

BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

AGENDA

Regular Meeting

DATE: 2024 June 20 (Thursday)

PLACE: Online

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

CHAIR: Sarah Bartnik

We would like to recognize we are on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the hə́nqəmińəh and Skwxwú7mesh speaking peoples, and to extend appreciation for the opportunity to hold a meeting on this territory.

*Meet and greet with recipients of the Picard Trust Award
Public Engagement and Awareness staff will make a presentation to the Board.*

	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
1. <u>Motion</u> to receive agenda	
2. <u>Minutes</u> (5 minutes incl. agenda)	
i) <u>Motion</u> to adopt the minutes of the regular meeting held 2024 April 18 as circulated	<u>ENCLOSED</u>
3. <u>Items for Decision</u>	
i) <u>Policy Update Use of Library Space Report</u> (5 minutes)	<u>1</u>
4. <u>Items for Information</u>	
i) <u>BCHRC Special Program Mid-Term Report</u> (10-15 minutes)	<u>2 - 4</u>
ii) <u>Intellectual Freedom Policy Research Report</u> (15-20 minutes)	<u>5 - 8</u>
5. <u>Other Business</u>	
6. <u>Next Library Board Meeting</u> – 2024 July 18 at 7:00pm via Zoom.	
7. <u>Adjournment</u>	

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 patron bans and financial matters.



TO: CHAIR AND TRUSTEES
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

FROM: DIRECTOR, COLLECTIONS & TECHNOLOGY
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY

DATE: 2024 JUNE 20

SUBJECT: POLICY UPDATE – USE OF LIBRARY SPACE

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Library Board amend the Use of Library Space policy as recommended below.

REPORT:

[Section 9](#) of the BC Library Act authorizes the Library Board to make rules for regulating the use of its facilities and services by the public. [Section 47](#) of the Library Act authorizes the Library Board to suspend library privileges for breaches of library rules and to exclude from the library anyone who behaves in a disruptive behaviour or damages library property.

At the September 2023 Library Board meeting, trustees approved changes to Board Policy C4: **Use of Library Space**, including adding the following section:

Filming and photography on library premises

Filming and photographing of library staff and users on library property is not permitted without prior written approval of the library. Filming and photography by an individual is allowed in library spaces provided it does not include unrelated staff or patrons, that it respects the privacy of library staff and users, and does not disrupt library services.

Staff recommend adding audio recording to the policy, so the section would read:

Filming, photography and audio recording on library premises

Filming, photographing and audio recording of library staff and users on library property is not permitted without prior written approval of the library. Filming, photography and audio recording by an individual is allowed in library spaces provided it does not include unrelated staff or patrons, that it respects the privacy of library staff and users, and does not disrupt library services.

Trish Mau
DIRECTOR, COLLECTIONS & TECHNOLOGY
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY



Burnaby Public Library

TO: CHAIR AND TRUSTEES
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

FROM: CHIEF LIBRARIAN
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY

SUBJECT: BCHRC SPECIAL PROGRAM MID-TERM REPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board receive this report for information.

REPORT

In November 2021, the BC Human Rights Commissioner granted an application from Burnaby Public Library (BPL) for a Special Program for a five-year term to allow preferential hiring of candidates who self-identify as Indigenous, Black or a person of colour (IBPOC) for all exempt positions except that of Chief Librarian. Approval of the Special Program was conditional on a mid-term and final report. The mid-term report was submitted to the BC Human Rights Commission in mid-June, and the content of the report is included below for the Library Board's information.

Program Data

BPL has had six (6) vacancies at the exempt level. All vacancies have been filled by applicants who are IBPOC. Details of the positions and the recruitment process are outlined in the table below.

