MINUTES

Kansas City Public Library Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting – October 21, 2025

The Board of Trustees of the Kansas City Public Library, pursuant to official notification, met Tuesday, October 21, 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 Susan Kenney India Williams Reid Day
MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:	Jonathan Kemper Claudia Oñate Greim Elizabeth Warwick
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 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, Chief People Officer Melissa Carle, Director of Information Services * Full list of staff in attendance available by request

Browne called the meeting to order at 4:49 p.m.

Motion by Dominik to take the agenda out of order to review items 4.3 and 4.4 first. Second by Kenney. Approved unanimously.

Discussing the health insurance renewal with Blue Cross Blue Shield (LBM 4804), Hrenchir noted the significant improvement from last year's 16.5% increase to only a 1.75% increase this year. Mike Foley of Foley Insurance provided an overview of how this reduction was achieved, including the addition of new plan options through BCBS. BlueSelect Plus network has been introduced and starting in 2026, Spira Care facilities will be added to all plans, offering staff no-cost care at nine locations, improving convenience and lowering overall healthcare costs. The library’s claims costs have improved this year due to a combination of education, wellness initiatives, and favorable trends, helping sustain manageable premiums and long-term cost control. The library is also exploring a support tool within the enrollment system to guide employees in choosing the best plans. Hrenchir commended Mary Batson for leading the Wellable Wellness program, which encourages fitness through step tracking, friendly competition, and accessible workout videos. Williams asked if the Library solicited feedback from employees to which Hrenchir responded that a wellness survey could be implemented next year.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas City (BCBSKC) for employee health insurance at a total cost of approximately $2,453,556 for the plan year January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2026. Second by Day. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4804)

Discussing the dental insurance renewal with Delta Dental (LBM 4805), Hrenchir noted a modest increase in rates following the end of a two-year rate guarantee. Foley explained that while some increase was expected, the plan remains competitive and affordable, and Delta Dental continues to be a popular carrier among employees.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the Chief Executive to contract with Delta Dental for dental insurance at a total cost of approximately $101,819 for plan year January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2026. Second by Day. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4805)

Following the discussion, Browne returned the meeting to the original order of business.

Motion by Dominik to approve the minutes of September 23, 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 separately.

Discussing the authorization of expenditures (LBM 4800), Yellman invited Fang to present the financial reports. Yellman noted the format was updated on the expenditures over $5000 report, highlighting that the revised layout makes it easier to read and clearly shows spending by category.

Discussing the financial reports (LBM 4801), Fang noted that total revenue to date is approximately $1.06 million, representing 3% of the annual budget. Tax revenue totaled $450,000, which is about $130,000 less than the prior year due to a higher payment under protest in the previous fiscal year. Other revenue sources were higher than projected.

On the expenditure side, salaries and benefits totaled approximately $4.6 million (22%) excluding health insurance, which is tracking at about 27% of the budget. Library materials expenditure was $947,000 (33%), including annual database payments. General operating expenses totaled $1.67 million (31%), reflecting annual payments for services and software subscriptions. Building maintenance expenses were $827,000 (27%), including unexpected costs related to flood damage at the mobile services facility and fire panel replacements. Capital outlay expenditures were $309,000 (23%). In total, expenditures to date are approximately $8.34 million (25%), and overall spending remains below budget expectations at this point in the fiscal year.

For gifts and grants, the Library received $756,000 in revenue, with $286,000 in expenditures (27%). Parking garage revenue totaled $102,000 (15%), with $85,000 in expenditures (11%). As of the end of the quarter, cash on hand totaled approximately $33.47 million, including $16.5 million in the UMB checking account, $10.4 million in the UMB investment account, and $6.6 million in the Swanson Fund. Fang also highlighted that the Library received three major grants: $331,000 from Kansas City Peer Navigators, $8,000 from Heartland Book Festival and $25,950 from AmeriCorps VISTA.

In response to Dominik's inquiry about the parking garage revenue being below budget, Yellman explained that the Library partners with the condominium association across from Central Library to provide monthly parking for residents. Although staff notified the association of a rate increase and contract renewal, delays in communication prevented the agreement from being finalized as planned. As a result, the Library has not received recent payments for those parking spaces, and Yellman has since reconnected with the association and expects payment and contract renewal to be resolved shortly, which should increase parking revenue significantly.

Fang concluded by presenting the quarterly W/MBE report, noting that the Library is currently at 18% of its 20% goal.

Motion by Dominik to approve the Consent Agenda items before the Board, Second by Williams. Approved unanimously.

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 September 2025: Payroll (9/4/25 net cash $398,534 plus taxes $138,614) and (9/18/25 net cash $396,409 plus taxes $137,153) in the total amount of $1,070,710; General Expenditure Payments including Checks (#17172-17237) and ACH in the amount of $1,188,416. (LBM 4800)**
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> **Move approval of the recommendation of the Chief Executive to accept the attached financial reports for September 2025. (LBM 4801)**

Discussing the contract with (PEC) Parwan Electronics Corporation (LBM 4802), Yellman provided a brief overview of Voice over Internet Protocol services (VOIP) which enables internet-based voice communication. Yellman commended the team for their work in managing the RFP process, also noting that PEC is a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE). Dominik raised concern about phone reliability during internet outages, to which Carle highlighted that all locations have copper lines except the Northeast Branch who would rely on cellphones if needed. Carle also noted that internet downtime is rare and closely monitored by the IS and Facilities teams with procedures in place. Carle noted that the contract for AT&T copper lines expire April 2026 and an RFP will be issued to explore alternatives.

