

A grey silhouette of the province of British Columbia serves as the background for the top half of the page. The text is overlaid on this map.

# BCLTA

British Columbia  
Library Trustees  
Association

## Annual Report 2020-2021

**Representing** and amplifying the voices of public library trustees to provincial, strategic and partner initiatives

**Supporting** effective public library governance

**Connecting** with public library trustees to build their professional network and to share their priorities and stories with each other, with supporters, and with decision makers.

# President's Message

Mike Gagel, BCLTA President



Here we are in the second year of a pandemic, coping with ongoing public health measures designed to defeat a virus that is negatively impacting everyone and everything, including the functioning of public libraries. However, if the historical two-year lifespan of pandemics holds true for COVID-19, then we should be able to look forward to a better 2022.

Speaking of 2022, the members of the BC Library Partners (**ABCPLD**, **BCLA**, **BCIC**, & **BCLTA**) continue to work on increasing awareness of the positive impact of BC's public libraries and on influencing provincial policy and funding for libraries. The Partners are busy advocating with the province to increase funding from the current \$14 million (stagnant for over a decade), to \$22 million in 2022. This higher funding level is consistent with the 2010 level of \$17.9 million, if cutbacks were restored and inflationary increases maintained. This work continued at the recent UBCM with a Bronze-level sponsorship booth peopled by partner reps throughout the conference (this included Jerrilyn Kirk).

Last year's AGM was our best attended event to date. This year, our keynote will be delivered by Dr. Alvin Schrader who will speak about freedom of expression and intellectual freedom. Freedom is a value and a right supported by Canada's public libraries. However, recent BC incidents highlighted some difficulties: **Drag Queen Story Hour** at the Okanagan Regional Library in Kelowna in 2019, and **Megan Murphy** speaking at the Vancouver Public Library in 2020. Are your board and senior staff ready if incidents were to take place at your library?

BCLTA staff continue to deliver. Discussion Starters updated this year include **Climate Crisis** and **Reconciliation**. The **BCLTA Governance Workbook** was also updated using feed-

back from trustees as well as Library Partner members, and transitioned from PDF to HTML, making it more accessible.

On behalf of the board, I would like to express our gratitude for the work and support of:

- Jerrilyn Kirk, Executive Director,
- Babs Kelly, Director for Learning & Development, and
- Jan Thomas, Bookkeeper

Thank you too, to all our member library boards, the Public Libraries Branch, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for their financial support, and especially to Mari Martin, Provincial Libraries Director for her unfailing support of public library trustees.

This smartphone screenshot shows the updated BCLTA Workbook in HTML (left), and in Read-Aloud mode (right).



# BCLTA Board of Directors



**Mike Gagel**

President 2019-2021  
Board Chair, Prince George Public  
Library Board  
On the BCLTA board since 2016



**Elysia Glover**

Director 2019-2021  
Greater Victoria Public Library Board  
On the BCLTA board since 2019



**Rhonda Sherwood**

Treasurer and Vice President,  
2018-2020  
Vancouver Public Library Board  
On the BCLTA board since 2018



**Brenda Leigh**

Director 2019-2021  
Vancouver Island Regional Library  
Board  
On the BCLTA board since 2019



**Louise Hardy**

Director 2020-2022  
Surrey Public Library Board  
On the BCLTA board since 2020



**Caty Liu**

Director 2019-2021  
Richmond Public Library Board  
On the BCLTA board since 2019



**Dave Clark**

Director 2019-2021  
Cranbrook Public Library Board  
On the BCLTA board since 2019



**Harlan Pruden**

Director 2020-2022  
Vancouver Public Library Board  
On the BCLTA board since 2020

# BCLTA Staff



**Jerrilyn Kirk**

Executive Director

[Jerrilyn.Kirk@bclta.ca](mailto:Jerrilyn.Kirk@bclta.ca)



**Babs Kelly**

Director for Learning & Development

[babs.kelly@bclta.ca](mailto:babs.kelly@bclta.ca)

