

MINUTES

Kansas City Public Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting – July 28, 2026

The Board of Trustees of the Kansas City Public Library, pursuant to official notification, met Tuesday, July 28, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. virtually.

MEMBERS' PRESENT: Claudia Oñate Greim, Vice President
Laura Dominik
India Williams
Dennis Dobbels
Reid Day
Susan Kenney
Elizabeth Warwick

MEMBERS' NOT
PRESENT: Pete Browne
Jonathan Kemper

STAFF PRESENT: Abby Yellman, Chief Executive
Pritha Hariharan, Executive Deputy Director
Qun Fang, Senior Director of Finance / Chief Finance Officer
Sage Lore, Administrative Officer
Joel Jones, Deputy Director for Library Services
Crystal Faris, Deputy Director of Youth and Family Engagement
Jami Hrenchir, Chief People Officer
Courtney Christensen, Chief Development Officer

* Full list of staff in attendance available by request

Oñate Greim called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

Motion by Dobbels to approve the minutes of June 23, 2026, Regular Board 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 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 consider items 3.1 and 3.2 separately.

In discussing (LBM 4854), Yellman highlighted the SHI International Corporation expenditure which included a \$240,000 capital outlay purchase for equipment. It was noted that the item

reflected a significant hardware purchase, and the timing has stretched over the past couple of years. Fang confirmed that the expenditure was budgeted, and there were no additional expenditures to highlight.

In discussing (LBM 4855), Fang reported that for the fiscal year the Library received \$28.8 million in property tax revenue, representing approximately 95% of the budget and was about \$1.5 million below budget due to property tax refunds to commercial property owners. Fang also reported \$1.9 million in other revenue, which was on target at approximately 100% of budget. Included in that category were \$923,000 in interest income (135%), \$344,000 in charges for services (102%), \$21,000 in postal service fees (86%), and \$136,000 in passport services revenue (68%). Total operating revenue was \$30.7 million, or approximately 95% of budget.

On the expenditure side, salaries and benefits are close to \$19.2 million (92%) with salaries making up 91% and benefits at 97% of the budget. Library materials expenditure was approximately \$2.7 million (95%). Fang noted there were publisher backlogs for physical materials, and those expenditures will occur in the new fiscal year, which could result in physical materials spending exceeding the budget. General operating expenses were \$4.3 million (86%). Building maintenance expenses were \$3.2 million (98%) and included unbudgeted emergency repairs. Capital Outlay totaled \$972,000 (73%). In total, expenditures to date are \$30.6 million slightly over (91%). Fang also noted that as part of the budget, the Library transferred \$1 million to the Capital Development fund and received a \$139,000 transfer in from the Gifts and Grants fund. Prior to those fund transfers, the Library had an operating surplus of approximately \$135,000 for the fiscal year.

Fang reported that gifts and grants revenue is about \$2.8 million, which includes over \$852,000 investment income with Swanson Fund. On the expenditure side, the Library has spent \$1.6 million exceeding the budget by \$600,000 for which a budget amendment will be forthcoming after the fiscal year closes for that fund. Expenditures included payroll benefits at \$470,000 and library materials at \$238,000, programs \$823,000 and building construction at approximately \$80,000. There were two reasons for the overage which were the accelerated spending of older grants and expenditures associated with newly awarded grants. Parking garage revenue totaled \$597,000 (89%), with \$691,000 in expenditure (87%), which included approximately \$140,000 in garage repairs. Fang noted that without the repairs it would have been a net profit of \$45,000.

Cash on hand totaled approximately \$42 million, including \$25 million in the UMB checking account, \$9.4 million in the UMB investment account, and \$7.4 million in the Swanson Fund. Fang also highlighted this month's contributions and grants: JE Dunn Construction (\$5,000), Missouri DigitalCorps (\$35,967), City of Kansas City Peer Navigators (\$40,389), Health Forward Foundation (\$75,000), Jackson County Building Improvement Grant (\$34,415) Missouri Humanities- Heartland Book Festival (\$70,000), Missouri Humanities- Writers for Readers (\$13,500).

Yellman reported that Jackson County provided an updated assessed valuation in early July, followed by an amended statement to correct issues related to TIF values after a follow-up by Fang.

The Board reviewed the assessed valuation from September 2025 and the current July 7, 2026, valuation, which will be updated again in September when the final mill levy is set. Fang summarized that the preliminary 2026 figures show that real property assessments are down approximately 7%, total assessed valuation is down approximately 5.7–7.3% depending on category, and new construction valuations have decreased by 70–80% year over year. Yellman explained that new construction is a critical source of long-term growth for the Library’s tax base, especially in even year, non-reassessment years when other valuation changes are limited.

In response to Dominik’s question, Fang clarified that the current assessed valuation is used to calculate the operating tax levy for the new fiscal year. The rebates/credits being discussed publicly are based on prior year assessments, for which Jackson County will revise values and issue credits to residential property owners. Dobbels highlighted the large decrease in new-construction homes, noting approximately \$48 million less than the prior year; Fang added that this figure excludes TIF and other abatement projects. Fang also confirmed that the new construction amount of approximately \$17.85 million is included within the total assessed valuation figure of roughly \$4.7 billion. Fang reminded the Board that in September the Library will hold a public hearing on the tax levy and, at the subsequent Board meeting, the Trustees will certify the final levy based on the updated September assessment.