Motion by Dominik to approve recommendation of the Chief Executive to contract with Parwan Electronics Corporation ("PEC") for a three-year contract for Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Service for 290 active lines and 295 pieces of hardware at a cost not to exceed $211,920.00. Second by Kenney. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4802)

Discussing the ratification of equipment purchase and repairs from MEI Total Elevator Solutions (LBM 4803), Yellman noted significant repairs needed for the ADA elevator, which could result in 10-12 weeks of downtime due to part availability. Yellman praised the team for developing a proactive plan to support patrons and staff during a potential outage.

Motion by Dominik to approve the recommendation of the of the Chief Executive to ratify the purchase of equipment to repair the Central Library's ADA compliant elevator from MEI Total Elevator Solutions ("MEI") in the amount of $69,800. Second by Day. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4803)

Discussing the revised personnel policies (LBM 4806), Yellman invited Chief People Officer Jami Hrenchir and outside counsel Kim Jones to present updates to the Library's personnel policy. Yellman noted that this project has been a significant, long-term effort, with extensive review and collaboration across departments. Hrenchir emphasized that personnel policies are essential for providing clear guidance, expectations, and consistency for staff. A core committee reviewed the policy with input from the 2024 organizational climate survey, focusing primarily on improving clarity and accuracy at the procedural level. Phase two will include broader engagement with supervisors and employees.

The updated policy will be provided as a keyword-searchable PDF with a table of contents, making it easier for employees to access and navigate. All staff will complete mandatory training to acknowledge their understanding of the revisions. Yellman commended Hrenchir for leading a successful employee Town Hall where staff were highly engaged and supportive of the updates. In response to questions, Hrenchir confirmed that employees continue to provide feedback and reach out to HR regularly. Jones addressed the recommendation to remove the reduction in force policy, explaining that existing legal requirements already cover such actions, and a procedural policy could limit flexibility.

The revised personnel policy will be placed on the policy calendar for Board review, with final action expected in November.

Motion by Dominik to move revised Personnel Policies in accordance with Library Board Policy 002 to the policy calendar. Second by Kenney. Approved unanimously. (LBM 4806)

Discussing the Director's Report (LBM 4807), Yellman invited Hariharan to provide updates on the strategic plan. Hariharan reported that Margaret Sullivan Studio held a combined workshop on September 30 with approximately 30 participants, including the Executive Team and Early Adopters Group. The session included activities and discussions centered around the mission, vision, and core values. While progress continues, these elements are still being finalized. Margaret Sullivan Studio (MSS) and MSR Design (MSR) collaborate closely to integrate all feedback gathered to date. The next major step is another combined workshop on November 10 to review the draft strategic plan, with the goal of submitting the draft to the Board prior to the November 18 meeting. Yellman noted that MSS has been asked to collect Board feedback, and Hariharan added that an email or form will be distributed to Board members in advance of the November meeting to gather their input.

Hariharan provided updates on the Comprehensive Facilities Plan, noting that MSR Design conducted several focus groups. However, attendance declined compared to the earlier Strategic Plan sessions. To expand community engagement, the team launched a community survey, which was featured at the Heartland Book Festival and received strong participation. MSR Design is currently analyzing the feedback and will return on November 5 for a full day of staff engagement, meeting with the Steering Committee, Executive Team, and Staff Advisory Committee. To support staff understanding, Amanda Quance developed materials clarifying what the Comprehensive Facilities Plan is and is not, addressing misconceptions related to potential new buildings or major branch changes. The next step will be a virtual presentation by MSR Design at the November Board meeting. Jones added that public feedback gathered for both the Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Facilities Plan has been overwhelmingly positive. Community members consistently express strong appreciation for the library's services and staff, emphasizing the library's importance and emotional value in their lives. Overall, this positive community response remains one of the most rewarding outcomes of the planning process to date.

Yellman reported that the Library is working with John Bardgett and Associates to organize a Legislative event on November 20. This year's event will focus specifically on state legislators, providing dedicated time to engage with them on key Library priorities. A working group has been formed to assist with logistics and planning. The team has drafted a legislative priorities document, refined with input from the lobbyist to focus on a manageable set of issues. Yellman noted that topics not specifically listed may still be addressed as needed, for example, library board governance or property tax legislation that could affect the library. Yellman advised that Fang is developing talking points to ensure the Library can respond quickly to any questions that may arise.

The broader goals include being proactive, transparent, and strategic with communicating the Library's priorities and community impact to state legislators. In response to a question from Dominik regarding potential legislative issues that might affect the Library, Yellman noted that most bills are still being drafted and will not be publicly available until December 1. The top legislative priority remains property tax reform, as potential changes could have a significant fiscal impact on Library funding.

Coogan reported on the outstanding success of this year's Heartland Book Festival, which drew an exceptional response with more than 4,000 RSVPs. Attendance was strong across all sessions, with Saturday at full capacity throughout the day. The event attracted a diverse audience of all ages, creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere. Headliner Taylor Jenkins Reid drew more than 700 attendees, filling her session to capacity, while several workshops such as Dungeons & Dragons and horror writing were standing room only. Coogan highlighted the collaborative effort across all library departments, emphasizing that the event's success was a direct result of staff teamwork and community engagement. Coogan also highlighted several upcoming events, including a program on redistricting in partnership with KCUR on October 30 and the Writers for Readers event on November 20 which supports writing internships for students from the University of Missouri–Kansas City's Creative Writing program. Finally, Coogan announced the launch of a new video series titled *Unlock a New World*. The five-part series was produced by Caleb Marie and Julie Lancaster with support from Coletta Hummel and Jen Tufts. The videos showcase the everyday work of Library staff and the meaningful impact they make in the lives of patrons.

There was no old business for discussion.

In discussing new business, Browne highlighted that the next regular Board meeting will be held at Westport Library on Tuesday, November 18.

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Secretary Date