

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Meeting of the Trustees Executive Committee Monday, May 10, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom DRAFT MINUTES

The meeting of the Boston Public Library (“BPL”) Trustees Executive Committee (“Committee”) was held on Monday, May 10, 2021 held virtually via Zoom at 8:30 a.m.

Committee members present at the meeting: Priscilla H. Douglas, Chair, Evelyn Arana-Ortiz, Zamawa Arenas, Ben Bradlee, and Cheryl Cronin.

Also present were David Leonard, President, and Pamela Carver, Clerk of the Board, along with staff and members of the public.

Priscilla H. Douglas presided and called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. Those in attendance were reminded that the meeting was being recorded. A roll call was taken and determined there was a quorum. The first matter of business was approval of the March 12, 2020 Meeting minutes. With no edits or comments, the meeting minutes of March 12, 2020 were approved via a roll call vote.

Ms. Douglas explained that she hoped to see more Trustee engagement. Therefore, she had contacted each trustee and ensured that each member was appointed to a committee. She encouraged them to reach out to her if they had any suggestions or appointments or discussions.

Ms. Douglas reviewed the charge of five of the Trustees Committees which included: Finance and Audit, Governance and Development, Special Collections, Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory, and the newly formed Strategic Community Engagement (“SCEC”). She noted that a member of each of the affiliates will be represented on the Special Collections Committee. Trustees Christian Westra will be joining the Governance and Development Committee, Michael Rush and Navjeet Bal will be joining the Finance and Audit Committee, Joe Berman will join the Special Collections Committee, and Joyce Linehan would serve as Chair of the Strategic Community Engagement Committee. Ms. Douglas also named the non-Trustee members who were appointed to the Strategic Community Engagement Committee and Special Collections committee. These new members would represent various areas of expertise. She noted all committees would be updated on the BPL website.

The Executive Committee members discussed the importance of clarifying the committee member’s roles, updating each of the charters and/or the priorities of the Committees.

Ms. Douglas explained the SCEC and Special Collections Committees would begin with an orientation for all new members in collaboration with BPL staff. She explained the committees would potentially meet several times a year. She explained she will present the new committee selections at the Annual Board Meeting.

Ms. Douglas moved onto new business. She explained that she, Vice Chair Evelyn Arana-Ortiz and David Leonard met to have discussion around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”). As a result, she hoped to recommit to clearly affirming the Library’s goals and principles at the start of each public meeting. She read the following welcome statement:

“The Trustees of the Boston Public Library reaffirm our commitment to racial equity and to principles of diversity equity and inclusion, more broadly.

The Library is formally committed to becoming an anti-racist organization in response to systemic racism, inequity, and injustice prevalent in our society.

We acknowledge also that the Boston Public Library’s Central Library stands on land that was once a water-based ecosystem providing sustenance for the indigenous Massachusett people *and is a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange among nations.* We are committed to land acknowledgements for all locations at which we operate.

We reaffirm this commitment to set the context for our planning, deliberations and public engagement will take place from the spirit of welcome and respect, found in our motto ‘free to all.’”

[Taken from the Institutional Statement Ratified by the Board of Trustees for the Boston Public Library on September 29, 2020.]

Ms. Douglas noted she would be recommending the Board to adopt the policy of reading this welcome statement before each public meeting. Next, Ms. Douglas asked for public comment.

David Vieira, City-Wide Friends, made the observation that the City-Wide Friends was considered an affiliate and has been a financial supporter and yet always neglected from Trustee appointments. Mr. Vieira continued that they often get special books that are route to the Library. He hoped that the Committee would consider adding a member of the City-Wide Friends to the Special Collections Committee. He requested that the Community Engagement committee solicited members of the Friends groups to join in their discussions. He pointed out that Trustees rarely attend Public Community meetings regarding renovations. He though it was important for Trustees to hear the comments and bring back feedback.

Next, Ms. Douglas asked Caroline Driscoll, Legal Advisor for the BPL to explain the Executive Session. Ms. Driscoll explained that the Executive Session would be held to discuss the status of the legal guardianship of the John Adams Library under Exemption 3 of MA Open Meeting Law. The Clerk would take roll call to vote on entering into Executive Session and that the Board would not be reconvening in a public meeting.

A motion to enter into Executive Session was duly made, seconded and,

VOTED: “that, the Trustees Executive Committee of the Public Library of the City of Boston vote to enter into Executive Session.”

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela R. Carver, Clerk of the Board