

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Meeting of the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee Tuesday, May 11, 2021, 8:00 a.m. Held via Zoom

MINUTES

A meeting of the Boston Public Library Trustees Finance and Audit Committee was held on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 virtually via Zoom.

Present at the meeting included: Committee Chair Evelyn Arana-Ortiz and Committee members, Zamawa Arenas, John Hailer, Jeff Hawkins, Navjeet Ball, and President David Leonard.

Also present were Boston Public Library staff including Chief Financial Officer Ellen Donaghey, Laura Irmischer, Chief of Collections, Clerk of the Board Pamela Carve and other BPL staff members along with members of the public.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz presiding, called the meeting of the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee (“Committee”) to order at 8:00 a.m. Roll call was taken and determined there was a quorum. Everyone was reminded that the meeting was being recorded.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz welcomed Trustee Navjeet Bal as the newest member appointed to the Committee. She also welcomed Trustee Priscilla H. Douglas who was in attendance.

The first matter of business was approving the Meeting Minutes from March 21, 2021. With no additional comments or edits made, the Chair called for a motion that was duly made, seconded, and approved the meeting minutes from March 21, 2021 via a roll call vote. (Navjeet Bal was abstained as she was not present at the March meeting.)

Next Ms. Donaghey briefly reviewed Mayor Kim Janey’s FY22 Recommended Operating and Capital Budget Executive Summary pointing out some key increases/decreases. She noted that utility costs had decreased, primarily due to a number of branches being closed for renovation and other locations only being open for hold pick-ups due to the pandemic. She also noted that the HVAC maintenance contract would increase. This contract is bid out for a fixed annual price for a 3 year term. The contract had been recently rebid and costs, as expected, were higher. She also pointed out that the new security contract also includes increased costs.

Ms. Donaghey also reviewed the non-city budget for FY22, including revenue from events, philanthropy the state budget among other sources. She noted that the pandemic had caused wholesale cancellations of Special Events in FY21, we did not yet have authorization for FY22 Special Events and the uncertainty around the pandemic and when restrictions will be lifted makes it difficult to estimate FY22 revenue. She also noted that the state budget was not yet finished and that Senate Ways and Means had not yet released their recommendations. This, too, resulted in state funding being an estimated amount.

Mr. Leonard added that they would not have a handle on the Library for the Commonwealth’s funding until the final budget was completed. He noted that four budget lines specifically for library increases and there was a new appreciation of libraries since the pandemic.

Ms. Donaghey ended her report on the budget with a review of the trust funds. She explained that they represent about 198 endowments, each with varying restrictions. She also noted that endowment spending was down, primarily due both to the pandemic and to the temporary closure of the rare books department.

With no further questions or comments, Ms. Arana-Ortiz made a motion and it was duly seconded, the Committee unanimously:

VOTED: “that, the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee recommend approval by the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston to accept Mayor Kim Janey’s FY22 Recommended Operating and Capital Budget.”

Ms. Donaghey explained the next four votes were routine annual votes. The first allows the BPL to move forward with certain critical repairs without additional approval from the Trustees. The second is the annual vote to allow the BPL to purchase books and other collections related matters without additional trustee approval. (An up to date vendor list was shared). The third vote authorizes the Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Committee to spend the FY22 Fellowes distribution. Finally, the fourth vote delegates approval for any contract Library staff deems to be of a critical nature to the Finance and Audit Committee during the summer months.

With no further questions or comments, Ms. Arana-Ortiz made a motion and it was duly seconded, the Committee unanimously:

VOTED: “that, the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee recommend approval by the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston to authorize the President, or designee, on behalf of the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, to enter into a contract or contracts for various goods or services relating to the Boston Public Library Critical Repair Operating Budget for the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 provided that each contract entered into pursuant to this authorization shall have been estimated to be less than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00). In no event will the contracts cumulatively exceed three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000.00).”

VOTED: “that, the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee recommend approval by the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston that there be entered into a non-advertised contract, as authorized under G.L., c.30-B, Section 7(a), referred to as a “Procurement of Library Books,” between the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston (a Corporation under Chapter 114 of the Acts of 1878), and the vendors listed therein (including any subsidiaries or agents), for the acquisitions of books and for certain other library bibliographical acquisitions materials, in an amount not to exceed the amount appropriated in the Library Department budget for books and other related bibliographical acquisitions materials, during the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.”

