

# **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**

### **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 a 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.

Mr. 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 library's 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*