

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Meeting of the Trustees as a Corporation and Administrative Agency

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Central Library, Rabb Hall

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, March 26, 2024, at 8:30a.m. at the Central Library in Rabb Hall.

Present at the meeting included: Chair Priscilla H. Douglas, Vice Chair Evelyn Arana Ortiz, and Trustees: Navjeet Bal, Joe Berman, Jim Canales, Cheryl Cronin, John Hailer, Jeff Hawkins, Jose C. Masso III, Porsha Olayiwola, Representative Chynah Tyler, Christian Westra, and Lynn Perry Wooten. Not present: Dr. Ray Liu and Senator 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 8:40a.m. She started by recognizing Sarah-Ann Shaw, longtime Friend of the Roxbury Branch, and supporter of the BPL, who had passed away. 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 of November 7, 2023. With no edits, a motion was duly made, seconded, and approved the minutes. (Ms. Arana Ortiz abstained from voting)

Tim Ritchie, President of the Museum of Science was introduced and invited to speak to the Board on the Museum’s recent strategic planning process and focuses. He noted the Museum’s efforts were to honor the past but not worship it, to give themselves permission to become something new. This threads through their belief that “knowledge is power” to become something new. They narrowed their vision around two initiatives and two commitments. He said his best advice for the strategic planning process was to choose the things that are choosing you.

The Board had a robust discussion with him regarding the outreach process, rollout, and financial support.

Mr. Leonard was asked to give the President’s report. The first matter was Strategic Planning updates.

Gensler, represented by Patricia Nobre and Erin Corcoran, gave brief introductions of their team, which included Margaret Sullivan of Margaret Sullivan Studios who worked in collaboration with Gensler. They reviewed their Roadmap which explained the three phases of the strategic planning process: vision, plan, and implementation. She explained that they kicked off earlier in the year and are currently still in Phase #1. This included engaging with Leadership, a staff network, key affiliate stakeholders, and the Trustees Committee. Over the summer, they will enter Phase# 2 and begin to refine the plan into the fall. The Board asked several questions. They discussed how to be involved and updated via the OnBoard portal. Mr. Leonard noted that the Strategic Planning Committee was comprised of five trustees, and seven non-trustee stakeholders.

Mr. Leonard moved onto key updates. He noted that the library hired fourteen new staff in 2024, bringing the total number of employees to 489. This was significant progress, but it was noted there were still forty open positions. Recruiting and process management remained a challenge.

The “Browse Borrow Board” initiative has had over 1,800 signups to date. They continued to showcase Women’s History Month, Black Is, and Pride Month. He noted a couple of well attended events including two author talks with Dennis Lehane, a former Trustee, and with Malia Lazu.

Staff put together an amazing professional development event with Boston Public School librarians and BPL librarians to connect the two institutions.

This year's theme was "Revolutionary Music: Music for Social Change". He explained that the Commemoration of the American Revolution is in 2026. The next few years will focus on the "Road to the Revolution" through music, art, and historical events.

Mr. Leonard highlighted some significant events. Company One held their performance in Rabb Hall earlier this year and the renovated Faneuil Branch reopened. Mr. Leonard concluded his report by noting that the Associates will host their annual "Literary Lights in April, the BPL Fund will host this year's "Morning Brew" and the LMEC's next major exhibit will be opening in the month of May.

Ms. Douglas moved on to the Finance and Audit Committee updates.

Ms. Arana Ortiz and Emily Tokarczyk presented the contracts that need approval. The first was for eRate, which are annual federal grants that we apply for. This year was for replacing the network switches. Ms. Arana Ortiz made a motion that was duly made, seconded, and voted to approve.

VOTED: "that, the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve a three-year contract not to exceed Two hundred Twenty-Four Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Dollars and Twenty-Six Cents (\$224,550.26) with ePlus Technology, Inc of 13595 Dulles Technology Drive, Herndon, VA 20171."

Next, the security guard contract was explained. The library issued an RFP, and it came down to two vendors, Securitas and Allied Universal. It was for a three-year contract. They reviewed both applications very carefully, noting both were excellent options. Ultimately, they decided on Allied Universal who encourage fair compensation, a culture of DEI, and provide a pathway for growth for employees. After some discussion and questions, Ms. Arana Ortiz called for a motion that was duly made, seconded, and voted to approve. (Ms. Tyler abstained from the vote)

VOTED: "that, the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve a three-year contract in the amount of Five Million Six Hundred Ninety-One Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty-Seven Dollars and Sixty Cents (\$5,691,987.60) with Allied Universal Security Services, 580 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA 02118, for guard and patrol services for the entire BPL System per the Request for Proposal ("RFP") specifications."

Ms. Douglas asked for new business. She noted the Special Collections Sampler on Women's Rights and the current LMEC exhibit among other upcoming events around the city that echoed our current programming in the coming weeks.

Ms. Douglas called for Public Comment.

Amber De Angelis, Research Services Team Leader, highlighted some of her upcoming programs and encouraged the Board to attend if they could. The list will be shared via email from the Clerk. She noted that events are either recorded or streamed and end up on BPL's YouTube channel.

Yvette Jarreau, Friend of the South End Library, commented that it was a great and interesting meeting. Talking about the South End library, she was delighted to be in the programming phase. She noted some additional requests that they hoped for including a full kitchen, a café, appropriate space for compost bins, more storage, and space for patron's belongings. They requested an additional community meeting and asked for a positive response.

With no further business, Ms. Douglas adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela R. Carver

Clerk of the Board