The Trenton Free Public Library Board of Trustees
120 Academy Street, Trenton, NJ 08608
August 13, 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 *(not present)*

Library Personnel: Karen O'Malley (Director)

I. **Call to Order**
   A. Lavern Rice, 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 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 under "Legal Notices" and on the *Trentonian* website

III. **Roll Call for Quorum**
   A. Present: Lavern Rice, Patricia Smith, Elizabeth Yull, Brittany Littlejohn *(was not present for the middle of the meeting)*, and Rick Kavin
   B. Not Present: Robert McGuckin and Blanca Ohler

IV. **Agenda Approval**
   A. Elizabeth Yull made the motion to approve the August 2026 agenda
   B. Brittany Littlejohn seconded the approval of the agenda
   C. Motion passes 5-0

V. **Approval of Minutes**
   A. Rick Kavin corrected the date of the Bill List to July 2026
   B. Elizabeth Yull made the motion to approve the minutes from the July 2026 Board meeting with the noted correction
   C. Patricia Smith seconded the approval of the minutes
   D. Motion passes 5-0

VI. Open Public Address

A. Two members of the public present
B. Patricia Tumulty noted the improvements to the garden area and how well the landscaping crew has done

VII. Presentations

A. Financial Report *(presented by Ann C. Zawartkay, CPA, CGMA)*
    1. *(see "July 31, 2026 financial reports" from Ann C. Zawartkay)*
    2. Retirement benefit issue persists. No amounts accrued as of December 31, 2024 and 2025. This marks **two years** of unaccrued retirement benefits for a total of $250k. No accrual made for 2026, as Anne advised that the accruals would be made at the close of the year if no bills came.
    3. State aid is traditionally received in the fall and thus is under budget for the year-to-date
    4. First quarterly City appropriation is historically received in February but was received in April. Second installment typically received in May, though this year the voucher was signed on July 30th - should be deposited imminently if not already. The next installment will likely also come late
    5. Interest income is over budget due to negotiated rate increases with PNC Bank, and legal fees are over budget due to an ongoing employment matter. Technology fees are over budget due to the timing of annual renewals
    6. Personnel expenses, facilities and utility expenses, and Library materials and programming expenses are all under budget *(Budget transfer was approved to move $20k from facilities to the legal expense line at the June 2026 meeting)*. Facilities expenses such as high PSE&G costs offset by lack of maintenance/repairs that had been budgeted in case of need
    7. Net operating income was a deficit of ~$122k compared to break-even budget for the year. This will even out once the City appropriation is received
    8. Liz and Lavern went to PNC Bank to sign necessary documents and make the approved investments from the July meeting. Liz also praised both Alex from PNC and Lavern for their dedication and perseverance on a very difficult day.
B. Bill List *(presented by Treasurer Elizabeth Yull)*
    1. *(see "TFPL August 2026 Unpaid Bills Report")*
    2. Approval of Bill List
        a. PSE&G bill roughly $13k *(roughly the same as July)*
        b. Working with AT&T to determine phone lines that are active, what is necessary, and what can be eliminated. Marc from City Hall will come do a phone audit to determine the various lines
        c. Large bills:
            i. City of Trenton: ~$21k *(repayment)*
            ii. Mercadien: ~$14 *(audit)*
        d. Patricia Smith made the motion to approve the August 2026 bill list

e. Rick Kavin 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 met with Karen, and the Friends will be holding an organizational meeting on Sept. 21st - Board and others are all welcome
   2. Pat also noted the next Trustee Institute will be in-person on October 17th at Monmouth County Community College, which will be the first in-person session since COVID. The topics will include AI, building foundations, and other Library-related topics

D. Director's Report *(presented by Director Karen O'Malley)*
   1. Auditors on site for final verifications for annual audit (2025)
   2. Programming survey
      a. Initial survey done for regulars
      b. Follow-up to be put out to larger community
      c. 60 respondents
         i. 88% have *not* attended a program in the past year
      d. Developing "drop-in" programming
         i. For example, "Coffee and Conversation," "Relaxation Hour," etc.
         ii. Lightly structured "hang-outs" to build patron base and create a regular audience for programming
         iii. Can also continuously get feedback and ideas from
      e. Cooking, painting/drawing, healthy eating, performances, movies, meditation, etc. were suggested in the survey
   3. New security cameras installed at entrance/ramp area and in main stairway
   4. Ongoing Needs:
      a. Need a list of retirees from the Library to reimburse City for health premiums – Rick is working on a Resolution for Council
   5. Personnel Updates:
      a. Open Positions:
         i. P/T Children's Librarian or Library Associate *(to be posted at end of August)*
         ii. Librarian I *(on hold)*
         iii. New P/T Librarian, Andrew, is excelling at the Reference Desk and is being trained on processing/tech. service duties by Matt
   6. Department Updates:
      a. Adult Services
         i. Survey conducted of regular in-person patrons to understand more about programming *(see section D(2) above)*
         ii. Adult Summer Reading: 16 participants, 87 responses
      b. Youth Services
         i. Free lunch program available throughout the summer in Children's Department

ii. Youth Summer Reading: 101 sign-ups *(parents receive email programs and reminders)*
iii. Interns are doing well!

