



Jonathan X. Côté
Mayor

June 21, 2022

Dear Mayor and Council,

Re: Library Funding UBCM Resolution

I am writing to ask for your support for a resolution that the City of New Westminster is bringing to the UBCM Annual Convention in September.

The Province of British Columbia provides grants to public libraries annually. In 2009, provincial funding for BC's public libraries was reduced from \$17.9 million to \$14 million. The grant has remained static at \$14 million since 2010. The lack of annual increases means that each year libraries receive less provincial funding as a portion of overall revenue, which results either in cuts to services or an increased cost to municipalities. Inflationary pressures compound the financial situation of BC libraries. Funding is provided to individual libraries; in 2022, the New Westminster Public Library (NWPL) received a grant of \$146,300, which represents 2.9% of NWPL's total operating budget, and a one-time COVID-19 relief and recovery grant of \$79,933.53 that will help address some needs this year only.

As in previous years, the BC Public Library Partners (BC Library Trustees Association, Association of BC Public Library Directors, BC Library Association and BC Libraries Cooperative) are coordinating advocacy efforts to increase provincial funding for libraries. The budget request in 2023 is for \$22 million.

In response to an appeal from our Library Board, at a meeting on June 13, 2022, New Westminster City Council received passed the following resolution to be considered by the UBCM:

WHEREAS libraries in British Columbia are largely financed by levies paid by local governments, and where provincial library funding has remained stagnant for the past 10 years;

AND WHEREAS public libraries are central to communities, provide equitable access to vital resources, including internet, computers, digital

library tools and in-person services from expert staff which are essential for low-barrier services and support job seekers and small businesses, that increase literacy in communities, that advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and that promote equity and inclusion;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of the BC Municipalities call on the Government of British Columbia to provide long-term sustainable funding for public libraries in BC and that the Province ensure that BC Libraries will henceforth receive regular increases to Provincial Government funding in subsequent years.

The support of your delegates to UBCM for this motion would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan X. Cote', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jonathan X. Cote
Mayor