

PIPLA Board Chair Report
AGM, March 1, 2021

Mission: Provide access to a range of library resources to support the diverse needs of our community

Vision: Be a dynamic and welcoming centre where all can learn, discover, explore and connect

Guiding Principles: Respect, responsive to change, collaboration, service

Board of Trustees: Laura Vilness (Chair), Lori Ragan (Vice-Chair), Ralph Dawson, Kathy MacLachlan, Joanne Peacock, Judy Pullen, Dianne Wilson

Another year has passed by and it has been a notable one, locally, regionally and world-wide. At this time one year ago, the potential impact of COVID was becoming apparent; international borders were closing and economic activity was in dramatic decline. In response, PIPLA services shifted immediately to virtual operation and, eventually, to a gradual reopening. PIPLA Board meetings continued on a regular basis through Zoom and socially distanced in-person meetings. This is evidence that our PIPLA governance structure is robust and our Board work is well defined.

COVID Response – Carmen Oleskevich, Library Director, has done an outstanding job of ongoing research, planning, and implementation of safe procedures for Library operations. Library services were maintained even when the building was not accessible to the public. She kept the Board well-informed and the Board endeavoured to provide her with full support.

Board Meetings – The Board held 10 monthly meetings during this past term, this is typical for PIPLA. The Library Act states that a Board must meet at regular intervals at least 6 times a year.

Mission/Vision/Guiding Principles – The Board deemed it was time to update the Library mission and vision statements and created guiding principles to replace values. This was an interactive activity that generated good discussion pertaining to the purpose of the Library. A mission statement conveys what the primary purpose of the Library is while a vision statement is aspirational as to what we desire to achieve. Guiding principles reflect our beliefs and how we operate as a team. The outcome of this is a shared belief system that guides us.

Strategic Plan – The Library Strategic Plan was created for the period of 2019 to 2023. We reviewed and updated it in September 2020. There are five over-arching strategic goals: Our team, financial management, library services, community connections, and library facility. This plan guides Library operations and Board governance on a monthly and yearly basis with both short and longer term goals and actions.

Organizational Chart – The Board approved the updated organizational chart in November 2020. The organizational chart outlines the governance and operational structure in both roles and activities. It is amazing the wide range of activities that a small staff and cohort of volunteers covers with efficiency.

Policies & Policy Governance – During the past two years, much work has gone into writing new governance policies which were approved in March 2020. Carmen created new operational policies which were approved October 2020. There is a clear separation of Board Governance and Library Operations which are within the purview of the Library Director. This is the framework of effective governance as promoted by BC Library Trustees Assoc. (BCLTA).

Board Training – The Board has a strong commitment to ongoing training for the Trustees. We are fortunate that BCLTA has created a series of webinars to provide training and collegial interaction and networks. It is beneficial to connect with Library Trustees around the province. The COVID restrictions have accelerated BCLTA’s production of online training opportunities. Carmen purchased a library training package for staff that the Board also has access to. The Board held a retreat in November 2020 facilitated by Babs Kelly, BCLTA Learning and Development. The retreat was a one-day meeting in the Library with social distancing and safety protocols in place. The Board worked on developing a recruitment strategy for new Trustees with an emphasis on working together as a team.

Committee Work – Each Board Trustee is expected to serve on at least one standing Board committee.

- Board Development – Kathy and Laura, this committee is focused on Trustee recruitment and orientation, ongoing Board training, and Board self-evaluation
- Finance – Ralph, Judy and Carmen, oversees the finances of the Library as mandated by the Library Act
- Policy – Dianne and Laura, reviews and recommends revisions to governance policies as needed
- Health & Safety – Ralph and Carmen, this is a new committee which replaced the Facilities Committee. The advent of COVID and adherence to Occupational Health & Safety led to the creation of a Health & Safety committee, the yearly physical tour of the facility is under the purview of this new committee, policy guidelines for the H&S committee are in development
- Volunteers Management – Joanne, Lori and Carmen, develops and implements strategies related to Library volunteers

SGILC – The Commission provides financial and administrative support to the community library organizations of the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area. PIPLA is a registered library in BC and subject to the BC Library Act. The other four libraries (Galiano, Mayne, Saturna, and Piers) are either registered BC societies or local clubs. SGILC holds two formal meetings each year in April and October. Recently, we connected informally to provide mutual support in our current challenging times. It has been acknowledged that through necessity we have each been creating new and more efficient processes and operations. There are positive outcomes in the challenges.

Upcoming Term and Board Plans – We will continue to

- provide support and leadership to our Library
- engage in Board training and ongoing evaluation of Board work to ensure excellence
- adhere to the Strategic Plan
- be responsive to changes and challenges as they arise.

Staff and Volunteers – COVID safety processes require social distancing and the implications have been reduced people in the Library while providing consistent services. There was an addition of a part-time front desk staff person. Most of the volunteers are in activities that do not require patron interaction and are carried out on the days the Library is closed to the public. The Board is greatly appreciative of everyone’s contribution to the Library.

We wholeheartedly thank our staff (Carmen Oleskevich, Colette Clarke, Samantha Dixon, and Melody Pender), our students (Ripley Stafford and Jessie Rempel), and our contracted workers (Elana Singlehurst, Custodian; Christian MacKeigan, Groundskeeper; and Kevin Gosling, IT), and our volunteers. Each has a valued role in the Library and its service to our community.

Additional Information – there was a reorganization in the BC government after the fall election and public libraries were moved from the Ministry of Advanced Education & Skills Training to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. The common perception is that this is a better fit for BC Libraries.

BCLTA advocates with the government for all BC Libraries and for reliable and sustainable annual funding.

We conclude this Board term with a sense of accomplishment but recognize that our work requires ongoing commitment and diligence. We look forward to a new Board term and our service to the well-being of the Library and the community of Pender Island.

I greatly appreciate and thank our dedicated PIPLA Trustees for their commendable support and work during this term and look forward to continuing our Library journey together.

Submitted respectfully by Laura Vilness, Board Chair

PIPLA – Pender Island Public Library Association
BC Library Act, 1996
SGILC – Southern Gulf Islands Library Commission
BCLTA – British Columbia Library Trustees Association