



Free Library of Philadelphia | Board of Trustees Meeting
Friday, September 22, 2023 | 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | Virtual

Attendance: F. Olanipekun-Lewis (Chair); J. Chizick-Agüero; A. Appulingam; J. Benoliel; J. Cooper; P. Dembe; D. Generals; D. Gould; R. Heim; J. Hinckley; D. Moore; O. Rendon; J. St. Geme; M. Stitt; E. Tomlin; L. Walke

Staff: K. Richards; D. Cottman; T. Dupass; D. Henderson; S. Maccari; M. Moore Pryor; C. Patton; J. Pecora; G. Sims; T. Smiley

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

F. Olanipekun-Lewis called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. and welcomed the Board of Trustees.

F. Olanipekun-Lewis welcomed and thanked staff for their work in supporting Saturday service this summer. She noted that the Trustees look forward to the restoration of Saturday hours.

F. Olanipekun-Lewis thanked S. Simons for her service to the Trustees. S. Simons recently resigned from her position as a member and First Vice Chair.

F. Olanipekun-Lewis shared that K. Richards recently onboarded three new members of his leadership team: Ty Dupass (Property Management Director), Stephen Maccari (Fiscal Director) and Trenton Smiley (Communications and Engagement Director).

II. President and Director Remarks – K. Richards

Info Item: President and Director Report

K. Richards stated that there was concern surrounding PRIDE month programming. Moms 4 Liberty’s conference in Philadelphia was scheduled to overlap with the Library’s programming and administration was informed about possible protests. K. Richards remarked that his team worked with City departments to achieve safe spaces for staff and patrons during PRIDE events for the month of June.

K. Richards announced M. Moore Pryor as the new Executive Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation.

The Pew Charitable Trusts awarded a \$1 million strategic planning grant for the Library and the Foundation. K. Richards noted that this grant allows both organizations to chart a path forward.

The Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) program allowed the Library to lend 13,000 devices to patrons in need.

Summer of Wonder programming occurred June 5th through August 11th at all Free Library locations. K. Richards shared that the program was greatly utilized by Philadelphia’s youth and very successful.

K. Richards asked the newest members of the leadership team to introduce themselves to the Trustees. T. Dupass, T. Smiley and S. Maccari shared information about their duties and prior experience.

L. Walke asked T. Smiley to elaborate on the Homebound program he mentioned in his introduction. T. Smiley shared that the Homebound program brings resources to those who are unable to come into the library.

K. Richards introduced M. Moore Pryor, the new Executive Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation. M. Moore Pryor shared information about her prior experience and stated that she looks forward to working with K. Richards and supporting the Library.

III. Action Item: Consent Agenda – S. Simons

Info Item: Minutes from the March 17, 2023

Info Item: Minutes from the June 2, 2023 Meeting

Info Item: Background Information Regarding the State Waiver

Info Item: Resolution for a State Waiver

F. Olanipekun-Lewis explained that the March 17, 2023 minutes are included in the consent agenda because that the Trustees did not have a quorum at their June 2, 2023 meeting.

F. Olanipekun-Lewis asked C. Patton to explain the state waiver. C. Patton replied that the Library's annual state application for aid requires a resolution from the Trustees that approves any waiver requests. The Library is seeking three waivers for reporting year 2022:

- Hours open to the public (Currently at FLP 40 hours currently, with 0 weekend hours at Parkway Central)
- Collection expenditures not meeting 12% of total operating expenditures
- Library Director continuing education requirement (Director onboarded in middle of reporting year 2022 and did not meet the 8 hours of continuing education required annually.)

R. Heim noted that the Library has not met the 12% threshold for collection expenditures and asked if the Library is trying to meet this requirement. F. Olanipekun-Lewis noted that the City provided funds for materials in FY23 and K. Richards confirmed. J. Hinckley asked if the Library will need a waiver for the hours for reporting year 2023. K. Richards replied that the Library may not require a waiver and D. Cottman replied that this will be predicated on the hours of operation.

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

IV. Budget Briefing – S. Maccari

Info Item: FY24 Operating Budget

S. Maccari summarized the fiscal report for the Trustees. F. Olanipekun-Lewis asked if S. Maccari noticed any pain points of concern. S. Maccari replied that he is scheduled to have a budget meeting on October 2nd and will provide an update to the Trustees.

E. Tomlin inquired about the library purchasing physical materials. S. Maccari confirmed that the Library is still purchasing physical materials. D. Cottman added that the Library will expand its Lucky Day collections, which provides access to new materials to community members, to all locations this fiscal year.

D. Gould asked for details regarding increases in inflation and its impact on expenditures. K. Richards replied that J. Pecora will cover this information in his Facilities report.

V. Facilities Report – J. Pecora
Info Item: Info Item: Status Report

J. Pecora shared that he is working closely with T. Dupass. There are more than sixty projects in process and the capital budget season will begin shortly.

A City press conference was held a few weeks ago to announce that National was the selected vendor for the 1801/1901 project. J. Pecora stated that the Library will receive 60,000 square feet in this project, which will include a children's and family center.

\$2.2 million worth of projects are currently in progress and 66% of those projects are in the Neighborhood Libraries. J. Pecora noted that this work includes five roof jobs and HVAC work.

J. Pecora added that his department is in the process of building out a people counter system in 47 libraries, which will include a secured camera-based system used by the Smithsonian Museums. This is in response to administration seeking a better way to accurately record a patron count and wanting to remove turnstiles that obstruct accessibility.

