



**Free Library of Philadelphia | Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Thursday, June 20, 2024 | 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**  
**Parkway Central Library, Rooms 405/406/407**

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**Attendance:** F. Olanipekun-Lewis (Chair); J. Chizick-Agüero; A. Appulingam; J. Benoliel; J. Cooper; D. Gould; R. Heim; J. Hinckley; D. Moore; M. Rashed; E. Tomlin; L. Walke

**Staff:** K. Richards; Q. Alegria Gambrell; D. Cottman; T. Dupass; D. Henderson; S. Maccari; M. Moore Pryor; C. Patton; G. Sims; P. Suero;

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

F. Olanipekun-Lewis called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. and welcomed the Board of Trustees and meeting attendees. F. Olanipekun-Lewis thanked Mayor Parker and Council President Johnson for their support of the Free Library.

F. Olanipekun-Lewis noted that the 2024-2025 year is her final year as Board Chair and thanked the Executive Committee for their support of her, as well as the Board.

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

**Info Item: President and Director Report**

K. Richards shared that he will complete his visits to every Neighborhood Library and Parkway Central Library department by the end of June. He will begin these visits anew in the fall to continue listening to staff across all divisions.

K. Richards announced that the Free Library continues on the path of stable six day service, with the goal of providing seven day service at certain locations.

K. Richards thanked Free Library staff for their hard work and dedication to Philadelphia’s communities.

During the summer, ten libraries will provide Saturday service.

K. Richards looks forward to the strategic planning process beginning in collaboration with the Free Library Foundation. Various stakeholders will be involved in this in-depth process that will inform the Free Library for years to come.

**III. Action Item: Consent Agenda – F. Olanipekun-Lewis**

Info Item: Minutes of the March 15, 2024 Meeting

Info Item: Information Regarding the State Waiver

Info Item: Resolution for a State Waiver

Info Item: Recommendation of vendor for the strategic plan process

F. Olanipekun-Lewis asked for an explanation regarding the state waiver. C. Patton provided this information to the Board.

Q. Alegria Gambrell reviewed the RFP vendor recommendation to the Board and noted the strategic plan will lead to data for the Pew Charitable Trusts to use in libraries and cultural institutions nationwide.

The vendor selection process consisted of three rounds and the final recommendation is for the ROZ Group to lead this process. D. Gould asked about the business plan for this project. Q. Alegria Gambrell replied that this project will codify the work of the Library and Foundation regarding their organizational separation, with the Library's strategic plan informing the Foundation's. R. Heim noted the change in libraries since COVID and hopes that the strategic plan provides information on this topic.

A. Appulingam asked if the firm is WBME certified. Q. Alegria Gambrell confirmed. A. Appulingam followed up with an inquiry about the percentage of minority and women owned applicants. Q. Alegria Gambrell responded that 75% of the applications are Black women led.

D. Gould inquired about the engagement piece of the strategic plan and Q. Alegria Gambrell replied that it will happen and be consistent to the term of the grant.

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 shared that the Library received an additional \$1.1 million in the FY25 operating budget for clean and green initiatives. T. Dupass intends to spend these funds on equipment.

The Library received \$3.5 million in the FY25 operating budget. Additional capital funds were also provided for Cecil B. Moore (\$5 million) and McPherson Square (\$8.5 million).

J. Hinckley asked S. Maccari to provide the budget requests for FY25. S. Maccari replied that the Library requested \$9 million and receive \$1.1 million in the operating budget. For the capital budget, S. Maccari believes that the Library requested \$12 million and received \$3 million, but he will confirm.

F. Olanipekun-Lewis asked if not receiving budgetary asks will impact public service. S. Maccari responded that it will not. J. Benoliel asked if there is a cost of living adjustment in the personnel services budget line. S. Maccari shared that \$219,000 is allocated for non-represented and exempt staff. S. Maccari expects this number to change due to union negotiations.

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

D. Henderson stated that 227 staff members (109 permanent and 118 temporary seasonal) were hired in fiscal year 2024.

At the end of calendar year 2023, the Free Library had 913 staff members, with 777 representing permanent full-time employees. F. Olanipekun-Lewis remarked that the Free Library had only 700 employees three years ago.

