



Attendance: J. Chizick-Agüero; J. Benoliel; J. Cooper; P. Dembe; D. Generals; R. Heim; J. Hinckley; D. Moore; S. Simons; M. Stitt; E. Tomlin; L. Walke

Staff: K. Richards; D. Cottman; D. Henderson; C. Patton; J. Pecora; S. Pollie; G. Sims; P. Suero;

I. Call to Order and Chair’s Remarks – S. Simons

S. Simons called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.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.

II. President and Director Remarks – K. Richards

Info Item: President and Director Report

D. Cottman provided highlights of K. Richards’ remarks, as K. Richards was unavailable due to an emergency.

Interviews have concluded for the position of Communications and Engagement Director. All candidates were excellent and the interview panel is working on a final decision.

D. Cottman shared that more than sixty applications for the Property Management Director position were received. The interview process will begin shortly and J. Pecora will serve as a panelist.

The application review process for the Fiscal Director position will begin soon, as the application is posted on the City’s website.

The Performance Management team and Information Technology team has merged to create the Performance Management and Technology (PMT) Division, which will be led by J. Maguire-Wright.

D. Cottman added that Saturday Service, which began on February 25th and will run through June 10th, will be funded by surplus funds in the salaries budget line due to the slower than projected hiring process and will provide overtime opportunities to staff.

Appendix A, located at the end of my report, lists the ten locations selected for Saturday Service, which began on February 25th and runs through June 10th. This service will be funded by surplus funds in the salaries budget line due to the slower than projected hiring process and will provide overtime opportunities to staff. Hours of operation will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Cecil B. Moore, Eastwick, Fox Chase, Greater Olney, Haverford, Kensington, Nicetown, Charles Santore, Tacony and Walnut Street West.

The Literacy Enrichment Afterschool Program (LEAP) was fully in-person at the start of the 2022-23 school year. Programmatic themes included science programming, held in collaboration with the Franklin Institute, and Black History Month.

Summer of Wonder planning is underway and the Youth Services and Programs (YSP) division is planning a Week of Play to kick off Summer Reading.

III. Action Item: Consent Agenda – S. Simons

a. Minutes of the December 16, 2022 Board Meeting

S. Simons called for a motion to accept the consent agenda.

J. Chizick- Agüero asked for a correction in Section X. of the minutes to reflect that she asked a question, instead of stated a response. S. Simons acknowledged that her email with the correction request was received and that C. Patton will make the correction.

The motion was made, seconded, and approved.

IV. Budget Briefing – P. Suero

Info Item: FY23 Operating Budget

P. Suero stated that the Library’s budget testimony is scheduled for April 19th and that updates will be available after that.

S. Simons inquired if six day service funds will be part of the Library’s budget ask. P. Suero stated that City Council and the Mayor will determine this going forward.

V. Facilities Report – J. Pecora

Info Item: Info Item: Status Report

J. Pecora shared a summary of capital improvements over the last sixteen months, which totaled 19 completed projects costing \$1.7 million. These projects included the roof project at Parkway Central, unexpected renovations at Chestnut Hill and the restoration of West Oak Lane due to damage caused during its Rebuild project.

The \$10 million received during the mid-year transfer for capital projects will support nineteen projects.

A ten foot section of plaster fell at Chestnut Hill and it was determined that a full restoration was required. J. Pecora is preparing to install new carpet and tile, followed by a cleaning. The expected return date for staff is April.

E. Tomlin asked about the status of Greater Olney, as this location was not specified in J. Pecora’s report. J. Pecora shared that Greater Olney is on the list for roof work, followed by HVAC work.

P. Dembe inquired about the life span for a new roof or new HVAC system. J. Pecora replied that new roofing systems last a minimum of twenty years and modern HVAC systems last approximately thirty years. P. Dembe stated it will be beneficial to educate City Council on this information so they can think

about the Library's capital needs. J. Pecora added that this is a topic of discussion in the Facilities committee, as the diverse equipment in the libraries means it is difficult to predict what will be needed at a given time.

S. Simons asked how many libraries close daily due to building issues. J. Pecora replied that the total was 12% to 16% pre-pandemic, but there are no current metrics.

J. Chizick- Agüero asked for the total number of roofs that are past the twenty-five year mark and for an update on McPherson Square. J. Pecora responded that 21 roofs have been replaced during his time in Property Management and the remaining roof work will be forthcoming. Currently, six roof jobs are on deck. Also, the meeting room at McPherson Square was restored. Mold was remediated and J. Pecora is waiting for Rebuild design estimates.

