



**The Trenton Free Public Library Board of Trustees  
Main Branch, 120 Academy Street, Trenton, NJ 08608  
October 12, 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-Ward (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, Deniece Johnson, Lavern Rice, and Rick Kavin

B. Not Present: Patricia Smith and James Earle

**IV. Agenda Approval**

A. The word “Table” was removed from VII – Financial Report

B. Deniece Johnson made the motion to approve the October 2023 agenda

C. Crystal Smith seconded the approval of the agenda

D. **Motion passes 5-0**

**V. Approval of Minutes**

A. The name of the Interim Director, Sharon Shrieves-Ward was corrected from “Shrieves-War”

B. Lavern Rice made the motion to approve the minutes from the September 2023 Board meeting

C. Rick Kavin seconded the motion

D. **Motion passes 4-0-1 with Deniece Johnson abstaining due to her previous absence**

**VI. Open Public Address**

A. One member of the public was present

B. Pat Tumulty spoke of the upcoming Halloween event, which she will attend

## VII. Presentations

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

1. (*see "September 2023 financial reports" from Ann C. Zawartkay, CPA, CGMA*)
2. **Total fund balance** (as of September 30, 2023) was approx. **\$3.0M**
  - a. \$1,584,000 in cash/investments, of which \$746,000 is in TFPL's operating checking account
  - b. This is a \$245,000 increase from previous month due to operating activity and the receipt of a payment from the City
  - 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 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.
7. **Personnel expenses** under budget by \$214,000 due to vacancies in budgeted positions and a change in health benefit plans. There have been no health and prescription invoices received for May through September premiums yet.
8. **Facilities and utilities expenses** are under budget by \$11,000.
9. **Audit expense** is under budget by \$20,000 due to timing of the start of the audit compared to prior years.
10. **Library materials and programming expenses** are under budget by \$47,000 due to timing of purchases for the collection and the use of remaining credits from Baker & Taylor from last year.
11. **Technology hardware and software** is over budget by \$5,000 due to timing of subscription invoices compared to the previous year.
12. **Planned expenditures from surplus for the Reading Room and tech upgrades** are over budget by \$69,000 since the project was not budgeted for 2023.
13. **Net income** (as of September 30, 2023) was a surplus of approximately \$516,000. This compares to a budgeted surplus of \$119,000 for the period, which is a positive variance of \$397,000. Excluding the expenditures on renovations, there is a positive variance against the budget of \$466,000 from operations.
14. **Health Insurance.** Shanna has been working with the City's Department of Administration to figure out the health insurance issue. The City is currently paying the premium.

15. **Personnel List/Payroll.** Shanna discovered that an employee's payroll was not on the budgeted list from the City due to them placing him on the list for a long-closed branch. A former part-time employee's salary also was not counted. This is being rectified.
- B. Personnel Report (*presented by Interim Director Sharon Shrieves-Ward*)
1. **Director Position**
    - a. Board's Hiring Committee (Liz, Rick, and Lavern) conducted interviews last week
  2. **Librarian I (Reference)**
    - a. Interviews were conducted and a candidate was selected
    - b. Rachel Paulus accepted the position
    - c. She is currently employed by the Twin Rivers Library of Mercer County
    - d. She is a current Trenton resident
    - e. Has worked at several public libraries and has mental health certifications
    - f. She will start Nov. 3 in Reference
  3. **Library Assistant (Trentoniana)**
    - a. Kenneth Morrissey began on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> in Trentoniana as a Library Assistant
    - b. He will catalog artifacts into the PastPerfect museum software
  4. **Youth Services/Librarian II?**
    - a. Had been posted, but is currently on hold
    - b. Depending on current staff, may restart search or keep on pause
- C. Friends of TFPL (*presented by Pat Tumulty*)
1. Partnership with schools via NJEA group – trying to enhance relationship between TPS and TPFL
    - a. Seeking linked lunch cards
    - b. Ebony is willing to participate
    - c. NJEA will send tutors and utilize their own networks to encourage an enhanced partnership
  2. Upcoming School Board Elections
    - a. Must get the word out
  3. Princeton Authors
    - a. May come to Trenton to present their work
    - b. Several lived locally and are eager to come to TFPL
- D. Director's Report (*presented by Interim Director Sharon Shrieves-Ward*)
1. **MARKETING and PUBLIC RELATIONS**
    - a. All 25 **Light Bulb Planter Kits** went out to the public in September
    - b. **TPSxTFPL Partnerships**
      - i. Young Adult Associate Adira Fuller-Warren leading initiative to partner with Trenton schools
      - ii. Has communicated via email with representatives from the Trenton After School Program, the Trenton Ninth Grade Academy, and Isles
      - iii. Seeking to bring in groups for visits, hold programs at the schools, and register students for Library Cards
    - c. **Art Show**
      - i. Library participated in Art All Day on September 16<sup>th</sup>