During the first 100 days of Mayor Parker’s administration, 44 new hires and 59 internal promotions occurred.

Recruitment remains a high priority for the HR team. Staff attended the American Library Association’s Lib Learn X conference to recruit for librarian vacancies and a Teen Job Fair to recruit for the Library Assistant and Library Facilities Guard positions.

E. Tomlin asked if any staff are furthering their education through the Drexel program. D. Henderson replied that the scholarship funding comes from the Foundation and six staff who completed the program were promoted.

**VI. Facilities Report – T. Dupass**  
**Info Item: Info Item: Status Report**

T. Dupass appreciates the \$1.1 million received for clean and green initiatives. The funds will be spent on services in Neighborhood Libraries. T. Dupass will look into bringing in cleaning services to support Municipal Guards.

T. Dupass shared that Paschalville’s renovation is 68% completed and Kingsessing’s renovation is 90% completed

Nicetown closed on April 5<sup>th</sup> due to pre-existing conditions exacerbated by the earthquake. T. Dupass is working on shoring up the floor to reopen, as this library is important to its community.

McPherson Square’s Phase 1 roof project is out for bid. T. Dupass noted that this project may have to wait until spring due to the bidding process.

T. Dupass stated that the new Safety and Security Director will begin on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

E. Tomlin implored T. Dupass to not forget about Greater Olney’s building challenges, including an unused basement and an inaccessible second floor.

E. Tomlin also asked if the Mercantile Library falls under the library's purview. K. Richards will look into this.

J. Chizick-Agüero asked if McPherson Square will have offsite programming during its closure, similar to Nicetown. T. Dupass replied that the Library will have to figure out where the programs will be housed. K. Richards added that the original funding allowed for work to occur while the building remained open, but additional funding means increased work and closure during renovations. F. Olanipekun-Lewis remarked that the Board and Library know that young patrons rely on library access for support.

J. Chizick-Agüero asked if Northeast Regional was closed. T. Dupass noted that it is currently open, but was briefly closed as they were waiting for the arrival of HVAC parts for installation. Also, trees that were causing a tripping hazard near the front entrance were removed.

L. Walke inquired about the abatement schedule for Cecil B. Moore. T. Dupass shared that the new funding for Cecil B. Moore will alter the timeline. K. Richards stated that the additional \$5 million in funding may change the plans for this project.

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

G. Sims acknowledged the Library's Pride month awareness and programming, which was brought together by a committee comprised of staff from various divisions and departments.

G. Sims connected with staff at Yeadon Library on a mutual program for African American authors, thus expanding the Library's network in the region. G. Sims also worked with staff at the Juvenile Diversion Program on a Youth Aid Panel to identify reading resources for their reluctant readers.

G. Sims also worked with Library staff to bring Roxane Gay to the Library for an Author Event.

L. Walke asked G. Sims to discuss the multigenerational workshop referenced in his report. G. Sims replied that the workshop will be provided for supervisory staff in the coming months.

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

No public comments were submitted for this meeting.

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

F. Olanipekun-Lewis invited M. Moore Pryor to speak about Foundation updates.

M. Moore Pryor highlighted the Leadership Circle Dinner held in early June to honor Robert and Eileen Heim's contributions to the Foundation. R. Heim appreciated the honor.

M. Moore Pryor's team attended a conference for library foundations in Washington DC and connected with colleagues from around the country.

M. Moore Pryor and F. Olanipekun-Lewis met with Val Gay, the Chief Cultural Officer of the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, and asked her to join the strategic committee for the Library's strategic plan. M. Moore Pryor shared that Rebecca Cornejo will join the strategic committee for the Foundation's strategic plan.

M. Moore Pryor thanks Library staff who assisted with Author Events after June 3<sup>rd</sup>. E. Tomlin appreciated hearing that Author Events programs continued with Library staff supporting this work.

J. Chizick-Agüero thanked the Business Resource and Innovation Center (BRIC) librarians for their work with the Community College of Philadelphia.

**X. Adjournment**

The Board of Trustees entered an executive session at 5:11 p.m.