

MINUTES

Kansas City Public Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting – August 26, 2025

The Board of Trustees of the Kansas City Public Library, pursuant to official notification, met Tuesday, August 26, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. at the Waldo Branch, 201 E 75th Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

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

MEMBERS Jonathan Kemper
NOT PRESENT:

STAFF Abby Yellman, Chief Executive
PRESENT: Candice Butler-Titus, Executive Services Senior Manager
 Margaret Perkins-McGuinness, Deputy Director for Philanthropy
 Joel Jones, Deputy Director for Library Services
 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
 Kim Gile, Branch Services and Engagement Director
 MaShonda Harris, Branch Manager
 Deborah Stoppello, Director of Library Collections
 * Full list of staff in attendance available by request

Browne called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

**Motion by Dominik to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2025, Regular Board Meeting.
Second by Kenney. 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 4786), Fang noted that since we are in the first month of the fiscal year, the Library renewed several annual contracts including workers' compensation, liability insurance and SIRSI database.

Discussing the financial reports (LBM 4787), Fang provided a comparison between July 2025 and July 2024. Fang reported that revenues and expenditures are overall like last year with two key differences. The first is property tax revenue in which the Library received half of what was received in July 2024, noting that no deposits have been received from Jackson County due to new software delays. The Library is currently using reserved funds to cover expenses. The other difference is in Library material spending, which was lower because one contract payment was shifted to August.

Fang highlighted that the Library has received \$443K in grants including \$315K from Carnegie Corp, \$70,000 from Missouri Humanities Bookfest, \$37,500 from (MEC) Metropolitan Energy Center (3rd payment) and \$7,681 from AmeriCorps. On the expenditure side, \$53K was spent on the parking garage, which is reported one month behind. As of the end of the month, total cash on hand is over \$19 million in the UMB checking account, \$12.4 million in UMB investments, and \$6.5 million held in the Swanson Fund.

Motion by Dominik to approve the Consent Agenda items before the Board, Second by Kenney. Approved unanimously by the voting Board members, Oñate Greim abstained from the vote for LBM 4786.

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 July 2025: Payroll (7/10/25 net cash \$406,098 plus taxes \$143,093) and (7/24/25 net cash \$402,419 plus taxes \$138,380) in the total amount of \$1,089,990; General Expenditure Payments including Checks (16897-17076) and ACH in the amount of \$2,702,835. (LBM 4786)

Move approval of the recommendation of the Chief Executive to accept the attached financial reports for July 2025. (LBM 4787)

Discussing the Annual Reaffirmation of Code of Ethics Policy (LBM 4788), Yellman noted that each August the Board passes a resolution to reaffirm the Library's Code of Ethics and authorizes the Library to submit it to the Ethics Commission, which must be done within ten days of the vote.

Motion by Dominik to approve recommendation of the Chief Executive to Reaffirm Library Board Policy 004 (Code of Ethics). Second by Warwick. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4788)

Discussing the Classification and Total Rewards Consulting Services (LBM 4789), Hrenchir summarized that a recent organizational climate survey, with 70% staff participation, showed low

pay satisfaction at 33% and highlighted staff requests for greater transparency and consistency in the classification system and pay progression. To address these concerns, the Library will engage an external consultant for the first time to ensure internal pay equity and external competitiveness. The consultant will conduct both an internal review of pay equity and an external comparison of roles and compensation with similar organizations, provide an objective analysis, identify any demographic inequities, and recommend potential policy or procedure improvements. Key deliverables include a classification review, total rewards evaluation, cost analysis, and phased implementation plan. Over the next several months, the consultant will also assist with staff communication and implementation, with all recommendations reviewed by the executive team before being presented to the Board.

Yellman added that the study is being conducted to generate recommendations, but the ability to implement them depends on factors like property tax revenue, legislative outcomes, and alignment with the strategic plan. Staff have been managing expectations, understanding that not all recommendations can be immediately implemented. Once more information is available, a robust discussion with the Board will determine what is feasible now versus what might be possible later, taking a holistic approach.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to contract with CBIZ Benefits & Insurance Services, Inc. (“CBIZ”) for a Comprehensive Classification and Total Rewards Study at a Cost Not to Exceed \$75,625. Second by Day. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4789)

Discussing the contract with Extreme Restoration & Remediation LLC (LBM 4790), Yellman noted that Truman Road was heavily impacted by flooding, requiring emergency cleanup. Due to the urgent nature of the work, the Board is being asked to approve a “do not exceed” amount to close out this emergency work order.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to contract with Extreme Restoration & Remediation LLC (“ERR”) for Restoration and Remediation of Flooding at the Outreach Location at a Cost Not to Exceed \$53,000. Second by Williams. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4790)

Discussing the distribution of \$60,000 from Helen Nelson Fund for FY 2025-2026 (LBM 4791), Yellman advised that The Helen Nelson Fund is an unrestricted fund, though the Board historically set guidelines to use it for projects benefiting the Central Library, youth and children, and seniors. This year, the proposal is to use \$60,000 to support the Missouri Valley Special Collections, specifically to begin inventory work on the recently acquired Call Collection. The project will likely span three years, with future funding requests brought back to the Board annually.

