



**The Trenton Free Public Library Board of Trustees
Main Branch, 120 Academy Street, Trenton, NJ 08608
September 14, 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: Crystal Feliciano (*not present*)

Library Personnel: Sharon Shrieves-War (Interim 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 Interim Director Sharon Shrieves-Ward

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. Crystal Smith made the motion to approve the September 2023 agenda

B. Patricia Smith seconded the approval of the agenda

C. **Motion passes 5-0**

V. Approval of Minutes

A. Patricia Smith made the motion to approve the minutes from the August 2023 Board meeting

B. Crystal Smith seconded the motion

C. **Motion passes 5-0**

VI. Open Public Address

A. One member of the public present

B. Pat Tumulty wished the Library good luck with “back-to-school” season and encouraged local students to sign up for a Library card to access both in-person and online resources

1. Crystal Smith, who is a TPS guidance counselor, noted that students are using AI (such as ChatGPT) and that it is hindering their learning, penmanship, creativity, etc.
2. Rick Kavin added that the “COVID years” have hampered student development with regard to accountability, work ethic, etc.
3. The Library should, and plans to, work with TPS to encourage students to make use of the Library’s tools

VII. Presentations

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

1. (*see “August 31, 2023 financial reports” from Ann C. Zawarkay, CPA, CGMA*)
2. **Total fund balance** (as of August 31, 2023) was approx. **\$2.7M**
 - a. \$1,336,000 in cash/investments, of which \$501,000 is in TFPL’s operating checking account
 - b. This is a \$272,000 increase from previous month due to operating activity and the receipt of a payment from the City for capital projects
 - c. Roughly \$125,000 of various trust funds and trust fund income has been designated for various purposes.
3. **Trentoniana donations, 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, audit expenses, and Library materials and programming 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. **Trentoniana donations** over budget by \$1,000 and grant and donation income is over budget by \$322,000, as TFPL does not historically budget for private grants and donations. Grant income includes \$300,000 from the City for capital projects, which was deposited in August.
7. **Personnel expenses** under budget by \$159,000 due to vacancies in budgeted positions and a change in the health benefit plans. There were no health and prescription invoices received for May through August premiums yet.
 - a. No bill from either the company or City Hall
 - b. Also still receiving employee contribution check
 - c. Shanna is working with City’s Admin. Department to resolve
 - d. Rick will go over to City Hall to ask Admin as well
8. **Facilities and utilities expenses** are under budget by \$9,000.
9. **Audit expense** is under budget by \$20,000 due to timing of the start of the audit compared to prior years. Not yet billed, and field work not yet started.
10. **Library materials and programming expenses** are under budget by \$43,000 due to timing of purchases for the collection and the use of remaining credits from Baker & Taylor from last year. Also, less purchases were made generally compared to last year.

11. **Technology hardware and software** is over budget by \$2,000 due to timing of subscription invoices compared to the previous year. Most have been paid, so this will stay largely static.
 12. **Planned expenditures from surplus for the Reading Room and tech upgrades** are over budget by \$56,000 since the project was not budgeted for 2023.
 13. **Net income** (as of August 31, 2023) was a surplus of approximately \$275,000. This compares to a budgeted surplus of \$165,000 for the period, which is a positive variance of \$110,000. Excluding the expenditures on renovations, there is a positive variance against the budget of \$166,000 from operations.
 14. **CDBG**
 - a. Liz spoke with new CDBG rep. at City Hall
 - b. He is meeting with Farrah Gee, who previously oversaw CDBG
 - c. Soon to be resolved?
- B. Personnel Report (*presented by Interim Director Sharon Shrieves-Ward*)
1. Kiana Harris was promoted to Library Assistant
 2. Interviews have begun for the Librarian I position (Reference Dept.)
 - a. Five candidates being interviewed over the next several weeks
 3. Library Director and Librarian II positions have been posted on NJLA and Library Link
 4. Christopher Loos who was hired as the Library Assistant (Special Project) in Trentoniana last month and began on the 16th was promoted to Library Associate and will still focus on organizing the city records
- C. Friends of TFPL (*presented by Pat Tumulty*)
1. **Library Card Sign-Up Month**
 - a. Pat and the Friends will do outreach and promotion
 - b. Can distribute materials, make presentations, etc.
 - c. Can also promote an online sign-up system
 - d. Would like to set a goal for the month (100 new sign-ups/renewals?)
 - e. Rick will ask Councilwoman Feliciano to mention and promote Library Card Sign-Up Month during her Civic Comment at the next Council meeting
- D. Director's Report (*presented by Interim Director Sharon Shrieves-Ward*)
1. **BUILDING MAINTENANCE**
 - a. **HVAC**
 - i. Fan replacement in rooftop chiller complete
 - ii. Was backordered at Core Mechanical for about four months
 - iii. Installed last week
 - iv. Everything works!
 2. **MARKETING and PUBLIC RELATIONS**
 - a. **Folding Fan Craft Kits**
 - i. All twenty-two kits went out in August
 - b. **"Tom Malloy: Trenton's Artist Laureate"**
 - i. On display through September 23rd
 - ii. Artist reception held on August 23rd (Malloy's birthday) with a very good turnout