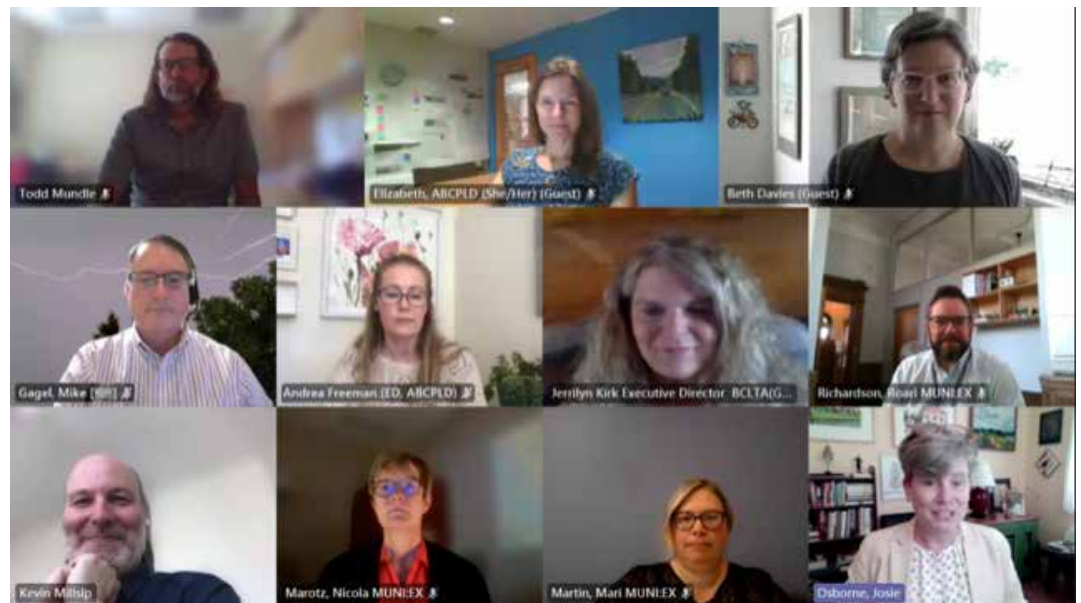


**Jan Thomas**

Bookkeeper

[jan.thomas@bclta.ca](mailto:jan.thomas@bclta.ca)

# BC Library Partners



## Library Partners

The BC Public Library Partners are:

- BC Library Trustees Association (BCLTA)
- Association of BC Public Library Directors (ABCPLD)
- BC Library Association (BCLA)
- BC Libraries Cooperative (BCLC)

The BC Public Library Partners work together to:

- Increase awareness of the positive impact of BC public libraries
- Influence provincial public policy and funding impacting libraries and their communities.

On September 1, 2021, the BC Public Library Partners presented to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. The request was to increase operational funding for public libraries. As you know, provincial funding has been frozen at \$14 million for over a decade, even while libraries have continued to evolve and do more every year. This increase accounts for the one time cut that happened in 2009, and accounts for the annual inflationary increases that would have been needed to keep up with inflation since 2009.

Representatives from each of the Partners had an opportunity to speak about the important work being done by libraries, library workers, and library trustees. We shared the vital role that libraries play in their communities, the difficulty of meeting the needs of those communities with stagnant funding, and the additional pressures resulting from the pandemic. We made the case that \$22 million is the amount of funding public libraries would have been receiving in 2022 if funding hadn't been cut and then frozen.

If you would like to see the presentation, a full transcript of the session is available online for your reference, with the BC Public Library Partners' section starting 2/3 of the way down.

BC Public Library Partners also attended the virtual UBCM to present our 22 Million in 2022 campaign to local and provincial government.

The BC Public Library Partners work together to advocate for all BC public libraries.

- For library grant levels to be restored along with an increase for inflation covering the past 10 years
- For reliable and sustainable annual increases to library funding
- For local governments to champion the unique role public libraries play in their communities.



