

## **WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### **1. Mary St. Pierre**

Hello,

*I'm a resident of Massachusetts, and I'm writing to express my disapproval with a BPL librarian being denied additional sick leave as she is battling cancer. How utterly disappointing that the BPL Board is unwilling to take care of one of their long standing employees. Please think of your loved ones in this situation and do the right thing by approving her leave. You are setting a precedent for other public organizations throughout the state.*

Thank you,

Mary

### **2. Meia Geddes**

*First, I would like to thank HR and the Boston Public Library leadership team for all the invisible, often thankless work that you do to keep the wonderful Boston Public Library running. As many of us know, HR and IT are examples of departments where if everything is going smoothly and everyone is staying on top of things, no one really says anything, but if there is a misstep, all hell breaks loose, and those departments bear the burden of blame and judgement.*

*As a member of the PSA union, though, I am disappointed by the recent decision to not grant a member's request to draw from the Extended Sick Leave Fund as she is suffering stage 4 breast cancer. As a union member, I and my fellow members donate time to the fund **specifically** for these kinds of situations that may arise for our colleagues. Our elected Sick Leave Fund Committee representatives are those we chose to represent us in how we want that time to be allocated. The Library and Boston's Office of Labor Relations ought to follow the Committee representative's recommendations.*

*I am trying to understand the reasoning behind this decision but am not getting anywhere. For example, I cannot understand the logic of fearing setting a precedent, which in this case has not, as far as I know, even presented itself as an issue. If we had multiple individuals suffering a terminal illness, for instance, the Committee would recommend a fair way to allocate hours between individuals. This is also **not** a taxpayer issue. These are hours that we could easily have chosen to use by taking sick days but instead chose to donate for others to use. I know that I and many of my colleagues who, combined, have thousands of hours of sick leave, would gladly give all our time to our fellow colleagues in need if we could. Yet we can **only** donate up to 3 days per period; there already is a cap on the Fund. I am perplexed why this simple issue of human decency must escalate into exerting public pressure. "The Sick Bank Donation Program allows employees to donate sick time to support colleagues facing serious or catastrophic illnesses or injuries," to quote **an email sent by the City of Boston on January 2, 2025**. You may also wish to read the 1992 executive order, "**No. 335: Establishing a catastrophic illness sick leave policy for the Commonwealth**" issued by Acting Governor Argeo Paul Cellucci. Article I states: "The purpose of this policy is to enable public employees who are concerned about the plight of their fellow employees to make a contribution for the benefit of any other public employee who has taken ill and lacks sufficient sick time or insurance coverage."*

*Sometimes details of the law are not spelled out, but the overarching sentiment of (1) this executive order, (2) our contract specifically detailing “Sick Leave” in Article XV Section III, and (3) City of Boston communications as recent as January 2025 is that our sick leave contributions are meant to help benefit our fellow public employees who have fallen ill.*

*Past decisions — such as the police **not** removing patrons refusing to wear masks (violating our limited forum appropriate use policies at the time) in the Children’s Library during the pandemic — suggest that the City of Boston and Library are more concerned about “optics” than the actual safety of employees. Our employer is quick to announce support of vulnerable patrons, but what about our own vulnerable staff who have dedicated years of their lives in service under the City? If you care about optics so much, I can say that the optics of this situation aren’t looking good from where I stand and will only get worse as news spreads. I respectfully ask that the Trustees of the Boston Public Library help pressure leadership and the City of Boston’s Office of Labor Relations to grant the sick leave requested by our ill colleague who finds herself in a terrible situation through no fault of her own.*

*Sincerely,  
Meia Geddes  
Librarian at the Boston Public Library*

**3. Ann Langone, Children’s Librarian/BPL PSA Union Member**  
18 Years at Boston Public Library

*Please reverse the BPL’s decision to deny our terminally ill librarian, Eve Griffin, the right to use our BPLPSA Union Sick Bank, when she is ill.*

