

Provincial Library Grants Report 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Greenwood & District Public Library serves the City of Greenwood and a portion of Area E of the Regional District of Kootenay/Boundary (RDKB), with a total population served of about 950 people. The library is a welcoming and safe community hub for Internet & Wi-fi access; printing, copying, scanning, and fax services; books, magazines, newspapers, audiobooks, & DVDs; and children's and adult programs. In addition, the variety of online databases, e-books, e-audiobooks, online magazines, and independent films available via our website make us a virtual hub as well. And it is a warm, welcoming place to stop in on a cold day (or vice versa, a cool place in summer) and browse the shelves, read for a bit, or use the Wi-fi.

Our community consists mainly of retirees, working adults, and a few families with children. Quite a few are on income assistance or disability pensions, as rental units are less expensive here than in many other communities. Though there is no major industry in Greenwood, some work in industries (mainly logging) in neighbouring communities. Others are involved with tourism, retail business, ranching, mining, logging, service industries & municipal government.

The main challenge faced by the community is lack of a large tax base. The City of Greenwood is limited in the support it can provide to our library and other community agencies; as such, it has been challenging for the library to expand programs and services with limited financial support and rising costs. That said, the board, staff and volunteers work hard to raise funds and we have been thankful for a substantial uplift in donations and fundraising in 2020. We received a major donation in matching funds from one donor, and two separate fund-raising initiatives that would not have been possible except during the pandemic and have between them raised nearly 40% of our annual budget for the year. We cannot count on any of these revenue streams going forward however we realize that the response to our fund-raising efforts has show how deeply the community cares about its library.

There have been a few changes in 2020, not only in our physical space, but in our staffing structure. In August 2020, our staff and volunteers reorganized the library's physical collection and shelving resulting in the collection being easier for patrons, staff, and volunteers to navigate. Also, they created a much-needed meeting space in the back room of the library which, when PHO restrictions are lifted, will serve as a private area for meetings and instructional programming. As far as staffing is concerned, we found ourselves without a Library Director for the second time in two (years) with that came the recognition that with our proximity and our financial situation it was going to take some time to fulfil this position and that we had to "think outside the box" and re-envision the role of the director in the interim. We looked at the strengths of our assistant librarian and our volunteer bookkeeper to help create new job descriptions whose duties complement each other: Acting Library Director and Library Administrator. This new structure proves to be positive, collaborative and has resulted in reducing staff stress and has had a positive outcome for our patrons as the Acting Library Director now focuses on being the "front desk" face of the library and the Administrator focus is behind the scenes on policies, grants, reporting etc.

Our Strategic Plan runs from 2019-2023. In November 2020, the library took a big step that meets all four of the goals in the current Strategic Plan: we signed an agreement with another agency, Community Futures, to allow their staff and the staff of Boundary Family Services to use the library premises one day a week (a day that the library is normally closed) to meet with their clients from the Greenwood area.

This collaboration meets all four of the central goals of the library's current Strategic Plan: it presents a new way for the library to support the local community; it strengthens the library's relationship with other local organizations; it brings in a stable, ongoing, substantial financial return (representing 10% of our current budget); and our recent reorganization of the library's interior space makes that space useful to these outside agencies in a way that would not have been possible in the past.

Improving Access

To engage and support community members by becoming a community hub for culture, learning, and social connection.

Prior to the Covid Pandemic, the library undertook several activities to engage and support community members by becoming a community hub for culture, learning, and social connection.

- Provided one-on-one instruction to patrons on how to access materials and use Library resources.
- Eliminated overdue fines for patrons.
- Promoted new materials through the Library website, Facebook, paper posters around community, as well local newspapers.
- The number of items borrowed by patrons from other libraries increased through the staff/volunteer one-on-one help in ordering materials.
- Games night started in early 2020.
- The Knitting and Crocheting Club met weekly and was open to a wide range of ages and abilities. It was regular group who attend and use the time to socialize, learn new skills, and check out new books at the same time.

Early 2020 we identified the need to remove overdue fines for our library. Although it affected us financially, the need for our patrons to stay socially connected outweighed the cost. We are pleased with this decision and are seeing more return visits to the library as a result.

March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a complete shutdown of our library. Using a phased approach guided by Provincial and Health agencies, we reopened for curbside pickup mid-May and by mid-summer we opened, albeit limited, our physical space to browsing and computer access. This phased approach was and continues to be well received and even though we have yet to reintroduce in person programming we are trending upward in our online presence resulting in a 40% increase online activity since the beginning of 2020.