Frankford, Paschalville and Kingsessing are slated to reopen in the spring after their renovations are completed. Lawncrest and Blanche A. Nixon/Cobbs Creek are in preparation for Rebuild work to begin. J. Pecora added that work will begin in the spring for Cecil B. Moore, Richmond, Wynnefield, Nicetown-Tioga and McPherson Square.

J. Pecora is projecting \$8.6 million for projects and will request this funding in the capital budget.

In response to D. Gould's question, J. Pecora stated that the design work is elevated in terms of costs. Construction and maintenance costs have been manageable. J. Pecora's big concern is the lead time for HVAC systems.

E. Tomlin asked about roofing and HVAC needs for Greater Olney. J. Pecora shared that roof work is happening currently, followed by new LED lighting.

P. Dembe asked if the Library is looking at security for Special Collections. J. Pecora shared that the design focus is on HVAC and dehumidification. T. Dupass noted that he has experience in fire protection systems and the current system is intricate.

K. Richards added that the Library will bring on a Security Director in the future to address high level security issues and that this is a significant focus for him.

R. Heim asked how many libraries are closed due to facilities issues. J. Pecora noted that there are five, which are closed for renovations.

R. Heim asked if the Library will seek \$8 million during the capital budget process. J. Pecora and Ty. Dupass will work on the projection prior to the capital budget process.

J. Hinckley asked if the turnstiles will be removed. J. Pecora hopes to remove them because they inhibit those with mobility difficulties.

E. Tomlin asked to be included in any community meetings concerning Greater Olney or Wyoming. J. Pecora confirmed that he will reach out to E. Tomlin for any such meetings.

**VI. Hiring Status – D. Henderson
Info Item: Staffing Report**

D. Henderson shared that the HR team onboarded 234 employees (171 full time and 63 temporary/seasonal) in FY23. Also, there were 125 internal promotions.

92 positions remained vacant at the end of FY23. These positions were in the Library Assistant, Librarian and Municipal Guard job class. D. Henderson expects 50% to 75% of these vacancies to be filled by December 2023.

F. Olanipekun-Lewis and E. Tomlin thanked D. Henderson for her work in filling the Library's vacancies. D. Henderson acknowledged her HR team working together on this goal.

L. Walke asked about HR's approach to filling the Library Supervisor 1 position. D. Henderson stated that there is arbitration in place for filling these vacancies and the HR team must adhere to the process. There is an agreement between the union and management to make the Library Supervisor 1 position open competitive, which allows external candidates who qualify to apply. (Library Supervisor 1 was previously only an internal promotion.) Human Resources is working on the canvas for Library Supervisor 1 on the current internal list, then moving to the open competitive list.

D. Henderson remarked the HR team recently attended a conference to recruit external Library Supervisor 1 candidates. L. Walke asked how many conference attendees applied and D. Henderson replied there were nine.

**VII. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) – G. Sims
Info Item: Quarterly Report**

G. Sims shared that he worked with staff internally to develop better protocols for Pride Month programming, which helped staff feel supported.

G. Sims also accompanied the HR team to assist in recruitment efforts at the American Library Association Conference in June.

G. Sims shared the design for the Hip Hop 50th anniversary library card. The card is bringing patrons back to the library, as well as reaching new patrons.

G. Sims met with Temple University's Summer Leadership Program, shared his DEI experiences and provided the group with a tour of Parkway Central Library.

G. Sims noted that there are other policies forthcoming to the Trustees for review and consideration, possibly by the December meeting.

G. Sims added that he looks forward to working with the incoming social workers who will support patrons and staff.

E. Tomlin asked if the atmosphere among employees is better than a few years ago. G. Sims replied that it is and noted that the DISC meetings have a strong focus on the DEI work.

VIII. Policies for Elimination

F. Olanipekun-Lewis remarked that staff will examine policies periodically to make sure they are relevant. Ten policies were presented to the Trustees for elimination.

- AS #1 - Library Cost Accounts
- AS #9 - Use of Central Elevators
- AS #20 - 8th Edition of The Free Library Supply Catalog
- AS #25 - Staff Book Purchases and Procedures
- AS #48 - Lost and Found Procedures
- PS #7 - Checklist of Procedures for Public Programs & Events sponsored by Central
- PS #8 - Library Materials and Library Service Talks
- PS #43 - Assignment of Schools to Agencies
- PS #55 - Special Collections in the Central Children's Department
- PS #63 - Edwin A Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music

F. Olanipekun-Lewis called for a motion to eliminate these policies. The motion was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

IX. Public Comment - J. Chizick-Agüero

J. Chizick-Agüero asked C. Patton to call the first speaker. C. Patton asked Neil Trenk to raise their hand.

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

Neil Trenk stated:

“Good morning. I just want to express my appreciation for everything that you guys do. I know it's not easy doing a public service work and recovering from the pandemic. But I did want to express the importance of having weekend hours at libraries. My children, my neighbors, children, a lot of other

children and parents, too. We're really appreciative of the Saturday hours over the summer. And we'd really like to see that continue. We understand that's part of the state standards. And as taxpayers as families. We'd really like to see the weekend program continue and expand. and we're hoping to see a timeline as to when it's gonna happen. Thank you."

J. Chizick-Agüero thanked Neil Trenk for the comment.

X. New Business – F. Olanipekun-Lewis

No new business was brought forth to the Trustees.

XI. Adjournment

F. Olanipekun-Lewis asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 a.m. The motion was made, seconded and approved.