



# FACT SHEET:

## ON OUTSOURCING THE LOCAL LIBRARY "KEEP OUR LOCAL LIBRARY LOCAL" / PRDTU

### WHAT KIND OF LIBRARY DOES PRINCE RUPERT CURRENTLY HAVE?

The Prince Rupert Public Library is a *municipal library*. This is one of several kinds of libraries for a municipality in B.C. Spelled out in the *Library Act*, a municipal library is funded by the city and governed by a municipal library board. Our City Council appoints residents as trustees on the board. As a municipal library, the Prince Rupert Public Library is controlled locally, is directly accountable to City Council, and the local taxes that fund it remain here, in Prince Rupert.

### IS THE PRINCE RUPERT CITY COUNCIL GOING TO CLOSE THE MUNICIPAL LIBRARY?

According to Mayor Pond, the answer to the above question, albeit in a slightly different form (focusing on “the library” instead of “the municipal library”), is **no**. But to understand what this “no” means requires paying close attention to the difference between *any library remaining in the city* and *retaining our city’s current library*. If the city outsources the library, the current library will be replaced.

Our city’s library is a municipal library, and for the city to outsource library programs to VIRL, the city’s current library and the city’s local library board need to be **abolished, dissolved**, and then the library’s assets would need to **vested** into the city. Do these above words mean closed? Draw your own conclusion.

Regardless if **abolished, dissolved**, and **vesting** means “closed,” the section of the *Library Act* on the “abolition of [a] municipal library and dissolution of [a] library board” is clear on the process, and it’s actually not an easy task for any city. According to the *Library Act*, a City Council “may only abolish a municipal library by bylaw adopted with the assent of the electors” (such as through a city-wide referendum). Abolishing and dissolving a municipal library, and its board, is a big deal.

And that makes sense, considering the value of local governance over core city services and programs. Deciding to retain local control over library programs, or to outsource them, cannot be a rushed, hidden away from sight, process. Outsourcing the library will impact how local services are prioritized, how local taxes are spent, and who decides how our library is managed. Rather than decide these issues here, in our community, the decisions would come from another community, located outside of our region.

### WHY ABOLISH AND DISSOLVE PRINCE RUPERT’S MUNICIPAL LIBRARY?

Prince Rupert City Council is expecting an invitation from VIRL to join its regional library district soon, inviting Prince Rupert to outsource library programs to this Nanaimo-based network of branch libraries. Outsourcing would result in city taxes leaving Prince Rupert, being pooled into the VIRL budget, and then being reallocated, by VIRL to all its branch libraries.

For this (possible) outsourcing to happen, the existing library (meaning the institution, not the building) would first need to be “abolished,” “dissolved,” and then its assets “vested” in the city, all according to the *Library Act*. Then City Council would have to accept the invitation, which requires only passing a bylaw, and the regional library district would be extended to include Prince Rupert.

The new (branch) library would be outsourced and run by VIRL, based in Nanaimo, with local taxes going to VIRL and being redistributed back to all its branch communities. The question for Prince Rupert residents is this: Do we want to retain local control and local management of a core city service – of our municipal library? Do we value local governance? Or do we want our library outsourced to Nanaimo?