



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee
From: Susan Walters
Chief Librarian, Richmond Public Library
Date: June 4, 2019
File:
Re: UBCM Resolution regarding Restoring Provincial Support for Libraries

Staff Recommendation

1. That a letter of support for the City of Victoria's proposed Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) resolution titled "Restoring Provincial Support for Libraries", as attached to the staff report titled "UBCM Resolution regarding Restoring Provincial Support for Libraries" dated June 4, 2019 from the Chief Librarian and Secretary to the Board, be submitted to UBCM for consideration at their annual general meeting; and
2. That a copy of the letter be sent to local Members of the Provincial Legislative Assembly.

Susan Walters
Chief Librarian and Secretary to the Board
Richmond Public Library
(604-231-6466)

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Intergovernmental Relations & Protocol Unit Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

This report requests support for a resolution to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) for increased provincial grant funding to British Columbia public libraries. This resolution was initiated by the Greater Victoria Public Library. It applies the principles of Council's Long Term Financial Management Strategy (LTFMS policy 3707), supporting policy #3: Alternative Revenues and Economic Development:

"Any increases in alternative revenues and economic development beyond all the financial strategy targets can be utilized for increased level of service or reduce the tax rate."

Analysis

Background

Public Libraries and Library Federations established under the authority of the *Library Act* are eligible for provincial funding. The BC Government provides \$14 million in grants to libraries annually. Libraries are the most equitable and accessible public amenities across BC, consisting of 71 library systems with 247 locations, and require ongoing reliable investment.

Richmond Public Library's 2019 annual budget is \$10.4 million, with 93.4% of the funding provided by the City of Richmond. Based on grants in prior years and increase in population, RPL's 2019 budget identified the provincial contribution as \$390,000 which represents 3.8% of the overall RPL budget.

Financial Implications of Provincial Funding

Of the \$14 million in provincial grants, RPL received an average of \$394,181 annually in the last five years (2015-2019).

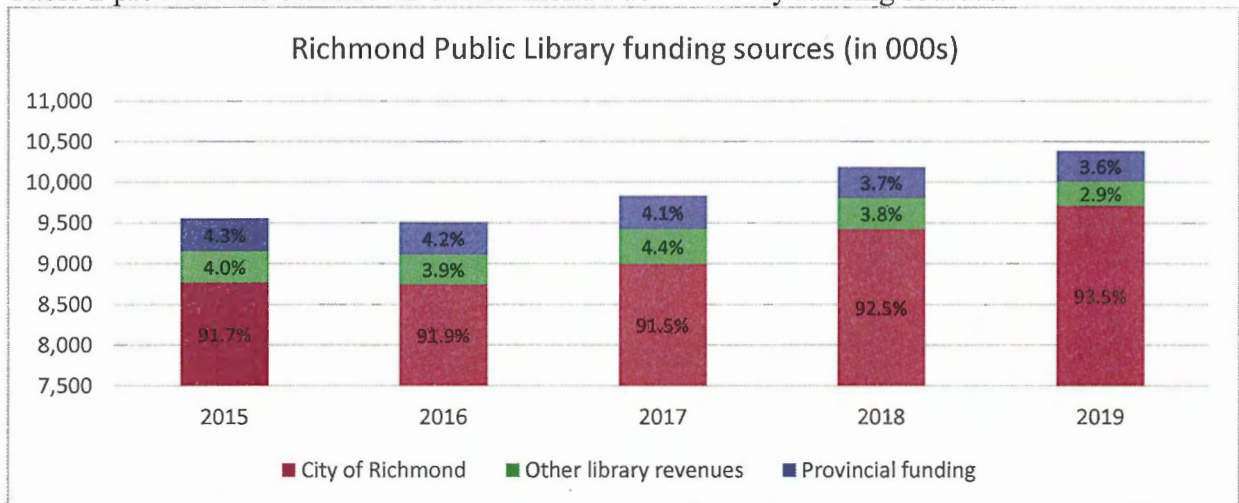
In 2019, the library received \$376,528, a variance of \$13,472 or 3.5% from the budgeted amount and a reduction of \$3,546 or 0.9% from 2018. This reduction has occurred due to increased resource sharing in the province and reallocating the funding to other library associations, keeping the total disbursements within the BC Government's \$14 million budget.