- ii. Show was a success, with roughly 100 patrons visiting the gallery
- 2. **STAFF and VOLUNTEERS**
  - a. *(see Section VII-B)*
- 3. **LIBRARY SERVICES**
  - a. **Program Attendance**
    - i. Computer Classes: 16
    - ii. Labor & Literacy: 17
    - iii. Utility Assistance: 38
    - iv. After School Program: 108
    - v. Math Tutoring: 12
    - vi. Young Scholars: 36
    - vii. Divine Kidz: 46
  - b. **Visits and Usage**
    - i. Total Library Visits: 7,690
    - ii. Total PC Usage: 1,995
      - i. Adult: 1,521
      - ii. Young Adult: 135
      - iii. Children's: 339
  - c. **Database Circulation**
    - i. eLibraryNJ: 369
    - ii. Tumble Book Library: 11
    - iii. Newsbank: 643
    - iv. BrainFuse Help Now: 24
    - v. Hoopla: 20
- 4. **COLLECTIONS and MATERIALS**
  - a. **September Statistics:**
    - i. Titles Added: 161
    - ii. Titles Deleted: 386
    - iii. InterLibrary Loan: 2 borrowed, 1 loaned
    - iv. Updated Library Cards: 71
    - v. New Library Accounts: 78
    - vi. Circulation Stats: 1,450
    - vii. DVD Circulation Stats: 339
- 5. **TRENTONIANA**
  - a. **Visits and Inquiries**
    - i. Room open for 17 days in September
    - ii. 23 patrons visited
    - iii. 27 inquiries via email, phone, and the online research form
  - b. **TCNJ Visit**
    - i. Interactive Media students from TCNJ visited
    - ii. Total of 72 students visited
    - iii. Two groups on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup>
  - c. **Meetings (attended by Archivist Laura Poll)**
    - i. Trenton Historical Society (in person) – September 11<sup>th</sup>
    - ii. Old Trenton Neighborhood Stakeholders (remote) – September 19<sup>th</sup>
    - iii. Discussion (remote) about historic interpretation on South Warren Street – September 25<sup>th</sup>
  - d. **Art All Day** (September 16<sup>th</sup>)

- i. Roughly 30 patrons visited the Trentoniana Room
- e. **Social Media**
  - i. Instagram: Zine Library account @trenton.makes.zines has 495 followers

## VIII. Action Items

### A. Bill List

1. (*see "TFPL October 2023 Unpaid Bills"*)
2. Deniece inquired about the "Eastern State Penitentiary"
  - a. Shanna explained that it is a museum pass that patrons can check out to use for the day
  - b. Site is located in Center City in Philadelphia
3. Shanna inquired why the bills from May for Clark Caton Hintz just came in now
4. Deniece inquired about the tow charge
  - a. The TFPL van battery died and had to be towed
5. Approval of Bill List
  - a. Lavern Rice made the motion to approve the October bill list
  - b. Deniece seconded the approval of the bill list
  - c. **Motion passes 5-0**

## IX. Old Business

### A. Director Search Update

1. Search Committee will provide update during Executive Session

### B. Vacant Positions Update – Librarian 1

1. (*see Section VII-B*)

### C. 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Renovation Update

1. Sharon received an email from Levy Construction
2. Shanna and Rick reached out to City Chief of Staff and HED Head Jim Beach

### D. Lawyer Update

1. Lavern provided possible candidates recommended by John Harmon
2. Liz will contact those candidates

## X. New Business

### A. Liz raised the issue of the **Hot Spot** loaners

1. They are not being returned after they are activated
2. Program has been running since COVID-era
3. 10 total, eventually down to 1, then ordered five more (six are currently accounted for)
4. \$100 charge if not returned, but often just never returned (formal notices sent out)
5. The six have been activated for the year, ending September 2024
6. If the current hotspots do not come back, we will not reactivate next year
7. Crystal noted that the schools also issue laptops and hotspots
8. Shanna also noted the same issue with laptops at TFPL – they are often removed and not returned

9. Shanna suggested reinvesting in the security alarm system that was previously at the doors – previously, books and other items had tags that would trigger an alarm if not properly checked out
- B. Liz also raised the issue of broken machines in storage
  1. Currently not usable or fixable
  2. Company is long out of business
  3. Currently in storage for \$350/month
  4. Liz made a motion to:
    - a. Dispose of the CD dispensing system, ideally by sale
    - b. Locker system itself will be sold
    - c. Lockers themselves will be brought to TFPL for staff use
  5. Lavern seconded the motion
  6. **Motion passes 5-0**
- C. Crystal inquired about the maintenance process for things like lighting, basic plumbing, and other issues
  1. Shanna encouraged the Board to be more active in speaking out about needs in the Library
- D. Shanna raised the issue of billing from EPIC Construction regarding an unpaid subcontractor bill – she and Liz will review the contract to see TFPL’s obligation

**XI. Announcements**

- A. The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is Thursday, November 9, 2023, beginning at 6:00 pm

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

- A. Entered at 6:48pm
- B. Exited at 7:10

**XIII. Adjournment**

- A. Deniece Johnson makes a motion to adjourn
- B. **There were no objections**
- C. Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Kavim  
TFPL Board of Trustees Recording Secretary