The work will involve hiring or contracting with an archivist to start inventorying the collection, which has already generated interest from groups like the Black Archives and leaders connected to Negro League history. While this use stretches the original guidelines slightly, it aligns with

their spirit by enhancing the Central Library, appealing to seniors and a broad audience, and preserving generational history.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to Request a Distribution of \$60,000 from Helen Nelson Fund for FY 2025-2026. Second by Day. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4791)

Discussing the distribution of \$256,000 from Ewing Kauffman Book Fund for FY 2025-2026 (LBM 4792), Yellman commended Stoppello for her expertise and proactive planning in developing this proposal. Plans include enhancing Central Adult Reference and supporting the expansion of Missouri Valley Special Collection, Kauffman Grand Reading Room Collection, and Central Library adult materials.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to Request a Distribution of \$256,000 from Ewing Kauffman Book Fund for FY 2025-2026. Second by Oñate Greim. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4792)

Fang introduced Forvis Mazars representatives McGovern and Earhart to present the annual audit. Earhart explained that the audit follows GAAP and GASB standards using a risk-based, materiality-driven approach, while maintaining independence and conducting walkthroughs of internal controls without relying on them. Supplementary information such as the Management Discussion Analysis (MD&A) is reviewed for consistency but not audited. A new accounting standard (GASB 101) affected the reporting of certain library benefits, and significant estimates tested included property tax receivables and pension liabilities based on management's actuarial reports. Key financial disclosures covered employee retirement plans and the Plaza facility agreement. Earhart reported two proposed adjustments: a true-up of property tax receivable to match current-year activity and an adjustment related to GASB 101 to help management estimate liabilities. Reviewing the financial statements, Earhart noted a positive government-wide net change in position of \$2.5 million under full accrual accounting, and a positive change of \$5.4–\$5.5 million at the fund level, reflecting strong resource and liability management. Reporting updates included compensated absences, with the prior balance of \$2.1 million unchanged as adjustments were not considered material; a slight increase of about \$11,000 was offset by retirement-related entries with no material effect on overall results.

Earhart noted that the audit was completed smoothly with full cooperation from management. Results were positive, no material weaknesses were identified, and the library ended the year with a strong financial position. The auditors concluded by inviting the Board members and management to their annual nonprofit and public sector seminar on November 18.

Browne invited Waldo Library Branch Manager Harris to share exciting updates.

Harris shared that the Waldo Branch has served its community for over 35 years and recently underwent renovations that created a more open and welcoming environment. Despite its small geographic service area, Waldo has a significant impact, welcoming over 11,000 visitors monthly,

supporting 19,000 cardholders, and ranking third systemwide in circulation with 107,000 items in 2024. Serving a diverse community of 27,000 residents, the branch provides essential technology access, averaging 2,750 monthly computer sessions despite high home connectivity. Waldo is one of the safest branches, with only 40 incidents in 2024, and serves as a true community hub, offering youth and adult programming, technology services, health resources, and more.

Discussing the Director's Report (LBM 4793), Yellman invited Hariharan to share updates on the strategic plan. Hariharan noted that since last month's update, the Library's strategic planning process has advanced with 4,376 survey responses collected, five community focus groups held, and internal workshops with staff and leadership. Consultants Margaret Sullivan Studio and MSR Design have begun coordinating efforts so the strategic and facilities plans move forward in parallel. MSR conducted trustee interviews, branch tours, and a review of Missouri Valley Special Collections, while also starting community engagement planning.

Next steps include survey data analysis, forming a staff advisory group, continued data gathering, and joint sessions with staff and consultants. Both consulting teams will return in late September for additional workshops, community engagement, and to present updates at the next Board meeting.

Yellman reported on recent property tax hearings in Jackson County and statewide, noting widespread frustration over delayed assessments, long appeals timelines, and the strain on both taxpayers and special districts reliant on property tax revenue. Yellman emphasized the need for balanced reforms that provide relief without crippling libraries and other districts, which in the Library's case is 90% property-tax funded.

Yellman also recommended hiring a lobbyist to strengthen the Library's voice on property tax and related legislative issues, sharing a proposal from John Bargett & Associates for a one-year, \$43,000 contract. Yellman stressed this would supplement current support from Evie Craig, and free up staff time spent monitoring legislation. Board members supported the idea, raising questions about funding, potential conflicts, and ensuring broad advocacy beyond property tax. Yellman noted the firm's strong relationships and recommended piloting the arrangement with high expectations for results.

Overall, the Board expressed support for pursuing outside lobbying assistance, recognizing the urgency of legislative challenges and the need for expert advocacy.

There was no old business for discussion.

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Secretary

Date