



what language
does distance
speak?



FVRLibraries
FORT VANCOUVER REGIONAL LIBRARIES

BUDGET 2021

Library District Overview

Fort Vancouver Regional Library District (FVRL) serves residents of southwest Washington including all of Klickitat and Skamania Counties, all of Clark County except for the City of Camas, and the City of Woodland and the Yale Valley Library District in Cowlitz County. FVRL supports thirteen staffed locations, two self-serve libraries, and two bookmobiles in rural, suburban, and urban settings, and provides books-by-mail services to

those living far from established library locations. FVRL has over 670,000 physical items that can be borrowed without fear of overdue fines. Our libraries also host a robust collection of over 128,000 eBook and eAudio items as well as vast digital resources such as eMagazines, streaming music and video platforms, and educational databases available 24/7 to anyone who holds a library card. FVRL offers a wide variety of programs for the public with a focus on early literacy, life-long learning, and the opportunity to learn about your community through its best assets - our citizens, businesses, and organizations.

FVRL Board of Trustees

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Amelia Shelley

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Governance

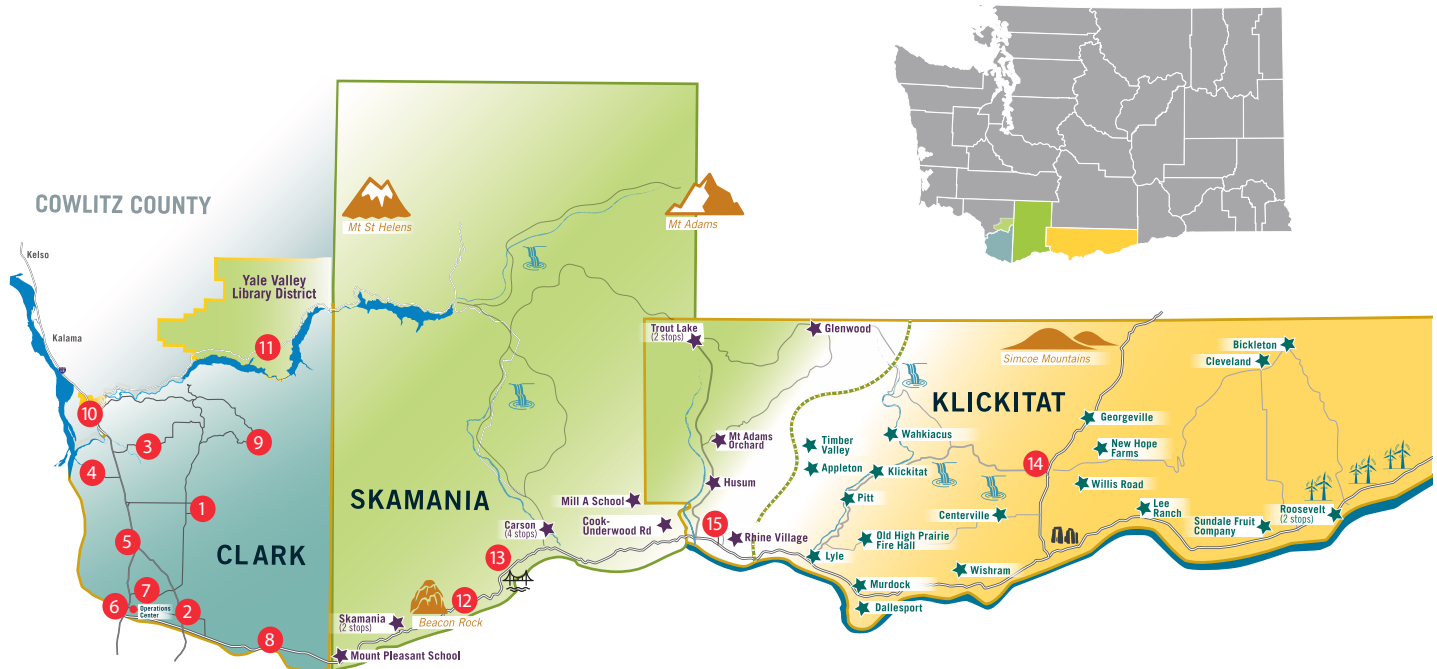
FVRL began in 1950 as Washington's first inter-county rural library district. It's now the fifth-largest library district in Washington State. FVRL is an independent taxing district and is governed by a seven-member board of trustees in accordance with RCW 27.12. Three board members are appointed by the Clark County Council, two by the Vancouver City Council, and one each by the Klickitat and Skamania County Commissions. Three of the counties in our service area (Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat) confirm the appointees. The board hires the executive director, adopts the library district's annual operating budget, sets an annual property tax levy, and approves the district's long-range strategic plan. Trustees serve voluntarily and agree to uphold the mission, vision, and values of FVRL.

Leadership

Responsible for the overall strategic direction and leadership of the district, the executive director ensures that FVRL operates within its approved budget while providing relevant programs, services, and materials that meet the needs of the diverse communities FVRL serves. The executive director's leadership team includes directors for Public Services, Facilities, Human

Resources, Communications and Marketing, Finance, Collections and Technology Services, and Outreach and Community Partnerships. The leadership team partners closely with the twelve community librarians who serve as the branch managers of FVRL's libraries, as well as the director of the Fort Vancouver Regional Library Foundation.

