

# TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Meeting of the Trustees Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee

Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 12:00 p.m.

Held virtually via Zoom

## MINUTES

A meeting of the Trustees Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, February 16, 2023 at noon via Zoom.

All members of the Trustees Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Advisory Committee were present. They included: Chair and Trustee Evelyn Arana Ortiz, Vice Chair Rep. Chynah Tyler along with Committee members: Priscilla Foley, Jacqueline Johnson, Allen Knight, Che Madyun, and Elizabeth T. Nagarajah.

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

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 12:03p.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 August 17, 2022 which were approved via a vote.

Priscilla Foley, Director of Neighborhood Services gave some general BPL updates. She commended the Roxbury Branch staff for their ongoing work to enhance the community through their services and programs they offer each day. She noted they continue to see the reach numbers of patron’s usage increase. The library was exploring adding additional hours and having more custodial services at all BPL locations on Saturdays. Ms. Foley also noted that the staffing shortages they experienced for the past couple of years have been improving with lots of new hires across the system to pre-covid levels. They were still exploring and interviewing some key positions, including the teen librarian at the Roxbury Branch.

The committee discussed the need for additional custodial services, specifically for the Roxbury Branch on Saturdays and for the late evenings when the branch is open.

Candelaria Silva Collins gave updates on the FY23 programming that ran between October 2022 to February 2023. She noted this was the largest grant offering that she has ever had before with 18 grantees. She reviewed the various categories that the programs entailed. They included in the art categories of dance, film, exhibits, music, instruction, and health well-being. In addition, some instructional classes included genealogy, math tutoring, knowing your rights, cooking classes, sewing, and chess classes. Each class had a varying number of attendees from five to one hundred. Ms. Silva-Collins showed photos from the programs which reflected they were very well attended with a mix of children and adults. She also showed a sample of the flyers to show they follow BPL branding formats.

Next, she reviewed some of the challenges. She noted every program does a final report and gives evaluations on attendees, which showed no complaints. Some grantees were not efficient with submitting the administrative reports that are required, in a timely manner.

The most struggling included outreach and maintaining teens in the programs. In addition, there was very limited space at the branch due to existing programming and the current operational hours. The physical condition of the branch on Saturdays with the need for additional custodial services was noted, especially when there is back-to-back programming. One grantee was very disagreeable

with one of the BPL employees. There was a learning curve with invoicing and reports, and hoped to see if there could be a standardized report form created with the BPL Business Office.

Next, Ms. Silva-Collings discussed some of her needs which included software, business cards, and additional evening hours, among other things. The Committee discussed her needs as well as the several challenges she mentioned. Ms. Foley noted her team would follow up with the finance office to answer some of her administrative questions.

Ms. Foley explained that she had a private conversation with Ms. Silva-Collins prior to the meeting to explain why some of the items she requested could not be provided by the BPL. She also noted that staffing shortages limit the BPL from expanding hours of operation for now, but the goal was to stretch Saturday to full days as soon as possible.

Ms. Arana Ortiz called for New Business. She explained that the annual Fund distribution was not affected by the economic changes. The annual distribution reflects the three-year average of the Fellowes Fund so the coming years may reflect slight changes because of this year's economy.

The Committee agreed to meet on June 15, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom.

There was no public comment. The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela R. Carver