Position	Date posted	Applicants		Interviewed		IBPOC hired?
		Total	IBPOC	Total	IBPOC	
McGill Branch Manager (temp, parental leave)	Dec 2021	11	6	2	2	Y
Manager, Community Development	Dec 2021	23	11	4	4	Y
Cameron Branch Manager	Incumbent in temporary McGill Branch Manager position appointed to permanent Cameron Branch Manager position Apr 2022					
McGill Branch Manager (temp, remainder of parental leave)	Apr 2022	8	6	5	5	Y
Manager, Human Resources	May 2022	37	26	3	3	Y

Coordinator, Human Resources	Jan 2024	211	160	5	5	Y
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From a process perspective, hiring managers look first at résumés from racialized candidates, and only look at résumés from white candidates if there isn't a sufficient pool of qualified racialized candidates. In all competitions to the mid-year evaluation point, there has been a sufficient pool of qualified racialized candidates.

All staff hired are still employed at BPL in the same position, with the exception of the person hired into the McGill Branch Manager position, where the incumbent returned from parental leave.

Program Impacts

As part of the mid-term evaluation, the Chief Librarian interviewed all exempt staff hired under the program except for the candidate hired into the temporary McGill Branch Manager position, who is currently on pregnancy leave. Comments from exempt staff are themed below:

Special Program influencing a person's decision to apply

- "The Special Program strengthened my intention to apply for the position. It spoke to my values."
- "As a resident of Burnaby, I've been encouraging people to apply for jobs because of the Special Program. Every time I share the program, my friends are very surprised. Representation matters. Says a lot about who we are as an organization and what we're committed to."
- "The existence of the Special Program encouraged me to apply because it showed what the organization was valuing. That it was taking steps towards an equity way of thinking."

Special Program intended impact of bringing new perspectives into exempt staff group

- "I haven't felt the need to fit in, or police my tone, or keep quiet. My sphere of influence is more impactful here."
- "When I raise something, I have the confidence that someone on the team can relate to what I'm saying. I wouldn't feel as confident if I was the only racialized person on the team."
- "I feel less filtered here because I know that I have the support to be able to express a differing opinion."
- "I feel that we're at a more critical mass now as an exempt staff group."

Special Program increasing sense of belonging for racialized staff

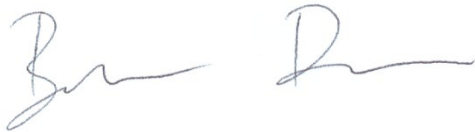
- A staff member said to a newly hired manager, "Oh my god, I've never seen a manager who's [from my country]. I've never even thought about it!"
- "Yesterday I met with a racialized staff person who shared things in confidence that I don't think they would have shared had I been white."
- "Having a BIPOC manager matters to staff. Others can see themselves moving into management."

Special Program increasing connection with BIPOC communities

- “I’ve made some contacts with patrons [who are from the same background as me]. Even to say hi in our own language, connect with them, their families. I think it makes a difference, it really does. People I’ve had a long interaction with, they come back. Making that connection, recognizing there’s someone who speaks their language – ‘this is a place where my people are hired.’ More than just, like, white people working. I think it feels better.”
- “I’m not sure if we can say that having more racialized exempt staff creates a more welcoming environment for racialized residents, because we’re not necessarily on the front lines. Having racialized staff on the front lines definitely makes a difference. We could argue that having racialized folks in management encourages frontline staff to feel supported in their way of thinking and that encourages them to think differently.”

Next Steps

BPL continues to review the processes and impact of the Special Hiring Program. We are confident that the program has contributed to BPL’s success as an organization. We are also aware that, while increasing the racial diversity of BPL’s leadership is important, it is only one step in our anti-racism journey. BPL remains committed to implementing further recommendations from our 2021 Anti-Racism Climate Audit, including increased staff training, implementing anti-bias hiring practices, creating safer spaces for racialized staff, and improving our response to racial incidents within the workplace and from the public.



Beth Davies
CHIEF LIBRARIAN
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY



TO: CHAIR AND TRUSTEES
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

FROM: CRISTINA FREIRE, LIBRARIAN 2, COLLECTIONS
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY

DATE: 2024 JUNE 20

SUBJECT: INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM POLICY RESEARCH REPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Library Board receive this report for information.

