

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Meeting of the Trustees Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee

Wednesday, August 17, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.

Held virtually via Zoom

MINUTES

A meeting of the Trustees Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee was held on Wednesday, August 17, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom.

Present at the meeting were: Trustees Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee Chair and Trustee Evelyn Arana Ortiz, Committee Members: Priscilla Foley, Jacqueline Johnson, Allen Knight, Che Madyun, Elizabeth T. Nagarajah, and Rep. Chynah Tyler.

Also present: Dianna Preusser, Assistant Neighborhood Services/Branches Manager, Candelaria Silva-Collins, Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Project Manager and Pamela Carver, Clerk of the Board.

The Clerk noted the meeting was being recorded and reminders to sign up for public comment. Trustees Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee (“Committee”) Chair Evelyn Arana Ortiz presided and called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. She read the opening statement. The Clerk took roll call and determined there was a quorum. The first item on agenda was approval of meeting minutes from June 10, 2022 which were approved via a roll call vote.

Ms. Arana Ortiz reviewed the current available Fellowes Athenaeum Trust balance for FY23 programming of \$273,073.90. Ms. Arana Ortiz noted that this included a carryover of \$61,066.67 and the annual distribution of \$112,007.23. She explained the balance was higher due to limited programming during the COVID-19 pandemic but would check with NEPC regarding recent effects on the economy and the annual Trust distribution. She will report back at the next meeting.

Ms. Diana Preusser, Asst. Neighborhood Services Manager, was asked to review the contract for Candelaria Silva-Collins as Project Manager for the Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Fund. Ms. Silva-Collins excused herself from the call while they discussed the terms of her contract.

Ms. Preusser noted her salary was \$40,170.00 annually for part-time employment of approximately 15 hours per week (based on hourly pay). They reviewed the terms and suggested a 4% increase to accommodate cost of living expenses.

Ms. Arana Ortiz made a motion that was duly made and voted to approve the FY23 contract via a roll call vote. It was noted that the exact amount would be verified by the Accounting Department.

VOTED: “that, the Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Fund Advisory Committee of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve the contract with Candelaria Silva-Collins for FY23 for \$40,160.00 with a 4% increase.”

Ms. Silva-Collins rejoined the call.

Priscilla Foley, Director of Neighborhood Services gave brief general BPL updates. The library has seen a tremendous increase in foot traffic throughout the BPL system. She noted the Roxbury Branch staff had done a fantastic job with the increase in patrons. Programming was increasing across the system as well.

Ms. Arana Ortiz moved onto the next agenda topic of review of 2022-2023 Request for Proposals (“RFPs”). She clarified if a member had a conflict of interest that they needed to abstain from the discussion and vote.

Candelaria Silva Collins reviewed the twenty-one grant proposals.

1. **Sister Re Leigh**, Coco Lady Enterprises, for Afro-Chi Fitness to provide wellness support including nutrition for adults and families for \$2,653.00.

The Committee discussed her relationship with Haley House and her services. They felt there were many questions left in her application and were not clear on what her deliverables were.

The Committee deferred voting on her grant until they had better clarification on the deliverables. After post-meeting follow up, this grant proposal was not approved.

2. **Blanca Bonilla**, Que Lindo Boston, for Latino Pioneers in Boston Project for exhibit and documentary screening. Her target audience was adults and families and requested \$7,000. They discussed the use of the rail in the community room to display artwork.

The Committee voted to fund this grant proposal. Evelyn Arana-Ortiz abstained from the vote and discussion due to a prior relationship with her.

3. **Faith Johnson**, returning applicant for Creativity and Meditation with art activities with target audience of adults and seniors. Her grant request was for \$2,619.69.

The Committee voted to fund this grant proposal.

4. **Leslie R. English**, Sewing 101 for target audience of 18 years old+. The grant request was for \$9,898.24. Ms. English was a new applicant to the Fellowes grant but not to the Branch. She had done programming at the branch in the past. The program manuals are in multiple languages. The Committee discussed her marketing and the number of classes offered (approximately forty). They noted they did not approve the request for refreshments at all workshops and only approved for the final ceremony. They also noted they would like to add the program to the BPL calendar. Ms. Silva Collins recommended reducing the grant amount with limited sessions.

The Committee voted to fund this application with the recommended revisions: Revise budget for closing ceremony to \$500, work on outreach, reduce the grant request to half = \$4949.21.

5. **Joel Mackall** was a return applicant with two applications. Both programs are always well attended and popular programs.
 - a. Tracing our Roots Bootcamp for Adults for grant of \$2,661.25.
 - b. Smart Phones Instruction for seniors and beginners for grant of \$7,441.25.

The Committee discussed that it was a great complement to the free Wi-Fi offered at the BPL. They suggested better outreach to the resident coordinator from local senior buildings and doing the training in 2 sessions to try to capture more seniors.

The Committee voted to approve both grant proposals.

6. **Maria Cabrera & Brenda Huggins**, Creative Writing and visual arts making for target audience of ages 7-12 (with parents/caregivers) for \$2,005.00.

The Committee voted to approve this grant proposal.

7. **Kathy Eow**, ArtsEmerson, for Play Reading Book Club. This would include four plays for the target audience of adults. The grant request was for \$10,000.00.

The Committee voted to fund this grant proposal.

8. **Darnell Anderson**, Thabasix Solutions, was a new applicant, an engineer for Math for Life. The focus was to teach 4 and 5th students teaching them math without devices. Parents are encouraged to attend. He used mental and manual math concepts. His grant request was for \$4,000.00.

