The Trenton Free Public Library Board of Trustees
120 Academy Street, Trenton, NJ 08608
March 12, 2026 at 6:00pm

Trustees: Lavern Rice (President), Elizabeth Yull (Treasurer), Rick Kavin (Recording Secretary, Mayor's Delegate), Brittany Littlejohn, *Robert McGuckin (Superintendent's Delegate)*, Blanca Ohler, and *Patricia Smith*

(**italics* indicate that the trustee was not present at this meeting)

City Council Liaison: Councilwoman Jennifer Williams *(via phone)*

Library Personnel: Karen O'Malley (Director)

I. Call to Order
   A. Lavern Rice, Board President, called the meeting to order at 6:02

II. Announcement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law
   A. Announced by Director Karen O'Malley
   B. Statement is hereby made that adequate notice of this meeting was given by posting written notice prominently at the Trenton Public Library main entrance, on the Library website, and on social media.

III. Roll Call for Quorum
   A. Present: Lavern Rice, Brittany Littlejohn, Elizabeth Yull, Blanca Ohler, and Rick Kavin
   B. Not Present: Patricia Smith and Robert McGuckin

IV. Agenda Approval
   A. Board President Lavern Rice added two items to the agenda:
      1. Presentation by Board Secretary Rick Kavin regarding new continuing education credits for Board Trustees
      2. Executive Session
   B. Elizabeth Yull made the motion to approve the March 2026 agenda with the noted addition
   C. Brittany Littlejohn seconded the approval of the agenda
   D. Motion passes 5-0

V. Approval of Minutes
   A. The wording of the OPMA compliance section was altered to comport with new regulations

B. Blanca Ohler made the motion to approve the minutes from the February 2026 Board meeting with the noted correction
C. Elizabeth Yull seconded the approval of the minutes
D. Motion passes 4-0 (Board Member Brittany Littlejohn was not present for the vote)

VI. Open Public Address

A. One member of the public present
B. Pat Tumulty attended a recent Rev250 program at the Library, "The Ladies of New Jersey and the Revolution Revisited, presented by Dr. Martha J. King of Princeton University. The talk centered on the women who played key roles relating to George Washington's time in Trenton during the American Revolution, including a discussion of the famed Arch under which Washington rode during his return to Trenton as President-elect in 1789. Pat commented on the educational value of the presentation and noted that there were about fifteen attendees. She also praised Young Adult Library Associate Stephanie H. and the entire young adult program.

VII. Presentations

A. Financial Report *(presented by Ann C. Zawartkay, CPA, CGMA)*
    1. *(see "February 28, 2026 financial reports" from Ann C. Zawartkay, CPA, CGMA)*
    2. Retirement benefit issue persists. No amounts accrued for 2025 or 2026 retiree benefits to date. This marks two years of unaccrued retirement benefits for a total of $250k – charged to both budget years, so already taken out. Medicare payment made (they are made a year in arrears) – paid total for 2025 (done as reimbursements). Councilwoman Williams may be able to assist in resolving this with City Business Administrator Maria Richardson, Assistant Business Administrator Colin Cherry, and Budget Office Alphonso Jones.
    3. State aid is traditionally received in the fall and thus is under budget for the year-to-date
    4. First quarterly City appropriation scheduled to be received in February – not yet received (last couple of quarters have been late by a month or so). In 2025, the first appropriation was received in May.
    5. Interest income is over budget for the year-to-date due to negotiated rate increases with PNC midway through 2025
    6. Personnel expenses slightly under budget due to vacancy
    7. Facilities and utilities combined are under budget – no significant repairs required in 2026 to date. (Drain pipe repair was charged to the 2025 budget)
    8. Publicity and fire licensing over budget due to timing of yearly expenses
    9. Legal fees over budget due to an ongoing employment matter – will flatten out as year continues and matter resolves
    10. Materials and programming expenses under budget for year-to-date due to changes in purchasing practices to accommodate circulation data and a change in materials vendor

11. Tech expenses under budget for year-to-date due to timing of annual subscription renewals
12. Net operating income deficit of $96,000 compared to break-even budget for the year – not unusual for early year due to timing of expenses, and this will even out once first quarterly appropriation is received from the City
13. Lavern commented on the $4k in the closed Wells Fargo account – she plans to file a complaint in order to retrieve the funds. Bank is requiring original signer's social security number from 15 years ago, and this person has not been associated with the Library in many years

B. Bill List *(presented by Treasurer Elizabeth Yull)*
    1. *(see "TFPL February 2026 Unpaid Bills Report")*
    2. Approval of Bill List
        a. Large payment (~$21k) to City of Trenton for previous overpayment
        b. Large payment (~$32k) to Clinton/Professor Gatsby's Plumbing for sewer work (this was charged to the 2025 budget due to the timing of the work performed)
        c. PSE&G bill was ~$16k, which is actually low for the weather
        d. Rick Kavin made the motion to approve the February bill list
        e. Blanca Ohler seconded the approval of the bill list
        f. Motion passes 5-0

C. Friends of TFPL *(presented by Friends President Pat Tumulty)*
    1. Pat Tumulty attended the Library's Black History Month program on February 21st. This all-day event was very successful. *(see more on the event in the Director's Report.)* Pat hosted a Friends sign-up table at the event and tries to attend as many of the public events as possible at the Library. She is seeking to rebuild the Friends group and to hold proper meetings. Pat plans to host an open Friends drop-in meetings at the Library during National Library Week (April 19-25).

