

MINUTES

Kansas City Public Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting – July 22, 2025

The Board of Trustees of the Kansas City Public Library, pursuant to official notification, met Tuesday, July 22, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. at the Central Branch, Annex Board Room, 14 West 10th Street, Kansas City, Missouri

MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Pete Browne, President
Laura Dominik
Claudia Oñate Greim
Susan Kenney
Elizabeth Warwick
India Williams

MEMBERS NOT

PRESENT:

Jonathan Kemper
Reid Day

STAFF PRESENT:

Abby Yellman, Chief Executive
Candice Butler-Titus, Executive Services Senior Manager
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
Jami Hrenchir, Sr. Dir. of Human Relations & Employee Experience / Chief People Officer
Kaite Stover, Director of Reader's Services
Courtney Christensen, Philanthropy Department Administrator/Project Specialist
Shannon King, Public Safety Director
Jimmy Thomas, Community Resource Specialist
* Full list of staff in attendance available by request

Browne called the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m.

Motion by Dominik to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2025, Finance and Audit Committee Meeting and the June 17, 2025, Regular Board Meeting. Second by Williams. 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 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.

Discussing the authorization of expenditures (LBM 4780), Yellman highlighted *The CALL* newspaper as the largest expenditure that is included on the expenditure authorization for items over \$5,000. Yellman invited Fang to discuss the financial reports for July.

Discussing the financial reports (LBM 4781), Fang reported that the Library received close to \$32.4 million in tax revenue, 9% higher than expected and about \$4 million more than last year. The Library received over \$2 million in other revenue accounts (96%).

On the expenditure side, salaries and benefits are 2% over budget but expected to be at 99.9% of the budget pending year-end adjustments. Library materials and building maintenance are slightly over budget and will be addressed in the upcoming budget amendment request. The total expenditure to date is about \$30.8 million.

For the Gifts and Grants Fund, the Library has received \$2.3 million in revenue (120%). Expenses to date are about \$1.3 million (88%). For the Parking Garage Fund total revenue is close to \$680,000, which comes from monthly parking, short-term parking and validations. As of the end of the month, total cash on hand is approximately \$40.8 million, with \$19.5 million in the UMB checking account, \$15 million in UMB investments, and \$6.3 million held in the Swanson Fund.

The Library has received \$150,000 in major grants this month, including \$112,000 from the Heath Forward Foundation, \$11,000 from LSTA, \$12,645 from AmeriCorps and \$10,584 from Kansas City Peer Navigators.

Fang noted that this month marks the annual reporting for MBE (Minority Business Enterprise) and WBE (Women Business Enterprise) spending. The Library tracks two categories: Supplies and Services/Furniture/Equipment. For MBE, the Library achieved 11% in the supplies category, exceeding the 10% goal and 7% in the Services/Furniture/Equipment category, which is short of the 20% goal. For WBE, the Library met the 1% goal in the supplies category and significantly exceeded the 1% goal in the Services/Furniture/Equipment category by achieving 6%. Fang suggested having a combined goal of 10% for all categories for Boards consideration. Browne noted that any changes to MBE/WBE goals could be considered in the next fiscal year after the planned expenditures are reviewed. Williams inquired about current processes and Yellman confirmed a directory exists and a form was created to allow MBE/WBE vendors unknown to the Library to connect for business opportunities. Williams noted and Browne agreed that a separate committee meeting may be needed to continue evaluating and improving outreach efforts.

Lastly, Fang highlighted that there will be adjustments to the final reporting, including market value changes for investments, interest receivables and prepaid expenses. These will be verified

by the auditors, and once finalized, the operating fund surplus is projected to be around \$2 million. Yellman emphasized that although property values are increasing, this does not necessarily translate to significantly higher revenue for the Library due to the rollback of tax levy. The final property assessment from Jackson County is expected by September 15. To allow sufficient time to respond to any unexpected changes, Fang recommended rescheduling the September Board meeting, a suggestion with which the Board agreed.

Motion by Browne to approve the Consent Agenda items before the Board, Second by Dominik. 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 June 2025: Payroll (6/12/25 net cash \$392,795 plus taxes \$136,239) and (6/26/25 net cash \$421,217 plus taxes \$155,078) in the total amount of \$1,105,329; General Expenditure Payments including Checks (16748-16896) and ACH in the amount of \$1,720,252. (LBM 4780)

Move approval of the recommendation of the Chief Executive to accept the attached financial reports for June 2025. (LBM 4781)

Discussing the Budget Amendment (LBM 4782), Yellman noted the amendment is now being presented to reflect changes in library materials and building maintenance as discussed in June. The budget needs adjusting due to rising prices for materials and corrections on how expenses were coded, specifically between the Capital Development Fund and the Building Maintenance Fund.

