



**The Trenton Free Public Library Board of Trustees  
Main Branch, 120 Academy Street, Trenton, NJ 08608  
July 14, 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*

(\*italics indicate that the trustee was not present at this meeting)

**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, Deniece Johnson, Patricia Smith, Lavern Rice, and Rick Kavin

B. Not Present: James Earle

**IV. Agenda Approval**

A. The presentation on the PNC Brokerage account was removed from the Presentations section, as that had been presented in June

B. The Director proposed adding “Bylaws” to Old Business and “Library Services and Technology Act Grant (LSTA)” to New Business

C. Lavern Rice made the motion to approve the July 2022 agenda with the above amendments

D. Pat Smith seconded the approval of the agenda

E. **Motion passes 6-0**

**V. Approval of Minutes**

A. Pat Smith made the motion to approve the minutes from the June 2022 Board meeting

B. Deniece Johnson seconded the motion

C. **Motion passes 6-0**

## VI. Open Public Address

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

## VII. Presentations

### A. Financials *(presented by Ann C. Zawartkay, CPA, CGMA)*

1. *(see "June 2022 financial reports" from Ann C. Zawartkay, CPA, CGMA)*
2. **Total fund balance** (as of June 30, 2022) was approx. **\$2.4M**
  - a. \$1.1M in cash/investments, of which \$138,000 is in TFPL's operating checking account
  - b. This is a \$104,000 decrease from previous month due to operating activity and payment of construction-related invoices
    - i. Payment of construction invoices related to the Library Construction Bond improvements required a transfer of \$300,000 from the Northfield capital reserve account to the PNC operating checking account at the beginning of May
  - c. Roughly \$125,000 of various trust funds and trust fund income. Approximately \$243,000 was released from restriction during the period to cover construction-related expenditures.
3. **Grant revenue, Library materials and programming expenses, audit expenses, technology hardware and software, and planned expenditures from surplus for the Reading Room/tech upgrades were over budget**
4. **Personnel expenses, facilities and utilities expenses, and security expenses were 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. **Grant revenue** over budget by \$122,000, as TFPL does not budget for private grants
7. **Personnel expenses** under budget by \$12,000 due to vacancies in budgeted positions
8. **Library materials and programming expenses** are over budget by \$21,000 due to timing of large purchases for the collection
9. **Facilities and utilities expenses** are under budget by \$64,000 due to repairs on the HVAC offset by an insurance check received for \$76,000
10. **Security** is under budget by \$12,000 due to timing of submission of the June invoice. The invoices are typically billed a month late.
11. **Audit expense** is over budget by \$5,000 due to the additional audit being performed for the six months ending December 31, 2021
12. **Technology hardware and software** is over budget by \$22,000 due to timing of subscription invoices compared to the previous year.
13. **Planned expenditures from surplus for the reading room and tech upgrades** are over budget by \$686,000 due to a delay in the timing of the project which was budgeted for in a prior fiscal period
14. **Net income** (as of June 30, 2022) was a deficit of approximately \$344,000. This compares to a budgeted deficit of \$57,000 for the period, which is a negative variance of \$287,000. Excluding the Reading Room and technology upgrades offset by trust funds released, there is a

positive variance against the operating budget of \$157,000, which is primarily due to grants received that were not budgeted and the receipt of the insurance reimbursement for the HVAC repairs.

- B. Personnel Report (*presented by Director Rebecca FrancoMartin*)
  - 1. The new Adult Services Librarian began
  - 2. The new Trentoniana Associate began and has run the Trentoniana Room when the Archivist was unavailable
- C. Friends of TFPL
  - 1. (*no Friends present*)
- D. Director's Report (*presented by Director Rebecca FrancoMartin*)
  - 1. **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**
    - a. **Helping Arms, Inc. Leadership and Personal Development Re-Entry Project**
      - i. Partnering with TFPL to provide a continuation of re-entry services
      - ii. Program Director will be at TFPL Tuesdays/Thursdays from 10am-12:30pm
      - iii. Began on July 7
    - b. **Womanspace**
      - i. Director and Mayor's Delegate met with the Chief Operating Officer of Client & Community Services, Susan Victor, to determine opportunities for partnership
      - ii. TFPL staff member will attend meeting at Womanspace to share resources and encourage Womanspace staff to refer clients or have TFPL provide outreach (incl. for Library Card signup)
      - iii. Womanspace outreach specialist will table at the Library once they are fully staffed
    - c. **120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Block Party**
      - i. 19 community partners tabled at the Block Party to provide resources to the community
      - ii. More than 500 patrons attended both indoor and outdoor programming
      - iii. Jondhi Harrell, the former FreshStart program manager, distributed a truckload of food to the community from his food pantry
  - 2. **MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS**
    - a. **Social Media**
      - i. TFPL social media reach continues to grow
      - ii. General TFPL Facebook page received 11,000 views in June
      - iii. Trentoniana's Zine account now has 286 followers
    - b. **Increased Marketing → Increased Patronage**
      - i. Increased marketing through outreach, social media, and updated image have all contributed to increased patronage
      - ii. Greater increase in June due to the Block Party event
      - iii. 52% increase from Jan. to June: 3,702 → 7,098 visitors
  - 3. **BUILDING & TECHNOLOGY**
    - a. **Wireless Printing** utilized by 500 patrons
    - b. **PC Use** increased 16.4% from May to June (1,786 users in June)