*The issue is very straight forward. Like many, many other employers, the Library has a sick bank made up entirely of sick days contributed by other librarians for the benefit of our sick members. You must be very sick to use this bank—you must have already used up all of your own sick time, vacation time, personal time—all of your discretionary time must be gone. A sick member then applies to the union sick bank; the committee reviews the request and as long as the details regarding time and illness are met, the member is granted the time. The PSA Sick Bank Committee already did this for Eve Griffin. I was a voting member of this committee. But the BPL has stepped in and refused to release the funds, even though Eve meets every requirement.*

*As you see, this refusal is arbitrary. The BPL states that Eve was denied use of our sick leave bank because she had used it too many times—there is no such rule—and that her continued absences due to illness created a burden on library staffing. And so the library’s refusal is not only arbitrary, it is cruel. Vicious, even.*

*I implore the Board of Trustees to please step in and decide what kind of organization the Boston Public Library will be. Do we value our employees and our patrons? Do we let the rules of the sick leave bank govern this rarely used employee sponsored benefit or do we change those rules arbitrarily and maliciously to try to force a terminally ill employee out of her job so we can be “unburdened”?*

*Thank you,  
Ann Langone*

#### 4. Kathleen Monahan

*I am writing to you today to protest the recent decision by the Library to deny Fine Arts Curator Eve Griffin the ability to use her union's shared sick bank.*

*For almost two centuries, the Boston Public Library has democratized knowledge and stood as a center for connection, mutual support, social services, and joy. We as an institution—and a city—are justly proud of this legacy, which is, and has always been, dependent on the library staff. We shape this institution and this city by how fiercely we care: for our collections, for our community, and for each other.*

*The Library's decision to deny access to a shared sick bank is a rejection of that very spirit that built and sustains the library.*

*We know that all of us can do our jobs more effectively—and show up for the community more fully — if we are not worried about losing income we depend on due to illness. We know that we interact with some of the most vulnerable populations of the city and endanger them if we are forced to work while ill. We also know that any of us could experience unexpected hardship. We want to help each other in that same spirit of mutual support that we bring to every part of our work.*

*Denying the use of the sick bank does more than harm the individual staff member who is already suffering through a catastrophic health crisis. It invalidates the very ethos of care that has driven us for over 170 years. If the BPL — a place that prides itself on strengthening community — is not willing to encourage mutual support in times of need, then who will?*

*We are not asking for special treatment just for one person. We are not asking for the City to provide additional paid time off at the City's expense. All we are asking is for the Library to respect our contractual right and allow us to give up our own personal sick time to help each other.*

*We are librarians. Let us do what we do best— let us help.*

*Sincerely,*

*Kathleen Monahan Vice President, BPL PSA, MLSA 4928*

#### 5. Crystal Rodgers

*Last week, Eve Griffin and I met with a high school student intern to share about our work. The intern glowed as she spoke about how much she loves BPL and is thinking about becoming a librarian herself. The Library is truly a magical place that inspires people, not just because of our amazing resources but because of the staff who keep this place running. You know what isn't inspiring, however? BPL and City leadership's refusal of a committed colleague's ability to get the support she needs. The denial of Eve Griffin's use of the extended sick leave bank contradicts all the positive things the Library stands for.*

*In an email sent by BPL President David Leonard to library staff affirming BPL's commitment to supporting our immigrant user communities, he concludes his message by saying, "Together, we will continue to offer knowledge, connection, and a welcoming space...and **to the best of our ability, support to each other.**" Is this denial of Eve's ability to use the sick time available to her support? Is this the kind of workplace we want to foster? We can't truly say we commit to*

*supporting our most vulnerable community members when we're not doing everything we can to support our own staff.*

*BPL and City leadership are being given the opportunity to make the compassionate decision, one that inspires because it centers the humanity of the people who work here. I strongly urge President Leonard and the Board of Trustees- use your power for good. Stand up for what's right in a time when it's more important than ever. Not just for Eve, but for all of us. We are all just a diagnosis or unexpected emergency away from needing this very same support. Help keep BPL the magical place that we know it can be by showing us that you truly care about the staff who make it so.*

