



**The Trenton Free Public Library Board of Trustees
Main Branch, 120 Academy Street, Trenton, NJ 08608
October 13, 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 6:00 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, Lavern Rice, Patricia Smith, and Rick Kavin

B. Not Present: Deniece Johnson and James Earle

IV. Agenda Approval

A. Crystal Smith made the motion to approve the October 2022 agenda

B. Lavern Rice seconded the approval of the agenda

C. **Motion passes 5-0**

V. Approval of Minutes

A. Crystal Smith made the motion to approve the minutes from the September 2022 Board meeting

B. Lavern Rice seconded the motion

C. **Motion passes 5-0**

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 "September 2022 financial reports" from Ann C. Zawarkay, CPA, CGMA)*
2. **Total fund balance** (as of September 30, 2022) was approx. **\$2.3M**
 - a. \$946,000 in cash/investments, of which \$128,000 is in TFPL's operating checking account
 - b. This is a \$74,000 decrease from previous month due to operating activity
 - 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 and donations, Library materials and programming expenses, audit expenses, and technology hardware and software were over budget**
4. **Personnel expenses, facilities and utilities expenses, security expenses, legal fees, 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 and donations** over budget by \$130,000, as TFPL does not budget for private grants. Several grants came in in early October and will be reflected in next month's report.
7. **Personnel expenses** under budget by \$61,000 due to vacancies in budgeted positions
8. **Library materials and programming expenses** are over budget by \$23,000 due to timing of large purchases for the collection. Baker & Taylor grant still helping to offset expenses.
9. **Facilities and utilities expenses** are under budget by \$53,000 due to repairs on the HVAC offset by an insurance check received for \$76,000
10. **Security** is under budget by \$13,000 due to timing of submission of the September invoice. The invoices are typically billed a month late.
11. **Legal fees** are under budget by \$10,000 due to fewer issues requiring legal consultation.
12. **Audit expense** is over budget by \$5,000 due to the additional audit being performed for the six months ending December 31, 2021
13. **Technology hardware and software** is over budget by \$17,000 due to timing of subscription invoices compared to the previous year. This will even out as the end of the year approaches.
14. **Planned expenditures from surplus for the reading room and tech upgrades** are under budget by \$341,000. 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.
15. **Net income** (as of September 30, 2022) was a deficit of approximately \$459,000. This compares to a budgeted deficit of \$1,203,000 for the period, which is a positive variance of \$743,000. Excluding the Reading Room and technology upgrades offset by trust funds released, there is a

positive variance against the operating budget of \$160,000, which is primarily due to grants received that were not budgeted and the receipt of the insurance reimbursement for the HVAC repairs.

16. Ann will go to **PNC Bank** to set up investments approved by the Board, which due to rate increases will benefit TFPL by more than \$65,000 annually

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

1. (*nothing to report*)

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

1. 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 Tuesday, October 18th (her birthday) at 6pm. Though she has passed away, some of her family may attend, as she is a Trenton native. Shange's sister is a playwright and may attend as well. Six local poets will read poems from Shange as well as their own work. This type of program may be a recurring event branded as "Voices of Trenton" to highlight and showcase native Trentonians.

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

1. **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

a. **The College of New Jersey**

- i. Two classes from TCNJ's Interactive Multimedia course visited the Trentoniana Room (twice each) to perform research

b. **Mercer County Community College**

- i. TFPL continuing to partner with MCCC
- ii. Adult Librarian coordinated a tour of the Library
- iii. 36 students issued Library cards
- iv. Partnership has been fruitful and students have participated in Library events

c. **Baker & Taylor**

- i. Young Adult Library Associate working with B&T, our book vendor, and Foundation Academy to finalize a small, rotating collection for the FA high school library
- ii. Book credits can be used to purchase from B&T
- iii. TFPL may do something similar at the RISE Center, which the Director and youth staff visited

d. **Henry J. Austin**

- i. Requested donated books, which TFPL still has from the RWJ Foundation donation
- ii. Youth Services Supervisor was put in charge of providing 50 books for a small collection in the waiting area along with 20 items to replace books as needed

