



**The Trenton Free Public Library Board of Trustees  
Main Branch, 120 Academy Street, Trenton, NJ 08608  
September 8, 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, Lavern Rice, Patricia Smith, and Rick Kavin

B. Not Present: James Earle

**IV. Agenda Approval**

A. Deniece Johnson made the motion to approve the September 2022 agenda

B. Lavern Rice seconded the approval of the agenda

C. **Motion passes 5-0** (NOTE: *Patricia Smith arrived shortly after this motion, and thus did not cast a vote*)

**V. Approval of Minutes**

A. Deniece Johnson made the motion to approve the minutes from the August 2022 Board meeting

B. Crystal Smith seconded the motion

C. **Motion passes 5-0-1 with Lavern Rice abstaining**

**VI. Open Public Address**

A. No members of the public present

B. (*no public comment*)

## VII. Presentations

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

1. *(see "August 2022 financial reports" from Ann C. Zawarkay, CPA, CGMA)*
2. **Total fund balance** (as of August 31, 2022) was approx. **\$2.4M**
  - a. \$1,019,000 in cash/investments, of which \$202,000 is in TFPL's operating checking account
  - b. This is a \$145,000 increase from previous month due to receipt of the third quarter appropriation from the City and transfer of remaining capital funds from Northfield to operating
  - c. Roughly \$125,000 of various trust funds and trust fund income has been designated for various purposes. 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, and technology hardware and software were over budget**
4. **Personnel expenses, facilities and utilities expenses, security expenses, and planned expenditures from surplus for the Reading Room/tech upgrades 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 \$130,000, as TFPL does not budget for private grants.
  - a. The Library does budget for private donations, and that is exceeding the budgeted amount so far this year.
7. **Personnel expenses** under budget by \$84,000 due to vacancies in budgeted positions
8. **Library materials and programming expenses** are over budget by \$28,000 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 July 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 \$17,000 due to timing of subscription invoices compared to the previous year.
13. **Planned expenditures from surplus for the reading room and tech upgrades** are under budget by \$218,000. The budget was amended to incorporate unspent budget amounts approved in prior years for the related projects into the current year budget. The revised budget amounts for the calendar year were spread evenly over twelve months.
14. **Net income** (as of August 31, 2022) was a deficit of approximately \$393,000. This compares to a budgeted deficit of \$1,010,000 for the period, which is a positive variance of \$617,000. 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.

15. Liz and Ann noted one discrepancy on the funds due from the City – the Balance sheet was corrected to reflect \$204,625.00 under “DUE FROM CITY – PRIOR YEAR”

B. Personnel Report (*presented by Director Rebecca FrancoMartin*)

1. (*nothing to report*)

C. Friends of TFPL (*presented by Friends President Pat Tumulty*)

1. Friends met in August and will next meet September 15
2. Friends will purchase and donate four Amazon Kindles to give away as incentives for individuals who sign up for new Library Cards (*see “Library Card Sign-Up Month” under Director’s Report for more information*)
3. Friends of the Library Month celebration on Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm – Shanshan is working with Pat to acknowledge organizations who have contributed to the Library throughout the year. Certificates will be presented to partner organizations and community groups.
4. Reception for birthday celebrating the author of *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* by Ntozake Shange. This will be held on October 18<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Though she has passed away, some of her family may attend, as she is a Trenton native.

D. Director’s Report (*presented by Director Rebecca FrancoMartin*)

1. **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

a. **Passage Theatre**

- i. Community Giving Manager Monah Yancy visited TFPL to discuss continuing our partnership and take a tour of the Library
- ii. Director was invited to visit Passage for a tour and to meet Artistic Director Rynne Domingues
- iii. There are plans to collaborate on programming at the Library to culminate in staff/patron participation in a Spring 2023 play at the Theatre

2. **MARKETING**

a. **Library Card Sign-Up Month**

- i. September is Library Card Sign-Up Month
- ii. Library is launching our newly designed Library Cards, which are currently available
- iii. \$1 replacement fee will be waived to encourage patrons to obtain a new Library Card and keyring card
- iv. Patrons that sign up, renew, or replace their Library Card will be entered into a contest to win one of four Kindles provided by the Friends of the Library, with one Kindle awarded each week
- v. All TPS students’ lunch card numbers also allow for Library access, both in person and online

b. **Social Media**

- i. Patron engagement increased by 1,000 viewers last month on Twitter
- ii. Previously, Facebook was the predominant platform in terms of patron engagement

**3. BUILDING & TECHNOLOGY**

**a. TLC**

- i. The Library's integrated library system, TLC, is ready for the final migration, to be completed on October 15<sup>th</sup>
- ii. IT Technician Enzo Labruzzo has been instrumental in updating equipment and licenses to ensure a smooth transition

