INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Fernie is a rapidly growing vibrant community located in the southeastern corner of the Province of British Columbia. The main industries in Fernie are tourism and mining. The 2021 Census showed a population growth rate of 17%, making us one of the fastest growing communities in the Province.

Like other communities in BC, Fernie is struggling with labour shortages and high housing prices. The Fernie Heritage Library is located in a gorgeous heritage building located one block off main street across the street from the post office and City Hall. We have a large garden that gives us the opportunity to expand our programming and services to the outdoors. We have three floors, our basement which is home to our programming space and our maker space, the main floor which houses our fiction collection and circulation desk, and the reference floor which houses our nonfiction collection, public seating, and computer workstations.

In 2022, we reviewed and updated our strategic framework. Our new vision is as follows: A welcoming place that creates connections and inspires learning for all community members. Our new mission is as follows: A library for everyone to learn, share, and build community. We revised our values and confirmed that they are shared by the FHL Board members, Library Director, staff, and volunteers. These values guide the entire team as we undertake the work necessary to achieve our vision and mission.

The FHL values...

- Belonging and Inclusivity
    - The FHL welcomes everyone in a safe, accepting environment based on belonging and positive relationships and celebrates differences.

- Respect and Professionalism
    - The FHL ensures that everyone – community members, volunteers, staff, partners – is heard, respected, valued, and treated in a fair and professional manner.

- Innovation and Creativity
    - The FHL encourages everyone to explore novel ideas and engage in creative thoughts and pursuits to address existing and emerging needs.

- Working Together and Collaboration
    - The FHL works together with community members, volunteers, staff, and partners and actively seeks to renew existing and cultivate new relationships.

- Being Solution-Focused and Responsive
    - The FHL operates with a positive mindset and is focused on developing solutions and responding to the essential needs of the community.

We pride ourselves on our programming and in 2022, we committed to a hybrid method for

delivering programming. Programs are now offered in person and virtually. In 2022, we continued to improve our outdoor programming space with the use of outdoor community games such as chess. We also worked to further Truth and Reconciliation in our community by hosting two Indigenous authors and by hosting six Indigenous storytime programs.

2. FEATURED PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Project/Program Name: Staff Mental Wellness Day

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.

We hosted a staff Mental Wellness Day in May. We partnered with a local wellness practitioner as well as a local coffee shop. In addition, we used virtual programming provided by Public Library Interlink library system to add to our program.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?

A key strategic objective for the library is to 'strengthen and develop the staff who create and deliver the library experience'. By showing our staff that the library leadership team values their mental health, we are creating a more positive workplace.

How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service from the strategic plan, which include:
1. Improving Access
2. Building Capacity
3. Advancing Citizen Engagement
4. Enhancing Governance

By working with partners to deliver a quality inhouse training opportunity for library staff, that used resources provided by Interlink, we were able to reduce barriers for library staff to participate in learning opportunities. This builds capacity for our library system.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

All of the library staff were able to participate in this learning and wellness opportunity. All reported improved team cohesiveness as well as expressed that the day had been very valuable.

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?

Yes, we could not have done this without our provincial grant and without the support the Province of BC provides to our library partners.

Project/Program Name – Strategic Framework Review

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.

The management team of the Fernie Heritage Library undertook a review of the library strategic framework in 2022.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?

One of our strategic objectives is to 'clarify the roles and responsibilities of the board in supporting the operations team as it carries out the work required to achieve the library's vision, mission, and strategic objectives'.

How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service from the strategic plan, which include:
1. Improving Access
2. Building Capacity
3. Advancing Citizen Engagement
4. Enhancing Governance

Reviewing the Fernie Heritage Library's strategic framework fits the Provincial goals of building capacity and enhancing governance.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

The result of this process is a more engaged board and a more energized library team. In addition, the team is committed to the revised framework and feels the revised mission and vision meets the current and future needs of the library.

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?

Yes, through our Provincial operating grants

Project/Program Name – Technology improves Accessibility

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.

We purchased technology to improve patron accessibility to services and programs. We purchased Meescan and the Owl.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?

This project supports the library values of 'innovation and creativity', and of 'being solution-focused and responsive'.

How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service from the strategic plan, which include:
  1. Improving Access
  2. Building Capacity
  3. Advancing Citizen Engagement
  4. Enhancing Governance

This project supports the Provincial goal of improving access to BC residents. By using technology tools such as Meescan and the Owl, our patrons can better access library service and programs.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

The key outcome is improved access to library service and programs.

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?

Provincial funding supported these initiatives.

3. CHALLENGES

Challenge	Briefly describe how this challenge has impacted the library/community, and what steps the library took to address it in 2022.
COVID-19 (e.g., safety protocols, proof of vaccination)	Our operations continued to be affected by Covid-19 in 2022. In person programming resumed but with small numbers.
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	Our building was flooded in late December of 2022 and this had a significant impact on the end of the year through to the beginning of 2023.
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	All costs rose and our revenue streams decreased. We did not receive a funding increase from our municipal government, nor from the Province. Donations continued to be lower than before the pandemic.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health, and wellness)	Staffing remains our largest challenge. All unionized library staff members used all of their sick time (including all banked time) in 2022. We were not able to find staff to fill vacancies due to retiring staff. We held a staff mental wellness day and continued to explore ways to improve staff mental health.
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	
Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	For several months, we had heating issues with one of our four furnaces. Our bathroom was renovated and mold was remediated. In addition, we had a flood in our new maker space in late December.
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	The largest barrier to the community accessing the library was our staffing challenges.
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental	Increasing numbers of homeless and under-housed people are using the library.

health crisis)	
Other (please specify)	

4. COVID-19 RELIEF & RECOVERY GRANT – 2022 PROGRESS REPORT

Summary and Overview
Funds have been used to increase community access to the library by increasing library hours of operation and by improving our technology-enabled outdoor space. Funds have been used to support library team members by hosting staff training sessions on emergency planning and on moving forward in the post-pandemic world. Funds were used to purchase a self-checkout station and an Owl to improve library service and program delivery. We planned emergency planning sessions to deliver information to the community.

	Grant budget	Reallocated budget
COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Grant Amount	26596.57	24596.57
Emergency Planning & Preparedness Grant Amount	8865.52	10865.52
Total Grant Amount	35462.09	35462.09

Project Progress Report

Please use this section for:

1. Report progress on projects included interim report **and/ or**
2. New projects developed since interim report (copy and paste tables as needed)

Project/Program/Activity	Emergency planning: creation of Business Continuity Plans
Rationale	Important to future proof the library
Area of Need	Throughout the organization
Action/Output/Deliverable	Creation of Business Continuity Plans
Outcome/Impact	A more future-proofed library
Expenditure	
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	Currently in progress
Comments (optional)	

5. BOARD APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: _____ Date: _Mar 1, 2023_

Board Chair Signature: _____ Date: _March 1, 2023_