c. Trentoniana:
i. Robert will be delivering a lecture at the NJ State Museum on Sept. 15th at 12pm to highlight TFPL and its local history holdings
ii. Cal has been an amazing addition to the Department and has increased the ability to fulfill research requests
iii. Total Research Time: 66.67 hours *(33% increase)*
iv. Total Visitors: 107 *(78.3% increase)*
v. 20 visitors/groups browsed the collection *(42.9% increase)*
vi. 54 visitors/groups made in-person research requests *(100% increase)*
vii. 73 remote requests/inquires were made and addressed *(82.5% increase from previous month)*

7. **Ramp Project** is progressing, though not without incident
   a. Another incident due to heavy equipment – rainwater pipe broke which causes rain to leak out and re-enter the building during heavy storms, which has flooded the Children's Department on several occasions. Awaiting remedy from project partners, who are disputing responsibility
   b. Telly may repair on his own
8. Goals for the Remainder of 2026:
   a. Obtain and install wireless printing
   b. Library Survey to identify community expectations and wants for the Library
   c. Library Programs evaluation and updates
   d. Updated policies re: Collection Development, etc.
   e. Right-sizing staffing levels, hiring more assistants and security
   f. Begin projects/Board-approved capital improvements
   g. Investigate and prepare discussion for Johnson legislation options to increase Library funding
   h. Other *(as needed)*
9. See also: Section VIII(B) regarding capital projects

VIII. Old Business / New Business

A. Security Contract Selection and Resolution
1. Staffing issues due to low number of security employees - conflicts with vacation, sick days, etc.
2. Low number of staff/security sometimes results in closures
3. Director obtained two quotes with pricing, schedules, etc.
4. Elizabeth Yull made the motion to authorize the Director to hire Semper Secure at their proposed rate and schedule
   a. Patricia Smith seconded the motion
   b. Motion passes 4-0 *(Brittany Littlejohn was not present for this vote)*

B. Discussion re: Capital Projects
    1. Karen prepared a list of seven possible projects and capital needs for TFPL. The Board and Karen discussed the needs, potential costs, and prioritization of the various projects
    2. The most needed project is also the one most out of reach: the restoration of the masonry and roof, which will cost millions of dollars. TFPL is hoping to engage with county, state, and federal funding sources as well as grants and partnerships. Because of the current condition of the roof, other needed projects cannot be completed as they may become damaged
    3. There are also needed renovations and updates needed for the Circulation area, Community Rooms, upstairs and downstairs offices, and the Children's Room. It may be possible to combine most of these projects. The Children's Room, in particular, needs the entire back wall moved due to a recurring flooding and drainage issue. Need to put off the Director's Office and Reading Room areas due to the roof issue
    4. New lighting fixtures for the old side of the Library may be factored into the project above, though that depends on the feasibility of the project due to the very old wiring in the building
    5. Karen will also discuss possible phone system upgrades with Marc as he works on the phone lines at TFPL. The current system is out-of-date, complicated, and error-prone
    6. Maintenance Supervisor Telly also added a pick-up truck with plowing capabilities as a "wish-list" item. This would allow him to plow the parking lot and surrounding areas during snowstorms to avoid closures, and the pick-up bed would allow for much more autonomy and efficiency regarding the Library's maintenance needs. Currently, TFPL often has to rely on the City or an outside service for plowing/disposal/etc.

IX. Announcements

A. September is Library Card Sign-Up Month! Director is working with TFPL Special Events Coordinator and staff on upcoming campaign. The Friends will also be part of the campaign, and TFPL is looking to engage other City agencies as well
B. The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is Thursday, September 10, 2026, beginning at 6:00 pm

X. Executive Session *(if needed)*

A. *(none required)*

XI. Adjournment

A. Elizabeth Yull made a motion to adjourn
B. There were no objections
C. Meeting adjourned at 6:57 pm

Prepared and submitted by:

Rick Kavin

TFPL Board of Trustees Recording Secretary