



**The Trenton Free Public Library Board of Trustees
Main Branch, 120 Academy Street, Trenton, NJ 08608
March 10, 2022, at 6:00pm**

Trustees: Elizabeth Yull (President), Crystal Smith (Treasurer), Rick Kavin (Recording Secretary, Mayor’s Delegate), Deniece Johnson, Lavern Rice, Patricia Smith, and Superintendent James Earle

City Council Liaison: Robin M. Vaughn (*not present*)

Staff: Rebecca FrancoMartin (Director)

I. Call to Order

- A. Elizabeth Yull, Board President, called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm

II. Announcement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law

- A. Announced by Director Rebecca FrancoMartin
- B. Statement is hereby made that adequate notice of this meeting was given by:
 - 1. Posting written notice prominently at the Trenton Public Library main entrance, the Library website, and Facebook.
 - 2. The mailing of said notice to the *Trentonian*

III. Roll Call for Quorum

- A. Present: Elizabeth Yull, Crystal Smith, Patricia Smith, Lavern Rice, and Rick Kavin
- B. Not Present: Deniece Johnson and James Earle

IV. Agenda Approval

- A. Rick requested to add “Board Terms Update” to Old Business
- B. Rebecca requested to add “Laptops for Board Meetings Instead of Printed Copies of Documents?” and “Language Programs” to New Business
- C. Crystal Smith made the motion to approve the March 2022 agenda with the above amendments
- D. Pat Smith seconded the approval of the agenda
- E. **Motion passes 5-0**

V. Approval of Minutes

- A. Crystal Smith made the motion to approve the minutes from the February 2022 Board meeting
- B. Pat Smith seconded the motion
- C. **Motion passes 3-0-2 with Lavern and Pat abstaining since they were not at the February meeting**

VI. Open Public Address

- A. No members of the public present via Zoom
- B. *(no public comment)*

VII. Presentations

- A. Financial Report *(presented by Ann C. Zawarkay, CPA, CGMA)*
 - 1. *(see “February 2022 financial reports” from Ann C. Zawarkay, CPA, CGMA)*
 - 2. Total fund balance (as of 02/28/22) was **\$2.6M**
 - a. \$1.5M in cash/investments, of which \$297,000 is in TFPL’s operating checking account
 - b. This is a \$30,000 decrease from previous month due to operating activity
 - c. Did not receive quarterly appropriation check from City for \$200,000 – may be changed due to shift from Fiscal to Calendar Year Budget
 - d. Roughly \$368,000 of various trust funds and trust fund income
 - 3. Insurance expenses and planned expenditures from surplus for the Reading Room/tech upgrades, Library materials and programming expenses, insurance expenses, facilities and utilities expenses are over budget
 - 4. Personnel expenses and security expenses were all under budget
 - 5. E-rate reimbursement program is giving a credit for internet service instead of cash payment. TFPL is only paying for internet service above and beyond what the credits cover each month.
 - 6. Personnel expenses under budget by \$62,000 due to vaccines in some budgeted positions
 - 7. Library materials and programming expenses are over budget by \$26,000 since our purchases for all new adult collection were paid for on the prior period budget
 - 8. Insurance expenses are over budget \$5,000 due to timing of receipt of the invoices for premiums compared to budget
 - 9. Facilities and utilities expenses are over budget by \$5,000 – will turn around due to bills for HVAC (covered by insurance)
 - 10. Security is under budget by \$9,000 due to timing of submission of the December and January invoices in Feb.
 - 11. Planned expenditures from surplus for the reading room and tech upgrades are over budget by \$90,000 due to a delay in the timing of the project which was budgeted for in a prior fiscal period
 - 12. Net income (as of Feb. 28, 2022) was a deficit of approximately \$168,000. This compares to a budgeted surplus of \$45,000 for the period, which is a negative variance of \$212,000. Excluding the Reading Room and technology upgrades, there is a negative variance against the operating budget of \$122,000, which is primarily due to the delayed February appropriation from the City.
- B. Personnel Report *(presented by Rebecca FrancoMartin)*
 - 1. *(no personnel changes)*
- C. Friends of TFPL *(presented by Pat Tumulty)*
 - 1. Pat commented on how nice the Young Adult space looks with the new mural
 - 2. Trenton Book Fair (Sunday, April 24, 1pm-4pm)