Building Capacity

To enhance overall skills of community members through programs to increase the Library's role in the community as a place for information- and skill-sharing.

- Ongoing staff, volunteer, and board information sharing and training when available.
- We provide daily support to patrons in the use of computers and technology.
- We provide a quiet environment to support learning and education.

The Greenwood and District Public Library is run by two part-time staff, volunteers, and our board trustees. Training of staff and volunteers as well as updating procedures and policies is an ongoing priority. In 2020, we restructured the roles of our key staff members which provides a greater flow of information sharing within the library. Regular contact with staff and volunteers, along with monthly board meetings (via Zoom) helps keep everyone up to date. We had hoped in 2020, to focus training of volunteers to update skills to further enhance patron experience, however the pandemic put that on hold, and we will look to do that more as protocols are relaxed. We continue to look for ways to develop our staff and webinars, online courses, and workshops.

Collaborating on shared goals

To develop strong relationship with other community organizations, local government, and the local business community.

- Ongoing partnerships with local schools to increase literacy for children and gain exposure for the library.
- Ongoing outreach to local agencies by Staff and Board to inform community members about services offered at the library and discuss possible partnerships.

Early 2020 we delivered a major presentation to the Mayor and Council of Greenwood with the intention to inform local government about services offered at the library and challenges with maintaining services and funding as well as to discuss possible partnerships. This presentation was well received, and we look forward to their ongoing support.

November 2020, we entered a partnership with Community Futures to use our library space one day per week to meet with their clients. This partnership not only provides them with a much needed to meet with their clients, but it also further serves as an addition information hub for our patrons and community.

The Library board members and staff continue to reach out to local agencies to ensure that community needs are being met and gaps in services addressed. This outreach takes place through attendance in local area meetings such as the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL) and regular contact with overlapping services such as CAPC, Family Connections, and Childcare Resource and Referral. The Board chair is in regular contact with the City of Greenwood and the local Regional District of Kootenay Boundary director representative.

Enhancing governance

To fulfill the goals of the new Strategic Plan and explore options for addressing funding shortfalls.

- A new Strategic Plan was created and approved in 2019 and by November 2020 the basis of our Plan had been fulfilled. We continue to review and enhance our objectives going forward.
- We continue to explore options to support long-term financial stability for the Library.

The Library staff and board entered a relationship with Community Futures to provide ongoing support to the community, strengthens the library's relationship with other local organizations, brings stable financial return and with the reorganization of the library's interior space (meeting area) makes the library more useful to outside agencies.

The board and staff continue to reach out to community agencies and discuss the need for additional funding to support library operations.

Technology Grant

Our aging community struggles with computer literacy, our economic situation is a huge barrier for people on income assistance or disability pensions and our rural location makes the need for accessible internet higher than ever. Our grant purchases help satisfy a multitude of challenges in the Greenwood area; unlike libraries in urban centers, many of our patrons cannot access services independently.

We anticipate that some of the equipment will provide additional support for future programming once Covid-19 protocols are relaxed and serve to increase computer literacy and independence and provide an educational platform for developing skills within the community. Our upgrading in connectivity and our technology infrastructure provide a more reliable experience for our patrons by increasing digital security, reducing downtimes, increased social engagement and enhanced performance. Going forward we will be able to engage people and provide support to those who would not have access otherwise. Due to the general pivot to online platforms which was induced by the pandemic our goal is to further engage patrons by providing sessional workshops and instructional guidance.

COVID -19

COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact in determining the strategies and priorities of the library. As Covid-19 struck in March 2020 resulting in a complete shutdown the need to reevaluate our space, staff and volunteer roles, and our financial ability to cope, became of paramount concern. Our volunteers, most of which fell into the vulnerable category were no longer able to assist and our staff was transitioned to a work from home model. That said, the regular workload and Covid 19 navigation in fact increased the number of paid staff hours which presented a financial burden on the library. That burden still exists, we still do not have volunteers to help with daily tasks and the additional time spent maintaining the health and safety protocols has added additional stressors.

We were fortunate to have such a committed staff and board to guide us through these uncharted waters and through that commitment we were able to, by mid-May open for curbside takeout and then to our Phase 3 model, mid-

summer which saw patrons back into our space for limited browsing and computer access while following all PHO guidelines for patron, volunteer, and staff safety during the pandemic. This phased approach was and continues to be well received and even though we have yet to reintroduce in person programming we are trending upward in virtual presence. We continue to monitor the protocols as dictated by the province's Public Health Officer moving forward and our hopes to be able to reconvene in person programs to further engage the community.