REPORT

At the March 2024 Board Meeting, the Board approved a process for a review of the BPL [Intellectual Freedom Policy](#). The first part of this review was to research library and other statements on intellectual freedom, and different views of intellectual freedom.

This report includes research into established and alternative views of intellectual freedom, examples of when intellectual freedom comes into conflict with values of equity and social justice, and research into approaches to intellectual freedom policies taken by other libraries.

Established Views of Intellectual Freedom

The United Nations upholds intellectual freedom as a basic human right. Article 19 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, states that “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

The [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) also protects intellectual freedom. It guarantees freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association. Many public libraries reference these fundamental freedoms in their intellectual freedom statements and policies.

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) [Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom](#) supports, defends and promotes intellectual freedom as defined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. IFLA asserts that a commitment to intellectual freedom is a core responsibility for the library and information profession, and calls upon libraries and library staff to adhere to the principles of intellectual freedom, uninhibited access to information and freedom of expression and to recognize the privacy of library user.

The American Library Association’s [Library Bill of Rights](#) was adopted in 1939, and most recently amended in 2019. ALA also puts out a yearly list of the [most challenged and banned books each year](#), noting in 2023 the “number of titles targeted for censorship at public libraries

increased by 92% over the previous year, accounting for about 46% of all book challenges in 2023.” ALA also has a yearly “[Banned Books Week](#)” in support of the freedom to read.

The [Canadian Federation of Library Associations Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries](#) was approved by the Canadian Library Association in 1974, and last reviewed in 2019. In Canada, the annual “[Freedom to Read Week](#)” encourages Canadians to think about and reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom. Also in Canada, the [Centre for Free Expression](#) at Toronto Metropolitan University maintains a Library Policies Database and [The Canadian Library Challenges Database](#), providing access to challenges libraries have faced.

The [British Columbia Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom](#) is currently under review, with expected completion date in 2026. In announcing the review, the organization stated that “BCLA recognizes members have a diversity of opinions on the application of intellectual freedom principles, and that there is a need for more learning, listening, and discussion as we strive to reflect the complexity of this value and how it manifests in our work.”

Intellectual Freedom and Other Values

In recent years, the value of intellectual freedom has come into conflict with values of social justice and equity.

In 2018, a trans-exclusionary speaker booked library spaces at Vancouver Public Library and Toronto public Library. The result were large protests with [hundreds turning up to protest in Toronto](#), and [VPL was denied participation in the Vancouver Pride Parade](#).

Following these room bookings, a trans-exclusionary book was published in the UK in 2020 and gained a favorable review in *The Economist*. Across Canada, [this book was the most challenged that year](#). In Halifax, a petition was started to have the library remove the book. The library refused, citing intellectual freedom, which led to a loss of relationship between the library and the LGBTQ+ community with [Halifax Pride saying they would no longer use the library spaces for Pride events](#).

At BPL, the Transgender Inclusion Working Group was still new and working to build relationships with trans people and organizations in the community. We were asked by a member of the trans community we had built a relationship with not to buy this book. But in response to patron demand, BPL did purchase this book, which immediately showed up on our heavy requests list.

Drag Queen Storytimes have become popular library programs in recent years, and these events have been protested by members of the public across the country, with [Coquitlam Public Library postponing their event due to public safety risk](#). At St. Catharines Public Library in Ontario, protesters “[stormed into the St. Catharines Public Library, unleashing a torrent of hateful rhetoric](#).”

Recently, in response to a patron request, BPL purchased the book *Grave Error: How the Media Mised Us (and the Truth About Residential Schools)*, which some libraries, including Greater Victoria Public Library, have chosen not to buy based on the content of the book. [One online newspaper is calling this decision a ban](#), with members of the public saying “The Greater Victoria Public Library is not living up to their own board collection policy.” After purchasing this book at BPL, it immediately appeared on the heavy request list, leading us to purchase more copies of the book. To date, there are 33 holds on four copies.

Alternative Views of Intellectual Freedom

Alternative views of intellectual freedom are not new. In 1978, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association stated that, “Democracy does not require ‘tolerance of ideas we detest.’ This nation was founded by people who would not tolerate ‘ideas they detested.’ Slavery in this country would not have been ended if tolerance of the detested idea had prevailed, nor would Hitler have been stopped.”

