

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Meeting of the Trustees Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee
Tuesday, December 29, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.
Held virtually via Zoom Conference Call

DRAFT MINUTES

A meeting of the Trustees Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, December 29, 2020 via Zoom Conference.

Present at the meeting were: Trustees Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee Chair and Trustee Evelyn Arana-Ortiz, Committee Members: Sarah-Ann Shaw and Che Madyun, Friends of the Roxbury Branch Library, and Priscilla Foley, Director of Neighborhood Services/Branches. Also attending were: Assistant Neighborhood Services/Branches Manager, Diana Preusser, Allen Knight, Roxbury Branch Librarian, and Candelaria Silva-Collins, Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Project Manager. Also present was Pamela Carver, Clerk of the Board of Trustees and members of the public.

The Clerk noted the meeting was being recorded. Trustees Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee (“Committee”) Chair Evelyn Arana- Ortiz presided and called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. She thanked everyone for coming and asked the Clerk to take roll call. It was noted all members were visually present and determined there was a quorum.

Ms. Madyun questioned Representative Tyler’s role as a voting committee member. She addressed that the State Representative for the district typically holds an *ex-officio* position per the committee charter. Ms. Arana-Ortiz noted that Bob Gallery, Chair of the Board, appointed Ms. Tyler to the Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee in January 2020. Ms. Arana-Ortiz explained that President Leonard was reviewing all Trustees committee charters and members to determine if they have to make any revisions to update them in unison with legal guidance. She explained that she discussed Ms. Tyler’s position as State Rep and committee member with the BPL’s legal counsel. Although there was nothing that restricted Ms. Tyler from being appointed to the committee, they discussed potentially inviting another State representative from the adjacent district as *ex-officio* if preferred. Ms. Madyun commented that the committee structure and ensuring any proposed changes must go to probate court for approval. Ms. Arana-Ortiz noted she would confer with legal counsel to ensure we are compliant and would of course include the committee.

Ms. Tyler addressed the committee as a new member since she was not able to since being appointed due to COVID-19 and the cancelled March meeting. Ms. Tyler said she was very interested in serving as a committee member and was hoping to complement the work at the branch. She explained she puts a strong emphasis on education gaps and her work at the State House reflects that.

Next, Diana Preusser was introduced as the new Neighborhood Services Asst. Manager for the Roxbury branch; taking the place of Pete Coco. Ms. Preusser thanked the group for welcoming her and she hoped to be of service in any way she can for the Committee.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz addressed the first matter of business was approval of the minutes from September 12, 2019. With a few suggested edits made, the meeting minutes from September 12, 2019 were approved. Ms. Arana-Ortiz reminded the public they are welcome to sign up for Public Comment.

Priscilla Foley provided a brief update on the Roxbury Branch. Ms. Foley announced the staff returned to the branch after being out for the renovation. They were doing lots of collection work that had to be brought back into the building and shelved. On October 26th, the branch returned for “BPL to Go” services and answering phones. She pointed out that all branches were open for holds pick up service only at this

time due to COVID-19 guidelines. The public was excited to have this service returned at the newly renovated space. Ms. Sarah-Ann Shaw asked how the BPL was distributing this information to the community. Ms. Foley responded that their outreach is ongoing. She noted there was an ad in The Banner newspaper prior to the start of services in October, along with postings to social media and the BPL website. Staff was continuing to do outreach within their networks and were open to learn new ways to notify patrons about accessing the library. Rep. Tyler asked if they would be able to tour the Branch. Ms. Foley explained the process of increasing services has to go through an approval process with the City of Boston in accordance to CDC guidance. Unfortunately, tours were not approved at this time. Ms. Foley noted that once small tours were approved, they would prioritize to start with the Trustees and the Roxbury Friends. A virtual tour would be released soon with various story tellers at the branch and would be shared with the committee once the edits were completed.

Ms. Silva-Collins reviewed her Program Manager's report since May 2020. All members were briefed via emails prior to that. The final piano classes ended with a virtual recital in May. Some final poem writing classes ended in June. She explained some of her administrative correspondence with grantees, program participants, the Roxbury Friends, and the BPL.

Ms Silva- Collins reviewed all the previous year's programs and numbers.

1. Arts Emerson ran the Play Reading Book Club. There were originally four plays but due to COVID-19, one was cancelled. Attendance for each varied from 10-36 people.
2. Boch Center: Youth Art for Social Change Conference was a one-time event held at Hibernian Hall with 75 people attended.
3. Haley House: Offered cooking classes for families, one series with 4 sessions was offered due to changes made due to COVID.
4. Joel Mackall: offered Tracing our Roots, did one series with four sessions. There were 15-25 attendees.
5. Joel Mackall: offered How to Use Your Smart Phone, had one series with four sessions scheduled but had to cancel three of the sessions due to COVID. The first session had 7 people in attendance.
6. Joel Mackall ran a virtual Genealogy Bootcamp with one session of 20 people in attendance.
7. Makanda Project was scheduled to hold two concerts. The first one held 171 people. The second one was postponed due to COVID. She noted the Makanda Project held an additional concert in honor of Mimi Jones with a restricted attendance allowed of 40 people in August.
8. Piano classes ran from September to May. They finished some of the classes virtually and held a virtual recital featuring 20 students.
9. Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction with Bonita Jones. There was one series with five sessions scheduled, but one was cancelled. There were 9-13 attendees, plus held an orientation and intro session as well.
10. Writing Poems to and for other People with Aaron Devine hosted 10-15 people. A publication was printed as a book. Ms. Silva-Collins noted the book does not represent all students as one opted not to be included in it. The book will be printed and presented for the collection at the Branch.

The Committee discussed the breakdown and process of selecting grantees who are owned and/or operated by people of color and organizations within the community first.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz reviewed the FY21 Financial Report which reflected an ending balance of \$152,099.35 that will carry forward for programming next year.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz opened the floor to discuss thoughts, ideas, and concerns on what to do next year. Ms. Arana-Ortiz had concerns balancing the needs of school-aged students in the age of zoom and access issues in a time of restricted use of the branch due to restricted COVID guidelines. They discussed the possibility of offering summer programming outdoors as well as an option of a hybrid virtual model (instructor is onsite teaching class virtually to students at home). Ms. Foley explained her concerns of having to pull back on a program that may be scheduled in the outdoor spaces (due to COVID). She explained the BPL was not able to currently use the outdoor spaces. Ms. Foley wondered if there were a way to ensure grantees have the capability to pivot to online virtual instruction if needed.

The Committee continued their discussion on outdoor programming with concerns for social distancing, capacity limitations, and inclement weather. They discussed a realistic timeline to determine the earliest they could offer programs to the public would be May 2021 due to the RFP process. The Committee brainstormed on outreach efforts, and tapping into local resources and organizations to develop stronger relationships and address some of the issues of the community regarding education wealth and gaps, and programming. Ms. Silva-Collins suggested accepting video-taped grant applications, in addition to written ones may help new applicants.

Ms. Silva agreed to continue in her position as Program Manager. Ms. Foley and Ms. Preusser agreed to meet to begin drafting her new contract as soon as possible to enable Ms. Silva Collins to begin working on the RFPs.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz asked for New Business. The Committee discussed their next meeting to discuss the RFPs on February 22, 2021 at 2 p.m. (*This meeting was subsequently moved to March 1, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.*).

Ms. Arana-Ortiz asked for Public Comment for which there was none. The meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela R. Carver