327.3651
Email: dcarson@virl.bc.ca

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exciting new learning resource at VIRL for students from grades 3 – 12

Wednesday, January 20, 2021 – The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the ways in which students in BC learn in school. Whether learning at home, online, or in a classroom, Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) is here to help with a new online resource called SOLARO, designed specifically around the BC curriculum with practice tests, study materials, and more for students in grades 3 – 12.

"The pandemic has created challenges for students and families across our service area," says Louise Broadley, VIRL's Divisional Manager of Collections and Support Services. "With SOLARO, we now have a resource that will benefit students in some of the most crucial learning years, and help set BC students up for success. We are thrilled to offer this free service to anyone with a VIRL library card."

Based on the BC curriculum, students and home learners in grades 3 to 12 can now access study materials and practice tests in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science with their VIRL library card. Learners can also create personalized flashcards and study notes.

In addition to SOLARO, VIRL also offers a suite of other learning resources for students, educators and parents. All of these resources are available on VIRL's home learning page at https://virl.bc.ca/read-watch-listen/audience/kids/home-learning/.

To sign up for a VIRL library card, either register online or visit any branch.

########

Media Contact
David Carson, Director, Corporate Communications and Strategic Initiatives
Cell: 250.327.3651
Email: dcarson@virl.bc.ca