

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Meeting of the Trustees as a Corporation and Administrative Agency

Friday, November 16, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.
Central Library, Commonwealth Salon
700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

DRAFT MINUTES

A Meeting of the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston as a Corporation and Administrative Agency was held at the Central Library, 700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116 on Friday, November 16, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. in the Commonwealth Salon.

Present at the meeting were: Chair, Robert Gallery and Vice-Chair Evelyn Arana-Ortiz and Trustees: Zamawa Arenas, Jabari Asim, Ben Bradlee, Cheryl Cronin, Priscilla Douglas, Senator Linda Dorcena Forry, and Representative Byron Rushing. John Hailer was not present. Also present were: David Leonard, President, Pamela Carver, Clerk of the Board, along with BPL staff and members of the public.

Chair Robert Gallery called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. and addressed the order of business. Mr. Gallery thanked everyone for their presence. He called for the approval of the minutes of the September 27, 2018 meeting. With no edits or comments, a motion was duly made and seconded. The Trustees voted in favor to approve the meeting minutes of September 27, 2018.

Mr. Leonard gave the President's report. He gave a brief update on the ongoing capital projects. He explained they will meet in Executive Session at the conclusion of the public meeting to give the Trustees an update on the Facilities Department. Mr. Leonard explained there is new leadership in many positions and they are continuing to see improvements in the BPL operations. He acknowledged the Boston Book Festival was another great success. He noted the Employee Appreciation Dinner was that evening honoring four employees who have 25 years of service at the BPL.

Mr. Leonard invited Laura Irscher, Chief of Collections to give an update on the Rare Books Department renovation. Ms. Irscher explained they are entering the end of the design phase and expecting to be done by the end of 2018 and selecting a contractor. She noted how pleased they are with the moving company they selected for the safe packing, shipping and storage of the collection. It is going extremely well. She explained the need for the music collection to be packed and stored with the vendor, along with the rare books collection, in preparation of the space effected by the renovation. She acknowledged her entire staff for their hard work and being incredibly flexible. She explained that the next steps are to prep for the renovation, ensuring each space is ready for the construction and the expansion of the footprint of the space. Staff will be transitioning as well to do some projects during this time. In the last 3 years, inventory work has been prioritized to gather more intellectual control and inventory over 535,000 items, including prints, photographs, rare books, manuscripts, and music. They are following industry best practices for maintaining information moving forward on all projects. David Leonard added that through this daunting process of inventorying the approximate 22 million in the collection we will get a better sense of a true number of items in the collections. Ms. Irscher added that they implemented doing an inventory of the entire collection of a branch that is going into a renovation. The goal is to have a long term plan that will still be relevant in twenty years.

Next, Mr. Leonard invited Mr. Salvatore DeGeorge, Assistant General Manager of The Catered Affair to give an update on their design plans for the Map Room Café. Mr. DeGeorge explained they will be

renaming the two McKim restaurants to the Map Tea Room and Courtyard Tea Room. The goal is to be more inclusive to millennials and single tourists in a casual environment while visiting the Library. They will offer similar food offerings of the Courtyard Tea Room in the Map Tea Room such as soups, salads, and charcuterie plates to the formal high tea lunch while adding an infused tea bar in a themed setting that has a nod to 19th century authors. They hope to expand the capacity a bit with the redesign to accommodate more guests. He reviewed some proposed programming i.e., “Wisdom Wednesdays”, readings, and musical entertainment from local schools and entertainers.

Mr. Leonard added they have seen a decline in numbers at the Map Room and Courtyard Restaurants since the renovation of the Johnson Building. Mr. DeGeorge noted that with the addition of some marketing and outreach, they have seen an increase in the tea experience. They estimate the patrons are 60% tourists and 40% are local visitors. Mr. DeGeorge explained their timeline is to rollout new layout in the latter part of January. Will invite the members of the Better Business Bureau, local conceirges, etc. and work out any kinks in early February. Mr. DeGeorge added they plan to add a small Gift Shop in both the Newsfeed Café and by the host in the Map Tea Room. They are working with a small committee to get ideas on items to sell and will present at a future meeting. Mr. Leonard added they hope to offer both traditional and new items to appeal to both McKim and Johnson buildings. The Trustees discussed their enthusiasm about the future design of the restaurant spaces.

Mr. Gallery invited Ms. Arana-Ortiz to give the report for the Finance and Audit Committee. Ms. Arana-Ortiz reviewed the vote to delegate approval of any E-rate contracts to the Finance and Audit Committee between the period of January 2019 and April 2019. By way of background, she explained that this is for federal funding for technology to the BPL. The application process can be very time sensitive and therefore the need for quick turnaround can be necessary in some cases for Trustees approval. The contracts will be reviewed, vetted and brought to the full board, but occasionally there is a need to delegate to the committee for that time in between full board meetings. With no questions, a motion was duly made and seconded,

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston delegate approval of any E-rate contract during the period between January 2019 and April 2019 to the Finance and Audit Committee.”

Mr. Gallery invited Mr. Leonard to update on the Special Collections Committee. Mr. Leonard explained that three committee members had resigned. and suggested adding Trustees Ben Bradlee and Priscilla Douglas to join the committee. Mr. Gallery commented they have graciously agreed to serve and therefore appointed them to the Special Collections Committee.

President Leonard gave the final report for the Governance and Development Committee. He noted there was a very active Steering Committee of independent volunteers to support the launch of the BPL Fund. Work is underway in the search for the Executive Director for that organization who will serve on the Leadership team. The Fund will be the successor of the BPL Foundation and will be the entity charged with fundraising efforts. He noted there will be tighter integration with affiliates and will have their own 501(C) He was happy to report negotiations with the Map Center is going well and they are committed to working with the BPL on the new fund and Gala on June 7, 2019. There is a very strong gala committee and the co-chairs include Ron O’Hanley, Alan Leventhal, and John Fish.

Mr. Gallery asked if there was any New Business for which there was none.

Mr. Gallery asked if there was any Public Comment. Elissa Cadillic, president of AFSCME welcomed the two new trustees, noting Senator Forry's advocacy for the BPL has been wonderful in the past. She explained with respect to the Special Collections plan, the staff are in the dark and should be updated. She asked for a schedule from TCA so they can best answer patrons inquiries on the various programs. She added that the gift shop is something she has asked to be added. She felt that BPL staff should be in charge of it and it should be included in the plans while renovating. She also asked that members of the various committees be noted on the website as well as the minutes be posted prior to meetings.

Next, a patron who teaches at Boston University stated she felt unsafe at the library. She stated she has written the President in the past but felt some of the patrons were grotesque and frightening to look at. She said she has been semi-assaulted by staff and didn't know what to do. Mr. Leonard pointed to Mr. Colford and suggested she speak to him to address her concerns appropriately.

Mr. Gallery closed by thanking everyone for attending and thanked the staff for their continued commitment to the library and hoped they enjoyed their evening of celebration.

Mr. Gallery called for an Executive Session to give an update on the Facilities department staffing and negotiations with union and exempt personnel. He noted that public discussions could have detrimental effects on the deliberations and therefore the need for the Executive Session. He added that they will not be reconvening in a public meeting. The Clerk of the Board polled the Trustees and all unanimously voted to enter into an executive session. With no further comments, the public meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela Carver
Clerk of the Board of Trustees