



**The Trenton Free Public Library Board of Trustees
Main Branch, 120 Academy Street, Trenton, NJ 08608
March 9, 2023 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: (*vacant*)

Library Personnel: Shanshan Ming (Supervising Librarian) is representing Director Rebecca FrancoMartin, who is an American Library Association-sponsored event on behalf of TFPL and the City of Trenton. The ALA is hosting a “fly-in” for librarians from around the country to visit Capitol Hill and advocate for federal funding for libraries. As a recipient of an LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant as well as other federal funding, TFPL was asked to participate in this event.

I. Call to Order

A. Elizabeth Yull, Board President, called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm

II. Announcement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law

A. Announced by Supervising Librarian Shanshan Ming

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. Patricia Smith made the motion to approve the March 2023 agenda

B. Deniece Johnson seconded the approval of the agenda

C. **Motion passes 6-0**

V. Approval of Minutes

A. Deniece Johnson made the motion to approve the minutes from the February 2023 Board meeting

B. Patricia Smith 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 "February 2023 financial reports" from Ann C. Zawartkay, CPA, CGMA)*
 2. **Total fund balance** (as of February 28, 2023) was approx. **\$2.5M**
 - a. \$1.1M in cash/investments, of which \$316,000 is in TFPL's operating checking account
 - b. This is a \$131,000 increase from previous month due to operating activity and the receipt of the first quarter payment from the City (came in Feb. this year, rather than March as in previous year)
 - c. TFPL is carrying approximately \$125,000 of various trust funds and trust fund income on its balance sheet that are designated for various purposes
 3. **Trentoniana donations and planned expenditures from surplus for the Reading Room/tech upgrades were over budget**
 4. **Personnel expenses, facilities and utilities expenses, Library materials and programming expenses, and technology hardware and software 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. **Trentoniana donations** over budget by \$1,000, as TFPL does not historically budget for private grants and donations.
 7. **Personnel expenses** under budget by \$29,000 due to vacancies in budgeted positions and especially lower-than-budgeted benefits costs
 8. **Facilities and utilities expenses** are under budget by \$5,000.
 9. **Library materials and programming expenses** are under budget by \$8,000 due to timing of purchases for the collection. Baker & Taylor credit has been exhausted.
 10. **Technology hardware and software** is under budget by \$3,000 due to timing of subscription invoices compared to the previous year. Many renewals came due in December (some 1-year and some 2-year), so this is mostly a timing difference in the budget.
 11. **Planned expenditures from surplus for the Reading Room and tech upgrades** are over budget by \$16,000 since the project was not budgeted for 2023. Some bills lingered into the new year even though the budget does not reflect the project in 2023.
 12. **Net income** (as of February 28, 2023) was a surplus of approximately \$72,000. This compares to a budgeted deficit of \$133,000 for the period, which is a positive variance of \$204,000. The primary reason for this variance is receipt of the City appropriation for February whereas it was budgeted to be received in March (as was the case in 2022).
- B. Personnel Report *(presented by Supervising Librarian Shanshan Ming)*
 1. *(no personnel changes)*
- C. Friends of TFPL *(presented by Pat Tumulty)*

1. Working with Shanshan to inform public that Friends now meet on the **second Tuesday of each month**
 2. Considering April local authors event for National Library Month – previous springtime event was more successful than winter event. May charge authors a small fee or deposit for table.
 3. Fundraising opportunities in April
 4. The Long Branch Public Library is hosting an event to thank those involved with the Library Construction Bond – will be nice to host those who played a part, included elected leaders, local activists, Library staff, etc. Pat encouraged TFPL to consider something similar.
- D. Director's Report (*presented by Supervising Librarian Shanshan Ming*)
1. **COMMUNITY PARTNERS & MARKETING/PR**
 - a. **Virtual Municipal Court**
 - i. Soft launch on Tuesday, February 21
 - ii. Three initial sessions
 - b. **Capital Area YMCA**
 - i. Operating **Summer Food Program** again this year
 - ii. Library will be a participating site
 - iii. Children will be able to receive free meals at the Library
 2. **BUILDING, MAINTENANCE, AND TECHNOLOGY**
 - a. **Jersey Connect**
 - i. Annual survey for statewide services is complete
 - ii. Contract with EM3 for internet services signed and submitted
 - iii. E-Rate covers 90% of internet costs for TFPL
 - b. **Debris Removal**
 - i. Vendor will provide an estimate for services
 - ii. Vendor has already discarded lightbulbs that the Library had previously been unable to discard
 - c. **Restroom Issues**
 - i. Children's Room restroom is experiencing mechanical issues with its waste disposal system
 - This system is independent of the sewer system that overflowed
 - ii. A toilet in the Women's Public Restroom is having issues flushing
 - iii. Clinton Plumbing was called to resolve these matters
 - d. **Firewall Attack**
 - i. Internet was slow for a few days
 - ii. Investigation by IT found an attack against the firewall
 - iii. Source has been located and IT will be at the Library on Sunday, March 12th to tighten security to ensure all systems continue to function properly
 3. **STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**
 - a. **Recovery Advocates of America**
 - i. A case worker from RAA visits the Library for a few hours on Monday mornings
 - ii. The case worker is available to meet with patrons interested in recovery information and assistance
 - b. **Princeton University (student project)**