- a. Focusing on Trenton authors and/or works about Trenton
 - b. Suggested donation of \$5
 - c. Authors can sell own works
 - d. Goal is “friend-raising” over fundraising
 - e. Friends are working on PR, donations of food, etc.
3. 120th Anniversary of TFPL (Saturday, June 11, 11am-3pm)
- a. Planning activities for adults, young adults, and children
 - b. Street fair planned
- D. Director’s Report (*presented by Director Rebecca FrancoMartin*)
1. **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**
- a. **Labyrinth Books of Princeton**
 - i. TFPL rebuilding relationship with Labyrinth
 - ii. Book event on June 15: *Community as Rebellion* featuring author Lorgia García Peña and Princeton professor of African American Studies Ruha Benjamin
 - iii. Flyer is attached
 - b. **Old Trenton Neighborhood/Trenton Health Team**
 - i. Director met with OTN and again with OTN and THT together
 - ii. Meetings provided information about current projects in the community, collaboration efforts and resource sharing, and future events
 - c. **Mercer County Community College**
 - i. Director attended a second meeting with Director of Libraries at MCCC
 - ii. Discussed distribution of books to college from our large book donation
 - iii. Potential partnership on display to be hosted at West Windsor Library
2. **MARKETING**
- a. **New Logo**
 - i. Library signage and marketing materials being updated with new logo and color palette
3. **BUILDING & TECHNOLOGY**
- a. **Website**
 - i. Library website updated with new logo and color palette
 - ii. New “Technology Services” page added
 - iii. “Donors and Grants” page in development
 - b. **Labor and Literacy Lab**
 - i. Minor renovations still to be completed once HVAC is finalized
 - ii. Lab well-used: 16 patrons scheduled appointments in February, and attendance increasing each time
 - iii. Eleven hours of training sessions attended by Labor and Literacy Guide
 - iv. Six patrons currently enrolled in Northstar Digital Literacy course, with four being regulars who have attended the class for the past month
 - v. Trenton is the top ‘Spoke’ Library so will be featured in an NJLA write-up

- c. **Aztec Software – GED Prep Classes**
 - i. Classes provided by Aztec will begin in April in the Lab
- 4. **STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**
 - a. **Cross-Training**
 - i. Over the course of a two-week period in February, staff participated in cross-training
 - ii. Training helped staff develop a better understanding of all TFPL department operations and to feel more confident when filling in for a different role as needed
 - b. **Current Staff Levels**
 - i. Staffing more consistent
 - ii. Down to three Pages
 - iii. 17 full-time staff and 6 part-time staff (23 total)
 - iv. Transitioned current staff to new or full-time roles in professional and paraprofessional positions
 - v. These changes have led to decreased staff turnover and more experienced staff supporting the community
 - vi. Library reviews have been increasingly positive
 - vii. Will still be under budget for payroll, as some staff have benefits from other sources and did not enroll in those available from their Library roles
- 5. **CONTINUING EDUCATION & MEETINGS**
 - a. **Princeton University**
 - i. Meeting scheduled with Duncan Harrison, Assistant Director for Regional Affairs in the Dept. of Community and Regional Affairs to discuss building a partnership
 - b. **Per Capita State Aid Meeting**
 - i. NJLA Director Juliet Machie requested the Director represent TFPL at a Per Capita State Aid meeting with Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson
 - ii. Director was away at a conference (*see item c below*), so the Supervising Librarian attended in her place
 - c. **Cities and Counties for Fines and Fees Justice Bootcamp**
 - i. Director and Mayor’s Delegate attended the ‘Bootcamp’ in Phoenix, AZ from March 2-5
 - ii. The conference is a prerequisite to apply for a \$25,000 - \$75,000 grant to eliminate fines and fees at the Library (*see section 8c below*)
- 6. **LIBRARY SERVICES**
 - a. **Attendance and Library Use**
 - i. 18.9% increase in patron visits from January (3,702) to February (4,402)
 - ii. 80 patrons attended adult programs in February
 - iii. 420 patrons attended children/young adult programs in February
 - iv. 14.1% increase in computer use from January (1,141) to February (1,302)
 - b. **Saima HuQ**
 - i. Partnership continuing with Saima HuQ, executive producer of “Always Love Lucy Theatre” (*see attachment*)