*Sincerely,  
Crystal Rodgers  
Archivist  
Central Representative, BPL PSA, MLSA 4928*

## **6. Marta Crilly**

*Dear Pamela*

*I was baffled and disappointed to learn that the Boston Public Library has barred the library union ([BPL Professional Staff Association](#)) from allowing Eve Griffin, an employee of 12 years with stage 4 breast cancer, to access leave hours from the union's extended sick leave fund.*

*Prior to transitioning to Boston College, I worked for the Boston City Archives, where I, like Eve, made a yearly donation to my union's sick leave bank. It was a comfort to know that I would be able to draw on those hours if I encountered an accident or serious illness. For BPL to bar an employee from using those hours, after the union has approved them is unthinkable.*

*This weekend, when I went into my local branch library, I saw a big sign that said "All Our Neighbors Matter Here." This is an ethos that I have deeply valued about the BPL, its leadership, and its staff. Time and time again, I have seen BPL employees look out for and take care of community members. It's bewildering to hear that BPL's administration is actively preventing its employees from taking care of a colleague who has stage 4 metastatic breast cancer.*

*On a personal note, I worked closely with Eve on a transfer of city building plans to the City Archives. She was a hard working and collaborative colleague who cared deeply about doing the right thing for the people of Boston. I'm truly disheartened to see the Boston Public Library and the City of Boston treat a dedicated public servant this way.*

*I hope the situation will be rectified to be in our line with our shared values of taking care of each other.*

*Sincerely,*

*Marta Crilly, Archivist for Reference and Outreach, Boston City Archives, 2011-2023  
Head of User Engagement and Burns Public Services, Boston College Libraries, [crillyma@bc.edu](mailto:crillyma@bc.edu)*

## **7. Robin Malamud**

I am unable to attend today's Trustees meeting, so I am submitting this comment in writing:

I am appalled by Library Management's response to my colleague Eve's use of extended sick time. As a staff member and a donor to the extended sick bank, I believe the Extended Sick Leave Committee should have the final word on approval of sick time. HR's refusal to disburse the approved sick time is not just cruel, and managers' callous remarks about their staff member's need for sick time are not just reprehensible, but this whole business would set a chilling precedent if allowed to stand.

This sick time is part of our contractually mandated compensation. It is voluntarily donated \*by us\* for the use of our colleagues. It is approved by \*our elected\* Extended Sick Leave Committee. If Management denies this, what is to stop them meddling with other parts of our compensation? What is the point of having a voluntary process if it can be interfered with by other parties?

The last section of our new strategic plan lists organizational shifts that are necessary for the rest of the strategic plan to succeed. Rebuilding trust between staff and management is a shift without which none of the others are possible. But how can trust be rebuilt when management seeks to break it at every turn?

Sincerely,

Robin Goodfellow (Puck) Malamud  
Cataloger and Classifier I  
Cataloging and Processing Department

## **8. Maty Cropley**

I am writing to you today to express my concern and anger over the Boston Public Library's denial of access to sick bank leave for our colleague Eve.

The Boston Public Library as an institution is frequently touted by library administrators and City of Boston officials as being a values-driven workplace and community resource. When staff see the institution and the City of Boston treat one of our sick colleagues with such callousness as to refer to their continued employment as an 'unburden on the Library', we begin (rightly) to question the veracity of the Library's words and their commitment to our well-being as staff.

Our colleague Eve needs all of our support at this time. To be subjected to such treatment and rejection by one's employer during such a difficult and frightening time is unfathomable. The Library and City must set aside their instinct to 'protect the institution' and instead prioritize the well-being of our colleague in this very difficult time. That action would best reflect the values we all as staff hold dear: solidarity, community, and care.

I urge to use your connections as Board of Trustees members to press the City of Boston and the Library to grant the requested hours sick bank time for our colleague Eve, and further to engage both unions to be sure this terrible and stressful situation never arises again for one of our colleagues.

Thank you.  
*Maty Cropley*  
*BPLPSA-MLSA Local 4928*  
*VP, AFT-MA*