FVRLibraries Service Locations



Clark County

- 1 Battle Ground Community Library
Holland Christie, Branch Manager
- 2 Cascade Park Community Library
Mary Abler, Branch Manager
- 3 La Center Community Library
Jurinda Swingruber, Branch Manager
- 4 Ridgefield Community Library
Sean McGill, Branch Manager
- 5 Three Creeks Community Library
Barbara Jorgenson, Branch Manager
- 6 Vancouver Community Library
Kelly Lamm, Branch Manager
- 7 Vancouver Mall Library
Brandon Cruz, Branch Manager
- 8 Washougal Community Library
Rachael Ries, Branch Manager
- 9 Yacolt Library Express
Holland Christie, Branch Manager

Cowlitz County

- 10 Woodland Community Library
Jennifer Hauan, Branch Manager
- 11 Yale Library Express
Jennifer Hauan, Branch Manager

Skamania County

- 12 North Bonneville Community Library
David Wyatt, Branch Manager
- 13 Stevenson Community Library
David Wyatt, Branch Manager

Klickitat County

- 14 Goldendale Community Library
Terra McLeod, Branch Manager
- 15 White Salmon Valley Community Library
Ruth Shafer, Branch Manager

● LIBRARY LOCATION ★ Bookmobile Stop

Message from Executive Director

In creating our annual budget, the FVRL Board of Trustees asked that we use the principles of equity, sustainability, and stewardship when investing the public's tax dollars in library services, resources, and programs. We look to provide equitable services in each of the communities we serve, ensure that we budget responsibly so those services can be sustained, and seek to provide a good return on the community's investment. These same principles inform FVRL's service priorities of Access, Engagement, and Support. For FVRL, Access offers services where and when people need them, Engagement finds creative ways to reach our users, and Support provides adequate resources to meet these demands.



Even with buildings closed, branches like Vancouver Community Library have continued to do art shows for the public. In 2021 we will continue to find innovative ways to connect with and brighten our communities.

Upholding these values and priorities in 2020 has been challenging, especially when our traditional model for library services has been up-ended due to the pandemic. Despite these difficulties, FVRL has worked hard to remain an essential community service in new ways - offering curbside service when buildings were closed, taking library programs online to reach homebound users, creating ways to help readers find books when they couldn't browse, opening our first Little Lending Library at Vancouver

Mall Library and increasing digital collections and resources to meet new demand. It's not been all that we wished it could be, but it has been safe and sustainable, and we are proud of our team for their efforts. We can also see that many of the new services that were created out of necessity will need to be sustained. Many of our patrons appreciate the convenience of curbside pickup and the increased access afforded by online programs. FVRL will need to build capacity to continue these services.

Most importantly, FVRL recognizes that the past year has had a devastating impact on our communities. We understand that a lack of access to the library's computers has been a hardship on many of our most vulnerable users, and finding a way to provide adequate access remains a top priority. While many of the library services we know our communities depend upon were curtailed, FVRL expanded Books by Mail, streaming services, and access to databases. We offered programs online increasing access for those usually unable to attend in person. We improved digital equity by circulating wifi hotspots last fall and are adding laptop computers for checkout this year.

As we face the coming year, FVRL must ensure that our budget offers the flexibility to allow us to respond to rapidly changing circumstances during continuing uncertainty. To help improve access to these needed

services, our 2021 work plan includes deploying Chromebook computers and wireless hotspots for checkout, expanding the reach of our Wi-Fi access further into our parking lots, and sustaining our telephone and online staff support should we face another lockdown.

FVRL suffered its own setback with a catastrophic flood at our Operations Center in October, making planned reopenings for our libraries even more challenging from the loss of workspace and resources, as well as equipment, supplies, technology, and vehicles. We estimate that the repair of the Operations Center could take more than a year. While we are not yet able to determine the total cost of the recovery, we have added estimates on both sides of the budget as placeholders for these costs. We anticipate that all flood-related expenses will be offset by insurance and not borne by our taxpayers.



Reflected in our 2021 budget is repairs and recovery after a flood impacted our Operations Center last fall.

In our 70th year of serving southwest Washington, the 2021 budget reflects a continued focus on the library's mission which guides our work: *To strengthen our communities through knowledge, experiences, and*

creativity. We will continue to fund core library services of collections, programs, and services, and offer meaningful experiences for patrons and staff to share their love of books and libraries, as well as support facility operations and improvements. We will also be developing a new strategic plan this year that will guide our efforts as we look to build upon our work of the past three years. This process will allow for public input as we value your thoughts and ideas as well as your investment in our resources, personnel, and buildings.

FVRL remains committed to providing vibrant, vital library services to all of our communities and users. That includes providing robust access to books and materials online, at curbside, and in our buildings, once our libraries can safely reopen. We look forward to a new year with new possibilities, and hopefully, a full return to the libraries you know and love.

With warm regards,

Amelia Shelley
Executive Director



Curbside delivery of library materials has become a popular service.

Message from FVRL Board

I am pleased to share the Fort Vancouver Regional Library District (FVRL) 2021 budget with you. Setting an annual budget is part of the fiduciary duties set forth for library trustees in the state statutes governing the operation of library districts. Under these laws, library districts are allowed to set an annual increase of up to one percent or less, depending upon the economy. Our 2021 levy is a little over \$.34 cents per \$1000 of value, or about \$120 on a \$350,000 home. Residents inside the Vancouver city limits pay slightly more based on a bond passed in 2008 to support new libraries.

The return on the investment (ROI) in libraries for most property owners is significant when compared to what borrowed books and other library resources would have cost if you chose to purchase them. The consumer cost of a typical print or ebook is between \$15 and \$30, requiring only about 5 library checkouts to match the value for your taxes. While that does not make the expense trivial, especially for those who choose not to use the library, it does represent significant savings for those who do. By loaning items repeatedly, libraries leverage tax dollars to provide more access at a lower cost.

Like all local and state government agencies during most of 2020, our libraries were asked to help stem the spread of COVID-19 by limiting services to curbside pick-up to reduce exposure for everyone. Our twelve branch locations were able to support patrons with over 350,000 checkouts this way. Our patrons accessed over 1.3 million e-books, e-audiobooks and streamable media sessions this past year.

