

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Meeting of the Trustees as a Corporation and Administrative Agency

Tuesday, January 17, 2023, 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, January 17, 2023, 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: Navjeet Bal, Joe Berman, Ben Bradlee Jr, Cheryl Cronin, Linda Dorcena Forry, Jeff Hawkins, Representative Chynah Tyler, and Christian Westra, and Lynn Perry Wooten. Not present: Jabari Asim, John Hailer, Jose C. Masso III, and Sen. Mike Rush. 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 convened the meeting at 8:31 a.m. She invited Lynn Perry Wooten to read the reaffirmation statement. Ms. Douglas then gave brief welcome remarks.

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 October 11, 2022. With no edits, a motion was duly made, seconded, and approved the minutes.

Ms. Douglas continued the order of business and asked for committee updates. Ms. Dorcena Forry was invited first to give updates on the Community Engagement Committee.

Ms. Dorcena Forry noted the Community Engagement Committee had an engaging conversation and finalized the Committee charter. Their focus is to strive toward elevating the work that the staff and Mr. Leonard are doing at the BPL. They hope to amplify the initiatives and programs that are being offered within the broader communities of Boston.

Ms. Douglas then noted the membership for two new committees, the McKim Capital Project Committee chaired by Navjeet Bal, and the Strategic Planning Committee chaired by Christian Westra. Both committee chairs spoke briefly on their vision for the work of their respective committees. They both planned to host their initial meetings in the coming month.

David Leonard was asked to give his President’s report. First acknowledging the guest speaker, John Szabo, City Librarian of the Los Angeles Public Library. Ms. Szabo’s background was reviewed. It included over 30 years of leadership in public libraries. He was heavily involved with national and international institutions. He currently oversees the Central Library and the 72 branches of the Los Angeles Public Library.

Ms. Szabo thanked the Board for inviting him to speak. He explained the importance of serving all demographics of the Los Angeles patronage. He noted the LAPL focuses on emphasizing addressing areas of digital equity, homelessness, health disparities, unemployment and economic opportunities while maintaining their broad mission of lifelong learning through initiatives and programs that give them the opportunity to make an impact on a higher level. He explained that communications, public relations, and social media saturation was a high priority for their outreach in multiple languages. He emphasized the

importance for their strategic plan was to narrow down their key priorities to where they can make the biggest impact and learning what to say no to right now in order to achieve them.

The Board had a questions/answers session with Mr. Szabo on areas of housing, digital usage, mission statements, and recruitment.

Ms. Douglas thanked Ms. Szabo for his thoughtful discussion with the Board.

Next, Ms. Leonard briefly reviewed some recent highlights. He noted that King Boston (with whom the BPL had partnered with) had recently unveiled the Embrace memorial in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The BPL was featured on CBS Sunday Morning regarding an author who used some of our anti-slavery collections.

Ms. Arana Ortiz was invited to give the Finance and Audit Committee report along with Ellen Donaghey, Chief Financial Officer.

Ms. Arana Ortiz explained that the next fiscal year's budget process looked a little different than previous years and asked Ms. Donaghey to briefly explain it.

Ellen Donaghey reviewed the process of submitting the annual maintenance budget requests which included initiatives, reforms, and reductions. There were a few new changes this year, and the City was currently only looking for the maintenance requests (and not reforms and reductions just yet). The BPL met with key City stakeholders (including the Office of Budget Management, members of the Human Services Cabinet, and the Mayor's Chief of Staff's office) to discuss how our initiatives align with the Mayor's priorities.

Ms. Donaghey explained that the BPL would be submitting our maintenance requests by January 13th with both union contracts still not renewed yet. The renewals should reflect a 1% increase when completed. She would provide a more thorough budget presentation in a future meeting.

Ms. Arana Ortiz explained there was a request to increase the contract approval thresholds and she asked Ms. Donaghey to review what they currently are and explain the proposed changes.

Ms. Donaghey explained they were looking to change some of the thresholds for when the Library is buying things on the Trustees side of funding. Currently, under ten thousand dollars, management and staff exercise their best discretion without needing approval. From \$10,000 to \$50,000 dollars, we are authorized by the Trustees to buy off the state contract, the Mass Higher Education Consortium contract, or we bring to the Board for approval. We propose having the Trustees increase these figures from \$0-\$50,000 as often they are simple requests. She noted some recent examples of contracts that had fallen into this designation.

The second change was to increase the amount for the Finance and Audit Committee to approve from \$51,000 to \$200,000 rather than having to go to the full Board. Anything over \$201,000 would automatically go to the full Board of Trustees for their approval.

Ms. Arana Ortiz called for a motion that was duly made, seconded, and the Board voted to approve with the contingency of auditor's approval.

VOTED: "that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve an update to the contract limit thresholds requiring a review and vote by the Trustees Finance & Audit Committee and full Board of Trustees, with the new limits set as follows with contingency of auditor approval:

- **\$0 to \$50,000 – no votes needed.**
- **\$51,000 to \$200,000 - Finance & Audit Committee votes to approve.**

- **\$201,000 and up - Finance & Audit Committee reviews and recommends a vote to the full board; Full Board of Trustees votes to approve.**

Ms. Douglas called for New Business. She noted in addition the feature on CBS Sunday Morning that Mr. Michael Colford was featured on WBUR regarding library services. She asked the Clerk to recirculate them both to the Board. The Leventhal Map and Education Center opened its newest exhibition called “*Building Blocks*.” She reminded all of the BPL Fund’s initiatives and opportunity to buy a chair or lamp in Bates Hall.

Ms. Douglas asked for public comment for which there was none.

With no further business, Ms. Douglas adjourned the meeting at 9:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pamela R. Carver". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pamela Carver, Clerk of the Board