The operating grants are based on per capita calculations, which are now using the 2016 Census population rather than the higher annually updated provincial population estimate.

Table 1 provides the breakdown of the provincial funding to the Richmond Public Library for the last five years:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Per Capita Operating	358,319	358,319	369,836	352,990	352,990
One Card Grant	40,873	35,153	30,299	20,593	16,664
BC Equity Grant	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500
Resource Sharing Grants	2,831	3,128	2,166	1,991	2,374
Provincial Grant Total	406,523	401,100	408,601	380,074	376,528

Table 2 provides the breakdown of Richmond Public Library funding sources:



As illustrated above, there is an upward trend of financial support from the City. This stems from declining revenue sources (fines and charges) as most libraries increase digital collections and the downward trend from the provincial funding. The BC Government has kept the total disbursement at \$14 million for over a decade while the library is facing growing pressure from non-discretionary increases annually such as inflation increases and demand for new and expanded services.

This spring, the Library Partners Group, which consists of the Association of BC Public Library Directors, BC Libraries Association, BC Libraries Trustees Association and the BC Libraries Co-op, took a unified funding message to the provincial 2019 Budget Lock Up. At the request of the Minister of Education a project proposal for one-time funding of \$2 million to support digital literacy for BC libraries was shared. To date, there has been no change in provincial funding to public libraries or an update on the digital literacy proposal. The Library Partners are supporting a new campaign **#20million2020** to seek increased provincial funding.

UBCM Resolutions

Provincial funding for libraries was reduced by 20% in 2009 from \$17.6 million to \$14 million and since 2010, public libraries have received \$14 million in annual funding. Libraries appreciate the stability of this grant funding, however with no annual increase in funding support from the

province, there is increased pressure on the City of Richmond and RPL's limited revenue options, due to the *Library Act*, to address inflationary pressure and demand for new and expanded services. Additionally, the grant funding allocated to RPL continues to decrease annually and does not correlate to Richmond's growing population.

Libraries are falling behind in their ability to meet growing needs and are seeking provincial funding that, at a minimum, includes annual increases to account for inflation. It is recommended that a letter of support for the City of Victoria's resolution be forwarded to the Union of BC Municipalities, requesting the province to restore library funding to a minimum of \$20 million. The resolution is included for reference (attachment 1).

Financial Impact

None

Conclusion

Libraries are the most equitable and accessible public amenities across BC, providing services to residents across 71 library systems with 247 locations. To meet residents' needs for new and expanded library services, BC libraries require ongoing reliable investment. This report recommends that a letter of support for the attached resolution be forwarded to the UBCM calling on the BC Government to restore library funding to a minimum of \$20 million.



Susan Walters, Chief Librarian and Secretary to the Board
Richmond Public Library
(604-231-6466)

Att. 1: Proposed UBCM Resolution – Restoring Provincial Support for Libraries

RESTORING PROVINCIAL SUPPORT FOR LIBRARIES

City of Victoria

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS libraries are a social justice equalizer that provide universal access to information and learning materials irrespective of income levels;

WHEREAS libraries are now so much more than books, building community and a sense of inclusion;

WHEREAS restoring funding to libraries supports the BC Government's agenda to eliminate poverty, improve access to education, and address social justice in BC;

WHEREAS funding rates have been frozen since 2009 and inflationary costs have increasingly been put on municipal property tax payers which is a regressive approach to funding public libraries;

WHEREAS municipalities face downloading from upper levels of government and have few tools to raise funds,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Council request the Mayor to write to the Minister of Education, the Premier, and all local MLAs strongly advocating for the restoration of library funding to a level that reflects both inflationary cost increases since 2009 and the value of this system to the Province.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be forwarded to other municipalities in the Capital Regional District and across BC requesting their favorable consideration.

To: General Purposes Committee Date: June 14, 2019

Cc: Robin Leung, Library Board Chair

From: Susan Walters, Chief Librarian

Re: Update – UBCM Resolution regarding Restoring Provincial Support for Libraries

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform the General Purposes Committee that new information has been obtained since submitting the above titled report.