In December, the Board also amended FVRL's 2020 budget to better reflect that actual revenues and expenditures were reduced by about \$4 million last year. These were funds we anticipated when we created the budget in 2019, but did not receive or expend. Our 2021 budget reflects approximately the same total amount as the original 2020 budget, as we anticipate those delayed capital projects will occur in 2021. FVRL posts its financial statements monthly on their website and is audited annually by the state.

At the end of December, FVRL had \$18.3 million in cash on hand., of which \$8.5 million is reserved for capital projects (like new libraries). That includes funds set aside for projects in Ridgefield, Washougal, and Woodland, as well as future projects or emergencies. The rest of FVRL's reserve represents the funds that pay the monthly bills between property tax collections in the spring and fall. By Board policy, we must maintain a minimum Reserve of 60 days of operational funds at all times, also known as our budget stabilization fund or "rainy day" fund, which amounts to about \$4.5 million.

We welcome your questions. You can write to the Board of Trustees at trustees@fvrl.org or to our Executive Director, Amelia Shelley at ashelley@fvrl.org. I also encourage you to attend a Board meeting if you are interested. Information about meetings, agendas, and other information is available on our website.

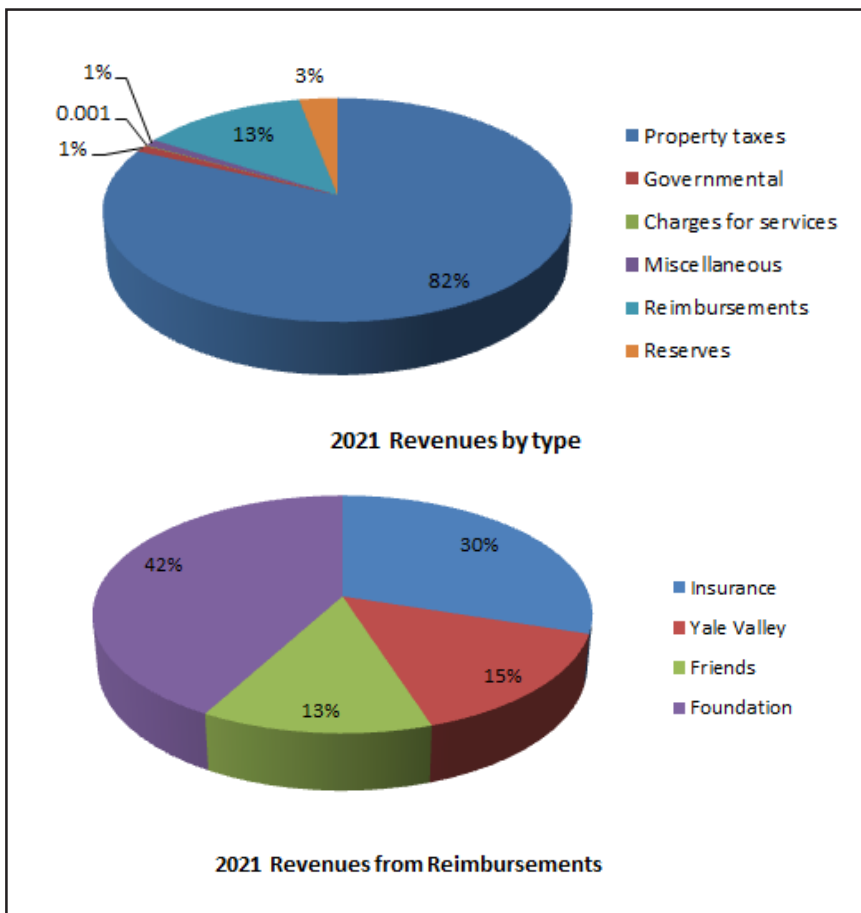
Kelly Smith
Chair
FVRL Board of Trustees

2021 Revenue and Expenditures

HOW IS FVRL FUNDED?

Property taxes are collected in April and October by the Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, and Skamania County treasurers, accounting for eighty-two percent of FVRL's revenue. As a vital component of our comprehensive financial planning, and in accordance with our policies, FVRL maintains an adequate fund balance to sustain ongoing operations during the months between revenue collection periods. This allows our libraries to ensure continuity of operations and avoid the need to borrow funds or cut services, should there be an unforeseen shortfall of revenues.

Public library districts are allowed a levy rate of \$.50 per \$1,000 of property value by state statute. This amount declines over time if property values rise, as they have throughout southwest Washington. Annual budget growth for taxing districts in Washington is limited to 1%, unless there is an additional limit based on the Implicit Price Deflator (IPD), employed during economic downturns when the inflation rate falls below 1%. An IPD of .602% was announced by the State in September for 2021 and the Board chose to accept the IPD rate for an increase of \$150,318.13, and resolved to bank the excess capacity of \$54,206.15 should the district need it in the future. The total assessed value of properties increased by just under 5% between 2020 and 2021. The levy includes \$492,255.73 in new construction and state assessed utilities, increasing FVRL's revenue by 2.59% over 2020's property tax revenues. FVRL's levy rate for 2021 (\$.3427465249) is almost a full cent lower than the 2020 levy rate (\$.3527081393).



Other 2021 revenue sources:

- Other taxes, grants, and contracts
- Charges for services
- Investment interest
- E-Rate
- Reimbursements

In 2021, FVRL anticipates that charges for services will remain low. Generally, these revenues are payments for lost materials, printing and copying fees, and meeting room rentals. This past year we have suspended or waived many of these fees to support our communities. Due to the October flooding of FVRL's Operations Center, we anticipate some significant reimbursements this year from our insurance provider to cover the cost of renovation of the lower level of the building. Additionally, we also expect reimbursements from the Yale Valley Library District and from the Fort Vancouver Regional Library Foundation to cover new construction

costs in Ariel and Ridgefield. Both of these new libraries are expected to open in 2021.