VOTED: “that, the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee recommend that the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve the expenditure from the Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Fund in an amount not to exceed two hundred forty two thousand nine hundred forty dollars and eighteen cents (\$242,940.18) to support the Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Fund Programmatic Plan for FY22 as recommended by the Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee and to be presented at an upcoming meeting.”

VOTED: “that, the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee recommend the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston delegate approval of any contract deemed to be of a critical nature by the President of the Library during the period between May 2021 and September 2021 to the Finance and Audit Committee.”

Moving onto the next vote on the agenda, Ms. Donaghey invited Laura Irmischer, Chief of Collections to discuss the next two votes. Ms. Irmischer explained the BPL received a \$2.1 million donation for inventory cleaning to the research collections. This contract is to hire a consultant that will oversee this project. A Request for Proposal (“RFP”) would be done and selected over summer months.

After a few questions, the Chair made a motion that was duly seconded, and the Committee unanimously:

VOTED: “that, the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee recommend that the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston delegate approval of the Research Collection Consultant Contract to the Finance and Audit Committee due to the timing of the vote needed to award.”

Next, Ms. Irmischer explained that they recently issued a RFP for a research collection space and storage study. A selection committee reviewed all three applicants and selected the vendor, Perry Dean Rogers Architects. The vendor would be authorized to assess the space, access the overflow on carts, and how much space we actually need. They will also determine additional space we will need to adequately store our collections in the future. Ms. Arana Ortiz made a motion that was duly seconded, and the Committee voted unanimously via a roll call vote,

VOTED: “that, the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee recommend that the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston authorize a contract in the amount of \$171,178.00 (one hundred seventy one thousand, one hundred seventy eight dollars) with Perry Dean Rogers Partners Architects, 177 Milk Street, Seventh Floor, Boston, MA 02109, the most highly advantageous vendor, for the study and analysis of the Research Collection Space and Storage per the Request for Proposal (“RFP”) specifications.”

The last vote was to recommend approval to the full Board regarding Fine Forgiveness. The approval of the Trustees would permanently eliminate late fines for patrons of all ages beginning in July 2021. The policy change would remove barriers and increase access to BPL resources for patrons across the City of Boston. Ms. Arana-Ortiz made a motion that was duly seconded and the Committee unanimously voted via a roll call vote,

VOTED: “that, the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston authorize the President of the Boston Public Library to implement any and all policy changes to permanently waive and eliminate late fines on all regular library materials, in concert with Mayor Janey’s FY22 City of Boston Operating Budget.”

Mr. Leonard reviewed the Capital Budget slide that included funding for various branch studies including; ongoing projects at Adams Street and Roslindale but also, Chinatown, Codman Square, Egleston, and Fields Corner. He also noted projects included improvements to the Central library such as the McKim Courtyard Fountain, the staff locker room, and façade repairs. He noted several projects are in the pipeline that have not been scheduled yet, but are equally important and anticipated, such as the North End Branch. The FY22 Capital budget was for approximately \$22 million dollars.

The Committee moved onto New Business for which there was none. Ms. Arana-Ortiz asked for Public Comment. The Clerk reminded the public they would be called in the order they were received and given two minutes to speak. All comments would be answered at a later time and requested contact information be provided accordingly.

David Vieira, City-Wide Friends member, commended President Leonard and staff on moving forward on the space assessment. He thought it is great that President Leonard was looking toward the future.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz thanked Mr. Vieira for attending and appreciated his comments. She complimented that he always comes into the Board meetings and gives a proposed solution and not only criticism. Mr. Vieira thanked the Chair for all she does for the Board of Trustees and the BPL.

Elissa Cadillic, President of AFSCME 1526, was very excited for Fine Forgiveness. She noted her excitement on the focus of the Research Collection project but concerned about what happens next. She agreed that it made sense to have an external project manager to oversee things, but had concerns that the BPL was planning to hire external vendors to perform this task. She asked that the Trustees take close look to ensure funds are being spent wisely. Supporting hires with diversity in mind, and really providing opportunities for own staff to continue to grow in the organization.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:11 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pamela R. Carver, Clerk of the Board