The Union of BC Municipalities has confirmed that they are in receipt of a resolution titled “Restoring Sustainable Provincial Library Funding Levels” from the Town of Sidney. The resolution is included for your reference (attachment 1). Council is requested to consider sending a letter of support from the Mayor that would reference the Town of Sidney’s resolution rather than the City of Victoria’s resolution that was referenced in the original report.

Also included for your reference (attachment 2) is a letter that the Richmond Public Library Board is submitting to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, copied to Minister Rob Fleming, Richmond’s four MLAs and the four organizations that make up the BC Library Partners. Library boards, municipal Councils and library supporters across the province have been encouraged to communicate the need for increased provincial funding to libraries and to request that this issue be identified as a priority during the 2020 BC Government Budget process. Council is requested to consider sending a letter of support from the Mayor in advance of the June 28, 2019 deadline for submissions.



Susan Walters
Chief Librarian, Richmond Public Library



TOWN OF SIDNEY

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June 12, 2019

VIA EMAIL: jjustason@ubcm.ca

Jamee Justason
Information & Resolutions Coordinator
Union of British Columbia Municipalities
60 - 10551 Shellbridge Way
Richmond, BC V6X 2W9

Dear Jamee Justason:

Subject: Restoring Sustainable Provincial Library Funding Levels

Sidney Town Council, at a meeting held on June 10, 2019, considered a recommendation from the Vancouver Island Regional Library Board regarding provincial library funding and requesting a resolution be presented to UBCM for consideration.

Public libraries provide important services to the citizens in our community and Council encourages the Province to ensure they continue to receive sustainable funding. Enclosed is a resolution to be presented to UBCM.

Best Regards,



Sandi Nelson
Corporate Officer

Encl.

Resolution to UBCM:

RESTORING SUSTAINABLE PROVINCIAL LIBRARY FUNDING LEVELS

WHEREAS libraries in British Columbia are largely financed by levies paid by local governments, and where Provincial library funding has remained virtually stagnant for the past 30 years,

AND WHEREAS libraries in British Columbia provide open and equal public access to vital resources, including the internet, public computers, digital library tools and in-person service from expert staff to provide opportunities for all British Columbians to access knowledge and information and increase literacy in our communities and present informative programmes: including First Nations programmes and material which advance public understanding and reconciliation,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM strongly encourage the Government of British Columbia to give urgent attention to funding for BC public libraries by adding \$20 million to the BC Provincial Budget for 2020 for allocation to public libraries throughout BC,

AND FURTHER THAT the Province be requested to ensure that BC Libraries will henceforth receive Provincial Government financial support at a sustainable level in subsequent years following the 2020 Budget.



June 14, 2019

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Attention: Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

RE: 2020 BC Government Budget Priorities

Dear Committee Members:

This submission is on behalf of the Richmond Public Library Board of Trustees.

It is urgent that we bring to your immediate attention the importance of provincial support for public libraries. Public libraries are the only public institutions that are truly equitable in providing services for all community members so that they may participate in, and benefit from the social and economic development of their communities. Public libraries are also the only freely accessible public spaces for all British Columbians to connect with, learn about, and experience, the advantages of living in this province.

We know that public libraries significantly contribute to the government's goals for making life more affordable, improving services, and building a strong, sustainable and innovative economy for all British Columbians. This committee is aware of the important role of public libraries from the annual Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) resolutions regarding provincial public library funding and from the compelling stories and evidence annually submitted to this committee from public library trustees, staff, community members, and local government officials from across the province.

We appreciate the provincial government's recognition of the public library funding issue. In 2017 the provincial government, in response to the UBCM Resolution B60, acknowledged that the cost of delivering public library services has increased with changing technology and other demands. We are heartened that we all share the understanding of the need for adequate and reliable provincial funding for public libraries.

Richmond Public Library (RPL) is making a difference to community social and economic development and individual well-being through initiatives that open dialogue and advance the Truth and Reconciliation Council Calls to Action. Examples included:

- Initiated and implemented by RPL, the **Richmond Indigenous Collaborative Table** consists of stakeholders from the Richmond Public Library, the City of Richmond and local non-profit agencies. Its mandate, with the support and guidance of an Indigenous Advisor, is to seek out opportunities to build relationships with Indigenous communities for the purpose of integrating Indigenous arts, artists, and cultural and heritage practices into the activities of Richmond-based community amenities and programs.