**4. STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**

**a. Director's Evaluation**

- i. Director received her evaluations from the Board and thanked the Board for their feedback

**5. CONTINUING EDUCATION & MEETINGS**

**a. Baker & Taylor**

- i. Director and Youth Services Supervisor met with B&T's Children and Teen Services (CATS) staff to discuss their new initiatives and how they might fit with TFPL services
- ii. New CATS program "Boundless" provides educational materials that are meant to increase literacy and may be used by Library staff, patrons, and educators
  - TFPL may be able to utilize grant money for this program
  - Educators have access as well and can use it in their classrooms
  - TFPL can recommend local authors for the program – Children's Librarian will prepare a list to submit
- iii. B&T also has a new publishing division of children's book that focus on diversity

**b. Trenton Community Street Teams**

- i. Grant-funded direct violence interdiction initiative from TPD in partnership with Isles
- ii. TCST is seeking partners in the community where services and resources will be provided by licensed social workers, clinicians, and other professionals
- iii. Director met with TCST staff to discuss a partnership and 'hub' at the Library
- iv. TCST staff also met with TFPL staff to discuss the program
- v. Rick, who is coordinating the Street Teams program at the Trenton Police Department, provided an overview of the program to the Board

**c. Trenton Municipal Courts**

- i. Trenton Municipal Courts Director, IT, and the Director met to test equipment for virtual court hearings and to determine the time frame for the service to begin at the Library
- ii. Service will provide a safe, quiet place and equipment for individuals in need to use for remote Court services
- iii. Slight delay due to wait for printer and marketing materials
- iv. Likely to begin in early October

**6. LIBRARY SERVICES**

**a. Program Attendance**

- i. A total of **363 adult patrons** and **444 children/teens** attended Library programs and events in August
- ii. Additionally, more than 600 patrons were served at the Board of Education's **Back-to-School event**, and TFPL staff gave away 500 books
- b. **Summer Lunch Program** provided 690 lunches to youth in the community throughout the summer
- c. **Summer Reading**
  - i. 43 adults (up from last year's *two* participants in the Adult Summer Reading program's first year), 19 young adults, and 106 children signed up for this year's Summer Reading program
  - ii. 17 adults completed the challenge to read two books
  - iii. Four young adults and 29 children completed and submitted the summer reading challenge
  - iv. Summer Reading prizes were awarded to a number of readers from each age group
  - v. **End of Summer Reading Party**
    - **Mad Science** presented their "Wacky Science" experience in the Children's Room
    - **Queen Nur** was scheduled to perform but did not show up
    - The event was a huge success and the kids had a great time
- d. **Library Visits**
  - i. Each month in 2022, Library visits have increased significantly
  - ii. In August, 7,542 patrons visited the Library, which is a 22% increase from July
- e. **Patron Feedback**
  - i. The services, resources, programming, and events are only part of the increased patronage, and Library staff contribute to why patrons continue to visit TFPL and spread the word about us
  - ii. Over the last year, Google Reviews have been increasingly positive, and the rating stands at 4.4 stars out of 5 as of September 7<sup>th</sup>
  - iii. Several Google Reviews are included here:
    - 5 Stars: "Visited the library to get Email processed due to difficulties encountered at the Trenton DMV. These people were awesome and very helpful."
    - 5 Stars: "Trenton Library was awesome. When I tell you I forgot a lot of words when it came to spelling. I am soon to be 61 and I just don't do much reading or writing. But today I learn it don't matter how old you are, there is someone will help you. The ladies that work there was the Bomb I mean without a doubt they jump right in and help me. I almost CRIED from the love they show me. I am really going to get a part time job. And when I do I will

look for them and recommend them to stay in that field. Awesome Ladies. Down town Trenton Library. YES.”

f. **Events**

- i. Utility Assistance, Digital Literacy Classes, and Children’s Programming continue to be the most successful events at the Library
- ii. Flyers for September events are included in Board members’ binders

7. **COLLECTIONS & MATERIALS**

a. **Databases and Digital Circulation**

- i. Usage has remained steady
- ii. eLibraryNJ, BrainFuse HelpNow, and World Book Online were the most utilized databases

b. **Baker & Taylor**

- i. Baker & Taylor suffered a cyber-attack, which led to their online services being down while security is addressed – the service is up and running again as of September 8<sup>th</sup>
- ii. **Sustainable Shelves** is impacted by this as well, so weeding has slowed until the feature returns to operation

c. **Collection Management**

- i. More than 4,000 new book titles were added to the collection this month
- ii. Staff are working diligently to ensure collections are diverse

