

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Meeting of the Trustees as a Corporation and Administrative Agency

Tuesday, October 11, 2022, 8:30 a.m.

Central Library, Commonwealth Salon

700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

MINUTES

The Meeting of the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston (“BPL”) held on Tuesday, October 11, 2022, at 8:30 a.m. at the Central Library in the Commonwealth Salon.

All present at the meeting included: Chair Priscilla H. Douglas, Vice Chair Evelyn Arana-Ortiz and Trustees: Jabari Asim, Navjeet Bal, Joe Berman, Ben Bradlee Jr, Linda Dorcena Forry, John Hailer, Jose C. Masso III, Senator Mike Rush, Representative Chynah Tyler, and Christian Westra, Lynn Perry Wooten. Not present: Cheryl Cronin and Jeff Hawkins. Also present: BPL President David Leonard, Clerk of the Board Pamela Carver, BPL staff, and members of the public.

Chair Priscilla H. Douglas presided, and called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. She read the Trustees reaffirmation statement. She began by welcoming two new Trustees, Jose C. Masso III and Lynn Perry Wooten. Both of them gave brief remarks on their backgrounds and were welcomed by all the Trustees.

A roll call was taken and determined there was a quorum. Everyone was reminded that the meeting was being recorded and to sign up for public comment by 9:00 a.m.

The first matter of business was approving the meeting minutes from May 24, 2022. With no edits, a motion was duly made, seconded, and approved the minutes.

Ms. Douglas continued the order of business and introduced the new Chairs of the affiliate boards. Alyce Lee is the new chair of the Associates of the BPL and Charles Cooney is the Chair of the Leventhal Map and Education Center. Ms. Lee gave some brief remarks of introduction and noted she looked forward to working together with the BPL Board in the years to come. Ms. Douglas provided some background on Mr. Cooney in his absence.

Ms. Douglas noted that “Engage, Amplify, and Partnership” was the FY23 theme for the Trustees. Their formal role was to act as governing agents of the organization and serve as library ambassadors in their day-to-day interactions.

The new Trustee committee structure and membership of each was reviewed. There were two sub-committees of the Executive Committee that were still in the early stages with more to come as they developed.

David Leonard was asked to give his President’s report. First acknowledging the passing of long-time City-Wide Friend, David Vieira.

Mr. Leonard noted there were five major points to his report: highlights, challenges, current roadmap and need for strategic plan, invitation to follow the library’s news multi-channels, and proposed topics for FY23 Board meetings.

Mr. Leonard began by thanking all involved in making the Special Collections renovation and reopening a success. He reviewed the new BPL Passport initiative to increase patron engagement throughout the BPL system. Summer reading had its highest participation year on record with more than 2,000 participants. He

explained that booklists continued in popularity and shared there was now an archive of equity booklists available.

The second ‘All Staff Professional Day’ was held on September 23, 2022. The BPL closed systemwide to provide a full day of support, gathering, and professional development for all staff. The first professional day was held in 2019 and they will continue to develop a plan for a cadence of future training opportunities.

BPL now offers Equity Weddings with the use of enterprise revenues (generated from special events). The weddings work in parallel with our motto ‘Free to All’ to provide an equal opportunity to have your wedding at the Central Library. There have been 60 weddings since its inception.

Next, Mr. Leonard discussed some challenges. Vacancies continued to be the biggest challenge with 50-60 vacant positions: representing 20% of our staff. They were actively searching to fill these positions; IT being the top operational priority.

The South End Branch remained closed since the end of April/early May of 2022 due to a water leak that destroyed all mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems at the branch. Supply chain issues have delayed the repairs as well. Mr. Leonard explained that the BPL, in collaboration with the city, is looking at all the variables as to what was feasible in regard to renovation vs. repairs at this time.

Mr. Leonard continued with his report regarding the current Roadmap document. He explained the Compass Strategic Plan dates back to 2012. They have a short-term Roadmap from 2019-2024 and are looking to develop the next stage of it to lead them for the next five to ten years, with the assistance of the Strategic Planning Committee and staff input.

Mr. Leonard reviewed potential topics for discussion at future board meetings in 2023. They included presentations from other libraries in the Urban Library Council to learn trends and best practices, review of Collections usage to look at patterns and metrics, review library services initiatives, Equity and Outreach, and Technology, Digital Services and Engagement.