- RPL's **Indigenous Services Plan** is a two-year foundation-building plan that maps out system-wide Indigenous services for our community. This includes programs and services for children, teens, caregivers and educators and outreach and collaborative initiatives that take place inside and outside the library. This plan has been submitted to the Musqueam Nation and will remain in draft form until reviewed by Chief and Council.
- In partnership with the City of Richmond's Public Art Program, RPL hosted a six-month series of engaging demonstrations and hands-on workshops led by four Musqueam artists. The **Musqueam Artists Workshops** provided our community with opportunities to personally interact with the artists, hear their unique stories and learn about Musqueam culture and heritage.

RPL is also supporting people in accessing the information and resources they need in areas such as personal enjoyment and life needs, new skill development, and connecting with government services. This is all with the help of expert library staff and connectivity to bridge the continued digital divide:

- Since 2013, RPL has actively participated in the **Library Champions** project through NewToBC. Hosting over 150 individual Library Champions and having reached over 9,300 newcomers, the library is actively helping newcomers find welcoming services and supporting their integration into the community.
- The **Young Entrepreneurs Program** began in 2017 and focuses on engaging youth in our community who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs. Designed for young adults and teens who have a passion for business, the goal of this series is to equip young entrepreneurs with the basic knowledge and tools required to be successful in their chosen industry.
- The **Launchpad** is an innovative learning space dedicated to enhancing and educating digital literacy. Focusing on community members of all ages and skill levels, this service provides collaborative learning opportunities in 3D printing, virtual reality, robotics, coding and more.

Public libraries are welcoming spaces which remove barriers to access and offer program opportunities that support life long learning and development for community members of all ages and backgrounds:

- RPL's **Inspire Curiosity** library card campaign is a three-year project that will ensure all Richmond students in grades 1, 4, and 8 have library cards.
- Our **Summer Reading with Your Library** focuses on summer reading for all ages and includes for 2019, in partnership with the City of Richmond's Sister Cities Advisory Committee, the *One Book, Three Cities* reading program for adults living in Richmond, Xiamen and Qingdao. This program will provide rich literacy experiences in person and online for all participants reading *Life of Pi* and RPL is proud to host the award-winning author, Yann Martel, in August.
- Richmond has one of the fastest growing senior populations across Canada, with many seniors experiencing social isolation. RPL is working to reduce isolation through its **Home Services** program, which delivers library materials to vulnerable seniors and library users with mobility challenges and/or print disabilities. Our **Home Delivery Drivers** program provides meaningful opportunities for adult volunteers to help isolated residents stay engaged and connected to library materials and services.

The Richmond Public Library Board of Trustees urge the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services to act on our shared understanding that provincial government financial support is critical to the successful continuance of public libraries and their positive impact on BC communities.

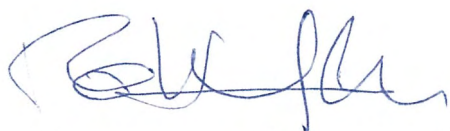
While libraries appreciate the stability of grant funding that the government has provided since 2010 (approximately \$14 million per year), the lack of regular increases means that each year libraries receive less support, due to inflationary pressures. After many years of this, libraries are falling behind in their ability to meet growing needs.

Since 2009 the public library community has asked that the provincial government provide funding for public libraries that at a minimum includes annual increases to account for inflation. Despite these repeated requests, for the past decade public libraries have received no increase to funding.

This year we are asking the provincial government for \$20 million for public libraries in 2020 as this will help address the chronic under-funding, lack of increases for inflation, and past government cuts.

Your attention to this urgent issue is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robin Leung', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robin Leung, Board Chair, on behalf of the Richmond Public Library Board of Trustees

cc: Rob Fleming, Minister of Education
Jas Johal, MLA, Richmond, Queensborough
Linda Reid, MLA, Richmond East
Teresa Wat, MLA, Richmond North Centre
John Yap, MLA, Richmond-Steveston

The BC Public Library Partners:

Scott Hargrove, Chair, Association of BC Public Library Directors
Babs Kelly, Executive Director, BC Library Trustees Association
Annette DeFaveri, Executive Director, BC Library Association
Kevin Millsip, Executive Director, BC Libraries Cooperative