8. **TRENTONIANA**

a. **Visits**

- i. In-person visits have increased after the reinstatement of walk-in hours
- ii. There were **25 in-person visitors** with an additional **30 inquiries** via email, phone, and the online research form

b. **Archives & History Committee**

- i. TFPL Archivist was invited to join the newly-formed Archives & History Committee of the New Jersey Library Association
- ii. The mission of the Committee is to retain, organize, and preserve the history of the NJLA

c. **Library Associate**

- i. The new Library Associate is assisting with inquiries, processing materials, and creating finding aids
- ii. He also is able to keep the room open even when the Archivist is not available
- iii. He has also visited several historic sites in Trenton with the Archivist

d. **Zines**

- i. The *Trenton Free Public Zine*, created in Trentoniana, was mentioned in Issue #117 (“The History Issue”) of the zine, *Brooklyn!*
- ii. *TFPZ* was cited as a good example of a hometown-focused zine

## 9. FINANCES/FUNDING

### a. COVID Reimbursement

- i. Documents for reimbursement of COVID-related materials were submitted to FEMA in the amount of \$22,794.55
- ii. For the time period from August 1 to December 31, 2022, the Library may submit additional documentation for reimbursement at 90%

### b. ARPA Grant Reimbursement

- i. Final documentation for reimbursement for the PopUp Libraries and Digital Literacy Lab was submitted in the amount of \$31,094.15

### c. Grant Submissions

- i. **Library Services and Technology Act** – \$20,000
- ii. **I Am Trenton** – \$3,000
- iii. Awaiting response from both

### d. Department of Health

- i. COVID Mitigation grant opportunity for up to \$137,000
- ii. Any submission for this grant needs to relate to COVID and may include staff and/or materials

### e. Jim Johnson

- i. Politician and activist Jim Johnson dropped by TFPL several weeks ago, including the Children’s Room
- ii. Since his visit, the Director and Supervising Library Assistant met Jim via Zoom to discuss funding for a potential bookmobile
- iii. Jim is interesting in assisting the Library in procuring funds and moving forward to increase engagement and resources within the Trenton community

## VIII. Action Items

### A. Bill List

1. (see “TFPL September 2022 Unpaid Bills”)
2. Approval of Bill List
  - a. Patricia Smith made the motion to approve the September bill list, with the exception of the item labeled “Elizabeth Yull”
    - i. Deniece Smith seconded the approval of the bill list with the noted exception
    - ii. **Motion passes 6-0**
  - b. Crystal Smith made the motion to approve the September bill list’s item labeled “Elizabeth Yull”
    - i. Patricia Smith seconded the approval of the item labeled “Elizabeth Yull”
    - ii. **Motion passes 5-0-1 with Elizabeth Yull abstaining due to the obvious conflict**

## IX. Old Business

### A. HVAC

1. Contractors EMY will be back through September 30<sup>th</sup> to finish final Punch List items

2. Flooding issue from new air handler is repaired – pump and filters were changed
3. Boiler is now operational
4. New hot water heater will be installed Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, so the Library open at 1pm

B. Capital Projects (CDBG, Roof, Masonry, LCB)

1. Bids came in very high
2. Roof -estimate pending
3. Masonry
4. Funds appropriated thanks to Verlina Reynolds-Jackson's office
5. Those funds may not cover the entire cost (roughly \$340,000 additional needed) – future CDBG money may be available

C. Audit – Draft

1. Draft received from auditor
2. Mercadien may come present next month, depending on when they receive information from the City regarding Library appropriations

**X. New Business**

A. Security

1. Currently contracted with Blue Line Security
2. Contract with BLS requires an armed security guard, though not all guards sent by the company are permitted to carry a weapon
3. Contract expires on October 31<sup>st</sup>
4. Director proposed hiring licensed security guards on a temporary basis (for one year) to assess their effectiveness before becoming permanent

B. Narcan

1. New Jersey State Library has a grant available for Narcan to be distributed through public libraries
2. Patrons may pick up Narcan, staff can administer Narcan
3. Libraries may also have Narcan available for emergencies but not distribute it to the public
4. Narcan can also be explained via webinars and distributed to individuals in need by mail
5. TFPL declined to take part due to challenges experienced in other libraries

**XI. Announcements**

A. Pat Smith distributed cards about the “People and Stories” program, which is a literary discussion group at TFPL

1. Sept. 20 at 10:30am (Spanish)
2. Sept. 24 at 11am (English)
3. Lawrence Community Center: Sept. 30 at 5:30pm

B. October 8<sup>th</sup> – Library Trustee Institute session

C. December 3<sup>rd</sup> – Trenton Authors Day at TFPL

D. The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is Thursday, October 13, 2022, beginning at 6:00 pm

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

A. (none required)



**XIII. Adjournment**

- A. Crystal Smith made a motion to adjourn
- B. **There were no objections**
- C. Meeting adjourned at 7:24 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Kavin  
TFPL Board of Trustees Recording Secretary