



**Free Library of Philadelphia
Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 13, 2019
8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.**

Attendance: P. Dembe (Chair); D. Carney; J. Chizick-Aguero; M. DiBerardinis; T. Dichter; G. Generals; M. Grimm (on-phone); A. Gupta; R. Heim; N. Kolb (on-phone); S. Olanipekun-Lewis; S. Simons; J. Soroko; J. St. Geme; B. Sutherland; N. Torres; D. Wilson

Guests: Irv Ackelsberg; George Adesanya (Board Fellow); Falena Hand; Debra E. Johnson

Staff: S. Reardon; J. Benford; D. Henderson; C. Kowalski; S. Moran; J. Pecora; L. Walker

Call to Order – P. Dembe

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

Chair’s Remarks / Consent Agenda – P. Dembe

P. Dembe reviewed a number of items within the Consent Agenda. She highlighted the Buildings Condition Ratings Report noting the Library needs between \$5M to \$6M annual Capital Budget to repair and maintain facilities adequately. She emphasized this information should be utilized when advocating for Library funding. She briefly mentioned Paschalville Library was announced as a Rebuild site joining Lawncrest, Kingsessing, and McPherson Square libraries. Furthermore, she noted a post-occupancy evaluation was completed on the 21st Century Libraries and the information gathered from that report would provide guidance with the Rebuild projects. She requested for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was made, seconded, and approved.

Governance Committee – P. Dembe

P. Dembe shared the Governance Committee recommends Mustafa Rashed for election to the Board. She noted he expressed commitment to the Library and visits Parkway Central Library frequently with his family. She made a motion to elect M. Rashed to the Board of Trustees. The motion was seconded and carried.

Additionally, the Governance Committee recommended reelecting the current slate of officers for the FY20 – FY21 term. P. Dembe requested a motion to approve the Committee’s recommendation. The motion was made, seconded, and approved.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI) – S. Olanipekun-Lewis

S. Olanipekun-Lewis informed the Board the Committee is drafting a plan which will guide their work and the goal is to identify and present recommendations regarding the Library’s diversity and inclusion to the Board in the fall.

S. Reardon introduced Donyale Henderson, the Library’s Diversity & Inclusion Officer. She stated D. Henderson will be the staff person for the DEI Committee and the chair for the Library’s internal steering committee. She also noted Trustee member, C. Arlene will be participating on the internal staff committee as well.

Strategic Plan Oversight Committee – A. Gupta

A. Gupta stated the Committee continues to track the Strategic Plan and each meeting discussion is focused on refining metrics.

S. Moran presented on the “Embrace Creativity and Innovation” goal of the plan. She explained it is an elusive one to track, but progress is being made. She shared one project in particular which elevated this goal was the creation of an online system for supplies ordering as the previous system was out-of-date and inefficient. She also shared the “Hatching Innovations” initiative is supporting progress with this goal as well. Since 2015, 254 applications have been submitted and 60 projects have received funding, such as the Social Justice Symposium for Teens, Busy Bus Bags, and the World Traveling Trunks. However, with regard to the current indicators, S. Moran explained for revisions will be made for FY20 to better track progress.

A. Gupta shared during the last Committee meeting much discussion was focused on the new and revised indicators for FY20, which promoted discussion on the Library’s diversity and inclusion efforts. The Committee came to the conclusion that by creating a fourth goal solely focused on diversity and inclusion the Library would be able to better track its progress in this area. A motion was requested to amend the Strategic Plan to include *Promote Diversity and Inclusion*. The motion was made, seconded, and approved.

Buildings Committee – D. Carney

D. Carney highlighted the “Five Year Capital Plan” document stating so far the Library has invested over \$45M in to capital improvements to the neighborhood libraries, yet in order to maintain these improvements the Library needs \$5M per year to do so. He went onto state the five-year plan focuses on upgrading roofs, HVAC systems, and elevators through investing over \$15M to do so.

He then briefly reported on the Post-Occupancy Evaluation of the 21st Century Libraries initiative. The libraries now are ADA Accessible, which is an important and vital improvement. Additionally, the welcoming physical environment and the place making of each project were well-received by the communities. However, concerns were raised regarding the acoustics and the lack of staff input in the process, which moving forward will be lessons learned to apply to Rebuild projects.

Three neighborhood libraries with concerning building conditions are the Fishtown, Nicetown, and Ogontz libraries. J. Pecora explained it would be best to find new locations due to extensive work each requires. S. Reardon introduced Debra E. Johnson, the manager of Nicetown Library. D. Johnson emphasized how the roof of the building is in such disrepair there is constant water infiltration which routinely impacts the library’s ability to open consistently. She further noted this frustrates both the

staff and the public and she appealed for the Board to focus on finding ways to ensure the Library receives the funding needed to maintain its buildings. The Board discussed ways to emphasize to City Council about how capital funding is direly needed to improve and maintain the buildings or closures will continue to occur.

D. Wilson, Deputy Managing Director for Community and Culture with the Managing Director Office, explained it would be beneficial to meet with the City Administration before Council because the Managing Director and the Mayor draft the initial annual budget.

New Business – P. Dembe

P. Dembe shared both M. Grimm’s and N. Kolb’s terms as Trustee members have come to an end. She thanked them for their service.

President’s Report – S. Reardon

S. Reardon shared the City budget would be announced later today noting the Library is expected to receive an additional \$2.5M in funding.

She went onto share two serious incidents occurred recently at the Greater Olney and South Philadelphia libraries and currently, the Library is redrafting the suspension policy as well. She also explained during the summer months, she would send monthly reports to the Board.

Also, she stated Parkway Central Library recently was designated as a historic site and a plaque would be installed on the front of the building.

Additionally, she shared over the summer months, the Library will be focused on the Strategic Plan and the Diversity and Inclusion Plan. With regard to the Library’s diversity and inclusion work, a team of staff members will be visiting Los Angeles County Library as they have set a precedent for their efforts in this area of work within the library field.

Lastly, she stated the agreement between the Friends of the Library and Free Library Foundation is almost complete.

Adjournment – P. Dembe

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.