

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Meeting of the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. Held via Zoom

MINUTES

A meeting of the Boston Public Library Trustees Finance and Audit Committee was held virtually on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 via Zoom at 8:30 a.m.

All members were present at the meeting: Committee Chair Evelyn Arana Ortiz and Committee members: Navjeet Bal, John Hailer, Jeff Hawkins, Senator Mike Rush, and President David Leonard.

Also, present were Boston Public Library staff including Chief Financial Officer Ellen Donaghey, Clerk of the Board Pamela Carver, other BPL staff members, and members of the public.

Ms. Arana Ortiz presiding called the Meeting of the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee (“Committee”) to order at 8:35 a.m. The Committee Chair read the welcoming EDI statement and 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 was approval of meeting minutes of November 1, 2022. With no comments or edits, the minutes were approved via a roll call vote.

Ellen Donaghey reviewed the process of submitting the annual maintenance budget requests which include initiatives, reforms, and reductions. She noted 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 was scheduled to meet with the Office of Budget Management along with 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.

Ms. Arana Ortiz recommended that the Committee members attend the annual City Council’s Ways and Means budget hearing with the BPL and requested the Clerk to send details as they were confirmed.

David Leonard explained that one of the new goals of this budget process with the 75 city departments was to simplify the process at the early stages. The City did not ask teams to develop fully written proposals that may not be necessary. It was meant to drive some efficiency in the submission process. In previous years, some versions of initiatives went forward, but a lot of preparation work was wasted or unnecessary for those that did not go forward. This year there will be deep priorities conversations with relevant city colleagues. This includes someone from the Mayor’s Chief of Staff’s office, someone from the Human Services Cabinet, along with budget representatives and other stakeholders. This means that we should have some tentative understanding of a shared vision of what is to move forward before we put in a lot of work into the detailed submission. We do our own internal administrative due diligence on where we think there are opportunities for increased investment, reform, or continued ongoing improvements.

Most of this work will be driving what will be a city submission and the other revenue sources that we can tap into or work with. He added it also informs the broader set of needs. There will be a more defined budget to review as we get closer to May.

They moved onto the discussion and review of contracts. Ms. Prindle, Head of Special Collections, explained the first vote was similar to a contract that the F&A Committee approved in 2017; to authorize trusted vendors for special collections work. Four vendors were presented who have significant experience working with on successful projects over time.

The request was to have authorization to work with four vendors, up to \$50,000 per vendor in any fiscal year without having to go through a procurement process. She explained that in Special Collections, for several reasons the bidding process was not something that went through the RFP processes. In many cases, there are only limited vendors who perform specialty work. The four proposed vendors have already been vetted through former projects.

Ms. Prindle reviewed each of the vendors and explained some of the work that they have done with the BPL.

Daedalus works on the preservation, repair, and restoration of sculpture architectural ornaments. They previously conserved and repatinated the bronze statue of *Bacchante and Infant Faun* in our courtyard.

Gianfranco Pocobene Studios restores paintings, murals, and historic decorations. He worked on the conservation of the Puvis de Chavannes' *Philosophy* panel.

Clark Fine Arts Services does specialized art handling, packing, and storage. They have worked with us in the past making custom enclosures for three dimensional objects and paintings particularly around the rare books moved in preparation for the renovation.

US Art also does art packing, installation, and storage. They assisted with the transport of our Toulouse-Lautrec's works to the Museum of Fine Arts for our participation in that exhibition.

Authorizing the use of these vendors would enable Ms. Prindle's team, within the expertise in her staff, to do due diligence in terms of getting estimates and quotes but does not require the additional step of going through the procurement process beyond the work that her team would do.

Ms. Arana Ortiz noted that these four vendors would be added to the full vendor list (which was provided in meeting materials).

Ms. Arana Ortiz made a motion that was duly made, seconded, and,

VOTED: "that, the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee approve the addition of:

Daedalus Inc, 205-3 Arlington Street, Watertown, MA 02472

Gianfranco Pocobene Studios, 193 Maple Street, Malden, MA 02148

Clark Fine Art Services, 287 Newtonville Avenue, Newton, MA 02460

US Art, 66 Pacella Park Drive, Randolph, MA 02368

To the authorized vendor list recommended by the President and Head of Special Collections to perform conservation and other specialized collection work up to \$50,000 per vendor in any fiscal year with no further procurement process."

Next, Ellen Donaghey noted as a point of clarification that they anticipated the Newspaper Image Processing Project contract to come in over \$200,000 but the actual contract was much lower.

Eben English, Manager of Digital Services explained that this was a contract to perform some post-processing work on newspaper content that had been scanned from microfilm. It allows the BPL to take content that was shared with an online genealogy company called MyHeritage and make it more searchable. The BPL had a partnership with them a couple of years ago where we provided them access to our microfilm and they provided us access to their digitized images.

Currently, there is additional work that needs to be done to make these images searchable, ingestible into our digital repository, and accessible on Digital Commonwealth. This contract would allow us to process almost 600,000 pages. It would be one of the biggest projects this department has done with newspaper microfilm. The selected vendor was Apex CoVantage, LLC and funded by Library for the Commonwealth.

