

MINUTES

Kansas City Public Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting – September 23, 2025

The Board of Trustees of the Kansas City Public Library, pursuant to official notification, met Tuesday, September 23, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. at the Central Branch, Annex Board Room, 14 West 10th Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

MEMBERS

Pete Browne, President

PRESENT:

Laura Dominik

Claudia Oñate Greim

Elizabeth Warwick

India Williams

Reid Day

MEMBERS NOT

Jonathan Kemper

PRESENT:

Susan Kenney

STAFF PRESENT:

Abby Yellman, Chief Executive

Pritha Hariharan, Assistant Director / Chief Operating Officer

Qun Fang, Senior Director of Finance / Chief Finance Officer

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

Crystal Faris, Deputy Director of Youth and Family Engagement

Jami Hrenchir, Sr. Dir. of Human Relations & Employee Experience / Chief People Officer

Amanda Quance, Manager of Special Projects

* Full list of staff in attendance available by request

Browne called the meeting to order at 4:43 p.m.

Browne opened the public hearing on the 2025 property tax rate and the final 2025-2026 budget, inviting questions and comments. No public comments were received, and the public hearing was closed.

**Motion by Dominik to approve the minutes of August 26, 2025, Regular Board Meeting.
Second by Oñate Greim. 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 4.1 and 4.2 separately.

Discussing the authorization of expenditures (LBM 4794), Yellman noted major items including approximately \$90,000 for Overdrive and building maintenance expenses related to the emergency flood repairs at the Truman Road location. Yellman also highlighted payments to MSR Design (MSR) and Margaret Sullivan Studio (MSS) associated with the Strategic and Comprehensive Facilities Planning projects.

Discussing the financial reports (LBM 4795), Fang reported the Library has received close to \$240,000 in property tax by the end of August, which is lower than last year due to Jackson County's discontinuing of tax deposits. Total revenue is approximately \$686,000 (2% of the budget). On the expenditure side, salary and benefits are close to \$3.1 million (22%), consistent with the budget. Library materials are about \$765,000 (26%), reflecting annual payments for insurance. General operating expenses total \$1.3 million (22%) including software renewals and professional service fees. Building maintenance expenditures are \$552,000 (23%) and capital expenditures total \$222,000 (17%). Fang noted a portion of the capital outlay included payments for Plaza Data Center and Annex office space.

In discussing gifts and grants, Fang reported total revenue is approximately \$708,000 and expenditures of \$198,000. For the parking garage, July's revenue totaled \$60,880 with \$32,229 in expenditures. At the end of August, total cash on hand exceeds \$35 million, including \$18 million in UMB checking account (earning an interest rate of 4.2%), \$10.4 million in UMB Investments (with an average yield of 4.15%), and \$6.6 million held in the Swanson Fund.

Fang also highlighted that the Library received three major grants including \$163K from Swanson Fund, \$12,986 from Ingram Distribution and \$15,238 from AmeriCorps VISTA.

Motion by Dominik to approve the Consent Agenda items before the Board, Second by Williams. Approved unanimously by the voting Board members, Oñate Greim abstained from the vote for LBM 4795.

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 August 2025: Payroll (8/7/25 net cash \$404,880 plus taxes \$140,666) and (8/21/25 net cash \$396,577 plus taxes \$138,288) in the total amount of \$1,080,411; General Expenditure Payments including Checks (#17077-17171) and ACH in the amount of \$1,965,147. (LBM 4794)

Move approval of the recommendation of the Chief Executive to accept the attached financial reports for August 2025. (LBM 4795)

Discussing the Property Tax Levy (LBM 4796), Yellman commended Fang for being a great partner, his transparency on the levy, and the well-put budget book.

Fang shared a comparative overview between taxes between the 2025 and 2024 real estate assessments. Real estate values increased 4.4%, while personal and state-assessed property values also rose, bringing the total assessment to approximately \$6.1 billion, a 9.8% overall increase.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) set by the State Auditor's Office is 2.9%, which is significantly lower than the assessment increase, requiring another tax rate rollback. Fang noted that last year's calculated tax levy was \$0.4933, while the 2025 rate after rollback is \$0.4733.

Fang also reported that the recoupment tax decreased from \$0.025 last year to \$0.0057 this year, resulting in a combined total levy of \$0.4790, compared to \$0.5166 in 2024, a decrease of 3.8 cents. Based on the new levy, the projected property tax revenue for 2025 is approximately \$28 million. Although this reflects an \$800,000 increase in new tax revenue compared to 2024, total revenue will be slightly lower due to the one-time 2024 tax settlement of approximately \$1.2 million and the higher recoupment tax received last year.

Yellman emphasized the importance of personal property tax assessments heading into legislative sessions next year. Referencing the proposed House Joint Resolutions that could have a significant impact on the Library's budget (15%). The Library is projected to receive 27,390,600 as the current year's property tax revenues for this fiscal year.

Motion by Dominik to approve recommendation of the Chief Executive to fix the Library's 2025 ad valorem tax rate at 47.90 cents per \$100 assessed valuation pursuant to the provisions of 67.110 RSMo. Second by Warwick. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4796)

Discussing the Final Annual Budget (LBM 4797), Fang discussed the comparison between the current budget and the prior fiscal year's actual results. Property tax revenue is projected to decrease by 6%, primarily due to a lower levy rate.

Overall revenue is expected to decrease by 17%, largely due to a decline in interest income, from \$1.2 million last year to an estimated \$700,000 this year. The total revenue budget is \$32.3 million (7% lower than last year).

On the expenditure side, payroll and benefits are projected to rise by 10% (\$1.8 million). Library materials are budgeted at \$2.9 million, a 2.8% increase over last year. Fang noted that last year's total included a one-time \$315,000 purchase of archival records from the Kansas City *CALL*. Excluding that expense, the materials budget reflects a 16% increase.

