

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

**Meeting of the Trustees Executive Committee
Wednesday, November 30, 2022 at 8:30 a.m.
Central Library, Commonwealth Salon
700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02122
MINUTES**

The meeting of the Boston Public Library (“BPL”) Trustees Executive Committee (“Committee”) was held on Wednesday, November 30, 2022 held at 8:30 a.m. at the Central Library.

Committee members present at the meeting included Priscilla H. Douglas, Chair, Evelyn Arana-Ortiz, Vice Chair and Trustees: Ben Bradlee, Cheryl Cronin, Linda Dorcena Forry, and John Hailer. Jeff Hawkins was absent.

Also present were David Leonard, President and Pamela Carver, Clerk of the Board. Trustees Navjeet Bal and Christian Westra, along with staff and members of the public.

Priscilla H. Douglas, Chair of the Board presided and called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. Those in attendance were reminded that the meeting was being recorded and how to sign up for public comment. She read the Trustees reaffirmation statement, roll call was taken and determined there was a quorum. The first matter of business was approval of the April 13, 2021 meeting minutes. With no edits or comments, the meeting minutes were approved via a roll call vote.

Ms. Douglas introduced new members to the Committee: Linda Dorcena Forry, John Hailer, and Jeff Hawkins. She noted that the intention was for the Executive Committee to have deeper conversations.

Beth Prindle, Head of Special Collection to review two votes before them. The first was to delegate approval to the Finance & Audit Committee the selection of a vendor for the Newspaper Image Processing Project. The project focuses on digitizing local newspapers and newspapers from other institutions around the state. The repository team was ready to tackle this huge project as this is one of the single most common requests of the Library. The project would be funded by the Library of the Commonwealth. The content would be accessible through the Digital Commonwealth and linked to the BPL website and our catalog.

Ms. Arana Ortiz made a motion to approve delegating approval for this vote to the Finance and Audit Committee. It was duly made, seconded, and voted unanimously,

VOTED: “that, the Executive Committee of the Public Library of the City of Boston delegate the award of contract for the Newspaper Image Processing project not to exceed Two Hundred Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$200,000) to the Finance and Audit Committee. 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. Prindle reviewed the vote to approve a vendor for the Research Collections move. She noted that the collections were moved to several locations during the renovation. The RFP allows the vendor to return the collection to BPL property. An RFP was issued, and they selected William B Meyer, Inc. The move was anticipated to take three months and would start in early 2023. The vendor would be responsible for the moving, cleaning, and shelving of the collection. BPL has worked with Meyer many times in the past but noted they were not our exclusive vendor for this type of work.

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

VOTED: “that, the Executive Committee of the Public Library of the City of Boston award a contract to William B. Meyer, Inc. of 255 Long Beach Blvd, Stratford, CT 06615 for Packing, Moving, Shifting and Shelving of Thirty-One thousand linear feet of the Research Collection as specified with the BPL, at a price not to exceed One Hundred Sixty-Three Thousand Two Hundred Sixty-Eight dollars and Zero Cents (\$163,268.00).”

Ms. Douglas noted that with the BPL's move to the City's Human Services cabinet the focus of our work is significant and encouraged members to stay up to date on the BPL. She asked for input if they felt topics should be discussed at the full board or at the committee meeting level.

The members had a hearty discussion on the role of the Board as a governing body and for fiduciary purposes. They discussed the Trustees served an oversight role for the library, but not over the management of the BPL. Some noted they felt the Board was "too in the weeds" and thought more thoughtful conversations should be made at the committee level. Mr. Leonard asked to defer the agenda item regarding future topics for staff presentation at future meetings.

Next, Ms. Douglas introduced two new subcommittees of the Executive Committee. She explained they would begin as subcommittees for management purposes only reporting back to the Executive Committee but may eventually roll into independent committees. The first was the Strategic Planning Committee which will be led by Christian Westra.

Mr. Westra explained he wanted to shape the strategic plan by what an urban library should look like in the 21st Century. It should be BPL driven with Board input. He wanted to create an output document that was useful and helped execute actual goals. He noted the last strategic planning process had not been formally done in the last ten years.

The Board discussed some apprehension they had toward the Strategic Plan being Board driven and felt it should be developed by management and presented for Trustees input afterwards.

Mr. Leonard added that there was no charted course, they were still working it out and still determining who was best to serve on this committee. He emphasized it must be in collaboration with BPL management and Trustees. There should be a range of experience on governance across this committee. The final strategic plan must be an actual document that makes an impact.

The second of the subcommittees of the Executive Committee is the McKim Capital Project Committee, led by Navjeet Bal. The developed McKim Master Plan was reviewed with the Board already. Part of this dialog will be with the City and part of the dialogue is with philanthropic arms but will also be in communication with the Board.

Navjeet Bal noted getting capital commitments will be important. This project was not just about a fancy new building but will also tie in with the strategic plan and being sure all the Committee's efforts are working in alignment.

Ms. Douglas asked if there was any new business.

Mr. Leonard explained the Urban Library Council had come up with a declaration of commitment to democratic principles in response to the challenges to book banning and other challenges of libraries in society. He recommended the BPL sign onto this declaration and asked for trustee to endorse this. The Committee felt it was the prerogative of management and recommended not having a formal trustee vote. and the sentiment of trustees' support would be more appropriate.

Ms. Douglas called for public comment, for which there was none.

Next, Ms. Douglas asked to enter Executive Session for the purpose of conducting a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with a nonunion staff member under Exemption 2 of the MA Open Meeting Law. The clerk noted it would be held immediately following the vote and that the Board will not be reconvening in a public session.

A motion was made, duly seconded, and voted unanimously,

VOTED: "that, the Trustees Executive Committee of the Public Library of the City of Boston vote to enter into Executive Session."

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela R. Carver, Clerk of the Board