

MINUTES

Kansas City Public Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting – April 15, 2025

The Board of Trustees of the Kansas City Public Library, pursuant to official notification, met Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. at the Central Branch, 14 West 10th Street, Kansas City, Missouri

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pete Browne, President
Laura Dominik
Claudia Oñate Greim
Susan Kenney
Michelle Smirnova
Elizabeth Warwick
India Williams

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Reid Day
Jonathan Kemper

STAFF PRESENT: Abby Yellman, Chief Executive
Candice Butler-Titus, Executive Services Senior Manager
Melissa Carle, Director of Information Systems
Carrie Coogan, Deputy Director for Public Affairs and Community Engagement
Trina Duncan, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer
Qun Fang, Senior Director of Finance / Chief Finance Officer
Crystal Faris, Deputy Director of Youth and Family Engagement
Pritha Hariharan / Assistant Director / Chief Operating Officer
Sharla Harris, Administrative Officer
Jami Hrenchir / Sr. Director of Human Relations & Chief People Officer
Coletta Hummel / Public Affairs Director
Joel Jones, Deputy Director of Library Services
David LaCrone / Digital Branch Manager
Margaret Perkins-McGuinness, Deputy Director for Philanthropy
* Full list of staff in attendance available by request

Browne called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

Browne welcomed Hariharan as the new Assistant Director / Chief Operating Officer and expressed gratitude to Board Trustee Smirnova for her dedicated service, as she prepares to explore new opportunities in the coming months.

Motion by Dominik to approve the minutes of the March 25, 2025, Regular Board Meeting. Second by Smirnova. Approved unanimously.

(Note: As a matter of Board convention, the Chair votes only when his/her vote would affect the outcome of the vote. In all "recorded" votes, the vote of the Chair appears only when it has actually been cast and when it has had an effect on the disposition of the motion. Notations of "approved unanimously" mean all members, other than the Chair, voting affirmatively.)

Request by Dominik to consider the Consent Agenda.

Motion by Dominik to consider items 3.1 and 3.2 separately.

Discussing the authorization of expenditures (LBM 4755), Yellman noted that there were no items to highlight and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Discussing the financial reports (LBM 4756), Yellman invited Fang to discuss the financial reports for March. Fang also reported that the Library has received \$31 million in property tax revenue year to date. On the expenditure side, salary and benefits totaled \$13.8 million, accounting for 74% of the total budget. Fang is confident the Library will finish the fiscal year on budget.

Fang highlighted several grants that the Library has received. Dominik inquired whether the Library would continue with the AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program. Yellman responded with the Library is monitoring developments at the federal level but the program continues to operate as normal.

Approved unanimously by the voting Board members. The following items were approved as part of the Consent Agenda:

Move approval of the recommendation of the Chief Executive to authorize the following expenditures for March 2025: Payroll (3/6/25 net cash \$381,785 plus taxes \$132,116) and (3/20/25 net cash \$385,462 plus taxes \$133,791) in the total amount of \$1,033,154; General Expense Payments including Checks (16202-16411) in the amount of \$1,135,319. (LBM 4755)

Move approval of the recommendation of the Chief Executive to accept the attached financial reports for March 2025. (LBM 4756)

Discussing the Contract with Forvis Mazars (LBM 4757), Yellman discussed the annual audit contract and requested Board approval for auditing services.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to Authorize a Contract with Forvis Mazars, LLC for the auditing service for FY 2024-2025. Second by Kenney. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4757)

Discussing the contract with Code Koalas (LBM 4758), Yellman acknowledged David LaCrone, Digital Branch Manager, for his dedication to continuous improvement of the Library's website and until the strategic plan is completed it was recommended extending the Code Koalas' contract for another year to continue support, updates for the website, and to related ancillary sites.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to Authorize a Contract with Code Koalas for Support, Maintenance, and Updates for the Library's Suite of Websites. Second by Kenney. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4758)

Discussing the contract with RSM US LLP (LBM 4759), Yellman reported that Melissa Carle, Director of Information Services, recommended contracting with RSM for data storage and backup services, citing their familiarity with the Library's systems and adherence to best practices. The recommendation followed a formal RFP process that evaluated multiple vendors, with consideration for MBE/WBE (Minority Business Enterprise/Women's Business Enterprise) and local vendor participation.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to Authorize a Contract with RSM US LLP for Data Storage Backup Services. Second by Warwick. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4759)

Discussing the contract with Margaret Sullivan (LBM 4760), Yellman shared that the Library issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a strategic plan in January, receiving 28 submissions. Of these, 26 met qualifications, and 5 were selected for the interview process. The team recommended contracting with Margaret Sullivan Studio, a certified WBE vendor, while highlighting the consultant's extensive experience with urban public libraries, strong community engagement strategies, and the previous work with libraries in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.

A kickoff meeting with the consultant is scheduled for May, and the Library is currently working on forming a steering committee. Browne invited Board members to express interest in joining and asked to let him know if wanting to participate.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to Authorize a Contract with Margaret Sullivan Studio for Strategic Planning Consulting Services. Second by Kenney. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4760).

Hrenchir outlined steps for the climate survey: The organizational climate survey was conducted to gauge staff sentiment. The survey covered seven key areas: Leadership and Accountability, Community Focus, Learning and Innovation, Work Environment, Culture, Clear Direction and Communication and Collaboration.

The organizational climate survey revealed strengths in community focus, learning and innovation but noted areas for improvement in strategic direction and accountability. Yellman stressed the importance of a clear strategic direction and a strong organizational alignment.

Williams highlighted the gap between staff having communication tools and using them, suggesting that trust and relationship with leadership are key factors. It was emphasized that smaller, safe spaces for feedback are needed, as large gatherings may not be comfortable for everyone. Leadership acknowledged the importance of rebuilding trust, particularly with staff's varied past experiences, and that leadership is working diligently to foster better engagement through the work of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Human Resources team, and leadership at all levels throughout the organization.

Discussing the Director's Report (LBM 4761), Yellman shared that the Facility Plan Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is live, with proposals due by April 25. A staff appreciation event was held April 10, featuring a preview of the PBS documentary *Free for All*. A public screening of the film is scheduled for April 23, with invitations extended to the Board of Trustees, metro librarians, and the community.

Coogan introduced Coletta Hummel as the new Public Affairs Director.

Yellman expressed appreciation for collaborating with Mike English of The Moran Company, who supported the search for an Assistant Director / Chief Operating Officer (COO). Hariharan shared her professional background and provided an overview of her experience and past roles.

Seven public safety officers completed 40 hours of training and are now being deployed to library branches, starting with Bluford and North-East. Yellman acknowledged Joel Jones (Deputy Director for Library Services), Shannon King (Public Safety Manager), Brian Oleson (Public Safety Officer), and others who supported the onboarding process.

There was no old business for discussion.

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Motion by Dominik to adjourn. Second by Williams. Approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Secretary

Date