The Committee noted this was a gap they wanted to fill. They considered this is pilot and suggested, if successful, would like to ask to add additional grades with an outreach to local schools to connect students with this need.

Ms. Foley noted that the BPL currently offers the Homework Assistance Program and has a retired Boston Teachers Union teacher for tutoring. This program would differ in that it expanded to caregivers as well and expanded to middle school students. They noted some concerns with the time being offered and pulling from the same student pool. They recommended the applicant's outreach be to parents.

The Committee voted to fund this grant proposal as a pilot.

9. **Julia Viskushenko** (Chess Wizards), offering chess classes for kids for grades 1-5 (ages 6-12). This was a repeat applicant who was requesting \$3,120.00.

Ms. Silva-Collins recommended this applicant. She noted that the gentlemen who are known to play from the branch were approached but were not interested in applying for a grant. This program provides the opportunity for more exposure to the game to local children.

The Committee voted to approve this grant proposal.

10. **Bithyah Copeland**, City Strings United, was a new applicant. The focus is to teach ages 7+ to instruct musical stories, interactive literature, and music learning. The grant request was for \$3,404.00. The applicant has a local network in the area.

The Committee voted to approve this grant proposal. Che Madyun abstained from the vote.

11. **Stephanie McKay**, Start with Art, LLC. proposal was for a hands-on public art workshop exploring artists and activists of the Harlem Renaissance with a target audience of families and children grades K-5 (possibly teens). They would offer program over summer camp sessions. The grant request was for \$8,704.00.

The Committee discussed this proposal and agreed to fund this grant with the following revisions, would approve it pending her scheduling was mutually agreeable with the Branch and for one week only. They reduced her grant request to reflect \$4,352.00. After follow up post-meeting, the applicant agreed to the revised terms and the proposal was approved.

12. **Deborah Cox**, DAC Enterprises, Inc. was a new applicant. Her proposal was for six sessions called "Know Your Rights when Interacting with Police and Law Enforcement". It targeted adults and her grant request was for \$9,985.00. The sessions would be offered on Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m.

The Committee questioned some of the details in her proposals. They recommend the removal of "offered childcare" and extending outreach to teens and emerging adults. They wanted more flexibility in her proposed schedule.

The Committee also requested an itemized budget.

The Committee deferred voting until they received more clarification. Specifically, that the applicant drops offering childcare, sessions extended to include teens/emerging adults, and provide deliverables. After post-meeting follow up, this grant proposal was approved.

13. **Yana Bean**, Beyond the Bars, targeted families and individuals effected by incarceration. The grant request was for \$6,500.00.

The Committee discussed they needed better clarification on what the programs deliverables would be.

They deferred voting until they got clarifications on program expectations and deliverables. After post-meeting follow up, this grant proposal was approved.

14. **Michelle Coleman**, Finding the Light Within, was a new applicant to introduce Chakras & Chair Yoga. The target audience was for Adults aged 18 and up. The grant request was for \$7,000.00.

Ms. Silva-Collins recommended her program. She noted Ms. Coleman had great recommendations and the proposed outreach was great.

The Committee voted to fund this grant. Evelyn Arana-Ortiz abstained from voting. She noted she was the Chair of the Trustees Strategic Community Engagement Committee. It was revealed that Ms. Coleman was a member of this committee after the vote was taken to ensure not to sway voting in favor or against. Ms. Coleman will be asked to file an ethics disclosure.

15. **Carlos Vargas**, the return applicant, had two proposals.
 - a. Piano Classes for students aged 5-12 years. His request was for \$10,000.00.

The Committee noted this is one of the most successful programs of the Fellowes Fund and voted to approve this grant.

- b. The second grant was for a mid-day concert series targeting families and adults. It would feature local and international artists based in Boston.

It was noted that the proposal was not well written and there was some confusion. The proposal noted they were hoping to host five 45-minute concerts. The Committee wanted to compare the cost of the BPL's known "Concerts in the Courtyard" series for comparison. It was later determined they were \$500 each.

The Committee deferred voting until they received more details regarding the cost of concerts and to learn more about the diversity of artists he was suggesting. After post-meeting follow up, this grant proposal was approved.

16. **John Kordalewski**, Makanda Project, proposal for two jazz concerts targeting both adults and youth for grant request of \$7,000.00. This is a repeat applicant and always very successful.

The Committee voted to fund this grant proposal.

17. **Abe Gore (Haley House)**, Take Back the Kitchen, was a return applicant who proposed two sessions. One session was targeting families and one session targeted seniors for a total grant request of \$6,004.72.

The Committee voted to approve this grant proposal.

18. **Iris Evans**, Movers and Makers, which provided movement and art making for families and youth. Ms. Evans was a returning applicant whose programs were always popular and well attended. Her grant request was for \$5,000.00.

The Committee voted to fund this grant proposal.

19. **Isaura Oliveira**, was proposing a Brazilian Dance Class Series with a Community Showcase for young adults. The grant request was for \$9282.00.

The Committee deferred voting on this proposal until they received more details on her “fiscal conduit fee” written in her contract. After post-meeting follow up, this grant proposal was approved.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz asked for New Business. She noted that the Clerk, Pamela Carver, would be requesting votes on the pending applications once more details were provided which would be relayed to Ms. Collins-Silva for processing the applications.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz asked for public comment, for which there was none. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela R. Carver