- i. Journalism student writing about services the Library provides for underserved populations
 - ii. Emphasis on how the Library makes an impact on the local community
 - c. **NJLA Conference Presentations**
 - i. Archivist Laura Poll will serve as a panelist on two sessions at the NJLA Conference in June:
 - “Mining the Archives: Preserving NJLA’s History”
 - “Start-Up Administration for Smaller Library & History Archive Collections”
- 4. **MEETINGS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
 - a. **Trenton Community Street Teams**
 - i. Meeting to discuss scheduling and service collaboration between TCST and TFPL
- 5. **COLLECTIONS & MATERIALS**
 - a. More than **800 new titles** added in February
 - b. Most popular title was *Lessons in Chemistry* by **Bonnie Garmus** for the fourth consecutive month
- 6. **FINANCES/FUNDING**
 - a. **Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant**
 - i. Midterm report for \$20k grant is being completed
 - b. **Princeton Area Community Foundation – Schaefer/Batterman Family Fund**
 - i. Donated \$5,000 to TFPL
 - ii. This is the fourth year they have donated to the Library
 - iii. Director has developed a great relationship with fund co-chair Cathy Schaefer-Batterman
 - iv. Funds will allow for additional adult programming and be used to purchase a few small furniture items that need to be replaced
- 7. **LIBRARY SERVICES**
 - a. **Adult Programming and Services**
 - i. There was a total of **146 attendees** at adult programs in February
 - ii. Willingboro Open Mic presented **Black History Open Mic** in the Reading Room with 50 attendees and more than 10 performers
 - iii. **25 Adult Art Kits** were distributed in February, and the new adult craft in March will be Shamrock Gnomes
 - iv. First **Adult Database Class** was successful with five attendees
 - v. One-on-one sessions for **GED Prep, Computer Literacy, and Workforce Development** remain steady with roughly ten patrons attending each session
 - vi. **Princeton Theatre Trip** was attended by five patrons
 - vii. **Community Violence Film Screening** attended by more than twenty patrons
 - viii. **“They Put a Stamp On It!”** will be presented by Queen Nur on Saturday, March 18th from 2-3pm for Women’s History Month

- ix. **Database Usage**
 - BrainFuse and NewsBank continue to be our most utilized databases
 - BrainFuse usage increased 68% from January to February
- b. **Children’s and Young Adult Programming and Services**
 - i. There was a total of **344 attendees** at children’s and teen programs in February
 - ii. **Outreach and School Program Visits**
 - Visits to Divine Kids Academy and Young Scholars Daycare
 - Visits from Trenton After-School Program (twice-weekly), Divine Kids Academy (monthly), and CYO (monthly)
 - iii. **Paul Robeson Elementary School Book Donation**
 - 60 books donated to Robeson School for their Read Across America Program
 - Books were purchased with funds donated by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
 - iv. Five to six **tablets** are being checked out daily in the Children’s Room
- c. **Trentoniana**
 - i. **February Visits and Inquiries**
 - **37 patrons** visited Trentoniana in February
 - **43 additional inquiries** via email, phone, and online research form
 - ii. **Warren Goes to Grandpa’s by Ed Bullock**
 - Accessioned to Trentoniana
 - Mr. Bullock debuted his book with a reading in the Children’s Room

VIII. Action Items

A. Bill List

1. (*see “TFPL March 2023 Unpaid Bills”*)
2. Approval of Bill List
 - a. Rick Kavin made the motion to approve the March bill list
 - b. Lavern Rice seconded the approval of the bill list
 - c. **Motion passes 6-0**

IX. Old Business

A. Investments (PNC)

1. T-Bills and annuity, plus \$40k in cash (Ann agrees with leaving it as cash)
2. 5.6% interest
3. \$210,000 after one year (on \$200,172)

B. Audit

1. One bid for Auditing Services received by Mercadien, who has been awarded the contract
2. The cost would be \$20,000, which is the same as last year. It was previously \$17,000 but was raised in the prior year.

3. Last year there was an extra audit due to the change to a calendar year budget and need for a “transitional year” budget – this was done to reflect the change made by the City of Trenton to shift to a calendar year

C. Health Benefits

1. Beginning on April 1, 2023, the City’s health benefits will transition from HBCBS to Aetna

X. New Business

A. NJSL Annual Survey

1. Currently in progress
2. Will be completed and submitted by March 15, 2023 deadline
3. Every year, the State Library distributes a survey asking questions about services, number of patrons, number of library cards issued, etc.
4. This affects state per capita aid and is a requirement
5. Deniece requested that the Board have the opportunity to review the 2022 survey – Shanshan will distribute and it may also be available online

B. CPR Staff Training

1. Staff is interested in learning CPR
2. Training will be provided by an American Heart Association-certified RN
3. This will likely be provided to TFPL for free

XI. Announcements

- A. The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is Thursday, April 13, 2023, beginning at 6:00 pm
- B. Liz presented an op-ed by the Mayor from the previous Sunday’s *Trentonian*. The Mayor suggested bringing back “satellite libraries by partnering with non-profits.” This does not comport with state law on libraries. Liz proposed a letter to the Mayor from the Board explaining the requirements and criteria of a Library, along with the cost.

XII. Executive Session (*if required*)

- A. (*none required*)

XIII. Adjournment

- A. Crystal Smith makes a motion to adjourn
- B. **There were no objections**
- C. Meeting adjourned at 6:33 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Kavim
TFPL Board of Trustees Recording Secretary