SUMMARY

The Greenwood and District Public Library has had yet another year of significant challenges. These included the Covid-19 pandemic, the resignation of our Library director and the subsequent reassessment and restructuring of our staff roles; we are truly fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers, Board members and staff who were able to navigate such a fluid year. Through this we have been able to secure partnerships, increase our fundraising efforts and revamp our physical space for a more welcoming and functioning area for staff and the community. We are pleased that our level of support and services to the community although limited, remains and are looking forward to the implementation of more expanded programming in the future. We continue to build relationships and partnership with other community agencies and to expand our role as a community hub.



P.O. Box 279, Greenwood, BC V0H 1J0

October 10, 2020

Interim Report via email

The Greenwood Public Library would like to extend our appreciation and gratitude for the One-Time Digital Initiatives Grant 2020 in the amount of \$7053. Greenwood Public Library considers this grant an immense uplift for us to increase connectivity and technology for patrons, staff, and the community at large.

Allocations of the grant will focus on upgrading and increasing our technological offerings; these upgrades will increase access and therefore promote community engagement.

- \$1000.00 has been allocated to access, increase wi-fi connectivity and upgrade hardware (modem, booster etc.) to support the upgrades. (Partnering with BC Libraries Cooperative)
- \$4000.00 to be used to purchase lendable e-readers and tablets, patron computers and supporting software.
- \$1800.00 to purchase equipment for educational and personal development purposes. A Smart-TV and laptop will provide us with increased resources for additional patron programming and computer literacy.
- \$1000.00 to increase our online collection to better serve our patrons giving increased availability and variety.

Our hopes for this grant are to help satisfy a multitude of challenges in the Greenwood area; unlike libraries in urban centers, many of our patrons cannot access services independently. Our aging community struggles with computer literacy, our economic situation is a huge barrier for people on income assistance or disability pensions and our rural location makes the need for accessible internet higher than ever.

We anticipate that some of the equipment we purchase will provide support future programs to increase computer literacy and provide an educational platform for developing skills within the community. We will be upgrading our connectivity and our technology infrastructure which will provide a more reliable experience for our patrons by increasing digital security, reducing downtimes, increased social engagement and enhanced performance. We believe that by adding lendable technology we will engage people who do not have access, and increasing our online collection, due to the general pivot to digital services, will further engage patrons by providing more variety and shorter wait times.

If you have clarifications or questions regarding this proposal, please do not hesitate to contact us @greenlib@shaw.ca

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: [GREENWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY]

Total Technology Grant Amount: [7053.00]

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.) Loanable devices	Loanable devices for patrons who rely on the library for access.	Increased digital inclusion and tracing abilities for assessment of patron need.	Improved access which supports strategic plan for British Columbians	Purchase of tablets, e-readers, protective cases etc.		Fall 2020	\$1000		
Connectivity (internet speed, connection capacity, etc.) Modem & Speed upgrades	Faster, reliable connectivity for	Increased usage of patron computers and Wi-fi connectivity	Improved access for British Columbians and improved citizen engagement	Upgrade existing equipment (modem, etc.) Increase connectivity	Partnered with the BC Libraries Cooperative to leverage their expertise and access a portion of their Tech Gran	Fall 2020 to early 2021	\$1000	\$700 from BC Libraries Cooperative Connectivity fund	
Electronic collections (licensing) Overdrive Advantage	Reduction of wait times and increased availability of online collection	Shorter wait times and expansion of present collection	Improved citizen engagement which supports the strategic plan for British Columbians	Development of plan for increasing collection. Purchasing of books		Late 2020 early 2021	\$1000		
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.) Patron Computer	More reliable, updated equipment	Increased security, reliability, faster processing speed and better compatibility with new programs.	Increase citizen engagement and improved access which supports the stragi	Purchase new desktop computer systems and tech setup		Year end 2020	\$2500		
Instructional Equipment Smart TV & Laptop	Provide ongoing training and programs for patrons	Increase of patron engagement and computer literacy	Increase Citizen Engagement	Purchase Smart TV and supporting Laptop and accessories		End of 2020	\$1,800		
Software upgrades (public and staff computers) Office Suite	Functioning and up to date software	Upgrade Office suite on 8 computers	Up to date software supports strategic plan for increased citizen engagement	Purchase software and tech installation		Late 2020	\$500		