Motion by Dominik to approve recommendation of the Chief Executive to Amend the FY 2024-2025 Library Operating Budget before the Board, Second by Williams. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4782)

Discussing the contract with MTS Consulting Contract (LBM 4783), Yellman noted that after last year's facility assessments, the Library is addressing structural concerns related to metal support posts at branches Waldo and Trails West. Waldo has nine posts and Trails West has three, for a total of 12 posts. The project will cost up to \$97,000. After getting bids from three vendors, including one MBE, the Library chose MTS due to significantly lower pricing of approximately \$7,000 per post compared to \$16,000 from the MBE. MTS also has a strong reputation and experience. The work ensures the buildings are structurally sound; it is not cosmetic repair. Dominik asked if the posts were being repaired or replaced. Yellman stated she would follow up to confirm. William noted a trend in which MBE bids are sometimes more expensive and suggested that this should be considered in future discussions.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to finalize a contract with MTS Consulting ("MTS") to repair metal columns at the Trails West and

Waldo Branches at a cost not to exceed \$97,700. Second by Oñate Greim. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4783)

Discussing the contract with GardaWorld Security (LBM 4784), Yellman noted the Library has ended its contract with Signal for third-party security services and is now transitioning to GardaWorld. This change follows the successful implementation of a hybrid security model, with seven in-house public safety officers hired in April. While there has been some expected staff turnover, replacements have been hired and trained. Third-party security is still necessary at branches where the in-house model isn't yet feasible. GardaWorld was previously vetted during the RFP process and offers a lower hourly rate than Signal, helping manage the \$1.3 million security budget. Additionally, GardaWorld will provide a dedicated guard at the busy Bluford branch during the summer months, with plans to include this support in future contracts to ensure consistency, an issue experienced with Signal.

Williams asked for clarification of the criteria used to determine that the Bluford branch needed additional security. King advised that a GardaWorld guard is currently being assigned to support in-house staff at the Bluford branch due to higher foot traffic and increased incidents, especially during the summer months (July to mid-August). This decision was based on data analysis of foot traffic, time of day, and types of incidents. The added guard follows the lead of in-house staff and has been effective in maintaining order. GardaWorld has also been responsive in providing coverage at other branches when in-house staff are unavailable, helping ensure no branch goes without security. The model is flexible and could be adapted to other busy branches like Southeast, based on evolving needs. Browne clarified and King confirmed that the Library would use our in-house team while keeping the third-party option as backup when the team's capacity is limited. Fang briefly highlighted the 10% increase in security expenses from last year due to seven FTEs. Oñate-Griem asked how the expense compares to that of other libraries of similar size, and Yellman responded that this would require follow-up.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to contract with GardaWorld Security (“GardaWorld”) for security officer services at the Bluford, Plaza, Southeast, Trails West, Waldo, and Westport branches and on-call services for an annual amount not to exceed \$258,000. Second by Williams. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4784)

The Margaret Sullivan Studio (MSS) presented the progress of the Library’s strategic planning process. The presentation began with an overview of the process framework, which includes four primary phases: Discover, Develop, Design, and Deliver. The project is currently in the *Discover* phase, which focuses on gathering insights from internal and external stakeholders and understanding community needs and industry trends. The team shared learnings from initial stakeholder engagement, including Board interviews and the community launch event attended by over 350 participants. Early staff and board conversations surfaced several consistent themes:

- A strong belief in the Library’s potential as a social impact organization.

- The need to clarify geographic reach and service equity.
- Opportunities to deepen community partnerships and youth development initiatives.
- A desire to build on local history and cultural identity.
- Interest in reimagining internal structures and staffing models to align with strategic goals.

Current engagement efforts include an active Community Survey (with nearly 2,000 responses to date) and plans for upcoming focus groups.

Discussing the Director’s Report (LBM 4785), Yellman highlighted that community survey is scheduled to be live until August 12, with 19,146 responses so far. Yellman recognized the working group for visiting branches, including Bluford and Southeast, and noted plans to schedule visits to Trails West, Independence, and Sugar Creek.

Yellman invited Hariharan to share updates on the facility plan. Hariharan noted that a working group and steering committee have been established, composed of staff from various departments. MSR will conduct interviews with Board members and host community engagement sessions, with site visits scheduled for August 11–13. Sophic Solutions have been brought in to help reach non-library users, particularly on the East Side. Yellman praised the work done and emphasized the importance of the partnership between MSR Design and Margaret Sullivan Studio.

There was no old business for discussion.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Secretary

Date