



Canadian Federation of Library Associations  
Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Réunion du Conseil d'administration**

Friday September 10, 2021 – vendredi 11 septembre 2021

12:00pm – 2:00pm ET – 12 h à 14 h HE

Zoom Meeting

**Minutes**

**Attending:**

|              |               |                  |                 |               |
|--------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Todd Kyle    | Kirk MacLeod  | Michael Rogowski | Lorisia MacLeod | Mary Chevreau |
| Vivian Lewis | Julie McKenna | Hélène Carrier   | Todd Mundle     | Katya Borrás  |
| Ann Smith    |               |                  |                 |               |

**Absent:**

Sharon Rankin & Graeme Tennant

**Guests:**

Tina Thomas, Deb Thomas, & Richard Baudry for items 4.1

**1. Opening Statements and Movements**

**1.1 Call to order:**

**1.1.2 Approval of July 23rd Minutes**

Motioned by **AS**, seconded by **MC**

Motion Carried.

**1.1.3 Approve Agenda**

Motioned by **JM**, seconded **KM**

Motion Carried.

**1.1.4 Conflict of interest Check:**

None

**1.2: Executive Committee Report**

Accepted



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## **2: Business Arising from last minutes**

None.

## **3: New Business**

### **3.1: Election Information for Members**

**TK:** This is mainly For Your information, but Impact Affairs has put together a few documents for us to distribute to our members. One which will be voted on, the rest as Good Information.

The main item, and the one that we will be voting on, is the 'One Pager' that is a re-working from our Pre-Budget Ask Submission. The others are the political parties' platforms as they relate to the library world, and the summaries of the French and English debates.

So does anyone have any comments or discussions on the One Pager? These aren't new as they are adapted from our Pre-Budget asks.

It might be good to add a piece on Indigenous Matters.

**JM:** The fourth point about Government Response to timely information request: Can we clarify that so it doesn't sound like LAC is just responding to its own ATI requests, that they in fact do all ATIs for the government.

**TK:** Yes, that is a very good point. Do we have a mover to approve the one-pager of election recommendations?

Mover: **KL** and Seconded by **TM**.

Motion Carried.

## **4. Discussion Item**

### **4.1: Response to Open Letter Regarding Intellectual Freedom Statement.**

**TK:** This discussion is in response to a letter we received from a number of librarians across the sector in their own response to our statement on Intellectual Freedom. We have some individuals here from the Intellectual Freedom Committee to hopefully comment on it and help us shape our response.

**RB:** We have a number of talented public librarian representatives who would be best to start off with.

**TK:** Mary, would you like to start with your position and CULC's stance?



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**MC:** I'd much rather hear from the IFC and their position. I can share the thoughts from CULC but I feel it's a bit cart before the horse.

**RB:** I'm very happy to begin the conversation as we were asked to speak on the issue. We were asked to respond to the group which is important. It's a matter of addressing our constituents who are a part of the library community of Canada. I'm glad to have the opportunity to add to the letter response written by the board.

**TT:** Just to add to the discussion on the draft letter, as we were in talks of re-wording our initial Statement, and the board and committee are unanimous in keeping the statement as is. We are also unanimous in support of the response letter, as it takes the focus away from the book, and the content found within it, and more what we stand for in Intellectual Freedom standpoint.

**TK:** I'll also add, one of the reasons this is a difficult issue: there are some core values questions here, and it brings into question the unity of our federation. Especially the direction the CFLA is going in, is not one that they like. We wondered if there's a compromise or a softening of the position to help bridge this growing gap. But I was swayed by the fact that as an organization, we have members who would feel disappointed if we went down that road. So I'm trying my best to remain objective and put the interest of the organization first. So I'm relying on the unanimity of the board and committee.

**RB:** There is a division of opinions and ideas within their own organizations of those who signed this letter. No matter what we do, there will be a division. People will support this response in the member organizations, but there will be individuals in those member associations who will not agree with it. The other thing is more difficult: they are taking a look at a book in a public library. So it appears to be a public library issue rather than an Academic Library issue, when it is available in both libraries. It leads us to a difficult position in supporting this item in Public Libraries only, as that is where the issue is.

**RB:** We will need a Translation for the Quebec Audience who's been affected.

**MC:** CULC is completely behind the Intellectual Freedom Committee and this original statement, and remains so. There was great concern about changing the stance in any way and we wouldn't want to change anything from the original statement. There was a great sigh of relief when this wasn't going to happen. My original comment was 'why talk about one individual title when this issue is going to come up time and time again' and I think this is a good response to that.

**TT:** From a process perspective: We are going to work on a policy to show how we choose our items to speak out against for complete transparency.

There is a growing level of fear in our community about speaking their agreement on this issue with such a loud voice in opposition. Some of this is even personal attacks



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from 1200 very loud voices, and we wouldn't want this conversation to go underground. We wouldn't want to go in a direction to continue this fear.

