

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON
Meeting of the Trustees as a Corporation and Administrative Agency
Tuesday, November 7, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.
Roslindale Branch, 4246 Washington St., Roslindale, MA 02131

MINUTES

The Meeting of the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston (“BPL”) held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023, at 4:00p.m. at the Roslindale Branch in the Community Room.

Present at the meeting included: Chair Priscilla H. Douglas, Vice Chair Evelyn Arana Ortiz and Trustees: Navjeet Bal, Joe Berman, Jeff Hawkins, Jose C. Masso III, Representative Chynah Tyler, Christian Westra, and Lynn Perry Wooten. Not present: Cheryl Cronin, John Hailer, and Sen. Mike Rush (who was attending required military training with the US Navy) 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 3:13p.m. She greeted all with some welcome remarks. She acknowledged the EDI statement, a roll call was taken and determined there was a quorum. The clerk reminded all that the meeting was being recorded and to sign up for public comment.

The first matter of business was approving the meeting minutes from September 27, 2023. With no edits, a motion was duly made, seconded, and approved the minutes.

Ms. Douglas continued the order of business and announced the appointment of three new trustees, Jim Canales, Ray Liu, and Porsha Olayiwola. Each of the new trustees gave welcome remarks and provided brief introductions to their backgrounds.

Ms. Douglas asked Mr. Berman to explain the Writer-In-Residence for The Associates and Ms. Paula Sakey of the BPL Fund to discuss Young Professionals which recently raised over \$180,000 for the BPL at their Night in the Stacks event.

Mr. David Leonard gave his President Report. He noted this was the first-time hosting meeting back in a branch since pre-Covid. He welcomed Jennifer Hawes, Roslindale’s Branch Librarian, to give some remarks. She provided a brief history of the branch which was opened in 1961 and renovated in 2021. She introduced her staff and showcased the features and programs they offer.

Linda Jackson, President of the Roslindale Friends group recognized all members where were in attendance. She discussed that they were comprised of 67 volunteers. She gave a brief presentation on the many ways they contribute to the flourishing branch via donations and programming.

The Board had a hearty discussion with the Friends and Ms. Hawes regarding some of their diverse demographics and their programming.

Next, Mr. Leonard discussed some current library trends. H mentioned they are informed by the work at the micro level to macro level at the Urban League Council (“ULC”), American Research Libraries (“ARL”), Public Library Association (“PLA”), and International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA).

Some concerns included the global state of youth education. There is a rise of book challenges, rise of artificial intelligence, and preserving culture and migrating populations. Statistics gathered by the ARL of challenges noted it is having a chilling effect with staff losing their positions for refusing to take books off shelves. National book challenges affect socio-political divisions, safety and security, and the future of the profession-staff pipelines. It affects the nature of research, campus communities and education support,

grappling with history as a differentiator. Massachusetts elected officials have brought a slew of bills to protect the rights of libraries. He reviewed the slate of legislation and explained them. They included Protection of the right of libraries to purchase E-content at fair prices and access perpetual license copies, Protection of Libraries, Protection for library workers, and Supporting the Right to Read.

The Board discussed these challenges and offered ways to help support them.

Next, Sarah Zaphiris and Josh Rosenthal reviewed what happens when a branch closes. They explained differences between planned short term, planned long term, and unplanned closures and the varying procedures for each.

Michael Colford explained the MBLC Action Plan is an annual file that enables a library to apply for grant funding. He reviewed the BPL's 2024 MBLC Plan noting the institutional priorities were identified.

Ms. Douglas made a motion to approve that was duly noted, seconded, and voted to approve.

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve the Boston Public Library’s 2024 MBLC Action Plan.”

Senator Mike Rush gave the Finance and Audit Committee report. Mr. Rush noted that all of the contracts have been fully vetted for approval by the Finance and Audit Committee. He asked Mr. Westra to explain the consultant contract.