2. **MARKETING**

- a. (*none*)

3. **BUILDING & TECHNOLOGY**

a. **Ancestry**

- i. Database not renewed as usage did not warrant the price of the annual subscription (\$3000/year)
- ii. Patrons can still utilize the database at the NJ State Library

4. **STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**
 - a. **Staff Meeting** held to provide updates and discuss upcoming events
 - b. Director conducts **Staff Check-ins** with staff individually or in small groups to see how they and their department are doing and if they have any questions or concerns
5. **CONTINUING EDUCATION & MEETINGS**
 - a. **Diversity Audit Webinar**
 - i. Staff that oversee collection development for each department attended a group webinar with the Director
 - ii. Webinar assisted in planning for a diversity audit following the upgrade of the catalog system
 - iii. Youth Services staff have already begun the preliminary work for a diversity audit of the Children’s Collection
 - iv. A diversity audit ensures that the Library will have a diverse and inclusive selection of materials
 - v. Collections will be assessed for “diversity” based on topic, authors, content, etc. to ensure proper representation
 - b. **Library Link NJ**
 - i. Presented a virtual conference on NJ legal system, support of library paraprofessionals, inclusivity, and accessibility
 - ii. Director attended from home
 - c. **Revolutionary Conversation**
 - i. Meeting held at Sprout U. with the Sprout director, TFPL director, and community members from the Old Mill Hill Society
 - ii. Likely to take place during Patriots Week
6. **LIBRARY SERVICES**
 - a. **Library Card Sign-Up Month (September)**
 - i. 529 Library Cards issued, 80 of which were for new cardholders
 - ii. Friends of the Library purchased three Kindles for distribution and a resident donated a fourth
 - iii. Patrons that renewed or signed up for a Library Card were entered into a weekly Kindle drawing – there were four lucky awardees
 - b. **Library Visits**
 - i. Slight drop-off in attendance from the previous month, which is typical following the summer months as students return to school
 - ii. Attendance still elevated from the first two quarters of the year, at **6,201**
 - iii. **1,603** patrons used computers
 - c. **People & Stories**
 - i. Trial sessions conducted
 - ii. Event will be hosted for 8 weeks beginning in October
 - iii. Event presented in both English and Spanish
 - iv. English version was more well-attended, so TFPL is working to encourage Spanish-speaking residents to attend
 - d. **Donald T. Evans (play)**

- i. Todd Evans hosted a play, *Donald T. Evans by the Don Evans Players* in the Reading Room
 - ii. Play centers on the Black Arts Movement of the 70s
 - iii. Extremely successful – 28 attendees
 - iv. Mr. Evans will host another play in December
 - e. **Children’s Room Events and Activities**
 - i. **Monday Night Crafts** for families to spend time together creating a craft or art project
 - ii. **Morning Storytime** for babies and toddlers (bilingual), rotating between in the Library and out at daycares and other facilities
 - iii. **Back to School Bookfair** was hosted for children and teens with each attendee taking home five books each and 120 books distributed to local daycares
 - f. **Black Infant Mortality**
 - i. Discussion held for mothers by Central Jersey Health Consortium
 - ii. Sponsored by NJ First Lady Tammy Murphy
 - iii. Hosted monthly on the last Monday of the month
 - iv. 20 participants at first event
 - g. **Hispanic Heritage Career Awareness Event**
 - i. Sponsored by Young Adult Services
 - ii. Guest speakers attended
 - iii. 50 attendees
 - h. **Teen Advisory Group (TAG)**
 - i. 11 participants in September
 - ii. Group is growing steadily
 - iii. Teens regularly volunteer at TFPL events and helped decorate the Children’s and Teen spaces
 - iv. Teens host discussions to determine events and activities at the Library for their age group
 - i. **Art All Day**
 - i. Three artists in the TAWA Past President show were on site in the Gallery
 - ii. 64 attendees
- 7. **COLLECTIONS & MATERIALS**
 - a. **Inter-Library Loans (ILL)**
 - i. 13 loans sent out in September
 - ii. ILL system is back in operation, and the Library is able to fulfill requests for residents across the area that cannot get the items from their local library
 - b. **Zines (operated by TFPL Archivist)**
 - i. Restocked at local businesses in the City, including Artworks, Classics Books, One Up One Down Coffee, Out of Step, and the Trenton Farmers Market
 - c. **Weeding**
 - i. Archivist began weeding serials and periodicals in the bottom level of the stacks
 - ii. First phase involves purging titles of general subjects with little or no relevance to Trenton