Lastly, Fang reported that for the full fiscal year, approximately 22% of eligible expenditures were made with women and minority owned business enterprises (W/MBE), exceeding the Library’s 20% spending goal.

Motion by Oñate Greim to approve the Consent Agenda items before the Board. Approved unanimously by the voting Board members.

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 June 2026: Payroll in the total amount of \$1,120,722.46 and General Expense Payments in the amount of \$1,500,586.33. (LBM 4854)

Move approval of the recommendation of the Chief Executive to accept the attached financial reports for June 2026. (LBM 4855)

In discussing (LBM 4856), Yellman presented the budget amendment to the Gifts and Grants Fund, explaining that it is intended to “shore up” increased spending and align the budget with additional gifts and grant revenues received during the year. Yellman noted that this amendment is considered a year-end fiscal cleanup, like the adjustment that was approved in the prior fiscal year.

Motion by Warwick to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to Amend the FY2025-2026 Gifts & Grants Fund Budget. Second by Williams. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4856)

In discussing (LBM 4857) Yellman invited Jones to discuss the proposed revisions to Board Policy 107, Customer Courtesy and Conduct to align the board approved language with the Library's new strategic plan. The changes would incorporate the updated mission statement, that the Kansas City Public Library "cultivates connection through experiences that educate and empower and celebrate our stories" and explicitly affirm the Board of Trustees commitment to creating a safe and welcoming environment in support of this mission. Jones noted that, consistent with Board procedures, policy changes must come before the Board at two meetings, and this presentation constitutes the first reading, with the item to be placed on the policy calendar for consideration at the next Board meeting.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to place on the policy calendar the proposed revised Board Policy 107 in accordance with Library Board Policy 002. Second by Kenney. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4857)

Yellman formally recognized Hariharan's appointment as Executive Deputy Director and introduced Christensen as the Library's new Chief Development Officer. Christensen provided a philanthropy update, reporting that 464 individuals contributed more than \$215,000 during the fiscal year and that the Library received more than \$1 million in government and private foundation grants. Despite staff transitions, the development team maintained eligible grant and giving opportunities while engaging new and lapsed institutional funders.

Christensen discussed efforts to reinvigorate the Library Foundation through strategic planning and reconstitution of the Foundation Board. Angela Fensel and Dan Cranshaw agreed to join the Board, pending approval by the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, bringing the Foundation to its required minimum membership. Next steps include reviewing the bylaws, aligning the Foundation's branding with the Library, and working toward a public relaunch in April 2027. Christensen also discussed the Library's fundraising trends which generally align with national philanthropy trends. This fiscal year priorities include strengthening the Foundation Board and development team, maintaining institutional funding, growing individual giving in alignment with the Library's strategic plan and comprehensive facilities plans, strengthening the relationship with the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, and continuing to build a culture of philanthropy. She concluded by sharing examples of the Library's community impact and thanking staff and Board members for their support.

In discussing the Director's Report (LBM 4858), Yellman provided brief updates noting progress on several strategic initiatives. Preparations are underway for the fall organizational climate survey, with a draft survey anticipated for the Executive Teams review in August. Implementation of the compensation study has reached 50%, with the first phase of employee communications scheduled for completion this week. Yellman also noted that the Executive Team is reviewing a draft recruitment and retention strategy, which will be further refined before being presented to the Board.

Hariharan provided an update on strategic plan implementation. The implementation team has been reviewing approximately 600 activities submitted by 31 departments and assessing their alignment with the strategic plan's priorities, goals, and activities. Directors will review the team's initial assessment in August, after which four cross-departmental staff advisory groups will be formed, one for each of the three strategic priorities and one focused on foundational operational work. The advisory groups will review activities within their respective areas and recommend whether each should be started, sustained, or stopped based on its alignment with the strategic plan. Yellman emphasized that the process is intended to support thoughtful change management and ensure staff are engaged as the Library aligns its work and resources with the strategic plan.

In response to a question from Board Member Warwick, Hariharan explained that participation in the strategic plan staff advisory groups will be through a self-nomination and application process, subject to supervisor and director approval. Staff may also be encouraged to apply based on their experience and expertise. Yellman emphasized the Library's commitment to including employees from different levels, departments, and branches in organizational initiatives and noted that participation also provides professional development opportunities. Board members expressed appreciation for the scope of the strategic planning work and recognized staff involved in the implementation process.

Yellman highlighted several items from the Director's Report, including a partnership with Goodwill Mobile Workforce Services to provide jobseeker and workforce development services at Library locations and the successful Urban Hikes program, which offered seven guided walking tours during the summer. She also recognized the Poppin' at the Park program as an example of staff bringing Library services directly into the community.

Yellman concluded by briefly acknowledging recent developments involving another Missouri library and the Secretary of State's Office. She encouraged Board members to remain informed and reiterated the Library's commitment to complying with applicable requirements while remaining focused on its mission.

There was no old business for discussion.

There was no new business for discussion.

Motion by Dominik to adjourn. Approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

Secretary

Date