

# TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

## Meeting of the Trustees as a Corporation and Administrative Agency

Tuesday, January 30, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

Central Library, Commonwealth Salon

700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

### 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 Tuesday, January 30, 2020 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, Priscilla Douglas, Linda Dorcena Forry, John Hailer, and Representative Chynah Tyler. Cheryl Cronin and Jeff Hawkins were 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 3:00 p.m. and addressed the order of business. Mr. Gallery thanked everyone for their presence and wished everyone a happy new year. A roll call was taken and determined there was a quorum. Mr. Gallery called for the approval of the minutes of the November 19, 2019 meeting. With no edits or comments, a motion was duly made and seconded. The Trustees voted in favor to approve the meeting minutes of November 19, 2019.

Mr. Leonard was asked to give his President's report. He began with showing a few photos from the first ever "All BPL Staff" meeting in November 2019. He was encouraged that this meeting signals the beginning of a long process of more effective staff engagement. He encouraged everyone to visit the new BPL gift shop located at The Newsfeed Café. He thanked Ellen Donaghey, the Catered Affairs, and the BPL Events team for their collaborative efforts and leadership to make it happen. This year 2020 is significant for BPL as it is the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the McKim Building and will be marked with various programs and announcements. They have officially launched the Request for Proposal ("RFP") to seek an architect for the McKim Building renovation. The year 2020 also includes other significant events and celebrations (i.e. leading up to the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment later this year, Boston is the host city for the NAACP conference in July, and it is the 50<sup>th</sup> year of Boston Pride).

Mr. Leonard gave some brief overview of the capital projects and branch renovation updates. His review discussed the South End Branch which had completed its refresh, Chinatown will remain closed until end of February/early March after the BPDA's renovations to the building, and the Adams, Dudley and Roslindale Branches remain under construction.

Ms. Donaghey was asked to give a brief overview of the FY21 budget submission. Mr. Leonard noted they will be giving a high level summary of both the capital and operations budget at the March Board meeting. Ms. Donaghey reviewed the areas of salaries, overtime, maintenance, utilities and supply costs. She noted they are requesting a 4.4% increase overall over FY20. David Leonard added that these figures are only reflective of the City budget and it does not reflect the other areas of funding, such as: Trustees, state aid, private/philanthropic grants, enterprise monies, and the Library for the Commonwealth.

Mr. Leonard concluded his report, recapping that at the November meeting, the discussion began for an updated mission statement, which included some strategic updates and revisions of the BPL's Mission statement and values. In response to some of the interests of the Trustees regarding library data, Laura Imscher, Michael Colford, and Scot Colford prepared a thorough presentation on library usage.

Ms. Imscher, Chief of Collections, began the presentation by reviewing the BPL collections. They are estimated at over 21 million items that are broken into three main categories; Circulating (9%), Research (vast majority which is 75%), and Special collections (roughly 16%). She reviewed how people are using these collections in three ways. They are using the traditional way of checking them out and leaving the library with them, in library use only, and online.

The collections are broken into four categories: Books, downloadable and streaming media, DVDs, and CDs. She noted there was tremendous growth in downloadable materials, the most over the last ten years. Ms. Imscher continued by reviewing what items are used inside the library only, which include most research and special collections. Our research collections are approximately 75% of their BPL's holdings, which are held at the Central Library in closed stacks as well as the Archival Center. They include the maps that are serviced by the LMEC and the Special Collections. These items are meant to be part of the BPL's "permanent collections" therefore posing restrictions for their safety and preservation.

Last category of the Collections are those used online. These can be used anywhere and you do not have to be in the building to access them. Looking first at streaming and download, they are broken down as: Audiobooks, Ebooks, and music and videos (television shows and movies). She reviewed the various vendors we use for streaming services and noted we recently crossed 10 million checkouts with one of our longtime partnerships with Overdrive.

Ms. Imscher ended by noting the growth of digital to the decline in physical circulation. While there is a decline in physical circulation, it is made up for by the usage of digital content and is anticipated to outpace physical content within the next quarter. The other online content we provide is databases. The BPL has over 130 resources with vendors on various products. They include scholarly research, language learning, career resources, legal forms, video productions, etc.

The last category is the digitized BPL collections. We own the physical copy and a digitized copy is available on platforms like Digital Commonwealth and the Internet Archive. Of our entire physical collections, only 1.5% has been digitized. Of that 1.5%, they were viewed over 10 million times. Pointing to the 98% that is not digitized as the BPL's potential and what we are working toward.