- iii. Due to interest, a “Part II” show may be featured next August
- c. **End of Summer Reading Party**
 - i. Party featured “Eyes of the Wild Animal Rescue,” who brought a skunk, wombat, two baby alligators, and a boa constrictor
 - ii. Every child who participated in Summer Reading received a prize and an award with the number of minutes they read
 - iii. Top readers received a bumper car, electric scooter, and a \$100 gift card
- 3. **STAFF and VOLUNTEERS**
 - a. Kiana Harris was promoted to Library Assistant
 - b. Interviews have begun for the Librarian I position (Reference Dept.) (*see above in “Personnel Report”*)
 - c. Library Director and Librarian II positions have been posted on NJLA and Library Link
 - d. Christopher Loos who was hired as the Library Assistant (Special Project) in Trentoniana last month and began on the 16th was promoted to Library Associate and will still focus on organizing the city records
 - i. Finding all sorts of interesting records, annual reports, etc.
- 4. **LIBRARY SERVICES and PROGRAMMING**
 - a. **August Book Club**
 - i. *City of Thieves* by David Benioff
 - ii. Five attendees
 - b. **Social Media**
 - i. Social media visits are down
 - ii. These are expected to increase as new programs and events are offered
 - iii. Scores tend to improve in correlation with large events such as plays, performances, or other popular programs
 - c. **Learning Lab**
 - i. Five people used the lab in August, including three for the workforce development service
 - d. **GED Prep**
 - i. Program with lowest rate of retention
 - ii. Many appointments made but many no-shows
 - e. **Visits and Usage (August ‘23)**
 - i. Total Library Visits: 9,386
 - ii. PC Usage
 - i. Adult: 1,822
 - ii. YA: 164
 - iii. Children’s: 486
 - iv. Total: 2,472
 - iii. Program Attendance:
 - i. Computer Class: 21
 - ii. Summer Reading Party: 55
 - iii. Notary Services: 16
 - iv. Utility Bill Assistance: 79
 - v. Tablet/Phone w/ Free Data: 13 tablets, 5 phones

5. **COLLECTIONS**
 - a. **Library Cards**
 - i. Updated Accounts: 535
 - ii. New Accounts: 76
 - b. **Total Circulation:** 2,679
6. **TRENTONIANA**
 - a. **Visits and Inquiries**
 - i. Room open for 19 days in August
 - ii. 35 patrons visited
 - iii. 41 inquiries via email, phone, and the online research form
 - b. **Social Media**
 - i. Instagram: @trentoniana1906 has 792 followers
 - c. **Meetings (attended by Archivist Laura Poll)**
 - i. Trenton Historical Society – August 14th
 - ii. Old Trenton Neighborhood Stakeholders – August 15th
 - d. **TCNJ Visit**
 - i. 25 new faculty members visited on August 23rd

VIII. Action Items

A. Bill List

1. (*see “TFPL August 2023 Unpaid Bills”*)
2. Crystal noticed increased expenses in Security and Technology
 - a. This includes cameras and other security measures
3. Approval of Bill List
 - a. Pat Smith made the motion to approve the August bill list
 - b. Lavern Rice seconded the approval of the bill list
 - c. **Motion passes 5-0**
4. Liz thanked Lavern for her work with the bank in resolving the check-washing issues

IX. Old Business

A. Lawyer Contract

1. Falls under professional services, so no RFP necessary
2. Lavern will send recommendations to both Liz and Sharon

B. Director Search

1. Ad went out
2. Three responses, all with previous Director experience at other Libraries
3. Pat Tumulty recognized all candidates from her time Executive Director of NJLA
4. Liz, Lavern, and Rick are available to serve as the Hiring Committee

C. Vacant Positions

1. Librarian I (Reference)
 - a. Three interviews scheduled
 - b. Additional resumes received
2. Librarian II (Youth Services)
 - a. Three resumes received
 - b. Interviews to be scheduled

X. New Business

- A. Capital Improvement Funds/Roof Update
 - 1. Roof permits in progress
 - 2. Liz will speak with Verlina about funding
- B. LSTA Grant
 - 1. Digital Literacy Grant
 - 2. Can continue to pay for staff to run the lab from this grant

XI. Announcements

- A. East Trenton “Community Center” Groundbreaking
 - 1. Liz spoke with numerous individuals in order to explain the legal requirements to be a “Library”
 - 2. Groundbreaking ceremony took place today (9/14) with ETC, NJCC, Mayor, City Council, etc. participating
- B. Book Club
 - 1. The next book club selection is *The Sisters Brothers*
 - 2. The next meeting is 9/26
- C. The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is Thursday, October 12, 2023, beginning at 6:00 pm

XII. Executive Session (*if required*)

- A. (*none required*)

XIII. Adjournment

- A. Patricia Smith makes a motion to adjourn
- B. **There were no objections**
- C. Meeting adjourned at 6:38 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Kavin
TFPL Board of Trustees Recording Secretary