**BC Public Library Partners are advocating for more provincial funding for our public libraries. For more information contact [kevin.millsip@bc.libraries.coop](mailto:kevin.millsip@bc.libraries.coop)**

# BCLTA Takes BOLD ACTION



*To support and represent Trustees in advancing Public Libraries*

Thursday, May-13-21

Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage  
CC: British Columbia Members of Parliament

Re: Clause 4.1(1) of Bill C10

The British Columbia Library Trustees Association (BCLTA), founded in 1977, is a not-for-profit society and registered charity. As the association for public library trustees in British Columbia, BCLTA supports and represents trustees in their role of overseeing libraries (which have a collective annual budget of over \$0.25 billion).

The BCLTA board has been following the discourse regarding Bill C-10 and is sending this letter to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage (copy to all British Columbia MPs) to communicate our concerns regarding the recent exclusion of clause 4.1(1) from Bill C-10.

The BCLTA board endorses freedom of expression as a core principle of Canadian librarianship. Public libraries are impartial collectors and distributors of knowledge in its many forms, including Internet social media. Because public libraries are fee-free and do not require membership, Canadians regard their local libraries as being key to supporting intellectual freedom and open communication. For many Canadians, their public library is the only place where they can participate in online discourse or create and publish end-user content.

This makes the Internet an essential tool for Canadians exercising their right to freedom of speech. Accordingly, the BCLTA board believes CRTC regulation should not be expanded to include Internet platforms such as YouTube and TikTok, which are just two examples of where Canadians may post content. Clause 4.1(1) allows for the exemption of end-user content from regulation by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

The BCLTA board encourages the House of Commons Heritage Committee to press for the reinstatement of clause 4.1(1) of Bill C-10. Thank you.

Mike Gagel

President of BCLTA

We had over 20 responses to our letter, many simply said thank you for sending the letter. Some of the responses are posted on the [BCLTA website](#).



# Executive Director Report

Jerrilyn Kirk, Executive Director

Many of you are familiar with what the fabulous Babs Kelly, BCLTA's Director of Learning and Development does. She is very much the face of BCLTA to BC Public Library trustees. We also have Jan Thomas who is our amazing Administrative Assistant, handling our books. So what is my purpose within the organization?

As the Executive Director of BCLTA I am responsible for the operations of the association. I have the privilege of working with the BCLTA Board of Directors. On behalf of the membership the BCLTA board establishes priorities, sets direction, builds formal partnerships, advises, leads the culture of the organization, and provides oversight.

This past year saw BC Public Libraries moving from the Education Ministry to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. The move has been much smoother than many expected and we are very fortunate to work with Minister Josie Osbourne and her staff including long time Director for Public Libraries Branch, the dedicated and supportive Mari Martin. Mari has been so supportive of the work of BCLTA and our trustees.

The work of BCLTA has grown over the past few years in response to membership needs and input. Working with our valued library sector partners, the BC Library Association (BCLA), the Association of BC Public Library Directors (ABCPLD) and the BC Libraries Cooperative (BCLC) we have, and will continue to work on advocacy. We work to influence strategies and outcomes. This work is planned out and serves an important purpose. We have, over the last several years seen some immediate results as well as long-term outcomes.

We are very optimistic about what we can achieve while working together as partners, with all of your support, presenting a strong unified voice for public libraries.

I consider myself so fortunate to work, with amazing people, doing amazing things.

Khaki seewatsih, always be kind.

**Jerrilyn Kirk**

# Learning and Development Report

Babs Kelly, Director for Learning and Development

The past year has seen tremendous growth in membership involvement in how and what BCLTA offers to support BC public library governance learning and development. BCLTA members have not only participated in greater numbers than ever in workshops and other events, but they have also provided direction on workshop topics such as policy development, strategic outcomes and chairing; on resource development such as the “Board Assessment and Development” guide; and importantly on how we deliver our learning and development services such as the scheduling of workshops, the use of closed captions in our online environment, and the transition from PDF format to web format for greater accessibility to our online resources.

Huge thanks to the BCLTA membership for being part of your association’s work! BCLTA Learning and Development services and resources have been strengthened by working with the BC Library Federations, the Association of BC Public Library Directors, the BC Library Association, the BC Libraries Cooperative, and with funding and support from the Public Libraries Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

## **BCLTA Learning and Development Highlights**

### *2021 AGM Guest Speaker*

BCLTA was delighted to welcome Angela Sterritt with her son Namawan Sterritt to the AGM. (See the recording on [YouTube](#).)

