

MINUTES

Kansas City Public Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting – September 19, 2023

The Board of Trustees of the Kansas City Public Library, pursuant to official notification, met Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. at the at the Central Library, 14 West 10th Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pete Browne, President
Billie Howard Barnes
Laura Dominik
Claudia Oñate Greim
Jonathan Kemper
Susan Kenney
Michelle Smirnova
Denesha Snell
India Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Carrie Coogan, Deputy Director of Public Affairs and Community Engagement
Crystal Faris, Deputy Director of Youth and Family Engagement
Angela Fencel, Director of Finance / Chief Financial Officer
Cindy Hohl, Director of Policy Analysis and Operational Support
Joel Jones, Deputy Director of Library Services
David LaCrone, Digital Branch Manager
Shannon King, Public Safety Manager
Heather Pedersen, Executive Assistant / Manager of Executive Services
Margaret Perkins-McGuinness, Deputy Director for Philanthropy
April Roy, Director of Employee Success
Debbie Siragusa, Assistant Director / Chief Operating Officer

* Full list of staff in attendance available by request

Browne called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

Browne opened the public hearing for the 2023 property tax rate and the final 2023 – 2024 budget and asked for questions and comments. There was no response from the public, and Browne closed the public hearing.

Motion by Kemper to approve the minutes of the August 29, 2023, Regular Board meeting and the August 25, 2023, Ad Hoc Committee on the 150th Anniversary Meeting. Second by Dominik. Approved unanimously.

(Note: As a matter of Board convention, the Chair votes only when his/her vote would affect the outcome of the vote. In all "recorded" votes, the vote of the Chair appears only when it has actually been cast and when it has had an effect on the disposition of the motion. Notations of "approved unanimously" mean all members, other than the Chair, voting affirmatively.)

Request by Dominik to consider the Consent Agenda.

Motion by Dominik to approve the Consent Agenda items before the Board. Second by Snell. Approved unanimously by the voting Board members, Oñate Greim recused herself from the vote for LBM 4652. The following items were approved as part of the Consent Agenda:

Move approval of the recommendation of the Chief Executive to authorize the following expenditures for August 2023: Payroll (8/10/23 net cash \$344,256 plus taxes \$123,575), and (8/24/23 net cash \$353,298 plus taxes \$125,595) total amount of \$946,724; General Expense Payments including Checks (#11542-11846), in the amount of \$1,666,032. (LBM 4652)

Move approval of the recommendation of the Chief Executive to accept the attached financial reports for August 2023. (LBM 4653)

Discussing the ad valorem tax rate (LBM 4654), Siragusa provided historical assessed valuation information and explained why the Library's current calculated levy is less than recent years, despite a 24% increase in the assessed valuation, as a result of the Library's levy being rolled back and effects of the Consumer Price Index.

Kemper requested that the Library ask the County for a breakout of the assessed valuation for New Construction.

Motion by Kemper to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to fix the Library's 2023 ad valorem tax rate at 47.62 cents per \$100 assessed valuation pursuant to the provisions of 67.110 RSMo. Second by Dominik. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4654)

Kenny joined the meeting at 4:52.

Discussing the Operating Budget (LBM 4655), Siragusa shared that there are many unknowns about what is going to happen with property tax revenues. The largest unknown is due to the high number of unsettled protested taxes, which could impact the Library's cash flow during the current fiscal year but could be recouped in the next year. She highlighted three major changes to the preliminary budget: 1) a decrease in Current Tax of \$68,148, related to protested taxes; 2) increases of \$100,000 in each of two categories, In Lieu of Taxes and Replacement Taxes, to reflect actuals from last year more closely; and 3) an increase of \$100,000 in Interest on Investments to reflect continued higher interest rates.

Discussing changes to expenses, the Security Guards budget was increased by \$150,000 to account for a change in vendor and increased level and number of security guards at Bluford and potentially at other branches. The Telecommunications line was increased by \$100,000

to correct a miscalculation in the cost of connectivity for Chromebooks purchased through the Federal ECF grant. ECF funding for connectivity was only available for the first year of the grant.

The group discussed the Chromebook lending program. It has been both popular and successful in providing connectivity to patrons with limited, if any, access at home. The loss rate has been high but is similar to that of other libraries nationally, that are offering the same service. Library staff will provide additional information on the program at a future Operations Committee meeting.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to adopt a final 2023-2024 Library Operating Budget General Fund of \$28,552,873 and approve changes as noted on the attached schedules. Second by Snell. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4655)

Discussing the revised contract with Code Koalas (LBM 4656), Siragusa introduced LaCrone, who described the additional expenses: \$18,000 stemming from delays in finalization of the Library's new logo and branding guidelines and changes to the website design, \$18,000 to support secondary sites for six months, and \$13,500 to upgrade one of the secondary sites in need of substantial upgrades. Answering questions about the launch of the new website, LaCrone explained that the website launch will follow the October logo launch, hopefully going live in October or November.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to revise contract with Code Koalas for design implementation and maintenance services at a total cost not to exceed \$136,000. Second by Snell. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4656)

Siragusa and Jones discussed the need for additional security guard presence at Bluford, resulting from an increase in incidents in the neighborhood that impact the library and patrons; the process that led to hiring Total Care Security (TCS) on a month-to-month contract; and the current recommendation for a 10-month contract with TCS while staff prepare an invitation to bid within the current fiscal year.

Oñate Greim requested additional information at a future meeting about how our security costs compare to peer libraries, including the cost per guard hour.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to contract with Total Care Security for security officer services at the Bluford branch for ten months at an amount not to exceed \$210,000. Second by Williams. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4657)

Jones introduced King, the Library's first Safety and Security Officer. They presented on the Library's safety and security program and plans, highlighting the following:

- King described her background and experiences related to corrections, safety, security, trauma-informed care, and community and mental health.

- Since starting at the Library five months ago, King has completed 13 trainings between all Library locations that focused on de-escalation and trauma-informed care for various situations.
- Branch and Community Resources staff have worked with King to increase and strengthen partnerships with KCPD, First Call, Care Beyond the Boulevard, and other organizations.
- Plans are underway to add Patron Engagement Ambassadors at some locations to welcome and guide patrons, serving as an intermediary between patrons, desk staff, and security – focusing on patron interactions and de-escalating potential issues when possible.
- Additional training and resources are being developed for service staff.

The Board requested additional information related to what the established norms are for acceptable behavior in public spaces. Jones shared that staff will be researching current trends and reviewing our code of conduct to revise and update for current uses and needs. He will send Trustees the list posted on the door of Bluford outlining what patrons can do while in the library.

Howard-Barnes and Williams shared highlights from the 2023 ALA Annual Conference, including:

- Protecting the right to read as a recurring and engaging theme,
- Celebration of Cindy Hohl as ALA President-Elect,
- Interacting with Dr. Carla Hayden, the first African American and first woman to hold the post of Librarian of Congress.

Perkins-McGuinness shared promotional materials and information about the events that are part of the upcoming Heartland Book Festival.

Kemper requested a breakout of the fundraising status for the Library’s 150th Anniversary in the next Director’s Report.

Motion by Dominik to move into closed session to discuss personnel matters. Second by Williams. Approved unanimously.

The Board was in closed session from 6:01 p.m. until 6:34 p.m. No action was taken.

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Secretary

Date