The Committee discussed the content was mostly 19th century and early 20th century Boston newspapers and the duration of the project was roughly six months. They hoped to complete it within FY23. Mr. English explained that there are 7 million images from MyHeritage, so this initial project was only the beginning. The hope was to do a bigger project next year.

David Leonard reminded the Committee that this was just one pilot among a bigger process of newspaper digitization. Access to newspapers was one of the most requested services by other entities, libraries, and patrons around the state. It was one major step forward to making our collections more accessible, more broadly.

With no additional questions, a motion was duly made, seconded, and

VOTED: “that, the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee of the Public Library of the City of Boston award contract to Apex CoVantage, LLC of 4045 Sheridan Avenue #266, Miami Beach, FL 33140 in the amount up to but not to exceed Ninety-Six Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$96,000). This contract is to provide public access and long-term preservation of digitized newspapers and will be funded with Library for the Commonwealth Funding.”

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 just exercise their best discretion without needing approval. Ten to Fifty thousand dollars we are authorized by the Trustees to buy off the state contract, the Mass Higher Education Consortium contract, or we bring to the Trustees. 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 go to the full Board of Trustees for their approval.

Ms. Arana Ortiz, this vote would be a recommendation to the full Board to increase the thresholds as discussed. Ms. Donaghey agreed to report on contracts that the BPL executes without Trustee approval on a regular basis.

Ms. Arana Ortiz made a motion, that was duly made, seconded, and

VOTED: “that, the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee of the Public Library of the City of Boston recommend the Board of Trustees 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:

\$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. Arana Ortiz asked for New Business for which there was none. She asked if there were any public comments.

Amber DeAngelis, Research Services Team Leader at the BPL was very excited to see the newspaper project highlighted and wanted to reiterate that the work her department does handles a lot of the requests that come through working with the newspaper in microfilm. A lot of that contributes to different scholarships around the world and in different fields. Excited that these materials will be more accessible and thanked the Committee for their consideration and approval.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:04am.

Ms. Arana-Ortiz asked for Public comment for which there was none. With no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 9:01 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pamela R. Carver, Clerk of the Board A meeting of the Boston Public Library Trustees Finance and Audit Committee was held virtually on Tuesday, January 10, 2023 via Zoom at 8:30 a.m.

All members were present at the meeting: Committee Chair Evelyn Arana Ortiz and Committee members: Navjeet Bal, John Hailer, Jeff Hawkins, Senator Mike Rush, and President David Leonard.

Also, present were Boston Public Library staff including Chief Financial Officer Ellen Donaghey, Clerk of the Board Pamela Carver, other BPL staff members, and members of the public.

Ms. Arana Ortiz presiding called the Meeting of the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee (“Committee”) to order at 8:35 a.m. The Committee Chair read the welcoming EDI statement and a roll call was taken and determined there was a quorum. Everyone was reminded that the meeting was being recorded and that members of the public who wished to speak must sign up for Public Comment.

The first matter of business was approval of meeting minutes of November 1, 2022. With no comments or edits, the minutes were approved via a roll call vote.

Ellen Donaghey reviewed the process of submitting the annual maintenance budget request. This year the City was only requesting the maintenance submission and initiatives. In previous years, they had also requested potential reductions and potential revenue. The deadline for maintenance is 1/13. Initiatives are to be submitted after BPL management meets with our colleagues from the Office of Budget

Management, the Human Services Cabinet as well as members of Mayor Wu's staff. Library will present potential initiatives and discuss how these might align with the Mayor's priorities.

Ms. Donaghey further explained the initial maintenance submission would be relatively small as we are awaiting implementation of the new PSA rates. Those rates will be included during OBM's review. The contract negotiations with AFSCME 1526 are on-going.

Ms. Arana Ortiz recommended that the Committee members watch the annual City Council's Ways and Means budget hearing with the BPL, which is typically available online through Boston City Council TV. She requested the Clerk send details as they were confirmed.

David Leonard explained that one of the new goals of this budget process with the 75 city departments was to simplify the process at the early stages. The City did not ask teams to develop fully written prior to our vetting them with our colleagues at City Hall. This was meant to drive some efficiency in the submission process.

In previous years, some versions of initiatives went forward, but a lot of preparation work was unnecessary for those that did not go forward. By talking with OBM, our Cabinet Chief and members of the Mayor's staff, we should have some tentative understanding of a shared vision of what to move forward. We do our own internal administrative due diligence on where we think there are opportunities for increased investment, reform, or continued ongoing improvements.

There will be a more defined budget to review as we get closer to May.

The Committee then moved onto the discussion and review of contracts. Ms. Prindle, Head of Special Collections, explained the first vote was similar to a contract that the F&A Committee approved in 2017; to authorize trusted vendors for special collections work. Four vendors were presented who they have significant experience working with on successful projects over time.

The request was to have authorization to work with these four vendors, up to \$50,000 per vendor in any fiscal year without having to go through a procurement process. She explained that in Special Collections, for this type of work, we use vendors that are recognized experts in their field rather than going through an RFP process. In many cases, there are only limited vendors who perform specialty work. The four proposed vendors have already been vetted through former projects.

Ms. Prindle reviewed each of the vendors and explained some of the work that they have done with the BPL.

Daedalus works on the preservation, repair, and restoration of sculpture architectural ornaments. They previously conserved and repaginated the bronze statue of Bacchante and Infant Faun in our courtyard.

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