### *Shifting Governance: Important conversations for our times*

This initiative with the Association of BC Public Library Directors (ABCPLD) launched on May 20th with “Reconciliation and Relationship Building” with Flavio Caron from Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.. The second installment was on June 17th with the “Fundamentals of Anti-Oppression” workshop with Oakley Ramprashad from Bakau Consulting.

See more about this initiative and watch for updates in the Learning and Development section of the BCLTA website.

### *Workshops and Trustee Meet-ups*

In the past year there have been over 400 registrations in BCLTA workshops and Trustee Meet-ups. Feedback from the workshops has been very positive and months after the workshops we hear from our members that what was learned has made a difference in individual trustee engagement and commitment, in board effectiveness, and in the over-all enjoyment of working together as a governance team.

### **BCLTA 2020/21 CORE GOVERNANCE WORKSHOPS:**

- Overview of BC Public Library Governance
- The Effective Board and Role Clarity
- Chairing and Leading: The mechanics
- Chairing and Leading: The art
- Strategic Outcomes and Oversight
- Policy Development and Oversight

### **BCLTA 2020/21 GUEST WORKSHOPS**

- Changing the Status of your Library from a Public Library Association to a Municipal Library and So you Want a New Library with Andy Ackerman
- Enhancing Board Relationships and Decision Making and Leading for Success with Daneve McAffer
- Advocacy from the Heart and Not an Either/Or Decision with Anni Holtby

Thank you Daneve, Andy, and Anni for bringing your experience, expertise, and fresh perspective to BCLTA's 2020/21 Guest Workshops!

### *Trustee Meet-ups*

Over the past year trustees from across the province have joined Meet-ups to talk about supporting library directors, reconciliation and land acknowledgments, board recruitment and succession planning, inclusion and diversity, meeting rules of order, advocacy, board culture, community and stakeholder engagement, and governing during a pandemic.

The Meet-ups are sparked by trustee interest and the following trustees (and friends) stepped up to share their experiences and questions to get the Meet-up discussions rolling. Thank you Anni Holtby (Nelson Public Library), Felicia Zhu (West Vancouver Memorial Library), Janet Hodgkinson (Gibsons and District Public Library), Andy Ackerman (Fort St. John Public Library), Andrea Freemans (ABCPLD), and Mari Martin (Director, Public Libraries Branch).

### **WORKSHOP AND TRUSTEE MEET-UP FEEDBACK:**

- "I am getting so much from the Meet-ups, workshops and love the direction BCLTA has taken."
- "There is great prep for the learning environment and everyone is encouraged to share their experience, ask questions, comment on a topic and space is made for this to happen."
- "Well organized and informative!"
- "Wonderful means to network with others in BC library system."
- "Well done, informative, supportive and gives the opportunity to interact with other trustees in an easy convenient, cost effective manner."

### *New and Updated Resources*

Visit the Learning and Development section of the BCLTA website and subscribe to the Bulletin to keep up to date with our resource development – there is always something happening. Recent new and updated resources include the BCLTA Governance Workbook, the Trustee Quick Guide, Discussion Starters, and guides for strategic planning (developed by Kyla Epstein) and board development.

### *Communications*

The BCLTA Board Chair and Vice-Chair list-serv is growing in use and is one of the ways that BCLTA connects with the membership and more importantly connects BC public library boards with each other. As well, BCLTA uses Twitter and LinkedIn to share information and news about BC public library governance and BCLTA activities with the library, government, and governance communities.

The monthly Bulletin touches nearly 600 readers and includes information about BCLTA learning and development services as well as updates from the BC Public Library Partners and the Public Libraries Branch, attention grabbing library news, and items of interest for public library governance. Visit the BCLTA website to see the Bulletin archive or email me (Babs) to subscribe.

#### **RECENT FEEDBACK ABOUT THE BULLETIN INCLUDES:**

- “Please keep this up – this is part of our much-needed environmental scan!”
- “Our board is impressed and the Bulletin gets us outside of our own complacency and we are now having big conversations spurred on by the workshops and the Bulletin.”
- “I joined the board this year and didn’t expect such a good newsletter – thank you!”
- “As a major city library, we didn’t think we needed the Bulletin, but it keeps surprising us – well done!”

