

Attention: Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

Regarding 2020 BC Government Budget Priorities

Dear Committee Members:

The Trustees of the Kimberley Public Library wish to add their voice to the provincial initiative requesting the provincial government provide \$20 million in funding for public libraries in 2020.

Provincial funding for public libraries was reduced 20% in 2009. There have been no increases in provincial funding to combat inflation or increases in the cost of living, resulting in libraries cutting programs and services in order to balance budgets. This is in direct conflict with the role that libraries play in helping provincial government meet the goals it established in regards to creating strong, sustainable and innovative economies, building community and making life affordable for the citizens of BC.

From 2011 to 2015, Kimberley's population grew 11% and is projected to increase each year as more people are attracted to the splendid quality of life in our town. Kimberley Public Library plays a vibrant role in this community helping to make the area truly a great place to work, play and learn. In 2018 Children and Youth programming saw an increase of over 1000 participants compared to previous years. There are now 2 Story Time providers. Where there once was one children's program running at the library there are now five: Rhyme Time, Story time, STEAM, Summer Reading Club and Outreach activities. The positions of Outreach Coordinator and STEAM Coordinator have been added in the last few years. Plans are underway to develop a Technology Programmer position whose duties will include visits to senior's facilities and other groups with iPads, computers, virtual reality equipment and cameras.

As positive as all this growth is for the Kimberley Public Library, there is so much more we wish to offer our patrons. Lack of physical space combined with underfunding is hindering our efforts to properly conduct these programs and in some cases to keep the current level of programming we now deliver. Thus, we urge the Committee to prioritize the need for increased funding for provincial libraries in order that they may continue to have relevant and positive impact on their BC communities.

Your attention to this urgent issue is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Cathie Kearns,

Trustee Kimberley Public Library