D. Director's Report *(presented by Director Karen O'Malley)*
    1. *(see "Director's Report for February 2026")*
    2. Snow days – Library was closed Feb. 23rd and 24th
    3. Meeting with Mayor's Office for discussion about East Trenton Library was canceled with no rescheduled date
    4. Outdoor murals on ramp were saved and transferred back to the artist for display elsewhere – the artist was delighted and excited to have them to display. Thanks to Artworks for helping to reconnect TFPL and the artist!
    5. Ramp project has started. Entrance of old building being used for patrons – changes to Poetry Café needed to facilitate security at this temporary entrance. Signage has been put up outside to direct patrons to the temporary entrance.
    6. Director was asked to participate in CDBG Week promo about city-wide projects – will be filmed next week at TFPL
    7. Elevator still out of order – part was delivered, only to find that a second component was broken. That part is currently on order.

8. Ongoing Needs:
    a. Need a list of retirees from the Library to reimburse City for health premiums *(Councilwoman Williams may assist)*
    b. Requested a meeting with BA to discuss 2026 budget
9. Youth Services:
    a. Invited the Trenton After-School Program to TFPL's "Witness to History" Program with historic interpreter Leslie Bramlett – 60 children attended from three centers. Presented on colonial-era women of color in George Washington's household
    b. Head Start Preschool has begun visiting TFPL – two groups of 15 students each so far, and scheduling more visits
10. Trentoniana:
    a. Nearly 68 hours total research time (4,075 minutes)
    b. Total Visitors: 242 (+55 from January)
        i. 48 students came as part of four separate class visits from Princeton U. and TCNJ
        ii. 75 visitors came for the "Witness to History" Rev250 event
        iii. 19 visitors came in to view the Trentoniana archival display during the Library's Black History event
11. Building and Grounds:
    a. Additional ongoing issues:
        i. Boiler has a condensation return pump issue (pipes) that will need to be resolved
        ii. Maintenance Supervisor following up with the City to get the old one or request a new variance re: fire code violation – FOIA requests continue to be extended
12. Personnel Updates:
    a. Open Positions:
        i. Librarian 1 – on hold
        ii. P/T Circulation Assistant – to be posted
        iii. F/T Building Maintenance Repairer – offered position to current P/T employee temporarily
    b. Departures:
        i. Senior Building Maintenance Worker – removed
        ii. P/T Circulation Assistant – resigned

VIII. Old Business / New Business

A. Abuse and Misconduct Policy
    1. Policy had been previously distributed to and discussed by the Board over several previous meetings
    2. Elizabeth Yull made the motion to approve the new Child Abuse and Molestation Prevention Policy
    3. Lavern Rice seconded the approval of the policy
    4. Motion passes 5-0

B. Black History Month Event Recap *(presented by Director Karen O'Malley)*
    1. The Library's Black History Month celebration event took place on February 21st, and was an all-day event held from 10am-4pm

2. Multiple stations, including numerous presenters, youth events and crafts, a catered lunch, and more
3. Roughly 200 attendees throughout the day
4. Events included:
    a. Open Mic with spoken word artist and poet Todd Evans
    b. Performance by storyteller Queen Nur
    c. "A Taste of Soul" catered lunch by 1911 Smoke House BBQ
    d. Local Author Book Fair
    e. Community Organization tabling
    f. Teen and Children's events
    g. Special Exhibit in Trentoniana
5. Karen and Pat Tumulty both praised the staff and noted their enthusiasm and excitement for making the event a success
6. Pat also praised Karen and her leadership for the event
7. Karen especially noted Library Associate Janice C.'s contributions to the event and thanked her for her hard work and for inspiring the entire team

C. Continuing Education Requirements *(presented by Board Secretary Rick Kavin)*

1. New State Aid regulations were promulgated in late 2025. The new law requires that public library trustees complete **TWO HOURS** of continuing education during the 2026 calendar year that will be reported by the Library in the 2027 Annual Survey. This will be an annual requirement.
2. Continuing education is required by law. Under the NJSA (New Jersey Statutes Annotated 15:21-2.3), each member of the board or commission **must complete a minimum of two hours of library-related education annually to qualify for state aid**.
3. The New Jersey Library Trustee Association (NJLTA) hosts monthly training sessions via Zoom. This month's session will be held via Zoom on **Wednesday, March 25th at 7pm** and will include a discussion of changes to the Open Public Meetings Act, a review of Rice notices, and a Q&A. Register here
4. Previous training sessions are available on the New Jersey State Library YouTube channel (@TheNJStateLibrary), and new sessions will be added shortly after their completion.
5. When you earn continuing education credits, Please notify the Director (director@tfplibrary.org) and Board Secretary (rkavin@trentonpolice.net) after completing any continuing education so that your hours can be recorded.
6. Pat Tumulty offered some background as well and encouraged Trustees to attend the live sessions to hear directly from experts and engage with the Q&A.
7. There was some discussion of hosting viewing sessions with the full Board of previously recorded sessions, though most agreed it is more beneficial to engage with the live sessions.

IX. Announcements

A. The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is Thursday, April 9, 2026, beginning at 6:00 pm

X. Executive Session *(if required)*

A. Entered at 6:49pm
B. Exited at 6:58pm

XI. Adjournment

A. Elizabeth Yull made a motion to adjourn
B. There were no objections
C. Meeting adjourned at 6:58pm

Prepared and submitted by:

Rick Kavin
TFPL Board of Trustees Recording Secretary