- ii. Next performance, *Cement Hands* by Thornton Wilder, will be held in the Reading Room on Saturday, April 23rd at 3pm
- c. **Black History Month: Storytelling by Trenton's African American Children's Book Authors**
 - i. Hosted by City of Trenton's Dept. of Recreation, Natural Resources, and Culture
 - ii. Three local authors provided storytime with the children
 - iii. TFPL purchased 30 books to be signed and gifted to the children who attended
- d. **Inspire Curiosity – Science Experiments**
 - i. Inspire Curiosity hosted two experiment programs in February
 - ii. Youth patrons were taught how to use a microscope, observed a density demonstration, and were provided 16 take-home STEM kits
- e. **Young Adult Teen Action Group (TAG) Team**
 - i. Seven participants this month
- f. **Rush Crossing**
 - i. Youth Services staff attended an outreach event at Rush Crossing to share Library resources and encourage participants to visit the Library
- g. **Mural (Young Adult space)**
 - i. Completed in February
 - ii. Article in *Trenton Daily* by Drew Mumich available here: <https://www.trentondaily.com/new-trenton-free-public-library-mural-brings-a-blast-of-color-to-the-young-adult-section/>
 - iii. First Fridays will resume on Friday, April 1st, and the Library will participate with mural artists Leon Rainbow and Lori Johansson in attendance
 - iv. Supervising Librarian will provide tours of the Library during First Friday events
- h. **Photo Digitization Project**
 - i. Since receiving the \$75,000 donation, meetings held with three companies to determine how best to proceed
 - ii. Meeting held with IT staff to discuss storage needs on servers
- i. **Black History Month Zine Display** created for February
- 7. **COLLECTIONS & MATERIALS**
 - a. **African American History Database**
 - i. Now available via the Library website thanks to ARP Humanities grant from the ALA
 - ii. **Hoopla**, a resource made possible from the same grant, is currently being set up
 - b. **Spanish Non-Fiction**
 - i. 19 boxes of Spanish non-fiction arrived as part of the **adult collection rejuvenation project**
 - ii. Space being made to add these materials to the collection
- 8. **FINANCES/FUNDING**

- a. **Schaeder/Batterman Fund (Princeton Area Community Foundation)** donated \$5,000 for general purposes
- b. **American Rescue Plan ALA Humanities Grant** orientation meeting attended by Director
- c. **Cities and Counties for Fines and Fees Justice**
 - i. Bootcamp attended by Director and Mayor’s Delegate (*see section 5c above*)
 - ii. Director and Mayor’s Delegate have completed the “Invitation to Apply” form in advance of the full application, which opens on March 15th
 - iii. The TFPL team will apply for a grant totaling \$25,000 - \$75,000 to help the Library go “fine free” and eliminate most fees and fines for patrons
- d. **NJ Council for the Humanities**
 - i. Joint application with ARTWorks
 - ii. Joint grant would provide \$15,000 for collaboration between the two organizations

VIII. Action Items

A. Bill List

- 1. (*see “TFPL March 2022 Unpaid Bills”*)
- 2. Approval of Bill List
 - a. Patricia Smith made the motion to approve the March 2022 bill list
 - b. Lavern Rice seconded the approval of the bill list
 - c. **Motion passes 5-0**

IX. Old Business

A. HVAC Update

- 1. Clark Caton Hintz suggested withholding payment this month in order to inspire the vendor to continue their work
- 2. Project is now moving along and much work is complete
- 3. Meant to finish April 2nd - \$500/day cost to company for each day after 4/2/22

B. Library Construction Bond Resolution

- 1. Resolution must be voted upon to certify project eligibility, that the funding is for the stated purpose, and that the Board is approving the project itself
- 2. Resolution from City Council may be required – Rebecca is seeking clarification from the NJ State Library, since TFPL is an independent Library and the project has already been approved by the municipality