General operating expenditures are budgeted at \$5.9 million, a 13% increase, driven primarily by professional service fees related to strategic and facilities planning, as well as staff development. Building maintenance decreased by 21%, reflecting smaller final payments for the lease purchase of Central Library. Capital outlay expenditure totaled \$1.3 million, representing a 100% increase over last year. Overall, total operating expenditure is \$33.4 million, a 9% increase from the previous fiscal year. The net operating deficit of \$1.73 million will be covered by the operating reserve. Fang highlighted two categories of transactions within the operating reserve forward:

- One-time expenditures totaling \$400,000, including \$175,000 for salary catch-up, \$75,000 for the compensation study, and \$150,000 for the facilities plan.
- Carryover projects from FY2024 totaling \$330,000, including \$85,000 for Plaza data center projects, and \$200,000 for laptop replacements and \$45,000 for interior signs for Central Library.

Additional adjustments since June's preliminary budget approval include a \$85,000 increase for the Plaza Data Center and \$45,000 for Central Library door size modifications, both carried over from the previous fiscal year, as well as \$50,000 for additional laptop replacements, \$100,000 for continuing education and leadership training, and a \$100,000 increase to the property tax projection. Changes to other funds include the Gifts and Grants Fund, which shows a net revenue increase of \$226,000 and an expenditure increase of \$268,000, primarily to support the Carnegie Grant and Library Corps Grant. The Parking Garage Fund reflects a revenue increase of \$80,000 and expenditures increased by \$140,000 to cover maintenance and new equipment purchases.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to adopt the Final Annual Budget for FY 2025-2026. Second by Day. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4797)

Discussing the contract with Western Specialty Contractors (LBM 4798), Yellman noted that each year the Library conducts a request for proposal (RFP) with Norton and Schmidt to seek garage contractors for ongoing maintenance. Western was the lowest bid and seeking approval from the Board.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to finalize a contract with Western Specialty Contractors ("Western") to provide construction repair services for the Central Library's parking garage for a total cost not to exceed \$141,318. Second by Williams. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4798)

Browne invited Matthew Kruntorád, Principal Architect with MSR Design, to present updates on the Library's comprehensive facilities plan. Kruntorád explained that the project is a multi-phase effort involving data collection, analysis, and extensive engagement with staff, community members, and stakeholders to develop a 10-year capital investment guide. With the discovery phase completed, MSR is moving into the "create" phase to shape conceptual plans.

Key priorities include consistent service delivery, safety, literacy, programming, and community partnerships. The plan addresses both system-wide and branch-level needs, balancing spatial use, reducing duplication, and aligning with community specific requirements. It integrates demographic trends and national best practices to guide and prioritize future capital investments.

MSR shared case studies showing how branches with similar layouts have adapted to neighborhood needs through strategies such as densifying shelving, curating collections, and creating adaptable, multifunctional spaces. Kruntorád also highlighted various partnership models from adjacent and attached to fully integrated collaborations with organizations like art centers and universities that expand services and strengthen community connections.

The firm emphasized the importance of flexible, well-lit spaces that support diverse programming, such as community rooms, audio-visual labs, recording studios, and teaching kitchens. Kruntorád noted that conceptual plans are in development and that the completed facilities plan will serve as a dynamic roadmap to guide KCPL's facility investments, programming, and partnerships over the next decade.

Discussing the Director's Report (LBM 4799), Yellman invited Hariharan to share updates on the strategic plan. Hariharan noted that since last month's update, the Library's next major step in the strategic planning process will be a combined workshop between the Executive Team and the Early Adopters group. This session will be the first joint meeting of the two groups and will focus on refining discussions around the Library's mission, vision, core values, and potential strategic focus areas. Consultants Margaret Sullivan Studio (MSS) and MSR Design (MSR) have begun collaborating and sharing data to ensure alignment between the strategic and facilities plans. Data analysis of survey responses is underway, and MSS will conduct its third on-site visit. A follow-up presentation to the Board from MSS is planned for November.

Yellman provided a brief update on the upcoming legislative special session, noting ongoing discussions related to redistricting and initiative petition reform. Yellman highlighted that Bargett & Associates identified five key topics expected to dominate the 2026 legislative session, with property tax reform as the top issue.

Yellman and Dr. Collier of the school district recently met to discuss shared concerns around property taxes and tax abatements. Preliminary information from several proposed House Joint Resolutions (including HJR 5) indicates potential elimination of personal property taxes (e.g., vehicles and boats) and a shift in focus to real property taxes. The proposals may allow taxing districts a one-time levy adjustment to offset lost revenue without voter approval, though this would not fully restore funding. Additionally, the proposed tiered system for real property assessments based on factors like square footage and age could reduce revenue if reassessed only every four years. Yellman noted that new construction, which is currently excluded from rollback

calculations, would be included under the proposed changes and emphasized that these details are preliminary and subject to change as more information becomes available.

There was no old business for discussion.

In discussing new business, Coogan highlighted the upcoming Book Festival, noting events with a range of activities including author presentations, book signings, vendors, puppetry, and food trucks. Faris specifically encouraged attendance for Derek Barnes, a local author whose newest book is on the National Book Award long list and is a finalist for the Curtis Prize. Barnes has prior connections with the Library, having participated in the Stories to Go project. Coogan emphasized the contributions of the executive team, staff, and various departments in supporting these programs.

Motion by Dominik to move into closed session to discuss personnel matters. Second by Oñate Greim. Approved unanimously.

The Board was in closed session from 5:55 p.m. until 6:37 p.m. No action was taken.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Secretary

Date