

**BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD**

**AGENDA**

Regular Meeting

DATE: 2021 May 20 (Thursday)

PLACE: via Zoom

TIME: 19:00h (7:00pm)

**Our dream is:**

***A welcoming community where all people can explore, learn and connect.***

**To realize our dream:**

***We empower the community to engage with and share stories, ideas and information.***

We would like to recognize we are on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the hən̓q̓əmi̓n̓əm and Sḵwx̱wú7mesh speaking peoples, and to extend appreciation for the opportunity to hold a meeting on this territory.

PAGE NO.

1. **Motion** to receive agenda

2. **Minutes**

**Motion** to adopt the minutes of the regular meeting held 2021 April 15 as circulated

ENCLOSED

3. **Reports**

i) **Board Chair** (*verbal*)

ii) **Council Liaison** (*verbal*)

iii) **InterLINK Representative** (*verbal*)

4. **Items for Information**

i) **Intellectual Freedom and Library Collections**

**1-4**

ii) **COVID-19 and Library Operations**

**5-6**

5. **Other Business**

6. **Next Library Board Meeting** – 2021 June 17 at 7:00pm via Zoom.

7. **Adjournment**

**Motion** that the regular meeting adjourn and that the Board resolve itself into an in camera meeting from which the public is excluded to consider financial matters.





# Burnaby Public Library

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**TO:** CHAIR AND TRUSTEES  
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

**FROM:** ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, COLLECTIONS AND TECHNOLOGY  
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY

**SUBJECT:** INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

**DATE:** 2021 MAY 20

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** the Library Board receive this report for information.

**REPORT**

On March 2, 2021, Dr. Seuss Enterprises released a statement that prompted many libraries to review six Dr. Seuss titles in their collections. The statement, [published on the Seussville website](#), read:

*Today, on Dr. Seuss's Birthday, Dr. Seuss Enterprises celebrates reading and also our mission of supporting all children and families with messages of hope, inspiration, inclusion, and friendship.*

*We are committed to action. To that end, Dr. Seuss Enterprises, working with a panel of experts, including educators, reviewed our catalog of titles and made the decision last year to cease publication and licensing of the following titles: And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street, If I Ran the Zoo, McElligot's Pool, On Beyond Zebra!, Scrambled Eggs Super!, and The Cat's Quizzer. These books portray people in ways that are hurtful and wrong.*

*Ceasing sales of these books is only part of our commitment and our broader plan to ensure Dr. Seuss Enterprises's catalog represents and supports all communities and families.*

A few weeks later, [Scholastic released a statement](#) regarding a title by children's author and illustrator Dav Pilkey (creator of the very popular Dog Man graphic novels and Captain Underpants series):

*On Monday, March 22, 2021, with the full support of Dav Pilkey, Scholastic halted distribution of the 2010 book *The Adventures of Ook and Gluk*. Together, we recognize that this book perpetuates passive racism. We are deeply sorry for this serious mistake. Scholastic has removed the book from our websites, stopped fulfillment of any orders (domestically or abroad), contacted our retail partners to explain why this book is no longer available, and sought a return of all inventory. We will take steps to inform schools and libraries who may still have this title in circulation of our decision to withdraw it from publication.*

*Throughout our 100 year history, we have learned that trust must be won every day by total vigilance. It is our duty and privilege to publish books with powerful and positive representations of our diverse society, and we will continue to strengthen our review processes as we seek to support all young readers.*

Dav Pilkey also [released an apology](#) on his YouTube channel.

These events, and libraries' subsequent responses to them, have generated discussion and debate around the presence of racist material in library collections and in children's collections in particular; intellectual freedom and the role of the librarian in providing access to books and information (curator, trusted guide, gatekeeper or censor); practices of selection and deselection; and library vs publisher rights in determining which titles remain in library collections. These events have also sparked important and sometimes difficult conversations about libraries' commitments to decolonization, anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and the role of collections in creating (or not creating) spaces where people feel welcome and respected.

This report includes background reading from various perspectives for trustees' information, together with BPL context.

### **Background reading**

There are many articles and social media threads debating these issues. The following capture just some of the perspectives and include examples of responses from libraries.

- BC Library Trustees Association [Discussion Starters: Intellectual Freedom](#) includes an overview of intellectual freedom, ideas for discussion topics, and questions that trustees may want to consider.
- Deborah Caldwell-Stone, Director of ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom responds to the Dav Pilkey/Scholastic decision and opposes publishers attempts to remove books from libraries. From the OIF Blog: [Dav Pilkey and "Cancel Culture": A Conversation with Deborah Caldwell-Stone](#).
- Thunder Bay Public Library has taken the six Dr. Seuss titles out of circulation and is doing a diversity audit of its collections. CBC News article: [After Pulling Six Dr. Seuss Books, Thunder Bay Public Library Takes on Comprehensive Review of Offerings](#)
- A number of libraries have decided to keep the books on their shelves, and in some cases, in the children's collection. Libraries whose decisions have appeared in the media include [New York and Denver Public Libraries](#), [Mississauga Public Library](#),

and [Hamilton Public Library](#). In Hamilton, the public library opted to keep the books, while the school district opted to remove them.