Michael Colford, Director of Library Services noted the BPL collects a lot of data and reports to various agencies (i.e. City of Boston, American Library Association, MA Board of Library Commissioners, among other library related organizations) on how the library is being used outside of the collections. He noted the main data measurement used is referred to as "Reach". It is an amalgamation of some of the top usages of the library system that is reported quarterly. Reach figures include five key components: Programs (both number of programs as well as attendees), visits to the libraries, circulation, computer use, as well as wireless sessions. Mr. Colford noted the challenge is balancing accurate statistics with the removal of barriers (such as estimated figures, outdated gate count technologies, and branch closures which can cause the statistics to drop dramatically). The Reach metrics are determined for each BPL location and they are commonly used to help determine the needs of the demographic of the community that branch serves especially during renovations.

Outreach is another measurement that is used. Outreach efforts serve two purposes, one to reach various demographics like students at schools and senior citizens at elderly housing to make them aware of the various services we provide at the library. Second, is to provide more services on location outside our the Library, such as providing storytimes at hospitals and teaching a class at a senior housing facility. The approach is to be more mindful of going beyond the numbers and really look at the impacts on the patrons we are serving.

The last is outcomes and impacts. This is mainly done through exit questionnaires and the Happometer (a small computer that takes exit surveys after programs). Looking ahead, a Data Working Group was

recently formed to audit this collected data so the BPL can make better recommendations. He added they invested in more data analytics for determining potential investment areas /areas of need.

Mr. Scot Colford , Online and Web Services Manager spoke about the tools the BPL uses to measure web usage from our primary website and catalog and the kinds of things we can learn from them. The BPL uses the platforms Google Analytics and Data Studios. Google Analytics collects the sessions and the visitors to our site. In the past, we simply just tracked numbers of visitors we had over a period of time. Now, the data reflects more behavioral related things, such as page views, the average time spent on a page, and how they got there, (whether it was from a search or if they logged into the BPL site directly). It also tracks entrances, bounce rates, and number of what percentage stay vs. exit. Some components to measure the data online is acquisition (where users are coming from, total number of users and whether they are new or not). Audience is also a key metric. It determines who the visitors are (what language their browser is using, what platform they are using whether that is mobile, laptop, or tablet). Mr. Colford noted that 42% of all sessions do not involve a computer but rather come from a mobile handheld device. This information helps reinforce the need for the return of the BPL app.

The next metrics measured is “Search”. We can tell what terms someone is looking for, the category they are searching from (help files, catalog, search tab, etc.) and the page they are on when they do their search. Statistics show that people are using our canned browse page searches we have set up (blog posts, book lists, movies). Behavior flow is the last of the metrics, it shows the paths that are taken throughout our site, which is useful in determining how frequently visited pages are accessed and can help determine our best marketing channels for certain types of events or posts. Mr. Gallery and the other Trustees thanked them for the very in depth presentation.

Next, Ms. Arana-Ortiz briefed the board on behalf of the Finance and Audit Committee. Ms. Arana-Ortiz noted that the committee view the BPL’s risk as a fiduciary duty therefore with a review of the portfolio with NEPC, tried to determine how to minimize socially impactful investments. As a result, the committee interviewed with Impax Management. They have a very thoughtful, methodical approach to investing, especially in areas of Environmental concern and gave a solid presentation to the Committee. Therefore, the Finance and Audit Committee is recommending to award the management of 8% of the endowment to Impax Management. The Board made a motion, was duly made and seconded and,

**VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston vote to move 8% of the endowment to Impax Asset Management.”**

Mr. Gallery asked if there was any New Business. Ms. Donaghey explained that the BPL was thrilled and privileged to have fifteen individuals running the Boston Marathon on behalf of the Boston Public Library for a second year. She explained they filled out applications and were selected to run on behalf of the library, noting most runners were from Boston, including BPL’s own, Caroline Driscoll. Each runner committed to raise a minimum of \$7,500 and collectively have raised \$135,000 so far. All funds raised will go directly to support youth services programming specifically afterschool programming and Homework Help.

Mr. Gallery asked if there was any public comment. Mr. David Vieira of the City-Wide Friends of the Library spoke. He asked Ms. Irmscher since only 1.6% of the collection is digitized, if one item is requested and it is not digitized, is that item automatically flagged? He also asked regarding the online/web presentation, how new systems are in place that can track a patron from one part of the BPL to another. Are these trackers patron specific or anonymous? Noting he is asking more relative to privacy? Mr. Scot Colford replied that they are completely anonymous and not traced to the person. He emphasized that the BPL does not collect that information.

With no further business, the Board made a motion and the meeting was adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Pamela Carver*

Pamela R. Carver, Clerk of the Board