#### **Next for BCLTA Learning and Development:**

- Collaborating with the BC Library Association and the ABCPLD for sessions at the 2022 BC Library conference
- Participate in the next Beyond Hope conference
- Continue to build strong and collaborative working relationships with the Library Federations, the Public Libraries Branch, the BC Library Association, the ABCPLD, the BC Libraries Cooperative, the UBC School of Information, and other trustee associations across Canada
- Continue to develop and update online governance resources
- Continue to deliver affordable and easy to access online workshops and Trustee Meet-ups
- High hopes for the return of in-person workshops throughout the province!

As always, my work at BCLTA is better when I hear from trustees, library directors, and others with an interest in supporting public library governance. Please let me know if you have any questions or thoughts about BCLTA’s learning and development services and resources.

**Babs Kelly**

# Ministry Message

Mari Martin, Public Libraries Branch, BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

On behalf of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Public Libraries Branch - thank you to each library board trustee and the BC Library Trustees Association. Your dedication and guidance have helped libraries navigate the challenges of this past year and enabled them to deliver services that people need more than ever. In helping to lead libraries, you bring a diversity of experiences, skills and knowledge that shapes the future of BC's public libraries and the services that people depend on.

BCLTA remains a key ministry partner and has worked closely with the Public Libraries Branch over this past year to help inform and provide development opportunities for trustees and library leaders. We would like to acknowledge BCLTA's ongoing work, taking a responsive and proactive approach in expanding its governance workshops, offering unique networking opportunities, and delivering board discussion starters. The "Shifting Governance: Important conversations for our times" series, launched this past May, is an excellent example of BCLTA's responsiveness and how we can achieve greater success through collaboration.

Together, we can help ensure that public libraries continue to strengthen communities, support B.C.'s economic recovery and enrich people's lives. We thank BCLTA and members like yourself for your support, contributions, and ingenuity as we continue to implement B.C.'s strategic plan for public library service (2020).

**Mari Martin**

# Library Month

Josie Osborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs

“This month we celebrate British Columbia’s libraries, our partners in fostering lifelong learning and providing people with equitable access to the information and services they need to learn, work and thrive.

“Libraries are unique and welcoming community spaces where people of all ages and backgrounds can gather, explore interests and develop lifelong skills. Throughout the pandemic, libraries have continued to be important places of refuge both online and in person, where a good book, a friendly ear and a link to the community has made a big difference in people’s lives.

“The pandemic has highlighted the vital role libraries have in keeping people connected with their loved ones and communities. Over this past year and a half, libraries have helped build bridges across the digital divide by offering lendable technology, new online library collections and hosting virtual storytime programs. Libraries have also provided safe online access to health information and a way for people to connect and access important services.

“I would like to express my gratitude to the board members, library staff and volunteers for their dedication to ensuring critical library services have been accessible during the pandemic and for their ongoing contribution to supporting inclusive communities.

“Our government is committed to working with B.C.’s libraries to ensure communities have access to the information and programs that people need to improve their literacy skills and help reach their full potential. Libraries today enhance people’s quality of life by providing access to services for employment, immigration and other programs that make life better and more affordable for people.

“I look forward to the years ahead, working with libraries to continue creating vibrant community spaces that contribute to a stronger, more resilient and inclusive province.”

# You and BCLTA

Be a part of BCLTA and your association's work by:

- Hosting a BCLTA Governance Workshop
- Attending the 2020 BCLTA Forum and AGM
- Sending us your board governance document templates (board development, advocacy, communications etc) for sharing in the BCLTA Discussion Starters
- Subscribing and contributing to the Bulletin
- Sharing your ideas with us for building a strong trustee association and a strong BC public library community.

It is your stories, news items, board work tips and challenges, and photos that connect trustees across the province and showcase the work of public library boards to provincial government staff, MLAs, local government officials, and others who are part of BC public library discussions and decision making.