M. Stitt asked how the Library tracks metrics about utilization of new spaces. S. Simons added the question about how the Library shows ROI and value. D. Moore stated that this point was raised in a previous meeting but the Library currently only tracks visits. K. Richards added that the Library hopes to get technology soon that will track people individual spaces, which will assist with the metrics. D. Cottman added that the library counts programming attendees, but does not differentiate between children and adults. S. Simons asked if checkouts are tracked by card type and D. Cottman replied yes.

P. Dembe asked the Library to be careful of details captured due to privacy issues. J. Chizick- Agüero asked for the library to be mindful with teens with connecting program attendance and checkouts. E. Tomlin suggested a survey for patrons to see how they feel about services.

S. Simons welcomed K. Richards to the meeting.

VI. Hiring Status – D. Henderson

Info Item: Staffing Report

D. Henderson shared Q3 hiring data for fiscal year 2023. To date, 141 staff have been hired, including 92 permanent staff and 49 temporary seasonal staff. 34 internal promotions have been accepted and the Library is no longer in the red due to attrition.

Hiring momentum is positive and HR has onboarded 64 of the 221 staff received through the fiscal year 2023 budget increase. Hiring events for Library Assistant 1 were held on January and early March.

Critical vacancies for public service have the current fill rates:

- Library Assistant 1 – 68% filled
- Librarian 1 – 67% filled
- Municipal Guard – 79% filled
- Library Supervisor 1 – 85% filled

S. Simons extended congratulations to D. Henderson and the HR team for the progress made in hiring. E. Tomlin echoed these sentiments.

L. Walke asked what has changed the tide and can it be sustained. D. Henderson replied that high pandemic attrition has lessened and the culture is changing under new leadership. K. Richards added that the Library has built up the HR team, including Training and Development, which is a key component.

D. Cottman thanked J. Hinckley and the Mayor's team for assisting the Library with expediting the HR process. R. Heim added that the leadership team was wise to build up the HR team before hiring began and acknowledged that the Board was frustrated, but the plan worked.

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

Info Item: Quarterly Report

G. Sims reported that building DEI capacity and increasing staff engagement are the main goals.

A Community Conversation on reparations was in high demand and extended to three sessions instead of two. Participants learned a lot from one another.

Upcoming training includes DEI Train the Trainer (the first cohort), DEI Leadership Training for Supervisors (3 trainings in April) and a new series to address stress among staff.

A review of the DiverseForce recommendations, along with the 3 pillars, is forthcoming.

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.

Linda Colwell-Smith, Interim Co-Chair of the Friends of the Free Library stated:

“Good morning again. Thanks for the chance to speak. I’m here on behalf of the Friends of the Free Library. First off, we’re very pleased to see the 10 day, the 10 branches open, and Saturdays we’re seeing public interest build, and we’re starting to get a lot more kids coming in with families, and that’s always a good thing. We’re looking forward to 6 day service. Whatever we can do to help, we’re here. We’re continuing our advocacy in City Council. Another update will be coming on that. We’re very busy, though and we’re very, very looking forward. We share your enthusiasm, especially Darren’s and Kelly’s for the Summer of Wonder program. I know we’re going to get...just from experience with the Torresdale Branch, we’re going to get a lot of kids this summer. So we’re very...We’re getting great response with the enhanced programming that is going on now through June. If I see another face painter or balloon artist, I’m happy. it’s a great thing to see. We’re getting a lot of kids coming out. So in collaboration with that, as part of our... the beginning of our fiftieth anniversary celebration. the friends of the Free Library is donating \$300 to every branch in the city of Philadelphia for the summer of Wonder program and we’re also, including the Parkway Children’s office and the teen center at Parkway as well. We’re making arrangements to have that money distributed, and we know that it’ll be well used to help our children and families during this summer of wonder that’s coming up. We’re going to have a lot of fun. We want to be part of it, and we’ve got a lot more things planned for our fiftieth anniversary celebrations. But

we're glad this is our kick off and thank you again for the chance to speak and have a great St. Patrick's day, everyone."

IX. New Business – S. Simons

E. Tomlin inquired about civics programing and educating the public by partnering with other organizations.

S. Simons suggested that this is a topic for one of the committees that deals with programming.

K. Richards added that the leadership team is working together, with the Mayor's support, to serve citizens and the Mayor has made a lot of investments in the Library with his recent budget address.

X. Adjournment

S. Simons called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made, seconded, and approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 a.m.