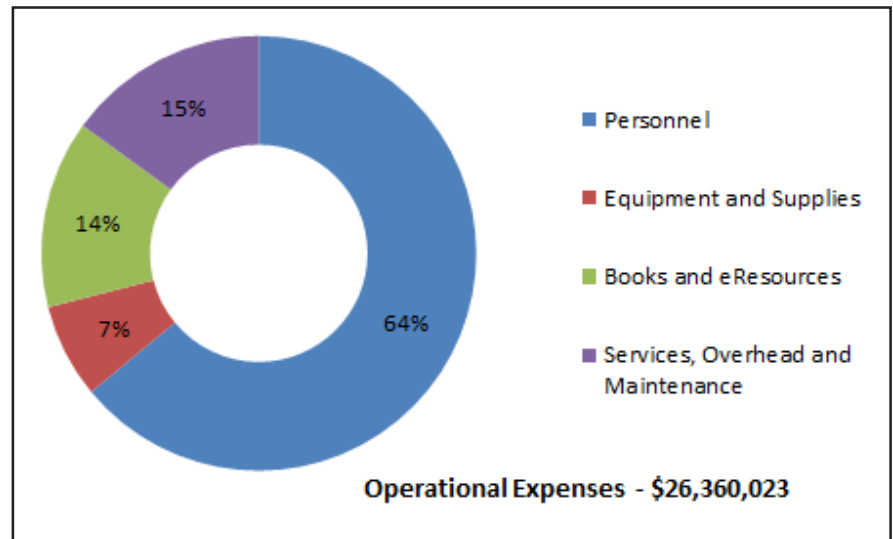
HOW DOES FVRL SPEND THESE FUNDS?

FVRL's operational expenditures do not represent a significant increase over 2020 due to several factors. There was a hiring freeze in place for most of 2020, with a total of 21 positions currently empty. We are anticipating adding staff for Yale Valley and Ridgefield as those new facilities open. FVRL was pleasantly surprised that our medical and dental insurance did not increase for 2021. There are significant increases in capital expenses, related either to the flood damage repairs at the Operations Center or our other capital construction projects. We anticipate that the majority of losses related to the flood recovery will be covered by insurance.

2021 OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

Personnel: Wages and Benefits

FVRL currently has 231 employees (223.5 FTE). All regular employees who work 24 hours or more a week receive benefits. The past year has seen a significant decline in the use of substitute hours as we have not needed the additional coverage. Although we have indicated an average of a two percent increase in wages, there are several factors to consider: a continued freeze for positions in locations where we are not providing all of our typical services; growth and development increases for AFSCME and non-represented staff; new hires for Ridgefield and Yale as those buildings open to the public; and the restoration of a deputy director position at the administrative level. We will also be bargaining with both unions (AFSCME and WPEA) in the coming year for new contracts.



Equipment: Technology and Supplies

A substantial increase in this category is due to the near-total loss of all equipment, furnishings, and supplies in the Operations Center's lower level. FVRL will be replacing office furniture and cubicle walls, computers, and other technology, as well as a large amount of equipment used for facilities maintenance and improvements. Some of the things that were lost - historic books, one-of-a-kind art, and historic records - are irreplaceable. An ongoing effort to recover wet documents will hopefully yield the retention of files necessary for compliance with state public records retention rules.

FVRL has added several new software products this past year including a new Human Resources Information System, expanded our digital reference platform to support additional services, and purchased products to facilitate distance meetings and remote access. In 2021, we are looking to add a system for managing accounts payable invoices online to reduce paperwork and streamline payments.

Resources: Books, Materials, and e-Resources

This segment of the budget has increased slightly for 2021 but was substantially underspent in 2020 due to



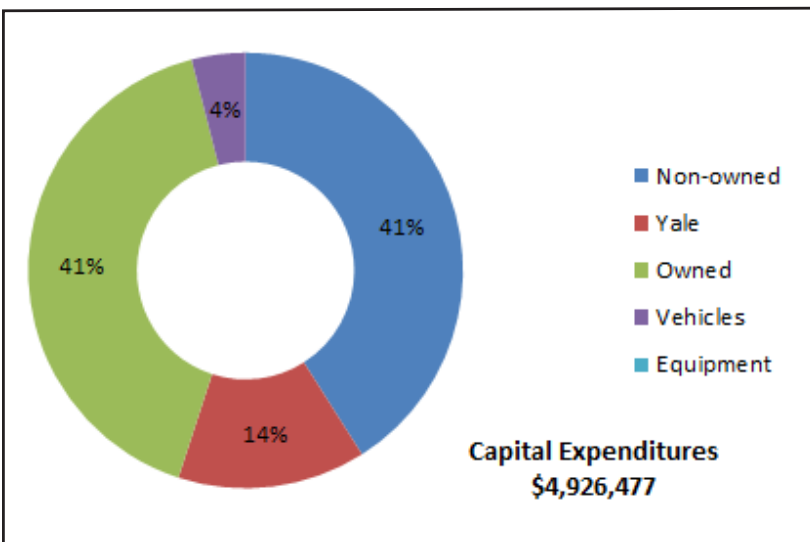
New libraries in Yale Valley (left) and Ridgefield (right) are under construction and will be completed in 2021.

challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The coming year will see these trends continue with slightly more spending, particularly eBook and eAudio titles in OverDrive as well as the Kanopy streaming video database, and continued support of new databases and additional capacity for user access. We will also be adding to the collections for Ridgefield and Yale Valley.

