



BCLTA

British Columbia
Library Trustees
Association

Annual Report

2019 / 2020

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

Libraries through the pandemic



It wouldn't do, not to acknowledge the pandemic. It's the reason AGM 2020 is being conducted via Zoom. The SARS-CoV-2 virus has profoundly affected us all and is likely to do so for some time to come. In the context of "library world," our branches were forced to close for a time and are not back to full operations. Some libraries were forced to lay off staff, while others had to reduce staff hours.

Nevertheless, as a vital part of social infrastructure, public libraries continued to meet patron needs. Libraries adapted by adjusting borrowing processes (such as with online ordering and curbside pick-ups) and shifting to, or bolstering, online offerings (such as OverDrive and Hoopla, as well as staff-hosted virtual programs).

What was BCLTA up to this past year?

Take a moment to compare the finances of BCLTA with the BC School Trustees Association (which serves just over 400 public school trustees, compared to our 700 public library trustees). BCSTA operates with a \$2 million annual budget; BCLTA gets its job done with \$85,000. I'm not implying that \$85K is adequate (because it's not), but consider what BCLTA does with that budget, especially in the context of a pandemic. I'll use BCLTA's three convictions to outline achievements over the past year and a bit:

1. BCLTA supports trustees to govern effectively
BCLTA does this by providing guidance through a series of themed documents available for free at BCLTA.ca. Topics range from a trustee orientation checklist and a trustee quick guide, to several board discussion starters and a virtual board meeting tips guide. The two most recent discussion starters address board recruitment (published in Sept) and climate change (published in Aug).

2. BCLTA represents trustees at the provincial level

BCLTA, the Association of BC Public Library Directors, the BC Library Association, and the BC Libraries Cooperative, work together as the BC Public Library Partners to increase the awareness of the positive impact of BC public libraries on our society, as well as the impacts that provincial policy and funding have on public libraries and the communities they serve. The Partners campaigned for over a year to increase provincial public library funding (\$14 million annually, unchanged for ten years) to \$20 million by 2020. While the Partners didn't quite succeed, government did supply \$3 million in one-time funding. That's our first increase, and we look forward to (not so tongue in cheek) receiving \$21 million in 2021! On its own, BCLTA was successful in receiving a separate one-time grant from the Libraries Branch and Ministry of Education to support the development of trustee governance workshops (which I'll list in the next section).

3. BCLTA connects trustees

BCLTA provides the means for trustees to connect and learn from one another. Admittedly, connecting was a weak area for the Association — we didn't have a list of our 700 members! Over the past year BCLTA worked hard and reached out to all public library systems in BC to seek updated board listings. BCLTA also implemented a free board chair email listserv, hosted free virtual trustee meetups every 4–6 weeks, and developed several inexpensive workshops (\$25 per attendee) as well as custom workshops (\$150 per attendee). Workshops included: Overview of BC Public Library Governance, Chairing and Leading, and Effective Board and Role Clarity. These workshops and trustee meetups had significant up-take by trustees and senior library staff. So far this year, there have been 365 participants and we expect 430–450 by year end. Compare that to the 85 total participants in 2018 and 126 participants in 2019.

While the BCLTA achievements I've noted here were overseen by the board, it was the staff who delivered products and services for our members while supporting the work of the board. On behalf of the board, I would like to exclaim a big thank you to:

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

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

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



Erin Carlson

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



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

BCLTA

Staff



Jerrilyn Schembri

Executive Director



Babs Kelly

Director for Learning & Development

babs.kelly@bclta.ca



Jan Thomas

Bookkeeper

jan.thomas@bclta.ca

BC Library Partners



Board Work

On September 21st, 15 trustees (including a municipal councillor) from Nelson, Cranbrook, Nakusp, Castlegar and Trail along with the Nelson PL Chief Librarian Tracey Therrien, contributed to a day that was rich with the sharing of diverse experiences, knowledge and skills.

Thank you Nelson Public Library for hosting!



\$20 Million in 2020

BC Public Library Partners with Minister Fleming, May 10th, 2019 (L-R) Mike Gagel, BCLTA, Sharon Herbert, BC Libraries Cooperative, Chris Middlemas, BC Library Association, Annette DeFaveri, BC Library Association, Elizabeth Tracy, Association of BC Public Library Directors, Minister Fleming, Shirley Lew, BC Library Association, Kevin Millsip, BC Libraries Cooperative, and Scott Hargrove, Association of BC Public Library Directors.

The BC Public Library Partners work together to advocate for all BC public libraries. When we met with Minister Fleming and other government representatives in 2019/2020, we continued to ask for 3 key items:

- 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 the Minister to champion the unique role public libraries play in their communities to other Ministries and to facilitate inter-ministerial conversations to support the work of public libraries.



UBCM Convention and Trade Show

We met with over 600 delegates, many of them your local mayors and councillors. They talked with us about the value of their public libraries as community infrastructure and signed the \$20 Million in 2020 campaign cards that were delivered to Minister Fleming on October 25th.



Beyond Hope: a fantastic opportunity for Libraries

Grace Dove delivers the keynote address at the Beyond Hope Library Conference in Prince George. (Photo credit Sara Itkonen, Creston Valley Advance.)

