



**Free Library of Philadelphia | Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Friday, June 16, 2022 | 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | In-Person at Parkway Central**

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**Attendance:** F. Olanipekun-Lewis; J. Chizick-Agüero; P. Dembe; T. Dichter; D. Generals; D. Gould; R. Heim; D. Moore; S. Simons; M. Stitt; E. Tomlin; J. Tuma

**Staff:** K. Richards; N. Hadi; C. Patton; J. Pecora; S. Pollie; G. Sims;

**I. Call to Order and Chair’s Remarks – F. Olanipekun-Lewis**

F. Olanipekun-Lewis called the meeting to order at 4:07p.m. and welcomed the Board of Trustees. She stated the public meeting is being recorded and will be posted online per City Ordinance noting participation in the meeting constitutes consent thereto and posting online complies with 65 Pa. C.S. §§709(c.1), 712.1.

F. Olanipekun-Lewis noted that she, along with K. Richards and J. Benoliel (Chair of the Board of Directors), traveled to Harrisburg to advocate for a 19% increase in the State Library Subsidy. Along with representatives from Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny County Library Association, they visited legislators and met with Governor Wolf. F. Olanipekun-Lewis hoped that this visit will yield positive results.

F. Olanipekun-Lewis provided details about K. Richards’ budget testimony to City Council for FY23. The request included an additional \$10.4 million, representing a 23% increase over the current 2022 operating budget. On this day, F. Olanipekun-Lewis learned that an additional \$2.7 million was added to the proposed budget, bringing the increase over the FY22 budget to 29%. F. Olanipekun-Lewis thanked Mayor Kenney, Council President Clarke and City Council for their support of the Free Library.

**II. President and Director Remarks – K. Richards**

**Info Item: President and Director Report**

K. Richards noted that optimism is good and excitement is brewing, given the new budget increase.

K. Richards is working to onboard a First Deputy/ Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and a Chief Operating Officer (COO) as part of his leadership team. First Deputy/CAO interviews began in early June and are still in process. The First Deputy/Chief Administrative Officer will act as the second in command, primarily focusing on overseeing multiple departments and building and strengthening the Library’s relationships through government affairs. The first round of COO interviews concluded in late May and great internal candidates interviewed for this position and HR is in the midst of scheduling second round of interviews.

Since the March board meeting, K. Richards met with over ten Councilmembers and spoken to Mayor Kenney’s representatives to discuss library service needs, pain points and opportunities for collaboration and growth. K. Richards believes this work and that of the Board led to the Mayor’s budget proposal.

K. Richards testified before City Council on May 3, 2022 and remarked how the Divisions Chiefs and other members of the management team came together to field questions from City Councilmembers. K. Richards appreciated the depth of their knowledge and expertise, which was crucial to his first budget testimony.

D. Generals asked if libraries are still closing. K. Richards replied that on average, 20 libraries are closed daily for an average of 5.5 hours. R. Heim stated that the priority is getting to stable five day service in FY23. F. Olanipekun-Lewis noted that the Library is committed to hiring 220 staff members but recognizes that HR needs support with this effort.

K. Richards asked S. Pollie to provide an update on the Foundation for the Trustees. S. Pollie noted that the Foundation is focused on closing out FY22 and that it is a challenging time to meet revenue goals. S. Pollie invited the Trustees and the attendees to Lillian Marrero Library for the One Book, One Philadelphia closing event. S. Pollie stated there is optimism at the Foundation for Kelly and his leadership of both organizations. Young professionals attended the Ravens on the Rooftop event, which experienced attrition during the pandemic but has rebounded. The Foundation hired a new Chief Financial Officer, Christine Ryder, to replace the soon-to-retain Dave Edwards. Christine, who previously worked at the Barnes and the National Philanthropic Trust, will spend three weeks overlapping with Dave and familiarizing herself with the Foundation. S. Pollie noted that the FY23 budget will pose a challenge due to COVID and the economy. The budget is ambitious, but realistic and will entail efficiencies among staff and roles, while maintaining thoughtfulness and care for staff, culture and community.

**III. Action Item: Consent Agenda – F. Olanipekun-Lewis**  
**a. Minutes of the March 18, 2022 Board Meeting**

F. Olanipekun-Lewis called for a motion to accept the consent agenda. The motion was made, seconded, and approved.

**IV. Budget Briefing – K. Richards**  
**Info Item: Operating Budget as February 28, 2022**

N. Hadi stated that the increase in FY23 over FY22 equals \$13,107,144.

The increase in Class 100 will allow the Library to support stable, five day service. These 220 positions will include new hires, promotions, front line and support staff. \$675,000 of this increase will provide the executive leadership to support the mission of meaningful change within the FLP institution. This leadership will provide the direction required to onboard and promote staff, increase public outreach and visibility, provide training and crucial programs, and engage staff as well as the public. N. Hadi stated that the city is providing \$700,000 for a programming budget for the first time and \$768,000 for

DEI trainings, training materials, workshop facilitators and more. An increase of \$2,000,000 in class 300 will bring the Library closer to complying with the State Library Code by increasing the materials budget. An allocation of \$200,000 for class 400 will provide computer equipment and software to support newly hired staff.