Operations: Professional Services, Utilities, and Maintenance

Most of this category is applied to custodial services, utility costs, maintenance contracts, and facility upkeep and repairs. FVRL also requires the assistance of professional architects, engineers, and others to support our capital projects in 2021. Staff training will continue to be online until it is safe to travel and attend meetings and conferences in person again. Some portions of this budget, primarily maintenance, custodial, leases, and other service agreements have small annual increases that are contractually stipulated.

Capital Projects: New, Existing, and Future Libraries



FVRL will undertake several smaller projects this year in our existing libraries in addition to the relatively large project of restoring the lower level of the district's Operations Center, and the opening of new facilities in Yale Valley and Ridgefield. Some site work will occur on our recently acquired property in Washougal and on our Woodland property as we continue our fundraising campaigns for both of these projects.

Fort Vancouver Regional Library District
Statement Of Revenue Budget - Fiscal Year 2021

		2020 Budget (Amended)	2021 Budget	Dollar Difference	Percent Change
Property Taxes					
311.10	Property Taxes - Clark	22,653,394	23,469,214	\$815,820	3.48%
311.10	Property Taxes - Cowlitz	306,098	326,395	\$20,297	0.06218539
311.10	Property Taxes - Klickitat	1,361,830	1,196,404	-\$165,426	-0.1382693
311.10	Property Taxes - Skamania	640,376	664,136	\$23,760	0.0357758
Total Property Taxes		24,961,698	25,656,149	\$694,451	2.78%
Other Taxes					
311.11	Other General Tax	70,000	0	-\$70,000	0.00%
318.20	Leasehold Excise Tax	90,000	92,000	\$2,000	2.17%
Total Other Taxes		160,000	92,000	-\$68,000	-42.50%
Intergovernmental, Grants & Contracts					
332.00	Federal in-lieu of Taxes	5,000	5,000	\$0	0.00%
335.05	State Forest Boards	150,000	170,000	\$20,000	13.33%
338.72	INET City of Vancouver (PEG)	61,296	61,000	-\$296	-0.48%
338.72	Contracts - Clark County Jail	500	500	\$0	0.00%
Total Intergovernmental, Grants & Contracts		216,796	236,500	\$19,704	9.09%
Charges for Services					
341.60	Equipment Use Fees	72,000	20,000	-\$52,000	-260.00%
347.21	Non-Resident Borrower Fee	6,000	2,000	-\$4,000	-200.00%
347.90	Lost / Damaged Material Fee	50,000	5,000	-\$45,000	-900.00%
347.50	Collection Agency Referral Fee	17,000	5,000	-\$12,000	-240.00%
Total Charges for Services		145,000	32,000	-\$113,000	-77.93%
Miscellaneous					
361.11	Investment Interest	200,000	177,000	-\$23,000	-11.50%
362.00	Rental Income	10,000	2,500	-\$7,500	-75.00%
367.10	Gifts/Contributions	5,000	3,351	-\$1,649	-32.98%
369.90	Miscellaneous	8,500	8,500	\$0	0.00%
369.90	Grants	366,600	2,500	-\$364,100	
369.90	Other Miscellaneous - E-Rate	130,000	200,000	\$70,000	53.85%
395.00	Sale of Assets	12,000	12,000	\$0	0.00%
Total Miscellaneous		732,100	405,851	-\$326,249	-44.56%
Subtotal-Operating Revenues		26,215,594	26,422,500	206,906	0.79%
Reserves					
397.10	Transfer in (unrestricted)	0	0	\$0	0.00%
397.10	Transfer in (restricted)	0	0	\$0	0.00%
Total Transfers		0	0	\$0	100.00%
Reimbursements					
369.40	Insurance Payments	2,500	1,500,000	\$1,497,500	99.83%
338.72	Yale Valley Library District	350,000	730,000	\$380,000	108.57%
369.90	Library Friends Groups	180,000	660,000	\$480,000	266.67%
369.90	Fort Vancouver Regional Library Foundation	50,000	2,136,000	\$2,086,000	4172.00%
Total Reimbursements		582,500	5,026,000	\$4,443,500	762.83%
Grand Total Revenue		26,798,094	31,448,500	\$4,650,406	17.35%

Fort Vancouver Regional Library District
Statement of Expenditure Budget - Fiscal Year 2021

