



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

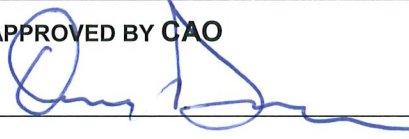
To: General Purposes Committee **Date:** June 7, 2022
From: Serena Lusk **File:** 11-7000-01/2022-Vol
Deputy CAO and GM, Community Services 01
Re: **Endorsement of UBCM Resolution for Library Funding**

Staff Recommendation

That the resolution in support of restoring provincial funding for public libraries, as outlined in Attachment 1 of the attached report from the Chief Librarian, be endorsed and forwarded to the Union of BC Municipalities for consideration during its 2022 Convention.

Serena Lusk
Deputy CAO and General Manager, Community Services
(604-233-3344)

Att. 1

REPORT CONCURRENCE
APPROVED BY CAO 

TO: Serena Lusk
Deputy CAO and GM, Community Services

FROM: Susan Walters
Chief Librarian

DATE: June 7, 2022

Recommendation

That the resolution in support of restoring provincial funding for public libraries, as outlined in Attachment 1, be endorsed and forwarded to the Union of BC Municipalities for consideration during its 2022 Convention.

Origin

This report requests Council support for a resolution to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) for restoring provincial support for public libraries. This resolution applies the principles of Council's Long Term Financial Management Strategy (LTFMS 3703), support 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

Libraries are critical to creating robust, resilient communities. They are community hubs, promoting belonging and equity. They support traditional and technological literacy, and through well-trained and compassionate staff, connect residents to essential services.

Public Libraries and Library Federations established under the authority of the Library Act are eligible for provincial funding. The BC Government provides annual operating grants to public libraries. As the most equitable and accessible public amenities across BC, consisting of 71 library systems, public libraries require ongoing reliable investment.

In recent years, the BC Library Partners (Association of BC Public Library Directors, BC Library Trustees Association, BC Libraries Association and the BC Libraries Cooperative) have advocated to the provincial government for increased funding. Since 2016, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services has made specific recommendations for public libraries.

While these appeals have increased understanding of the need for adequate and reliable provincial funding and yielded one-time funding for specific initiatives – \$3 million for Digital Initiatives (2020) and \$8 million for COVID-19 Relief and Recovery (2022) – they have not resulted in a permanent, sustained increase to provincial funding for BC public libraries. The draft Union of BC Municipalities resolution attached to this report was drafted by the Association of BC Public Library Directors to be shared with Library Boards across the Province.

At their meeting on May 27, 2022, the Richmond Public Library Board passed a motion to request Richmond City Council to consider a resolution to the Union of BC Municipalities to appeal for increased provincial support for public libraries.

Financial Implications of Provincial Funding

In 2009, provincial funding for libraries was reduced by 20%, from \$17.6 million to \$14 million. Since 2010, annual provincial funding has remained stagnant.

Richmond Public Library's 2022 annual budget is \$10.9 million, with 95.6% of the funding provided by the City of Richmond. Based on grants in prior years and increase in population, the

library's 2022 budget identified the provincial contribution as \$376,500 which represents 3.5% of the overall library budget.

Between 2015 and 2022, provincial operating grants to Richmond Public Library decreased 7.4% from \$406,253 to \$376,500 despite increases to cost of living and population growth.

Table 1 provides the breakdown of the provincial funding for the last eight years:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019-2022
Per Capita Operating	358,319	358,319	369,836	352,990	352,990
One Card Grant	40,873	35,153	30,229	20,593	16,664
BC Equity Grant	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500
Resource Sharing Grants	2,831	3,128	2,116	1,991	2,374
Provincial Grant Total	406,523	401,100	406,681	380,074	376,528

With no annual increase in funding support from the Province, there is increased financial pressure on the City of Richmond and Richmond Public Library's limited revenue options to address inflationary pressure and meet the demand for new and expanded services.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Supporting a Union of BC Municipalities resolution for restoring provincial funding for public libraries is aligned with the principles of Council's Long Term Financial Management Strategy and supports the advocacy work of the BC Library Partners and other municipalities across the province.



Susan Walters
Chief Librarian, Richmond Public Library
(604-231-6466)

Att. 1: Draft UBCM Resolution in Support of Restoring Provincial Funding for Public Libraries

Proposed Council Resolution Supporting Restoring Provincial Funding for Public Libraries

WHEREAS libraries in British Columbia are largely financed by levies paid by local governments, and where provincial library funding has remained stagnant for the past 10 years;

AND WHEREAS public libraries are central to communities, providing equitable access to vital resources including internet, computers, digital tools and in-person services from expert staff;

AND WHEREAS public libraries provide British Columbians with low-barrier services that support job seekers and small businesses, that increase literacy in communities, that advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and that promote equity and inclusion;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Richmond urge the Government of British Columbia to provide long-term sustainable funding for public libraries in BC;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Province ensure that BC Libraries will henceforth receive regular increases to Provincial Government funding in subsequent years.