C. CDGB (Accessible Ramp/Doors)

- 1. Funding shifted by City Council to allow for dedicated funds for certain years to be used for different projects
- 2. Must be spent by August 11, 2022
- 3. May be additional funding for any funding over the appropriated amount
- 4. Permits will be submitted to the City to prepare for when a vendor is selected to perform the work

D. Board Terms Update

- 1. Issue of staggered terms have been resolved

2. New letters from Mayor issued for Crystal Smith (now 2021-2026) and Patricia Smith (now 2022-2027)
3. Correction issued to Lavern Rice, whose term expires on June 30, 2023
4. Board terms will terminate on June 30th of the following years:
 - a. 2022: Patricia Smith (*reappointed by Mayor Gusciora through 2027*)
 - b. 2023: Lavern Rice
 - c. 2024: Elizabeth Yull
 - d. 2025: Deniece Johnson
 - e. 2026: Crystal Smith
 - f. 2027: Patricia Smith
 - g. *Ex officio* – serve until a successor is appointed:
 - i. James Earle (Superintendent of Trenton Public Schools)
 - ii. Rick Kavin (Mayor’s Delegate)

X. New Business

- A. 120th Anniversary (June 11th, 11am-3pm)
 1. Block party and indoor/outdoor events planned
 2. Adult, teen, and children’s events planned
 3. Isles bringing T-rex truck
 4. Pop-up skate park from Freedom Skate Park (*Liz inquired whether the group’s insurance covers off-premise events*)
 5. Permit application submitted to City
- B. Laptops for Board Meetings instead of Printed Copies of Documents?
 1. Group would prefer to keep receiving paper documents
 2. Many members save the documents
 3. Pat rightly noted that paper documents allowed Rick to properly sort out the Board’s terms
- C. Language Programs
 1. Crystal inquired whether there was a ESL-type “mirror” program to help English speakers learn Spanish in order to better communicate with their Spanish-speaking neighbors
 2. Library currently uses Rosetta Stone and Rocket Language services to train on languages other than English
 3. Questions:
 - a. Who would teach the course?
 - b. What is the level of interest?
 4. Language collection being developed and curated, especially for Spanish-language materials
- D. Mask Policy
 1. Mercer Co. Library and Princeton Library still have mask requirements
 2. Hamilton Township has no mask requirement
 3. Locally, Trenton City Hall has lifted their mask requirements while Trenton Public Schools has not
 4. Library staff is comfortable with patrons not wearing masks except during close one-on-one interactions
 5. Multiple Board members suggested requiring patrons and staff to wear a mask during direct interactions and during large programs/events, with a “No Mask = No Service” policy
 6. TFPL will continue to provide masks to patrons in need

7. Director will hold off on updating the policy until the April meeting and will continue to consult with TPS and the City Health Department/Trenton Health Team

XI. Announcements

- A. The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is Thursday, April 14, 2022, beginning at 6:00 pm
- B. TFPL will be closed Tuesday, March 15 to attend to plumbing issues
- C. Rick: JoJo's sign, menu, and other memorabilia
 1. The site of JoJo's Steak House, the restaurant formerly owned by Joseph "JoJo" Giorgianni that was a key location in the corruption scandal of former Mayor Tony Mack, was demolished on Monday, February 21st
 2. Mayor Gusciora had the sign for the Steak House removed and stored with Public Works so that it can be preserved for the Library's Trentoniana Room
 3. Rick purchased a menu on eBay from a City resident and reporter for \$25 which he donated to the Trentoniana Room for preservation alongside the other artifacts
 4. Rick also brought several items from City Hall to be assessed by the Trentoniana Room: a Trenton Police Department flag, two old photographs, and a lamp manufactured in Trenton

XII. Executive Session (*if required*)

XIII. Adjournment

- A. Patricia Smith makes a motion to adjourn
- B. **There were no objections**
- C. Meeting adjourned at 7:17 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Kavin
TFPL Board of Trustees Recording Secretary