**DT:** We've had a number of Amazing academic librarians who are upholding intellectual freedom. I'm very pleased that the dialogue is taking place in a healthy way. I'm not saying it's changing any minds, but more and more people are coming up and talking about it, which does help quell the fear some librarians are feeling. This is also very good for those who don't have their minds completely made up and it allows them to form a much more informed thought.

**HC:** We support comments that have come. We want engagement, but once we're ready to post, can we circulate this to member associations first? This would be a courtesy to our members. We are a collective voice and even when we're not in agreement, we are still in a unity, and giving this to our members first to react, we give them that option.

**TK:** We would send it to the individual who sent the letter, and also the CCed member associations.

**LM:** As an early librarian in their career, we already have the fear of speaking up as we don't have tenure. We don't have that security to allow us to speak up, and we have to play it safe.

**VL:** As CARL President, we were talking about this and reviewing our IF statement, in part because of this issue. Recognizing Academic Librarians are in a different position than Public Librarians. We may have challenges around speakers we have coming to our campuses, but not that same scrutiny over the books in our collections. There was something about holding a conversation, but then it stopped. I wonder if we need another sentence in our response about the action of the conversation that can result in nuanced thinking.

**JM:** I agree, we aren't opening the door wide open, we are missing the conversation that needs to take place. While speaking with MLA and SLA, who had invited individuals from trans populations to speak on the trans issue. We came away with this population as being heard. It's the key piece currently that is missing.

A public librarian could not sign a letter like this representing their institution, or even on their own. This would be against our code of conduct and is antithetical to the values of the organization which endorse the CFLA position on Intellectual Freedom. We wouldn't be able to sign this without discipline. We don't have that kind of power that an academic librarian does.

**TK:** Let's look at the actual response that we have crafted. So we have decided a translation is required. A courtesy showing to the sender and member organizations to share with them first before making it 'public'.

Does anyone have any comments about or crafted a response?



**VL:** I Strongly encourage you to rework the second paragraph, as it may be received as insulting. It insinuates 'You're welcome to attend, but we're not going to do anything.'

**DT:** I agree. We are open to a dialogue, and not so rigid to discount any discussion.

**LM:** We could frame it as an open and constructed discussion is so important that we are actively planning this. We create an environment that is critically constructed. The voices that we want to hear from this may not be heard due to the global pandemic. Construct engaged discussion is what we want, and it needs to be safe.

**TM:** If the response is not about the specific book, what do we have in the response? The paragraph after this, pointing to Intellectual Freedom serving marginalized populations, might be a number of individuals who signed on due to this specific paragraph. I'm not sure how we change it, but that paragraph might be more problematic.

**TK:** We would need to point to open constructed dialogue when conditions permit.

**RB:** No matter what we do, the group who sent the response won't be satisfied. We need a timeline for our own response. The longer we take the more the submitter will interpret it as dragging it out.

**LM:** One of the recommendations from this paragraph is to include something on the importance of materials like this to educate and inform allies without requiring marginalized communities to do the emotional labour of explaining these perspectives they deal with. There is a large emphasis for the marginalized communities to do this work and allies need to help in this front, and educate others about this.

**WW:** I see the value of this discussion. I see the paragraph with the item of 'Safe Space' and we should change that to 'To serve'. We believe libraries serve this population.

**TK:** Normally I'm not a fan of wordsmithing on the fly, but we have to get this out in a timely manner. Here's what we have so far:

-take out 'safe spaces' and put in 'to serve'

**WW:** change 'encouraged' to 'welcomed'

**VL:** It should be more 'together we will be able to explore a nuanced discussion'.

Explore or arrive at. We can get our shared understanding at a better place. If the Intellectual Committee feels this. This is all coming out of a framework that the library is a neutral space, and I don't know if there's a shared belief in that. SO if we're framing our policy around an idea we no longer believe, maybe we can arrive somewhere better.

**JM:** I do find this all very challenging, but I'm also recalling when planning the in-person forum and this issue was on the table, having many people abandon us. So I don't want to poke a stick at people. It needs to be something that is respectful and genuine, and true in what we are willing to do.

**MC:** I'm all for on the fly editing and appreciate the effort, but I think it might be better suited to take some time to think it through.



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**RB:** I am on board for having an honest nuanced conversation and larger forum, but I fear, the way the letter was received, they would only want to speak with us if we concede to their point. We do have to maintain our idea of the initial letter.

**VV:** It is loaded when we put forward we are willing to meet with you, but we stand firm with our statement.

**RB:** We would need to maintain that it's a discussion and not something to have a change in our stance.

**KM:** Agreed. Looking at the paragraph, and looking at it from their perspective, opening a forum and talking to them about it. Their response would be "Great, when?" So I am a little hesitant unless we are willing to have a hard and fast discussion with them. And it's not even a decision, it's a discussion.

