

**Free Library of Philadelphia  
Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, September 27, 2018  
8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.**

**Attendance:** P. Dembe (Chair); D. Allie; C. Arlene; D. Carney; J. Chizick-Agüero; J. Cooper; M. DiBerardinis; G. Generals; M. Grimm; R. Heim; N. Kolb (on-phone); J. Maddox; J. Soroko (on-phone); B. Sutherland; E. Tomlin (on-phone); I. Wang

**Guests:** Nick Thome (Board Fellow)

**Staff:** S. Reardon; J. Benford; J. Bogoni; D. Dreher; D. Edwards; S. Gould; S. Horrocks; C. Kowalski; S. Moran; A. Nurkin; J. Pecora; S. Pollie; L. Walker; L. Williamson

**Chair Remarks – P. Dembe**

P. Dembe called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. and welcomed new Board member M. DiBerardinis.

**Consent Agenda – P. Dembe**

P. Dembe discussed how the President’s Report can be used as a tool for fundraising and advocacy because it highlights recent Library accomplishments and happenings. She also pointed out the updated Strategic Plan and its goals. She motioned for the approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded and carried.

**Governance Committee – J. Cooper**

It was acknowledged I. Wang’s term on the Board has come to end. P. Dembe thanked him for his many contributions, including his work on the Buildings Committee. He was presented with a gift. It was announced D. Carney will serve as the new Chair of the Buildings Committee.

J. Cooper shared that with I. Wang’s departure from the Board, a Library appointment is available, and the Governance Committee recommends extending an offer to Dr. St. Geme of CHOP. P. Dembe concluded the update by encouraging Board members to recommend potential candidates along with offering opportunities for potential candidates to participate on Committees.

**Special Collections Committee – P. Dembe**

D. Dreher provided background on the transfer of the McKean Automobile Reference Collection (ARC) to a consortium of buyers. He went on to share the Term Sheet of the transfer stipulates the collection to be sold in its entirety, maintain the McKean name, remain local and increase public access to the collection, including digitization of the collection. It was also noted the funds gained through this transfer would be restricted to the care of Special Collections.

P. Dembe shared the transfer would have to be approved by the City Attorney General and the City Controller along with Orphan’s Court. In addition, it was noted a descendent of the McKean family will be notified as well, being the collection originated as bequest to the Library.

It was inquired if the restricted funds may be utilized to promote other Special Collections. D. Dreher explained the definition of collection care has expanded to include such actions; however, the Board will need to approve this expenditure.

P. Dembe motioned for the Board to accept the recommendation of the Special Collections Committee to approve the Term Sheet; empower the President and Director of the Library to negotiate a transfer of the ARC in a manner substantially consonant with the Term Sheet; and to invest the proceeds of the transfer in the FLP Board of Trustees endowment and restrict the funds to the acquisition or direct care of remaining Library Special Collections. The motion was seconded and approved.

After the vote, Board members inquired if a public relations strategy has been developed yet due to recent negative news stories on organizations deaccessioning materials. D. Dreher shared a press release along with a public campaign are being developed.

#### **Parkway Central Project – P. Dembe and J. Pecora**

J. Pecora explained as construction continues, unforeseen challenges have arisen; particularly, a ground water issue discovered by the North wall. However, the issue is being managed and controlled with success. Since such challenges cause delays, the substantial construction is expected to be completed by the beginning of November.

During December, January, and February, signage, furniture, audio & visual equipment, and collection materials will be installed and/or set-up, and so, the target date for the grand opening is March 2019. He went on to share the project is currently on budget, and noted this entire venture has not involved any City funds, yet they are tracking economic and workforce data as if it was a City funded project.

#### **Philadelphia Beverage Tax – P. Dembe**

Since the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld the Philadelphia Beverage Tax, Rebuild funding is now available. Paschalville and McPherson Square libraries have been selected as sites with public announcements forthcoming. Paschalville will be priority project with plans to raise private funds in addition to the Rebuild funding and the recently awarded Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant. Rebuild will also fund other smaller projects throughout, such as a lighting project at Cecil B. Moore Library.

#### **Library Hours – S. Reardon**

Due to a recent article published in the Philadelphia Inquirer posing the idea there is not equitable distribution of neighborhood library hours throughout the city, especially in communities with the highest levels of financial insecurity, the library hours, particularly Saturday service, and budget levels have garnered the attention of City officials, politicians, and the public.

S. Reardon, L. Williamson, Chief of Neighborhood Libraries, and J. Benford, Deputy Director of Customer Engagement began by explaining neighborhood library hours are determined by data based on levels of use throughout the day, and so, as variations in these use trends change, hours for those libraries change. Also, the number of libraries opened for Saturday service is determined by equitable distribution throughout each City Council district and staffing levels, and as staffing levels increase so will the amount of libraries opening for Saturday service.

Board members expressed concerns, if the data, including budgetary data, accurately reflected the tone of the Inquirer article, and the need to take corrective action if it does, but if it does not, there is a need for the Library to correct the story being told.

**President's Remarks – S. Reardon**

S. Reardon referenced a recent Library Journal article on public libraries eliminating fines as a way to remove barriers to access. She went onto explain fine elimination was recently discussed with the Trustees Executive Committee and with the City Managing Director, but will continue to be an on-going conversation due to financial concerns regarding the fine revenue. G. Generals shared the Community College of Philadelphia will be eliminating fines, and he stated he would share literature on the topic.

**New Business – P. Dembe**

In order to offer robust collections for the opening of the Business Resource and Innovation Center and Teen Center spaces at Parkway Central, S. Reardon asked for the Board to provide funding from the Trustees endowment. The motion was made, seconded, and approved to provide funding for the opening day collections.

**Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:22 a.m.