- BookRiot, a well-known book review and editorial book website, calls on libraries to weed books with racist content. They reference a weeding method that includes removing books that are misleading, factually incorrect or have poor content: [Weed the Racist Books, Libraries](#).
- Creston Valley Public Librarian Saara Itkonen raises questions about curation vs. censorship in libraries in her column in the Creston Valley Advance: [No, Dr. Seuss Has Not Been Cancelled](#).
- New and BIPOC librarians are often left out of mainstream discussion of library issues. The following interview is one library student's thoughts on the Dr. Seuss issue: [Dr. Seuss v. Censorship: BIPOC Librarians Have Thoughts](#).

### **BPL Context**

- Burnaby Public Library's values include Intellectual Freedom. BPL endorses the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' statement on intellectual freedom and includes the statement in its [Intellectual Freedom Policy](#).
- BPL's [Collection Policy](#) guides selection and access to collections. The library welcomes requests from borrowers, and many items in the collection reflect their individual reading or viewing interests. Some of those items are in direct conflict with the interests and values of our staff.
- BPL's Collection Policy recognizes the right of an individual or group to make a complaint about the inclusion of material in the collection. Individuals or groups objecting to material in the collection are asked to make a written request for reconsideration.
- BPL received four requests for reconsideration in the last five years. The library did not receive any written requests for reconsideration in 2020, but did receive one request from a community member to not purchase a title. They described the book as anti-trans, and expressed concern for transgender people who might encounter the book. The library subsequently purchased the title and followed up with that community member.
- BPL staff undertook a review of the Dr. Seuss titles and have made the decision to move them to adult non-fiction. They will receive the call number for historical children's literature, and will not be used in children's programs or displays. Staff have also initiated a review of *Ook and Gluk* by Dav Pilkey. A decision on that title is expected in June.

Trustees are encouraged to bring questions, concerns and comments to the meeting, or to the Chief Librarian or the Assistant Director, Collections & Technology, at any time.



Trish Mau  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, COLLECTIONS & TECHNOLOGY  
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY





**TO:** CHAIR AND TRUSTEES  
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

**FROM:** CHIEF LIBRARIAN  
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY

**DATE:** 2021 MAY 20

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 AND LIBRARY OPERATIONS

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** the Board receive this report for information.

### **REPORT**

This report updates the Board on library operations during COVID-19

#### **Service Levels**

On April 10, in response to concerning COVID-19 case numbers, and staff anxiety arising from increased incidents with patrons not observing physical distancing, not wearing masks or refusing to leave the library after their one-hour limit expired, the library implemented the following changes:

- Patron visits limited to 15 minutes
- Library open for computer use, quick browsing, quick questions and checkout only
- All seating, except public computer seating, removed
- Public computer sessions limited to 15 minutes. Staff assist patrons from the desk, not on the floor.
- Newspaper and magazine browsing not permitted

The introduction of these changes led to a noticeable decrease in staff anxiety. The changes have had negative impacts on the service that patrons are offered.

The number of people using the library declined during this time, although it's not possible to say whether the decline is due to the reduced services, or whether patrons are staying away due to COVID concerns. Specifically:

- Checkout is at about 71% of pre-pandemic levels. In early January, it was at 80%.
- Patron visits are at about 34% of pre-pandemic levels. In early January, it was 40%.
- Computer use is at about 40% of pre-pandemic levels. In early January, it was 45%.

Plans are underway to increase the time that patrons can spend in the library to 45 minutes, and to resume seating for wifi and magazine reading. The implementation date of this service change will be guided by declining case numbers and by any changes to the provincial health office prohibition on in-person dining.

The library is not offering in-person programs or meeting room rentals, and has no plans to reintroduce these services at this time. Librarians are delivering virtual programs including

storytimes, conversation circles, and programs about Reconciliation and on the climate emergency.

### **Open Hours**

All library branches are open 7 days a week, as follows:

- Mon: 10am to 5pm (*pre-pandemic 10am to 9pm, 9am to 9pm at Metrotown*)
- Tue-Thu: 10am to 7pm (*pre-pandemic 10am to 9pm, 9am to 9pm at Metrotown*)
- Fri: 10am to 5pm (*pre-pandemic 10am to 9pm, 9am to 9pm at Metrotown, 10am to 6pm at Cameron*)
- Sat: 10am to 4pm (*pre-pandemic 10am to 6pm, 9am to 6pm at Metrotown*)
- Sun: 12pm to 4pm (*pre-pandemic 12pm to 5pm*)

There are no plans to expand hours at this time. Current safety protocols require additional staff to monitor occupancy levels, and perform enhanced cleaning duties. Evening hours continue to be quiet and staff have received very few requests to expand hours. Opening hours will be re-evaluated in July, with a tentative goal of a return to normal or near-normal hours in September.

### **Health & Safety**

Work continues to make sure that library spaces are safe for staff and patrons in line with the library's COVID-19 Safety Plan. Additional barriers have been installed in both staff and public areas, and shelving has been removed from the second floor workroom in order to install more desks. We are also continuing with additional cleaning protocols, thanks to the hard work of Building Service Workers.

In November 2020, the government of BC issued a mandatory mask order for public spaces, including libraries. Staff are enforcing this policy through conversation and signage.

In November 2020, the City of Burnaby's Emergency Operations Centre developed a revised working from home policy. As of early May 2021, 63 staff are working some of their time at home. Many staff have work that can't be done at home.

On May 11, Fraser Health announced that all library staff age 18+ can start booking vaccinations immediately.



Beth Davies  
CHIEF LIBRARIAN  
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY