

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Meeting of the Trustees Community Engagement Committee Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. Central Library, Commonwealth Salon

DRAFT MINUTES

A meeting of the Boston Public Library Trustees Community Engagement Committee (“Committee”) was held at the Central Library, 700 Boylston Street, Boston MA 02116 in the Commonwealth Salon on Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

Present at the meeting included: Committee Chair, Linda Dorcena Forry, Committee Vice Chair Jose C. Masso III, and Committee Members: Evelyn Arana-Ortiz, Michelle Coleman, John Linehan, Nam Pham, Pam Waterman, and President David Leonard. Joe Berman, Imari Jeffries, Dayron Miles, and Rep. Chynah Tyler were absent.

Also, present were Chair of the Board Priscilla Douglas, Clerk of the Board Pamela Carver, BPL staff members, and members of the public.

Ms. Douglas called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m., which was also streamed via Zoom for the public. She read the Trustees reaffirmation statement. 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.

The first matter of business of approval of meeting minutes was postponed due to lack of quorum excluding the new members who were ineligible to vote. The clerk agreed to post the draft minutes to the website with non-binding agreement of the group.

Ms. Douglas noted that the name of the committee had changed from “Strategic Community Engagement” to “Community Engagement Committee”. Explaining that there would be an addition of a “Strategic Planning Committee” and did so for clarity purposes.

Ms. Douglas introduced the two new trustees appointed to the Committee, Linda Dorcena Forry who will serve as Committee Chair (replacing former Trustee Joyce Linehan) and Jose C. Masso III will serve as Vice Chair. Each of the Committee members gave brief remarks on their backgrounds.

Next, Ms. Forry officially took over the order of business and invited David Leonard to review the roles of the Trustees and the Committee.

Mr. Leonard noted that “community engagement” was the primary focus of this committee’s work. As an extension of the trustees, whose work is in the realm of governance, oversight, strategy, and policy. The committee is to amplify the work of the BPL and help develop new ideas. He noted that the Trustees, staff, and committee members have defined roles. He hoped that the Committee members would embrace an “ambassadorial role” and encouraged them to reach out with fresh ideas for consideration.

David Leonard noted the importance of knowing what is being offered at the BPL already. Explaining it is often about getting the word out on what is already happening at the BPL rather than creating new initiatives or programs. In 2019 (pre-pandemic) the BPL counted that it offered 12,000 “things” as individual programs over the calendar year. Which included counting formal conversations, author talks, and scheduled programs. It is not about more but rather curating better and more engaging.

Mr. Masso introduced the draft mission statement which was introduced last year. He and Ms. Forry wanted to reintroduce it to reaffirm the statement and ensure that the statement and charter were going in the same direction as they initially intended. He also wanted to ensure that members of the committee understood their roles as “ambassadors” to the BPL. Mr. Masso invited each of the committee members to share what they felt they could add to the mission of the group. He also asked each to explain ways they felt were a measure of success in a year or two. Mr. Masso also asked if they could express ways for the staff and trustees to support their thoughts and ideas.

The Committee had a discussion regarding the draft mission. The discussion included ways to bring the BPL to people in ways that are relevant to their lives, consider new ways to gather metrics to measure success (and whether live, virtual, or recorded), and how to get different age groups engaged. They expressed including the word “community” and “physical and virtual spaces” in the mission statement.

Ms. Forry asked for the Committee to review the draft charter and principles for a deeper discussion at the January meeting.

Mr. Leonard briefly reviewed some potential discussions for staff to present at future meetings. They included: branch staff outreach plans-strategy review, local communications and marketing strategy review, local partnerships strategy review, equitable service delivery, and advocacy for additional resources and staff skill development.

Mr. Leonard noted that he welcomed their feedback on other areas to review and explore with the Committee. He asked the Committee to model engagement by being involved (attending events, participating in various initiatives, etc.).

The Committee announced that they would be attending a private tour of Teen Central immediately following the meeting.

Ms. Forry asked for New Business and Public comment for which there was none. With no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pamela R. Carver, Clerk of the Board

DRAFT BPL Community Engagement Committee Charter and Principles

In line with the Trustees' roles of oversight and governance, this committee will propose a set of specific guiding principles to the Library and Board that supports the following:

- An endorsement of a move to more responsive local programming, based on local community need and interest (program 'with' not 'for').
- Increased outreach at the local level to local and broader regional user and non-user communities, and local partners.
- Support a robust Communications plan to increase patron acquisition, user engagement, and (re)introducing the library in all its richness to our local and broader communities.
- Ensure engagement with our communities is based on the fullness of their diversity, and equity needs.
- Support specific opportunities for strategic collaboration with Friends groups, with interest in strategic community engagement.
- Receive reports on and recommendations for issues affecting Strategic Community Engagement and comment as appropriate.
- Provide recommendations to the Board of Trustees on Strategic Community Engagement issues
- Support the development of a long-range strategic plan for the strategic community engagement

As with all BPL Trustee Committees, appointments are made by the BPL Chair as is the selection of a chair and vice chair. The President of the Library will be a voting member of the committee. Additional staff roles will be appointed as non-voting ex-officio members.



BPL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO SIGN UP
FOR PUBLIC COMMENT VIA THE CHAT TAB BY 4:30 P.M.

PLEASE INCLUDE "YOUR NAME" AND "PUBLIC COMMENT"

* INCLUDE PHONE AND/OR EMAIL FOR FOLLOW UP IF NEEDED
OR SEND TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD AT PCARVER@BPL.ORG

Linda Dorcena Forry, Committee Chair

1.11.23

BPL OPENING 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 Massachusetts 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 so that they 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.

CALL TO ORDER

Linda Dorcena Forry, Committee Chair

- Trustees EDI Affirmation
- Roll Call of Committee Members
- Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 25, 2022

DRAFT BPL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHARTER AND PRINCIPLES

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHARTER & PRINCIPLES VOTE

Linda Dorcena Forry, Committee Chair

VOTED: “that, the Community Engagement Committee of the Public Library of the City of Boston vote to adopt the Charter and Principles as discussed and determined on January 11, 2023.”



Branch Staff Outreach

Priscilla Foley

Director of Neighborhood Services

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Services to neighborhoods
- Marketing
- Connecting neighborhoods to branches
- Ask what the neighborhood needs



COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW



COMMUNICATIONS: HOW IT WORKS

- *We cover all 26 locations, and all 12,000 programs*
- *BPL's in-house strategic communications agency*
 - *Marketing*
 - *PR*
 - *Internal communications*
 - *Social media*
 - *Web services*



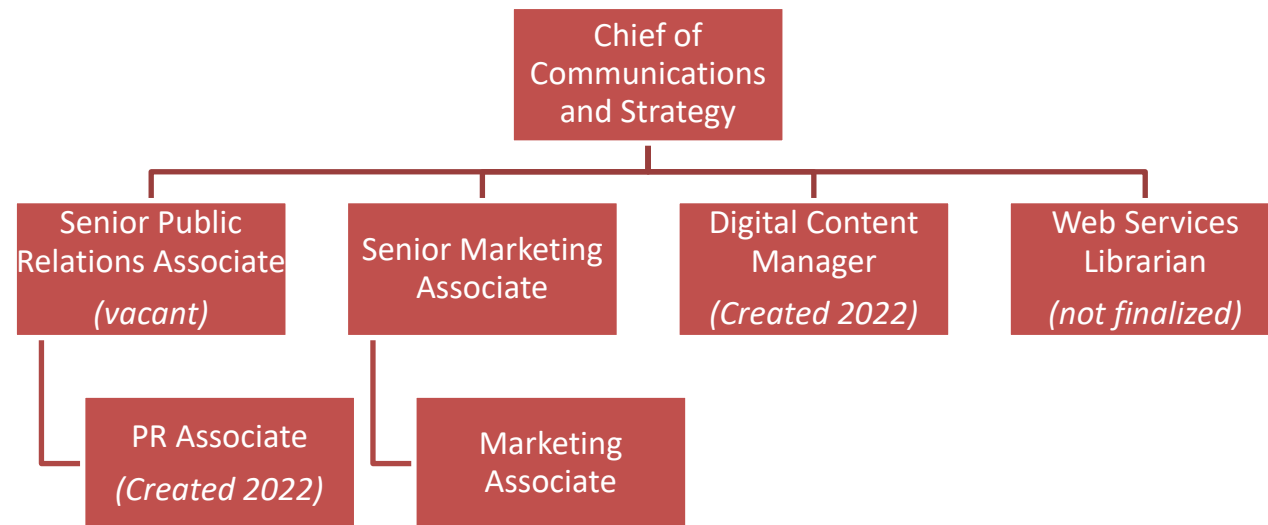
OUR PRIORITIES

- *Equity, diversity, and inclusion*
- *Developing economic + workforce equity*
- *Youth engagement*
- *Civic engagement*

HOW WE'RE STRUCTURED

...Small but mighty

*(By comparison:
DC PL comms has
13 staff members)*



SOCIAL MEDIA + STREAMING

*An ever-shifting
challenge*

- Main channels
 - 52K followers on Facebook,
 - 30.7K on Twitter, and
 - 35.1K on Instagram.
- We also have Facebook pages for all branches, and certain departments (such as Teens, KBLIC, etc.) have their own social accounts.
- YouTube
 - Editorial guidelines and use cases for archiving videos

THE PR SIDE OF THE HOUSE

From Jan. 1 to Dec. 23 of 2022, there were 453 media mentions of the BPL from 171 different outlets.

PR SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Press releases & media alerts
- Partner announcements
- Media inquiries / outreach
- Social media
- Connecting to other city departments for promotion

THE MARKETING SIDE OF THE HOUSE

PRINT COLLATERAL

- Affinity booklists
 - Black Is.../LatinX/Native Lives/Pride
- Bookmarks/Rack Cards
- Flyer approvals
- Logos

PAID ADVERTISING

- Print advertising
- Online advertising
- Pro bono ads

NEWSLETTERS

- Books and Beyond
 - Monthly; 300,000 subscribers
- Genre newsletters

BRAND STANDARDS OVERSIGHT

WEB SERVICES

- Maintain patron-facing web sites and services and intranet
- Organize and present content to maximize usability
- Edit and review some content for consistency and best practice
- Implement and develop new web services
- Administer configuration and setup of some web systems
- Assist patrons and staff with technical issues related to web services



MONTHLY ACTIVITY

- 4 Issues of the Weekly
- 4 events-based media alerts
- 1 monthly patron newsletter
- 1 monthly genre newsletter (Proofing)
- Post + create new social media content, up to 5x a day
- 10 - 20 inbound media requests
- 1 - 4 press releases
- 225 - 400 event Approvals + edits
- 40+ flyer approvals
- Weekly clips
- Produce event invitations
- Design + produce internal signage
- Quarterly booklists: editing, proofreading, art direction + printing
- Create and approve digital signage
- Design & create imprinted promotional items
- Designing & manage production of brochures, postcards, and bookmarks to support programs
- Distribution & Tracking of Print Collateral to Branches
- Blog Edits

ANNUAL PROJECT SCHEDULE

Q1

Lowell Lectures
Fund Gala Announcement
Black Is... Booklist
Women's History Month

Q2

Spring Author Talks
APAHM Booklist
We are Pride Booklist

Q3

Banned Books Week
Summer Reading/Learning
Concerts in the Courtyard
LatinX Life Booklist
Back to School

Q4

Native Stories Booklist
Winter Author Talks
Winter Reading
EOY Data release

GOAL 1

Promote priority
services + programs
thematically

*Streamline our
communications calendar by
grouping concepts, initiatives,
programs, and services*

Strategies & Tactics

BUCKET PR PROMOTION

BUCKET MARKETING PROMOTION

RETHINK AND RELAUNCH EDITORIAL
BOARD MEETINGS

GOAL 2

Infuse EDI strategies
into our work

*Enhance participation in
programs + increase
awareness of BPL resources
that increase equity*

Strategies & Tactics

MEDIA OUTREACH

TRANSLATION

GET INTO OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

PARTNER OUTREACH

GOAL 3

Support and improve
branch-level
communications

*Magic happens at the
branches.*

*We want to tell those stories
better by supporting branch
social media, surfacing
impact stories, and
providing communications
resources*

Strategies & Tactics

SOCIAL MEDIA LIAISON PROGRAM

REASSESS TRAINING MATERIALS

GOODWILL BRANCH TOUR

GOAL 4

Patron acquisition
& engagement

Reintroduce the library to the community by:

- *discovering new ways to acquire new patrons and reach target audiences;*
- *converting patrons who use the library purely for books & author talks into patrons who use other services; and*
- *"upselling" services to patrons at all levels*

Strategies & Tactics

DRAFT + DISTRIBUTE RFI

UTILIZE SOCIAL MOMENTUM

LEVERAGE CITY OF BOSTON COLLEAGUES

RELATIONSHIP MARKETING



HOW ELSE CAN WE REACH PATRONS?

- *Partnerships – work closely with Director of Strategic Partners*
- *Targeted media outreach*
- *Direct mail*
- *Additional, data-based advertising*
- *OUTREACH*

Thank you!

Insta + Twitter:

@BPLBoston

FB:

BostonPublicLibrary



POTENTIAL (FUTURE) DISCUSSION TOPICS WITH STAFF

A. Local Partnerships – Strategy Review

Angela Veizaga

B. Equitable Service Delivery

Roudnie Celestin

C. Advocacy for Additional Resources & Staff Skill Development

D. Fellowes Athenaeum Trust as model (pros and cons)

E. Invitation to Key Friends Group leaders

Linda Dorcena Forry

Committee Chair

BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



New Business

Linda Dorcena Forry

Committee Chair

**BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**



Public Comment

- If follow up is required, please send your contact email or phone number to the Clerk of the Board at pcarver@bpl.org
- People will be chosen in the order they were received and allowed 2 minutes to speak.
- The Moderator will unmute your mic when you are called on.
- Comments made in chat during meeting will not be acknowledged.

Linda Dorcena Forry

Committee Chair

BOSTON
PUBLIC
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Adjournment

**Next Meeting is March 15, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.
(subject to change)*