**V. Facilities Report – J. Pecora**

**Info Item: Info Item: At Risk Assessment of Libraries**

J. Pecora noted that a conditioning study on the HVAC system in the Rare Books department showed it is end of life. There are problems with the humidity and it needs a total replacement. It is a complicated system and the replacement cost will exceed the capital budget. J. Pecora is working with Public Property to begin engineering. The possibility of fundraising was discussed with Rare Books staff. This project will total \$1.5 million to \$2 million.

J. Pecora stated that the Library began having meeting with the Department of Planning and Development to discuss the area behind Parkway Central. The project went out for bid, in tandem with 1801 Vine in July. The PPA lot is leased and will be part of the development. The lot size is estimated at 60,000 square feet. J. Pecora noted that seven strong proposals were received. Both J. Pecora and K. Richards are on the selection committee. Mayor Kenney and Council President Clarke will have a press conference. T. Dichter inquired about parking and J. Pecora replied that the Library will have 50 spots. P. Dembe asked about the status of the Book Corner. J. Pecora announced that the Book Corner is included in the design. F. Olanipekun-Lewis added that 7,500 square feet will be reserved for the Annex. P. Dembe inquired about 1801 Vine (formerly the Family Court Building) and J. Pecora replied that the City will announce plans at the press conference. J. Tuma asked if the city is handling development and J. Pecora confirmed that a developer is handling the project. J. Chizick-Agüero asked if the city provides the building and we outfit the interior. J. Pecora was unsure, but will get further details. F. Olanipekun-Lewis stated that the community needs to have input on what they want in the space. T. Dichter asked if we are selecting the design firm and J. Pecora responded that we need to be part of a larger group to pull this project off.

J. Pecora used low end numbers to create a current replacement value (CRV) model and our total cost of ownership is calculated at \$16 million. F. Olanipekun-Lewis commented that 35% is very high for reactive maintenance. J. Pecora noted it will be higher when the annual numbers for energy cost for the whole system, which is estimated at \$1.2 - \$1.5 million, are added. F. Olanipekun-Lewis asked if the deferred maintenance is due to the age of our system. J. Pecora replied that this is the reason. D. Generals asked if the Library can budget for deferred maintenance with its city allocation. J. Pecora responded that they are not, but try to keep some aside. R. Heim noted that J. Pecora and his team do incredible work trying to keep Neighborhood Libraries in good shape.

**VI. Hiring Status – G. Sims**

**Info Item: Staffing Report**

G. Sims stated that an onboarding process must be in place prior to hiring 220 employees. A committee is working on this process and focusing on planning/implementation. HR recently lost two key members,

but two new hire are coming in to help. The team is ready to take on onboarding tasks to support stable, five day service. T. Dichter asked about the master's degree requirement for librarians. K. Richards stated there is no update. J. Chizick-Agüero inquired about why only 4 out of 18 candidates accepted the Clerical Assistant position. F. Olanipekun-Lewis noted that the candidates may have a preference to work in another city department or that the salary may be too low. J. Chizick-Agüero asked if this matter should be looked into. F. Olanipekun-Lewis replied that it is difficult to tell since the employee makes the decision. D. Generals asked if these positions required exams and F. Olanipekun-Lewis confirmed.

## **VII. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) – G. Sims**

### **Info Item: Quarterly Report**

G. Sims noticed the tension and lack of trust when he onboarded at the end of 2020. G. Sims worked to lay groundwork based on the DEI tenets and philosophy. For FY23, there is a budget for DEI and G. Sims will expand on grassroots initiatives begun in 2021. G. Sims stated he is committed to change and addressing the issues. D. Generals asked if G. Sims is the head of HR and if it has been publicized. K. Richards replied that it was shared within the organization but not publicized. J. Tuma asked what does G. Sims' appointment as the head of HR mean for the organization. K. Richards stated that it shows that the organization is intentional about DEI efforts being intertwined with the organization. F. Olanipekun-Lewis suggested that G. Sims have a year in review discussion. E. Tomlin inquired about a HR handbook with policies and procedures for staff. G. Sims responded that he and the HR manager have monthly meetings with Cluster Leaders and others to identify their needs. The employee handbook is on the website, but G. Sims is getting into the details and will provide a framework for staff.

## **VIII. Public Comment - J. Chizick-Agüero**

J. Chizick-Agüero stated each speaker will have three minutes to speak on agenda topics and once time is up they will be informed and the next speaker will be called.

Diane Pak stated:

*Would the Free Library of Philadelphia form a partnership with a local organization or a non-profit organization to help Philadelphia end poverty that...they....help end Philadelphian poverty, yeah? I know a lot of research is out there that will be helpful for the Free Library of Philadelphia to partnership with them and you want to succeed, help college students succeed and help deal with homelessness."*

J. Chizick-Agüero thanked Diane Pak for her comment.

## **IX. New Business – F. Olanipekun-Lewis**

There was no new business. The meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.