- c. **Computer Lab**
  - i. 15 patrons visited the Lab for individual instruction on computer literacy skills, resume help, unemployment assistance, and instructional classes via the Northstar software
  - ii. One patron completed the entire Northstar sequence of courses
  - iii. The Labor and Literacy Guide has reported an increase in computer literacy and comfort level of patrons utilizing the PCs in the Lab
  - iv. Lab patrons frequently mention that a friend or family member recommended TFPL and the L&L Guide services
  - v. Currently seeking to improve GED Prep and Workforce Development services, due to challenges related to obtaining employment generally and the GED Prep being a self-taught system
- 4. **STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**
  - a. **Adult Services Librarian**
    - i. Doing well with training
    - ii. Already working on programming, website management, and marketing
    - iii. Engaging with the community within the Library and outside through outreach
    - iv. Completed first newsletter and Adult Services calendar in June
  - b. **Trentoniana Library Associate**
    - i. Given an overview of the collection
    - ii. Fielding email inquiries and assisting with patrons
- 5. **CONTINUING EDUCATION & MEETINGS**
  - a. **New Jersey Library Association (NJLA)**
    - i. Supervising Librarian and Archivist both attended the annual NJLA meeting in Atlantic City
    - ii. Archivist gave a presentation on Zines
  - b. **LibraryLinkNJ (LLNJ)**
    - i. Supervising Librarian attended the LLNJ Tech Forum
  - c. **American Library Association (ALA)**
    - i. Director and Circulation Supervisor both attended the annual ALA conference in Washington, DC
    - ii. Both attended a speech by Dr. Carla Hayden, the 14<sup>th</sup> Librarian of Congress, who presented a special message to library professionals about the role of libraries and librarians in the ‘Misinformation Age’
  - d. **NJLA Enhanced Institutional Memberships**
    - i. Beginning Jan. 1, 2023, libraries can pay one flat fee for NJLA institutional memberships that will include staff memberships
- 6. **LIBRARY SERVICES**
  - a. **Programming**
    - i. 984 patrons attended **Adult Programming** in June, including the Block Party

- ii. 423 children and young adult patrons attended **Youth Services Programming**
  - b. **Summer Reading**
    - i. 100 youth and 18 adults signed up so far
    - ii. Off to an excellent start and hopeful that participation will remain high
  - c. **First Fridays**
    - i. New display installed on June 28th for ‘First Friday’ on July 1<sup>st</sup>: “Art by Area Cartoonists” and a display of William Pedrick’s newspaper caricatures
    - ii. Approximately 30 visitors for Barry Hantam’s “Fused Glass & Mixed Media” art exhibit in June
  - d. **Summer Camps**
    - i. Various camps visiting TFPL four days per week
    - ii. Books being distributed at camps hosted by Trenton Public Schools so that youth may participate in Summer Reading
  - e. **Youth Services**
    - i. Moving from ‘take-home’ crafts to ‘in-house’ activities to encourage in-person attendance
  - f. **Juneteenth Celebration & Book Distribution**
    - i. More than 200 books distributed
    - ii. Several hundred patrons of all ages given information about TFPL resources
  - g. **Book Drive**
    - i. June 23<sup>rd</sup> Book Drive attended by 316 adults and 258 youth
    - ii. 1300 books distributed
    - iii. Children’s author and Trenton resident Brittany Johnson signed books and engaged with the children
  - h. **Teen Action Group (TAG)**
    - i. Members volunteered 26 total hours in June
  - i. **Utility County Assistance Outreach Program**
    - i. Provided bill help to 23 patrons and will continue providing services to the community (*see attached flyer*)
  - j. **Book Talk – *Community as Rebellion***
    - i. Author Lorgia García Peña and guest speaker Ruha Benjamin presented
    - ii. 74 total attendees in person and virtually
  - k. **Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK) Outreach** engaged 55 patrons to inform them of services available at TFPL
7. **COLLECTIONS & MATERIALS**
- a. **Brainfuse and Rosetta Stone**
    - i. State Library discontinued subscriptions for Brainfuse and Rosetta Stone databases due to budgetary constraints
    - ii. TFPL worked with **Brainfuse** to subscribe at a reduced cost for the upcoming year, which is used by youth patrons especially for homework help and tutoring services
    - iii. TFPL still offers **Rocket Languages** despite no longer having access to Rosetta Stone (though it receives little use) and is seeking additional language databases