Library Operating Budget		2020 Budget (Amended)	2021 Budget	Dollar Difference Between 2020 & 2021	Percentage Increase or Decrease
Bars	Description				
Personnel: Waqes & Benefits					
572.00	Wages	11,133,575	11,563,314	429,739	3.72%
572.24	Benefit - Medical	2,476,458	2,501,458	25,000	1.00%
572.24	Benefit - Dental	304,144	306,644	2,500	0.82%
572.24	Benefit - Life, LTD, STD	131,891	132,891	1,000	0.75%
572.22	Benefit - PERS	1,459,354	1,459,354	0	0.00%
572.21	Benefit - FICA	853,521	871,318	17,797	2.04%
572.25	Benefit - L & I	117,656	117,603	-53	-0.05%
572.2X	Benefit - PFMLA	17,891	17,941	50	0.28%
572.28	Unemployment Expense	10,000	10,000	0	0.00%
	Personnel Subtotal:	16,504,490	16,980,523	476,033	2.88%
Equipment: Technology & Supplies					
572.30	Supplies	362,885	400,000	37,115	9.28%
572.35	Small Equipmt (FFE)	348,000	500,000	152,000	30.40%
572.38	Technology	350,000	525,000	175,000	33.33%
572.33	Library Software and Professional	282,000	300,000	18,000	6.00%
	Equipment Subtotal:	1,342,885	1,725,000	382,115	28.45%
Resources: Books, Materials & e-resources					
572.34	Library Books & Materials	2,100,000	2,400,000	300,000	14.29%
572.39	Electronic Resources	1,360,000	1,400,000	40,000	2.94%
	Resources Subtotal:	3,460,000	3,800,000	340,000	9.83%
Operations: Services, Overhead and Maintenance					
572.41	Professional Services	1,255,488	1,238,000	-17,488	-1.39%
572.42	Communications	383,652	419,400	35,748	2.00%
572.43	Training / Travel	108,000	108,000	0	0.00%
572.44	Advertising	30,000	29,000	-1,000	-3.33%
572.45	Rentals / Leases	540,000	519,200	-20,800	-3.85%
572.46	Insurance	205,000	223,700	18,700	9.12%
572.47	Utilities	430,000	408,500	-21,500	-5.00%
572.48	Repairs & Maintenance	750,000	775,000	25,000	3.33%
572.49	Misc / Dues / Printing / Other	166,579	131,200	-35,379	-21.24%
572.50	Intergovernmental Services	15,000	2,500	-12,500	-83.33%
	Operations Subtotal:	3,883,719	3,854,500	-29,219	-0.75%
	Subtotal-Operating Expenditures	25,191,094	26,360,023	1,168,929	4.64%
Capital Projects: Library Improvements					
572.62	Buildings / Non-Owned	91,000	2,000,000	1,909,000	2097.80%
572.62	Yale	641,000	730,000	89,000	13.88%
594.62	Buildings / Owned	800,000	2,000,000	1,200,000	150.00%
594.64	Machinery & Equipment	75,000	196,477	121,477	161.97%
	Capital Projects Subtotal:	1,607,000	4,926,477	3,319,477	206.56%
Reserves-Library Development - transfer out					
572.38	Reserve Projects	0	162,000	162,000	100.00%
Reserves - Library Development - transfer in					
572	Budget Stabilization Account	0	0	-	0.00%
	Reserves Subtotal:	\$ 0	162,000	162,000	100.00%
Grand Total All Expenditures:		\$26,798,094	\$ 31,448,500	\$ 4,650,406	17.35%

Plans for 2021

This year marks the beginning of a **new strategic planning cycle**, one that will build upon the work of the past three years. Since 2018, FVRL has focused on three areas of development: Supporting Student Success, Building Connected Communities, and Fostering a Culture of Innovation. To continue to move FVRL forward, even during the restrictive environment presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the district began a strategic planning process that will include input from stakeholders: staff, the board, volunteers, and the communities we serve. Plans include hosting online conversations with the communities as well as within the organization and with our trustees to determine our priorities for the next three years. The new strategic plan will cover initiatives beginning in 2021 through 2023.

OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS

In 2019, FVRL established ten desired outcomes for users of their public libraries. These outcomes are the basis for how FVRL plans, evaluates, and improves upon its five library core service areas: **Collections, Customers, Programs, Spaces, and Technologies**. Our outcomes are evaluated against benchmarks for each core service area annually, and refinements and improvements to these areas are driven through staff-based initiatives and the annual budget. Our focus for 2020 was Customer Service, and due to the interruptions caused by the pandemic, we will continue to work on and refine these benchmarks to support the new strategic plan. Our work plan for 2021 also reflects these desired outcomes in our focus on supporting community needs, helping our patrons improve their lives, and making our libraries easier to use and access.

COLLECTIONS

FVRL will implement a new catalog module that will allow for those with **new book suggestions** to receive updates and responses on those titles. This feature is something long-sought-after by our staff and patrons. FVRL's **website** will be updated to a more recent version of our web platform (Drupal). The catalog will be improved by creating a tabbed display that will include article results from our subscription databases supporting our **ConnectFVRL** student library access program through our local schools.

CUSTOMERS

One of FVRL's organizational values is Exceptional Service. The past year has led FVRL to establish many new practices to put materials into patrons' hands during the COVID-19 pandemic including **curbside pick up** and expanded **books by mail** deliveries. As we plan to restore **in-library services** in the coming year, we will ensure that all of our actions will be compliant with the State's safety guidelines and standards. FVRL will continue to offer a number of these new services as long as is necessary, perhaps even beyond the end of the pandemic



Successful services like curbside pick up and library samplers will continue to help get materials to our communities.

should they prove to be successful. FVRL plans on implementing an improved online library card registration portal that will allow new patrons to apply for a full-privileges library card to allow for faster access to all of our digital resources. All FVRL library locations will continue to be **open at least six days a week**, and we have standardized our open hours to provide more equitable access to our communities.

PROGRAMS

Library staff will continue to offer **virtual programs** for adults, teens, and children into 2021. Staff are creating programming with an associated literacy component to promote and encourage viewers to check out related library materials. We are hopeful that the **2021 Summer Learning Program** will build upon last year's success with online participation unless we can host some in-person events. Whether in person or online, we will once again offer a community-wide reading opportunity for our users through our **Revolutionary Reads** program.



SPACES

Yale Valley Community Library should open in the spring of 2021, barring any unforeseen delays due to the pandemic. The new **Ridgefield Community Library** will be completed and open by mid-summer. Site work and fundraising for a new **Woodland Community Library** will continue throughout the year, and conceptual design work for the new **Washougal Community Library** should begin early in 2021.

Upgrades and improvements to existing facilities include replacement of flooring in our **Battle Ground, Vancouver, and White Salmon Valley Community Libraries**. Additionally, we will complete the remodel of the teen area begun in 2020 at **Cascade Park** and install exterior sound panels in the garden at **Three Creeks**. Improvements to **Stevenson's** basement staff area, the lighting in **Vancouver's** teen area, replacing **Three Creeks'** front doors, improving the landscape at **Cascade Park** and **Goldendale**, and several other smaller projects are planned. Finally, renovation of the flood-damaged **Operations Center** should continue throughout the year.



Construction of the new Ridgefield (top) and Yale Valley (below) Community Libraries will be completed in 2021.