**WW:** I was on the planning committee for the original national forum, and we need far more voices. We could have that representation of voices if it was held online. I would suggest we point to these possibilities and allow those diverse voices with what comes out of the forum to help shape the direction of CFLA.

**TK:** We know the general message we want to get out of this, but what's really important is how we say it. This is what needs to be ironed out in this response. We don't want to poke the bear, but we also don't want to over promise.

-we approve the letter with further editing with the issue addressed here.

I believe we are in general agreement and time is of the essence. Set a deadline of mid next week.

**MC:** I'm concerned about the comment of 'we invite individuals to meet' what the intended outcome is. If we aren't prepared to change our statement, what would be the value?

**TK:** We need to make sure we aren't over promising anything.

**MC:** Help me understand why we need this statement on providing a meeting when we don't plan on changing our minds.

**LM:** We as a librarianship in Canada and our community need to talk about this. We as CFLA won't have a discussion with individuals, but we encourage and will help facilitate these conversations. We will have a national forum, but we don't engage with individuals.

**MC:** This makes better sense to me, thank you. This is a very slippery slope.

**TK:** So here's what we have now:

-We do want to engage that discussion at the earliest opportunity

-We hope in the future to be able to plan a national event to explore these issues and in the meantime we encourage ongoing constructive discussion

And this isn't final wording.



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**DT:** One of the items that came out of our conversations is having a listserv to help facilitate this conversation while we wait for a national forum to take place.

**TK:** I am very mindful of the time, and let's put the motion on the table. Are we comfortable with approving this in principle with the edits that we've discussed.

Motion to accept the response with the changes once they are completed:

**JM** and **MC**

Discussion: None.

Motion Carried.

**ACTION:** Give ourselves until September 15th to look over the statement. We will then translate it and send it to our member associations as a courtesy, then we will make it public.

## **5. Updates from Committees:**

### **5.1: Indigenous Matters Committee**

**LM:** The IMC has had a challenge finding a chair. We also have a vacancy in our Vice Chair position. We did have some members leave the committee stating the IF statement as the reason, though there was a member who specifically said it was not because of the IF statement.

We are in need of a meeting as we haven't had one for several months, but are unable to hold one without a chair. We have had members reach out to us wishing to have an update on the committee.

**TK:** It is difficult and frustrating as a board with a lack of communication without a chair. How do we ask a committee for an update without that leadership. We want to support and help the committee any way we can. It's less 'what are you doing' and more an update on the Truth and Reconciliation document that came out five years ago.

**LM:** A further note about Truth and Reconciliation. We need to update the statement as there are many items from that document from five years ago that have not come to pass that should have; such as NAPA which hasn't come to pass.

**KM:** Or a National Aboriginal Library Association. One question I had was when that report came out there was an opportunity for libraries to endorse this. I wonder if we have anyone who supported and endorsed the statement and ask if they would like to spend time in the committee and even chair it. This might get someone out and help us with the committees.

**TK:** NIKLA was something that came out of the energies from the document. I think Kirk's idea in reaching out to Institutions who already support us would be a great place to



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start. We need to do outreach and a call to members for the IMC committee and a chair.

**ACTION:** Call for chair. We can also call for members, to fill the vacancies left by those stepping away from the committee.

**VL:** I reached out to Stacy a little while ago that we had someone interested in joining the committee. Stacy responded that she was no longer the chair and the issue died. I know there are people out there who are very eager and want to join.

## **5.2: Cataloguing and Metadata**

**JM:** No Update

## **6. Decisions undertaken by email**

### **6.1: CFLA statement on York U Case**

**TK:** we acknowledge that this took place over email, and make sure there are no discussions or issues over that.

## **7: Marketing and Advocacy**

### **7.1: Twitter Analytics**

**MR:** Most of our engagement was around the IFC statement on Intellectual Freedom, those very little long term gains were yielded. We have 72 new followers since our last update (a total of 2,179) with well over 500 points of engagement. We only put out 5 posts, but the other four posts yielded very little engagement: 3 likes and 3 retweets. On the IFC post, we had 52 responses, with 100 retweets, and 340 likes as of right now. We also had 61 mentions of individuals who tagged us in their own tweets. On Facebook there was very little engagement with our IF post.

**HC:** This isn't necessarily social media or marketing, but I wanted to make people aware of this: There is going to be a Super Conference in Quebec, and we answered a call 'Influencing Public Policy: A Canadian Perspective'. It's posted now for everyone to know.

## **8. In Camera Discussion**

Budget for 2021-2022 has been passed.

Next Meeting: October 15th, 2021

Meeting Adjourned.