



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

### June 20, 2024

#### In Attendance

Trustees: Holley Barreto, Kushanava Choudhury (on phone), Mayor Mark Freda, Robert Ginsberg, Jeffrey Liao, Keisha Smith-Carrington, Sebnem Tuzun

Library Staff: Laura Bishop, Becky Bowers, Susan Chernik, JiHae Ju, Jennifer Podolsky, Karen Rackley, , Rhiannon Schoener, Sonja Vloeberghs

Others: Brad Caruso (WithumSmith+Brown)

At 6:00 p.m. Mr. Ginsberg called the meeting to order and announced that pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting was provided as part of the annual schedule of meetings to the municipal clerk, Princeton Packet, Town Topics and Trenton Times on Jan. 24, 2024. The notice was posted in the library, on the library's and municipality's websites and has remained continuously posted as the required notices under the Statute. In addition, a copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the library's Administration Office.

**Approval of Consent Agenda** – Ms. Smith-Carrington motioned to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Tuzun seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

- May 15, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- Final May Bills
- Preliminary June Bills

**Audit Presentation** - Ms. Chernik introduced Brad Caruso from WithumSmith+Brown. Mr. Caruso thanked Ms. Chernik and the team at the library for their cooperation in the audit process. He referred the Board to the "Results of the December 31, 2023 Audit & Required Communications" that was included with the board packet. He noted the financial statements are in accordance with the State of NJ Department of Community Affairs basis of accounting. He read the required communications for the audit.

Mr. Caruso provided a brief high-level overview of the "December 31, 2023 and 2022 Financial Statements With Independent Auditor's Reports" which was included with the board packet. He noted there were no instances of non-compliance or other matters, and there were no material weaknesses related to internal control over financial reporting based on the audit.

Ms. Chernik thanked those at the library, especially Ms. Orsini, who provided supporting information to the audit team.

**Board Materials** – There was no discussion on the Director's Report or the March, April and May statistics.

**Staff Spotlight** – Rhiannon Schoener is this month’s staff spotlight and was introduced by Ms. Podolsky and Ms. Bishop. Ms. Schoener started at PPL in April 2023. She noted that she works part time at another library as well and is currently in library school. She noted some of the classes she is taking, and will take in the fall, at Rutgers. She would like to be a programming librarian although there is no programming concentration at Rutgers. Ms. Schoener started the Bullet Journal Club at PPL which meets once per month; bullet journaling is a method of personal organization kept in a notebook. She likes finding all types of things for patrons and will soon add Business Center supplies management to her responsibilities at PPL.

**President’s Report** – Mr. Ginsberg welcomed Mayor Mark Freda.

**Friends and Foundation Report** – Ms. Lederer and Ms. Naso were unable to attend the meeting. There was no Friends and Foundation report.

**5G Cell Antenna Committee Report** - Mr. Ginsberg noted the committee chair, Mr. Van Buren, was not present, and did not have any update of the project. Mayor Freda noted that information was shared with the Municipality’s engineering department. He noted his concern was the visibility and size of the equipment that would be put on the roof.

**Employee Appreciation Committee Report** – Ms. Tuzun noted the committee will discuss, in July, providing an appreciation for staff at or around the Children’s Book Festival in September.

**Finance Committee Report** – Mr. Liao noted the committee did not meet. He thanked Mayor Freda for the municipality’s support. Ms. Chernik noted that staff were working on the 2025 budget.

**Policy Committee Report** – Mr. Liao noted that the committee met and discussed the removal of the interlibrary loan fees as well as reviewed the first half of the bylaws. The committee expects to review the rest of the bylaws at their next meeting.

**Fundraising Report** – Ms. Podolsky provided a report from the Development Office:

- The Annual Appeal has raised \$139,995 so far this year towards our \$350,000 goal. This is 127% higher than where we were at this time last year, which was \$61,522.
- In addition to this unrestricted support, we received a \$5,000 grant from Princeton University in support of BrainFuse. We are also anticipating a \$20,000 gift in support of strategic plan initiatives from an anonymous donor.
- We are continuing our major donor outreach and developing solicitation materials for capital and endowment asks.

**Director’s Report** – Ms. Podolsky noted the Summer Reading kick-off party was on Saturday, June 15 on Hinds Plaza with face painting, bubbles and much more. (Summer Reading runs June 15-Aug. 15.) She noted that Dancing Under the Stars returns to Hinds Plaza on Friday nights beginning in July. She referred the Trustees to her report, which was part of the board packet, and congratulated Marissa Warren on becoming the head of Youth Services.

**Strategic Plan Update** - As well as the items noted in the Director’s Report that support the strategic plan goals—third-floor furniture refresh, Ms. Warren’s promotion to YS department head and interlibrary loan fees removal—Ms. Podolsky provided the following strategic plan update from Ms. Bess:

The library received a grant through the Library of America Foundation's “Latino Poetry: Places We Call Home” public humanities project; the grant proposal was submitted by Janie Hermann,

adult programming manager and Cliff Robinson, public humanities specialist. The Princeton Public Library will be the only public library in New Jersey to participate in this major initiative.

Ms. Hermann and Mr. Robinson are organizing a series of programs for this fall through the support of the grant. The core program is a series of discussions concentrating on the expression of eight humanities themes in the poems collected in the Latino Poetry volume. These humanities themes are: ancestry & identity; first & second homes; voice & resistance; language/lenguaje; family & community; music & performance; labor; and earth, landscape, & myth. This series will be facilitated by two accomplished poets with broad regional recognition, Dr. Enriqueta Carrington and Carlos Hernández Peña, and it will be offered in a hybrid format to make the program broadly accessible. The four discussions are scheduled for evenings in October and November and will appear on the library's calendar soon.

A further public panel discussion, scheduled for Sept. 30, will bring to the library four notable voices with expertise on this project and the tradition which it represents including Rigoberto Gonzalez, editor for the anthology, principal humanities advisor for the project, and professor of English at Rutgers University; Vincent Toro, humanities advisor for the project and professor of English at Rider University; and Dimitri Reyes, poet, multidisciplinary artist, content creator and educator from Newark, NJ. In development also is a partnership with one of the area schools, so that poet Dimitri Reyes can share this tradition with students in an assembly or series of classroom visits and further follow up programs for the National Poetry Month in spring 2025.

**Removal of ILL Fees** - Ms. Podolsky noted the library removed the standard processing fee of \$3.00 per item for interlibrary loans; the fee removal was reflected in the 2024 approved budget. Users will still be responsible for any fees imposed by the lending library.

**2023 Audit Approval** - Mr. Liao motioned to approve the 2023 Audit as presented; Ms. Tuzun seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Board Comments** – Mr. Choudhury commended Ms. Hermann and Mr. Robinson for their outreach efforts working with student groups and the Arts Council. He commented on information in the board report: the library's three new hires include two Spanish speaking staff and one who knows American Sign Language, and the library's outreach effort to the laundromat.

There was discussion about capturing statistics related to the outreach efforts. Ms. Podolsky noted that since the library does not collect information on cardholders, there might be other ways to track involvement, such as questions through WhatsApp, Spanish and foreign language collection usage and reference questions asked at the service desks.

**Library Planters** - Ms. Podolsky noted that the library was unable to hire someone to install live flowers and plants in the library's outdoor planters. She thanked staff members Ms. Orsini, Ms. Collins and Ms. Sottung with help from Mr. Caruso for their efforts in creating beautiful arrangements in the planters. There were suggestions about clubs that may be able to help with the planters in the fall.

**Meeting Schedule/Adjournment** – Ms. Smith-Carrington motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Barreto seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for July 17, 2024.