TECHNOLOGIES

FVRL has been making strides in the area of **digital equity** due to the constraints of limiting patron access to our libraries. Through a Washington State Library grant in 2020, we are now lending **hotspots** and will monitor the popularity of this service to determine if additional devices are needed to support our

communities. Early in 2021, we will be adding **Chromebooks** for patron checkout. These devices are intended to support those who lack access and need to connect online for school, work, or other activities.

In addition to these core services activities, FVRL is also engaged in several activities that provide critical support to our libraries and patrons.

UPGRADING SYSTEMS

FVRL will begin the process of replacing one or more of our **automated materials handlers** in our libraries. Four of our five machines are at or near the end of their expected life cycle. FVRL's **technology plan** will be updated to include more contemporary goals and measures, as it has been several years since the last update. The new tech plan will also include **disaster recovery planning** learned through our recent experience of a flood in our Operations Center, as well as other unforeseen catastrophic events such as fires and earthquakes. As part of this effort, we are improving staff access to phones when our libraries are closed, and rebuilding our **phone answering system** for more responsive access to help.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

FVRL is working toward building a more holistic approach to **partnerships** in 2021. We work with a wide variety of outside groups, all around our service area, and our libraries have deep and meaningful partnerships with early learning providers, assisted living facilities, and many others. These partners often provide programs, materials, and services at the local level. A new initiative called **Read, Return, Repeat** places library materials at assisted living facilities and other community locations. These collections place high-quality library materials in facilities or locations where people experience challenges to accessing library materials.

REACHING OUT TO NEW POPULATIONS

We will focus on developing projects with these partners that will **reduce barriers to access** for populations that do not use library services. These barriers may include being homebound, lacking transportation, or belonging to a systemically non-dominant population. To facilitate new approaches to improving access, FVRL will be purchasing an outreach vehicle that will be equipped to deliver library materials and programs to populations that may have difficulty accessing a physical library. This vehicle will see initial use primarily in Clark County, delivering pop-up opportunities for communities to gain access to library materials and services such as books and computer access.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

This will be the second year of FVRL's work on an **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)** initiative with the EDI committee established to accomplish this work for the district. The initial project for this committee has been the development of an equity statement and lens tool to utilize in the evaluation and recommendation



A patron uses FVRL's wifi outside of Woodland Community Library. 2021's plans include expansion of services like checkout of wifi hotspots to also include Chromebooks for patron use to help bridge the digital equity divide.

of changes to our policies, procedures, and initiatives for their effectiveness in addressing and improving our accessibility to our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community members. Once these tools are developed, the committee will conduct a district-wide conversation and develop training for our teams. The EDI committee will also be reviewing and making recommendations regarding district processes such as recruitment, hiring, and on-boarding of new employees in the coming year and will present their findings to the board.

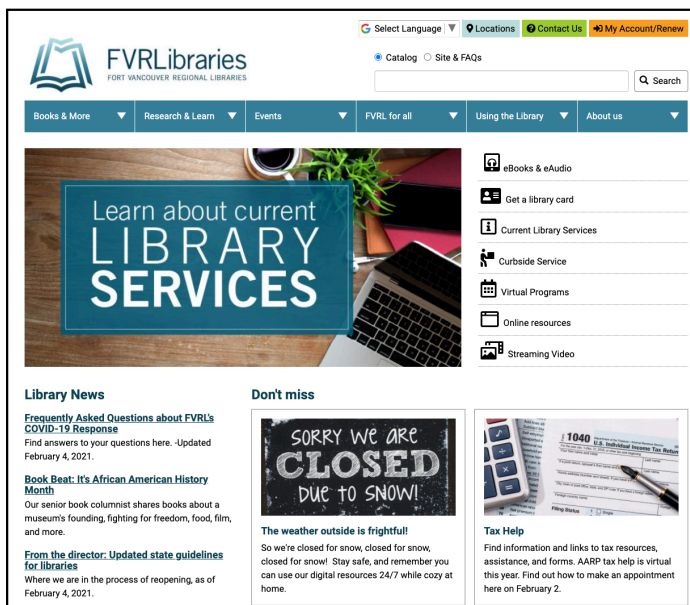
EQUITABLE EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

Also in 2020, FVRL staff from large and small, urban and rural locations, began working on an **anti-bias education framework** for children’s programming. This tool will support the development and delivery of programming that holds equity and inclusion at its center. After input from community organizations and

partners has been gathered and evaluated, we will be seeking to develop an approach to children’s programs that will provide the opportunity for children belonging to systemically non-dominant groups to see themselves, their families, and their communities reflected in more of our library program offerings.

CRITICAL COMMUNICATIONS

FVRL will further our strategic communications goals by developing a new process for planning, promoting, and marketing FVRL’s services, resources, and programs. In 2021, this will include working with the EDI committee and Digital Equity workgroup to improve communications materials, develop signage parameters, and inform how we promote FVRL programs and events. FVRL will also be **updating our web platform** in the coming year to ensure that our online presence continues to be the hub for library information and services, as well as adding new features and evaluating and updating existing content



In addition to security enhancements, our updated website will add features to make it easier for patrons to find the services they need and get help from library staff.

as needed. Our communications team supports FVRL by developing marketing materials for programs and facility signage as well as fundraising materials for the Foundation and Friends groups related to our building projects and fundraising events.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

We will be automating **cash receipts** and **accounts payable** processes to allow for invoices to be managed remotely and reviewed online, and to set vendors up for electronic payments. Automation will save paper, time, and expense by creating a digital audit file format, eliminating the need for file storage space. Automation software will allow FVRL to pay vendors promptly, with no mail delays or lost invoices. An additional benefit would be electronic transfer so that paperwork does not have to be mailed or transported. In 2021, FVRL will also continue to improve **LEAN practices for public works projects** including the use of the Public Works Flowchart, refinement of tracking processes, and collaboration with all stakeholders.