More recently, as public libraries began to adopt antiracist and decolonization values, staff, trustees and members of the public began to question how these values support and conflict with intellectual freedom policies and practices for both collections development and use of library spaces and rooms. Some examples of alternative views are included below.

- **My Remarks to the TPL Board (2019)** Academic librarian Jane Schmidt’s remarks to the Toronto Public Library Board after their decision to allow a transphobic speaker to use their meeting space included a statement that, “I keep thinking of all of the rich conversations we could be having – alongside our community partners – about widening our understanding of intellectual freedom and social responsibility; about an interpretation of intellectual freedom with an anti-oppressive and trauma-informed lens.” She also said, “As a librarian, I understand the significance of intellectual freedom. I understand its place in a democracy. But I stand here today to tell the board and everyone else who is here that there are a good number of librarians and library workers who believe that intellectual freedom must not trump the lives of real people.”
- **Open Letter to the CFLA Board on Intellectual Freedom (2021)** – this letter was signed by library workers across Canada after the bookings at VPL and TPL of the trans-exclusionary speaker. In the letter, it explains “The IF Committee statements, instead, cause active harm to the trans library workers in our field, as well as our communities and patrons. To be clear, we believe that intellectual freedom is a complex issue worthy of discussion; the humanity and fundamental right to gender expression for trans people is not. CFLA needs to reckon with what happens when abstract principles are prioritized over real people’s lives.”
- **Intellectual Freedom is Not Social Justice (2015)** – in this academic paper, the author argues “The power relationship between the ALA and library schools underlies a trend in LIS education that privileges technocratic managerial theories and practices over the concern for human and social welfare present in progressive librarianship. The ALA is complicit in furthering this trend by maintaining an organizational commitment to embedding a neutrality-focused conception of intellectual freedom within LIS education”
- **The Problem of Neutrality and Intellectual Freedom: The Case of Libraries (2020)** – this academic paper concludes “the decision of a community to de-platform, to violate the liberal principles of free speech where the community considers it necessary, is an integral part of this common intellectual project.”

Other Library Policies

The vast majority of intellectual freedom statements and policies from public and academic libraries in North America echo or directly quote the language of traditional library association statements. Even recently revised statements, such as Ajax Public Library’s [Statement on Intellectual Freedom](#), which was approved in February 2024, have changed little.

Research found only two examples of libraries that incorporate equity values alongside values of intellectual freedom in collection policies.

Thunder Bay (Ontario) Public Library’s Collections Management Policy (4.9), amended in 2021, states that “The Library Board affirms its support of the principles embodied in the Statement of Intellectual Freedom adopted by the Canadian Library Association. At the same time, other considerations, such as the current strategic directions of the TBPL may override this statement, particularly with regards to children’s books.” It also adds that an item “considered to be inconsistent with TBPL values, vision, purpose and strategic direction” may be a criteria considered in the de-selection process.

SFU Library Collections Policy Statement, approved February 2024, adheres to the [Canadian Association of Research Libraries \(CARL\) Statement of Freedom of Expression and Inclusive Libraries](#) which includes a statement that “The parameters of freedom of expression and the broader concept of intellectual freedom are being reexamined as research libraries and

the institutions of which they are a part take steps to further understand, reflect upon, and address equity, diversity, and inclusion deficits in their organizations.” The CARL statement goes on to commit to support learning and research that “contemporary society, or some within it, may consider unconventional, unpopular, unfounded, distasteful, or unacceptable.”

Next Steps

Consultation with staff through an online survey and in-person meetings has begun and will continue to September 2024. Staff are being asked about their views and experiences of intellectual freedom and about where intellectual freedom conflicts with other values. A final report, including any proposed changes to the intellectual freedom policy, will be brought to the board for approval in December 2024.

Cristina Freire
LIBRARIAN 2, COLLECTIONS
BURNABY PUBLIC LIBRARY