BCLTA Takes BOLD ACTION

Board Assessments Are Fundamental To Governance Excellence

BCLTA Directors took bold action to increase access to public library governance development and support by establishing the following:

1. **CHANGING THE NAME OF BCLTA WORKSHOPS FROM THE TRUSTEE ORIENTATION PROGRAM (TOP) TO BCLTA GOVERNANCE WORKSHOPS.** The change in name acknowledges the changes that the program has undergone in the past 18 months to focus on governance development while still providing an overview of provincial and legislative context and board mechanics. It signals to our membership and the broader community that the workshops are not just for new trustees, they are for the entire board and library director.
2. **OFFERING AN ON-DEMAND AND TAILORED-FOR-YOUR-BOARD BCLTA GOVERNANCE WORKSHOPS.** These workshops are based on the BCLTA Governance Workshop and are available as is possible to schedule and deliver by BCLTA staff. The fee for these workshops is \$150 per participant with a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 15 participants. The host library will be responsible for the venue and catering and BCLTA is responsible for the development and delivery of the workshop.
3. **LAUNCHING THE BCLTA GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP PILOT PROJECT IN JANUARY 2020.** This is a one year project that will require membership participation, workshop evaluation, outcomes assessment, and external funding for the association to continue the project beyond 2020. The BCLTA is able to fund one year of the pilot from board reserves.



Angela Sterritt is BCLTA's AGM Guest Speaker

Angela Sterritt is an award-winning journalist and author from British Columbia. Sterritt has worked as a journalist for close to twenty years with her reports appearing in the *Globe and Mail*, *The National*, CBC's *The Current*, and various other national and local news programs. She currently works with CBC Vancouver as radio, television, and online reporter. She was nominated for a Canadian Screen Award for best local reporter of the year in 2020 and has won numerous awards for her CBC column, *Reconcile This*.

She is a proud member of the Gitksan Nation and is currently working as an adjunct university professor at UBC's School of Journalism as an Asper Visiting Fellow. Her upcoming non-fiction narrative book, *Unbroken* weaves in her own story as an Indigenous girl and woman with the larger story of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

The BCLTA is honoured that Angela Sterritt will be speaking at our AGM and we acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Libraries Branch, Ministry of Education in making this possible.

Learning and Development Workshops

In the spring and summer of 2020 nearly 365 trustees and library directors representing 63 boards participated in BCLTA workshops and here is a small sample of what they had to say:

- So welcoming and friendly — I really appreciated the openness to questions and discussion.
- Highly informative and I will be using what I learned at our next board meeting.
- I now have greater appreciation for our board's strengths and the role (hard work!) of the library director.
- I see areas where we have been “stuck” and now know that we can get “unstuck”
- The facilitator is well informed, positive, and responsive AND she knows how to facilitate.
- The after workshop follow-up with our board has put us on a more positive and supportive track for working together and with our library director - loved the “trust-based!”

Fall Schedule

GOVERNANCE BIG PICTURE: OVERVIEW OF BC PUBLIC LIBRARY GOVERNANCE (a.k.a. I'm a trustee, now what?)

- Saturday, October 3rd, 10am (PT)

CHAIRING AND LEADING: THE MECHANICS

- Monday, October 19th, 6:30pm (PT)

CHAIRING AND LEADING: THE ART

- Monday, October 26th, 6:30pm (PT)

GOVERNANCE BIG PICTURE: THE EFFECTIVE BOARD AND ROLE CLARITY

- Monday, November 9th, 6:30pm (PT)

For more information about these workshops and to register visit the BCLTA Governance Workshops. These workshops are facilitated by Babs Kelly, BCLTA Director for Learning and Development, and registration opens approximately two weeks before the workshop.

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.



Canada
Province of British Columbia
A Proclamation

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom,
Canada and Her other Realms and Territories, Queen, Head of the
Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith

To all to whom these presents shall come – Greeting

WHEREAS British Columbia's libraries are partners in fostering lifelong learning and fulfill a vital role in helping people of all ages and from all backgrounds access the information and services they need to learn, work and thrive, and

WHEREAS British Columbia's libraries ensure people have equitable access to information, ideas and works of the imagination; help people improve their literacy skills; and play a key role in supporting citizen and student success by offering diverse collections, services, programs and digitally enhanced resources, and

WHEREAS British Columbia's libraries are focused on providing opportunities for people to explore ideas, create new content, find community connections, engage in dialogue, think critically and share knowledge with others, and

WHEREAS British Columbia's libraries play an important role in helping families and people stay connected, informed and entertained during the COVID-19 pandemic, and

WHEREAS libraries and their staff, board members and volunteers enhance the quality of life for everyone and contribute to vibrant, resilient and inclusive communities where diversity flourishes;

NOW KNOW YE THAT We do by these presents proclaim and declare that October 2020 shall be known as

"Library Month"

and October 26, 2020, shall be known as

"School Library Day"

in the Province of British Columbia.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent and the Great Seal of Our Province of British Columbia to be hereunto affixed.

WITNESS, The Honourable Janet Austin, Lieutenant Governor of Our Province of British Columbia, in Our City of Victoria, in Our Province, this twenty-first day of September, two thousand twenty and in the sixty-ninth year of Our Reign.

BY COMMAND.



Attorney General
(counter signature for the Great Seal)



Lieutenant Governor