2020 Year in Review

Although the past year has posed challenges to almost every aspect of our organization, there have also been opportunities for meaningful change. When libraries closed due to COVID-19, FVRL rapidly adapted library programs to an online audience and launched new services to meet community needs. The following areas continued to build on our strategic priorities, including:

Community Partnerships: Partnerships, both district and local, enable us to expand our impact, increase our visibility, and actively support our communities. Employees assisted Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency (CRESA) with the development of a PPE warehouse and distribution system. Staff supported residents at the Clark County Juvenile Detention Center with book talks and an author visit. The ConnectFVRL program continued to expand, with nearly 70,000 public school students in nine school districts being able to access our electronic resources via their student ID numbers. Early learning partnerships with school districts and early learning providers allowed us to pilot library-led emergent literacy programming for parents.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI): Based on our commitment to ensure equity among those we serve, our EDI committee has continued to meet and work on an equity statement and lens tool to use in the evaluation, potential revision, or creation of library policies and programs. These tools will also be used to make enhancements to our recruitment and on-boarding programs. This committee will continue its work with our consultant into 2021 to complete these deliverables. Additionally, our Outreach and Youth Services staff worked on an EDI framework for early literacy programming that utilizes partnerships to reach new audiences.

New Facilities: New library buildings were started in 2020 in Yale Valley and Ridgefield. Yale Valley Community Library is a project in partnership with the Yale Valley Library District, who contract with FVRL for services. Their new 2,000-square-foot library building is anticipated to open in early 2021. The new Ridgefield



Library partnerships like this one helped provide free meals for needy families in our communities.

Community Library is the expansion and remodel of the former library and Ridgefield Community Center. The new library will be just over 8,000 square feet and offer separate children's and teen areas, an adult reading lounge and tech bar, a community room, and an expanded collection. FVRL worked with Hacker Architects to develop a conceptual design for a new Woodland Community Library.

Strategic Communications: Google Meet and Zoom webinar platforms were introduced to conduct FVRL's staff and board meetings. Social and print media were used to promote library services, hours, programs, and resources. FVRL partnered with the Office of Financial Management to develop a mailer that went to every household in our district to cross-promote the 2020 Census and how easy it was to use library services to help enter census data. Additional phone lines were added to support the increased volume of callers.

Responsive Library Services: Popular library programs were adapted for online audiences, and a new curbside hold-pickup service was launched. Library Samplers provide curated collections of materials on request, and patrons can get reader's recommendations through our personalized reading suggestions service. The digital collections budget was increased and several new databases were added including Value Line (online version) and Ferguson's Career Guidance Center. The ConnectFVRL program was expanded to currently include ten school districts supporting the distance learning needs of 70,000 students.

Reduce Barriers to Library Access: FVRL eliminated blocked card limits and suspended billed items during the closure, to ensure patrons had maximum access to library materials and resources. We also standardized branch hours across the district to a minimum of forty-eight hours a week with a minimum schedule of 10 am to 5 pm, six days a week. Books by mail services have temporarily been extended to any patron, and patrons can request a small amount of free printing or copying each day.

Internal Systems Improvements: The implementation of a new human resources information system (HRIS) has improved payroll automation and integrates the payroll process with other financial and human resources tasks. FVRL utilized this new system to conduct our benefits open enrollment in October and saw a significant decrease in the Human Resources workload regarding this processing. We will continue to work on integrating the final modules of this system. The HRIS also provided significant improvements to our payroll processing, allowing us to streamline and automate this task. FVRL is proud of its clean 2019 audit thanks to our exceptional Finance team.

Administrative Actions: FVRL signed a new lease agreement for the Operations Center property with the City of Vancouver to allow for the development of Vancouver Innovation, Technology and Arts Elementary School.



Virtual Programs took some of our most popular events and programs and put them online in 2020.

Administrative staff also successfully negotiated the donation of property in Washougal for a new library on Durgan Street between Main and C Streets, and served on several statewide committees during the past year including the Broadband Advisory Council. Late in the year, attention turned to coping with the October 3 flood at the Operations Center and starting the long process of recovery.

Gratitude: FVRL has a tremendous team who have truly risen to the occasion to find new and creative ways to engage our readers. Many of our employees were also juggling family responsibilities and other challenges brought on by the pandemic. Despite this, staff worked together to ensure that our library services were covered. FVRL instituted a hiring freeze last March and has looked for ways to contain costs for the many new activities required relating to safety, sanitation, processing and handling books, as well as advertising and marketing new services. We appreciate everyone's willingness to learn new things, adopt new procedures, and be prepared for changes as they came our way.

FVRL received a tremendous amount of support from our patrons over the past year, despite the challenges we all faced as part of the pandemic restrictions. FVRL has also been fortunate to partner with other organizations to assist with community efforts such as the 2020 US Census, Red Cross Blood Drives, and CRESA's PPE warehouse. While we are still not sure when the need for pandemic protocols will end, we remain positive that your libraries will be here to serve you through the challenges ahead.

Library patrons love their libraries!

"Thank you so much for being there and carrying on. It's a wonderful service you provide."

"Thank you for the take-n-make craft kit (finger knitting). I really enjoy it and the yarn colors were beautiful. The kit inspired me to start crocheting, and I am having so much fun learning 'amigurumi,' the Japanese art of crocheting little animals."

"You have been some of our heroes during the past 6 months. We are so grateful to still have access to library books - that has always been an important part of our family life."

"During this very challenging year, we want to thank you for all the work you do. We appreciate the variety of help by phone and online."

"My kids (and me, too!) have had so much fun with the kit and I had a great time with the 'Insect Storytime and Crafts' with my son while his big sister did her distance learning."