



Attendance: P. Dembe, Chair; C. Arlene; J. Cooper; M. DiBerardinis; T. Dichter; G. Generals; R. Heim; J. Maddox; M. Rashed; S. Simons; J. St. Geme; B. Sutherland; N. Torres

Guests: G. Adesanya; J. Lili (DiverseForce); J. Peterson (DiverseForce); S. Rahman; D. Wilson

Staff: S. Reardon; J. Benford; C. Kowalski; S. Moran; A. Nurkin; J. Pecora; L. Walker

I. Call to Order / Chair’s Remarks – P. Dembe

P. Dembe called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. and welcomed the Board.

II. Consent Agenda – P. Dembe

P. Dembe called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was made, seconded, and carried.

III. President’s Report – S. Reardon

S. Reardon began by stating due to COVID-19, non-essential business, which includes the Library, are closed until April 30, 2020 due to the stay-at-home order issued by the Governor. Staff deemed essential are still reporting to work, but non-essential staff are currently receiving e-time (excused time). It was noted the Library is in discussion with staff unions to develop ways Library operations can be executed virtually. Currently, staff has been very active on social media platforms offering programs and reference. It was also noted the Library’s digital resources are rich with educational content for both adults and youth, and the Library is working on providing virtual cards to students.

IV. DiverseForce – S. Rahman

Sulaiman Rahman of DiverseForce introduced himself and his team members, Jessica Lili and James Peterson. He noted they will be assessing the Library’s culture with regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and provide recommendations for ways the Library can institutionalize DEI.

J. Peterson discussed the assessment phase of the project which includes holding focus groups, one-to-one interviews, and providing a survey in order to gather both qualitative and quantitative data from staff, and once this information is gathered and compiled a report will be provided to the leadership in order to develop recommendations for the action phase. It was noted they are currently determining how to hold the focus groups and interviews virtually.

P. Dembe noted the upcoming budget crisis and how that will impact the Library should be considered within this work as well. J. Peterson stated they would be considering the current and future circumstances of the Library, and he further noted during a crisis, such as COVID-19, issues around DEI

are exposed at the forefront. S. Reardon noted it is important to consider what the next iteration of the Library will be and how to create equitable services during this time.

V. Buildings Committee – P. Dembe

With regard to facilities, J. Pecora stated the main focus is on maintaining building integrity, and so, twenty staff members are checking in on buildings daily. It was noted the Library hired four companies to handle the deep cleaning of all facilities and the expense for this will be reimbursed by the City. Additionally, he shared pest control and conversion from heating to cooling is in process for all locations; emergency repairs are being handled, such as plumbing; and the controls station housed in Parkway Central is in operation still. J. Pecora also noted Parkway Central still has 24 hour security. He also shared once the Governor permits construction to restart, the Library will continue with its projects, including the roof replacement project at Overbrook Park Library.

VI. Government Affairs – P. Dembe

Currently, S. Moran shared the City and State are working to keep budget timelines for FY21 progressing, but the City budget hearings have been postponed. It was noted due to COVID-19, it is hard to anticipate currently how the budget will be impacted. It was shared it is important to have an advocacy strategy with promoting the strengths of the Library in response to potential budget cuts.

VII. Humanities Committee – J. Cooper

J. Cooper shared the Humanities Committee meet the previous week virtually. He noted due to COVID-19, many programs, including author events are cancelled, but staff is responding with providing digital programming. Staff is using Facebook and Instagram to offer story times and home cooking programs with more programming to be developed. However, it was stated a taskforce will be working to develop guidelines for digital programs and staff is also determining how programs will be handled if the current circumstances of COVID-19 continue through June and beyond. It was noted the Library and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee needs to discuss how to make digital programming equitable to all audiences. Overall, J. Cooper stated the Library is continuing its impressive work during this time.

VIII. New Business – P. Dembe

A report on the Rosenbach was requested. It was shared the Rosenbach is following the same protocols as the Library. The Rosenbach will be closed until April 30, 2020 with the Rosenbach annual postponed until October 2020 tentatively and a decision regarding the annual Bloomsday celebration in June has yet to be made, but consideration to convert it to a virtual event is being made.

A question regarding the status of exhibitions was asked and A. Nurkin shared installations are on hold, but some will be viewable online. It also noted planning for future ones still continues.

A brief discussion on how to capture online engagement of Library programs and services occurred emphasizing the importance of sharing this data with City Council and City Administration.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:56 a.m.