- iii. Subjects related to main Trenton industries, as well as titles that originated in Trenton or come from Trenton entities, will be kept
- d. **Children's Checkouts**
 - i. Based on checkouts by children and teens, they seem to be studying World War II
 - ii. Top checkouts for juvenile non-fiction were *What Was Pearl Harbor* by Patricia Dumuth and *World War II* by R. Hart
- e. **Book Club**
 - i. September selection was *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus, a *New York Times* bestseller and *Good Morning America* Book Club selection
 - ii. There were seven checkouts of the book in September
- 8. **TRENTONIANA**
 - a. (*none*)
- 9. **FINANCES/FUNDING**
 - a. TFPL was awarded two **Grants** and is applying for one or two more:
 - i. **I Am Trenton** awarded the Library \$3,000 to fund a teen empowerment program
 - ii. The **NJ State Library** awarded TFPL \$20,000 from the Library Services and Technology Act, which will allow TFPL to hire a part-time employee for the Computer Lab and to assist patrons
 - iii. The **NJ Council for the Humanities** is accepting applications for Incubation and Action Grants. Trentoniana along with a partner from Isles will be working in partnership to possibly apply first for an **Incubation Grant**, to be followed by the application for an **Action Grant** to digitize the Chamber of Commerce Publication Trenton. TFPL may wait until Spring 2023 to apply.
 - iv. The **NJ Department of Health** is accepting applications and will award grants in the amount of \$137,000 to four libraries for "equity response" to COVID-19. TFPL is applying for this grant and will be working with several community partners to fulfill the requirements. The grant will help TFPL renovate the Community Rooms to host COVID vaccine and booster clinics, conduct outreach, etc.

VIII. Action Items

A. Bill List

- 1. (*see "TFPL October 2022 Unpaid Bills"*)
- 2. Liz Yull inquired about the high cost of the landscaping bill from ABM Landscaping, LLC this month. The large bill was due to extensive work to remove a large volume of mulch and replace it with river rock.
- 3. Approval of Bill List
 - a. Rick Kavin made the motion to approve the October bill list
 - b. Lavern Rice seconded the approval of the bill list
 - c. **Motion passes 5-0**

IX. Old Business

A. Security

1. Current security guard from the current company will be retained as an employee

B. Strategic Plan

1. Director and Deniece met to review the status of the Plan and make some edits to align with the Mission Statement of the Library
2. They are working to create a Vision Statement, which will be discussed at the next meeting
3. Survey and community meeting to be conducted for public input

C. Staff Appreciation Day (November 30, 2022)

1. Staff will go bowling to increase camaraderie

X. New Business

A. Capital Improvements

1. HVAC project will finish tomorrow, Friday, October 14th with final walkthrough with Clark Caton Hintz on Monday, October 17th
2. Severe water leak caused damage due to a burst pipe – Director contacted the City’s Administration and Public Works Departments in order to have it repaired. Public Works assessed the damage and is working to repair it. Repairs can be paid for with the Capital Improvement Fund, which currently has approximately \$174,000 in it
3. Roof repairs currently being assessed, with Clark Caton Hintz drawing up a plan for what is needed

XI. Announcements

- A. The Book Club selection for October is *Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray, and the meeting will be held October 31st at TFPL
- B. *War of the Worlds* will be presented at the Library by Always Love Lucy Theater on October 29th from 2:45-4pm
- C. Mercer County IDs available at TFPL on October 17th from 1-4pm
- D. The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is Thursday, November 10, 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 7:59 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Kavin
TFPL Board of Trustees Recording Secretary