- iv. TFPL is seeking data from the NJSL on Rosetta Stone to assess usage by our patrons to determine whether the service is a necessary investment
- v. Many patrons have requested ESL classes rather than language software
- b. **Collection Development Meeting** held to discuss fund balances for the second half of 2022 and plans to spend down that fund
- 8. **TRENTONIANA**
  - a. **13 Patrons** visited in person with **23 additional inquiries** from other sources
  - b. **Watson Institute at Kean University**
    - i. Three students visited to conduct research on Trenton's land use and industrial history, issues around the City's economic decline, and other urban topics
- 9. **FINANCES/FUNDING**
  - a. **Humanities Grant w/ ArtWorks**
    - i. Grant applied for in partnership with ArtWorks was not awarded to the Library
    - ii. This may be a positive, as the Director of ArtWorks resigned roughly one month ago
  - b. **NJ State Library Services and Technology Act**
    - i. TFPL will apply for \$20,000 in grant funding
    - ii. If awarded, funding will assist with increasing services in the Computer Lab next year
  - c. **NJ Legislative Funding**
    - i. Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds Jackson secured \$314,000 for the roof repair project and masonry work
    - ii. Official notification forthcoming from either NJ DCA or US Treasury

## VIII. Action Items

### A. Bill List

- 1. (*see "TFPL July 2022 Unpaid Bills"*)
- 2. Approval of Bill List
  - a. Deniece Johnson made the motion to approve the July bill list
  - b. Lavern Rice seconded the approval of the bill list
  - c. **Motion passes 6-0**

## IX. Old Business

### A. HVAC

- 1. Only remaining issue is persistent humidity in the stacks
- 2. Maintenance has connected a dehumidifier that drains outside
- 3. Jersey State Controls is working on adjustments to reduce humidity, which has been accomplished in all TFPL locations *except* the stacks
- 4. Construction company is requesting final payment, though will only receive a partial payment until punch list of small items is completed

### B. CDBG Ramp & Doors

- 1. TFPL put out a bid for ramp and doors
- 2. Funding from CDBG is 2015 funds that must be spent by end of August, which would require a quick turnaround

3. No submissions were returned due to the timing of the work needed
4. HED will enable TFPL to use 2016 funds instead, and there have been nine requests for the bid so far
5. Bids are due 8/10, and company will have 120 days to complete the work
6. Depending on timing, the project may be pushed until after winter
7. Library won't close – alternate entrance will be open and accessible entrance is available in back of building

C. Bylaws

1. **Tabled until the August meeting**

**X. New Business**

A. Resolution for the Library and staff to support the preservation of N.C. Wyeth's "Reception to Washington..." painting (*see attached*)

1. Thomas Edison State University is seeking to sell Wyeth's painting
2. By passing a resolution, the Library is empowered to advocate for the retention of the painting in the City of Trenton as part of its history
3. The Resolution requests that TESU take any and all steps to ensure the mural remains displayed in the City of Trenton so that the mural may be enjoyed by the citizens of the City of Trenton and the State of New Jersey
4. Mayor's Delegate will circulate the Resolution to both the Mayor and the City Council with the intention of garnering their support and advocacy
5. Crystal Smith made a motion to accept the Resolution as amended
  - a. Deniece Johnson seconded the motion
  - b. **Motion passes 6-0**

B. ALA & Library Topics

1. Director and Circulation Supervisor attended ALA Conference in Washington, DC, which offered ideas regarding COVID response, digital programming, sustainability, intellectual freedom, threats toward libraries, etc.
2. Librarian of Congress presented on library resiliency and their worth to the community with regard to social services and resources, even (and especially) during times of closure when other agencies are unavailable
3. Archivist gave Director copies of TFPL Zines to be included in the ALA collection

C. Library Card Sign-Up Drive

1. September is Library Card Sign-Up Month
2. New cards feature the new logo
3. Cards have been ordered and should arrive in time for September

D. New Library Card Launch

1. (*see above in Section C*)

E. Library Services and Technology Act Grant (LSTA)

1. TFPL will provide documentation to apply for the Library Services and Technology Act Grants in the amount of \$20,000
2. Funds will be used to fund the Computer Lab and related staff, as well as a laptop for the outreach worker going into the community
3. Deniece Johnson made a motion to approve the Resolution
  - a. Seconded by Crystal Smith

- b. **Motion passes 6-0**
- F. Resolutions regarding Library Policy
  1. There have been threats made against libraries with regard to certain materials being available to the public
  2. A set of two Resolutions is being proposed:
    - a. Intellectual Freedom Policy
    - b. Filming and Photography Policy (*will be amended to include "Recording"*)
  3. These resolutions will protect TFPL staff and set clear boundaries on what is and is not permitted in Library facilities
  4. First Amendment Audit – staff should permit any patron to film/ask questions/etc. so long as the individual is complying with Library policy
  5. Crystal Smith made a motion to approve the set of two Resolutions as amended
    - a. Pat Smith seconded the motion
    - b. **Motion passes 6-0**

**XI. Announcements**

- A. The Director's Evaluation has been circulated to the Board. Board members will complete the evaluation form, send it to the Board President, and then review in Executive Session at the August meeting.
- B. The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is Thursday, August 11, 2022, beginning at 6:00 pm

**XII. Executive Session (*if required*)**

- A. (*none required*)

**XIII. Adjournment**

- A. Deniece Johnson makes a motion to adjourn
- B. **There were no objections**
- C. Meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Kavlin  
TFPL Board of Trustees Recording Secretary