Christian Westra, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, gave a brief overview of the strategic process. There was a Request for Proposal (“RFP”) over the summer. Various stakeholders and staff made up a library panel that reviewed and interviewed the vendors. Gensler was the selected consultant for this contract. He noted that Gensler worked with Margaret Sullivan Studios, a leader in strategic planning or libraries. The contract was for two hundred thousand dollars and zero cents (\$200,000).

Mr. Rush made a motion to approve that was duly noted, seconded, and voted to approve.

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve the award of a contract to Gensler, One Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108 not to exceed two hundred thousand dollars and zero cents (\$200,000) for services as a Strategic Planning Consultant.”

Emily Tokarczyk explained the Company One contract. It was for two hundred fifty dollars and zero cents (\$250,000) for three years. The contract includes theater productions, programming, and community engagement.

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve the contract with Company One Theatre, 539 Tremont St, Boston, MA 02116 in the amount two hundred fifty thousand dollars and zero cents (\$250,000) over three years for theater productions, programming and community engagement.”

Ms. Tokarczyk explained the loading dock repair contract with Structural Preservation Systems was for four years in the amount of four hundred twenty-five thousand dollars five hundred dollars and zero cents (\$425,500) to repair the concrete platform.

Mr. Rush made a motion to approve that was duly noted, seconded, and voted to approve.

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve the award of a fully bid Ch. 149 construction contract to Structural Preservation Systems, LLC, 1755 Highland Avenue –

Building B, Cheshire, CT 06410 in the amount of Four hundred twenty-five thousand five hundred dollars and zero cents (\$425,500) to repair the concrete platform of the Central Library loading dock.”

Mr. Rush explained the delegation of votes to the Finance and Audit Committee to allow the committee to vote on the selected vendors prior to the next board meeting in March. Each of these votes were vetted by the Finance and Audit Committee.

Ms. Tokarczyk explained that the first was for the Multi-Function Printer contract which was for all printing systemwide for the next five years for seven hundred fifty thousand dollars and zero cents (\$750,000). They were currently vetting contractors to see which were compatible with our current software and anticipated putting forth a selection in the coming weeks.

The second vote was for the Newspaper Digitization contract which was the second phase of this project. It was for three years for a total of five hundred thousand dollars and zero cents. The RFP was due back, and a selection committee would be recommending a vendor soon.

A motion was duly made, seconded, and voted to approve both delegation votes.

VOTED: “that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston delegate approval of the Multi-Function Printer (MFP) service and equipment 5-year contract to the Finance and Audit Committee. This contract will be for systemwide printing, scanning and photocopying capabilities for patrons and back of house use, and is a service that must be compatible with our current Pharos “pay-for-print” software. It is estimated that the total 5-year contract should not exceed seven hundred fifty thousand dollars and zero cents (\$750,000).”

VOTED: “that, the Trustees Finance and Audit Committee of the Public Library of the City of Boston recommend the Board of Trustees delegate approval to award a five hundred thousand dollars and zero cents (\$500,000) three-year contract for Newspaper Digitization to the Finance and Audit Committee.”

Emily Tokarczyk reviewed the FY23 gift report which totaled \$3,881,158.36. She highlighted the generosity of our main affiliates, The BPL Fund, LMEC, The Associates, and the various Friends groups.

Ms. Douglas asked for New Business. She noted the Museum of Fine Arts “*Fashioned by Sargent*” exhibit.

Ms. Douglas asked for Public Comment.

Amber DeAngelis, staff member of the BPL, thanked the Roslindale Friends and Jennifer Hawes. She noted the upcoming event “Stolen Relations” and encouraged everyone to attend.

Elissa Cadillic, President of AFSCME 1526, appreciated the support of staff’s work. She asked for the Trustees to embrace the use of the term “library staff” and not just “librarians” to encompass all staff. She also wanted to acknowledge the need for more staff, as the shortages puts a toll on all. When they talk about extending hours that we acknowledge the burden of the staff is taken seriously.

She raised the issue of Company One putting out tip jars and envelopes for the suggested cost of tickets at the BPL whose mission includes it is “Free to All”.

With no further business, Ms. Douglas adjourned the meeting at 5:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Carver, Clerk of the Board