The President’s report concluded with two votes. First, was the vote for the renewal of the lease agreement on Il Panino for five years in the North End.

A motion was duly made, seconded, and voted to approve.

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston vote to approve an extension to the 2017 lease agreement for the North End Branch and Il Panino.”

The second vote pertained to the West End branch. Mr. Leonard explained that the BPL was not required to take a vote, but in light of engagement and transparency was asking for a non-binding vote. He explained the project is in collaboration with the Mayor’s Office of Housing to renovate the space and provide housing above the library. This project has large community and city support. The vote authorizes to collaborate with other city departments.

Some questions were asked and then Ms. Douglas called for a motion that was duly made, seconded, and then the Board voted to approve.

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston authorize the President of the Library to collaborate with the Mayor’s Office of Housing and other agencies as needed, for the redevelopment of the current site of the West End Branch Library under the city’s ‘Housing with Public Assets’ program,’ such redevelopment to include a new branch library as part of the development based on the recently completed programming study.”

The meeting ran beyond its scheduled timeframe, therefore, Trustees Linda Dorcena Forry and Lynn Perry Wooten had to leave at 10:00 a.m. There was still a quorum present in the meeting.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz gave the Finance and Audit Committee report. She began by showing the BPL Golf Tournament Trophy as a member of the winning team and encouraged others to participate in future events.

Ellen Donaghey explained by way of background that the first vote was a bid for the catering contract for the entire complex at Central. It included special events and both restaurant spaces. She corrected a statement she made during the Finance and Audit Committee meeting regarding the partnerships with both TCA and Gourmet Caterers.

We have engaged with Cini-Little to assist with this RFP process and a thorough grading metrics which included: organizational overview references, food services, computing diversity and inclusion, insurance inspections, food safety, tastings, event execution, and finally financial projections. There were two vendors that responded to the bid, The Catered Affair (“TCA”) and Gourmet Caterers.

Ms. Donaghey noted that both vendors did very well. They are established and both are second generation family-owned businesses. Both organizations were contracted with some of the most iconic establishments within the Commonwealth.

Both proposals were reviewed and scored. It was determined by the BPL team to award this contract to TCA. The Finance and Audit Committee approved this and are bringing the Committee’s recommendation vote to approve this contract.

With no questions, Ms. Arana-Ortiz called for a motion that was duly made, seconded, and the Board voted to approve.

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve a contract with The Catered Affair, 70 Ledgewood Place, Rockland, MA 02370 for a term of three years beginning November 1, 2023, with ((2) one-year additions.”

Next, Ms. Arana-Ortiz reviewed the draft audited financial statements from year ending June 30,2022 had a clear opinion, which is the highest opinion, reflecting they did not identify any material in the statements that needed corrections. She explained they reflected the assets managed by the Trustees only.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz called for a motion to approve that was duly made, seconded, and,

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve the Boston Public Library’s Draft Audited Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2022.”

Next, Ms. Donaghey reviewed the gifts, grants, and donations report of 2022 which totaled \$3,102,848.87. She reviewed some of the largest contributions from our affiliates.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz gave the report on the Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee. They approved twenty-one grant proposals totaling \$115,376.28 for the 2023 fiscal year for programming supporting art, empowerment, health/well-being, and instruction.

Ms. Douglas called for new business. She congratulated Mr. Jabari Asim on being named the distinguished professor of multidisciplinary letters at Emerson College. This new designation honors his contributions to the institution and society as a prolific author, thought leader, teacher, and mentor.

Ms. Douglas asked for public comment.

Pamela Bush Miles, a resident of Roxbury asked for consistency in naming of the area. She noted the City adopted the name Nubian for the Square and recommended to enact the will of the people to change the name of the branch to 'Nubian Library'. She asked for the Trustees to take a vote.

Priscilla Douglas explained that the branch is referred to as the Roxbury Library in Nubian Square. The mayor and her administration have been briefed. This is considered a closed matter.

Jumaada Smith, a Roxbury resident, she was pleading and offered her fervent prayers to make the library in Nubian Square, the Nubian Library. She suggested the trustees be open to take another vote.

With no further business, Ms. Douglas adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela Carver, Clerk of the Board