

**TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON**  
**Meeting of the Trustees as a Corporation and Administrative Agency**  
**Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.**  
**Honan-Allston Branch Library, 300 N Harvard Street, Allston, MA 02134**  
**MINUTES**

The Meeting of the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston (“BPL”) held on Tuesday, February 4, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. at the Honan-Allston Branch Library in the Rita DiGresse Community Room.

All present at the meeting included: Chair, Dr. Ray Liu, Vice Chair Evelyn Arana Ortiz (Remote) and Trustees: Joe Berman, Cheryl Cronin, John Hailer, Jeff Hawkins, Julie Kim (Remote), Senator Mike Rush, Christian Westra, and Lynn Perry Wooten. Trustees Jim Canales, Navjeet Bal, Jonathan Lavine, Jose C. Masso III, and Porsha Olayiwola were absent.

Also present were BPL President David Leonard, Clerk of the Board Pamela Carver, BPL staff, and members of the public.

Dr. Ray Liu, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. and provided brief introductory remarks. He acknowledged the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) welcome statement. The Clerk conducted a roll call, confirming a quorum, some trustees participated remotely (noted). Everyone was reminded that the meeting was being recorded, and they were provided with instructions on how to sign up for public comment. The Clerk reminded all that the meeting had a hard stop of 5:00 p.m. due to schedule conflicts.

Dr. Liu thanked the Friends of the Honan-Allston Branch for providing pizza, snacks, and beverages for the meeting.

The first matter of business was the approval of the meeting minutes from December 13, 2024. No comments or edits were made, and the board voted to approve them.

Dr. Liu invited David Leonard to give his President’s Report. President David Leonard thanked the host of the meeting, Branch Librarian Carin O’Connor. He thanked the Honan-Allston staff and the Friends of the Branch for their hospitality and ongoing support.

The Branch Librarian, Carin O’Connor along with Vice President of the Friends of the Honan-Allston Library, Sarah Markell, offered greetings from the branch. Ms. O’Connor highlighted some facts about the branch and some of the various programs they offered as well as reviewing their circulation numbers. She introduced her staff and introduced Ms. Markell.

Ms. Markell also introduced her board members. The Friends sponsor various adult programs, the book club, and Sip and Stitch. They support the library through various grants, donations, and membership dues. They aim to support the library in any way they can.

Mr. Leonard introduced Kyrah Altman, the new Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Manager, who will focus on supporting staff and fostering cultural transformation within the library system.

President Leonard provided a brief update on the implementation of the BPL Strategic Plan, emphasizing the next 3-6 months of work, including turning initiatives into actionable plans and increasing staff and donor engagement.

Mr. Leonard reviewed the operational and capital updates. He shared that BPL currently has 495 employees, with vacancies in the 40-50 range. He discussed ongoing mechanical issues with older library buildings and provided a brief overview of the Capital Projects List. He also highlighted the coalition's push for increased state funding for libraries, noting that the upcoming budget season would be a crucial time for advocating.

The next topic on the agenda was the Finance and Audit Report. Ms. Evelyn Arana Ortiz, along with Ms. Emily Tokarczyk (Chief Financial Officer) presented two contracts for approval:

The first was the library's Microsoft 365 renewal. It was for the services of all BPL computers. A motion was duly made and voted unanimously to approve.

**VOTED: "that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve Microsoft 365 Renewal in the amount of Two Hundred Sixty-Eight Four Hundred Sixty-Seven and Ninety Cents (\$268,467.90)."**

The second was to approve the purchase of seven vehicles (including hybrid options) using unrestricted trustee funds.

**VOTED: "that, the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston approve the purchase of the fleet of vehicles from Colonial Ford, 11 Pilgrim Hill Road, Plymouth, MA 02360 in the amount of Three Hundred Eighteen Thousand Two Hundred Eighteen Dollars and Twenty Cents (\$318,218.20)."**

Ms. Emily Tokarczyk provided a detailed breakdown of BPL's annual operating budget, which totals approximately \$62 million for FY25. She explained there were five sources that fund the library's annual operating budget: City, state funding (which includes interlibrary loan, Library for the Commonwealth, and our state aid) philanthropy through the fund and our other affiliates, the trust funds, and then earned revenue (which includes the private event program, royalties, leases). 80% of the funding comes from the city budget. Personnel costs represent the largest expenditure at 64%. The library also faces potential funding gaps related to strategic plan implementation. She discussed the FY26 budget submission, which reflects a 3.4% increase, primarily due to union contract salary increases. The budget office meeting is scheduled for the coming months, with the mayor's proposed budget to be released on April 9th, followed by City Council hearings.

Jeff Hawkins, Chair of the BPL Fund, briefly gave an update of the BPL Fund. He shared that the fund has raised over \$35 million in five years. The Fund's focus is aligned with the library's strategic plan, with specific emphasis on areas such as "Activating Democracy", "Unlocking Opportunity", and "Sharing Treasures."

He also introduced a new two-year, \$5 million fundraising initiative, "Bridge to McKim Renovation," aimed at engaging patrons and securing future funding.

Dr. Liu announced the sunset of two committees: the Strategic Planning Committee and the Community Engagement Committee. He thanked committee members for their hard work, particularly those trustees who had served on these committees, including Christian Westra, Jose C. Masso III, Joe Berman, and Cheryl Cronin, and Evelyn Arana Ortiz

Dr. Ray Liu called for New Business. Joe Berman announced the Literary Lights Gala on April 27th, the largest fundraiser organized by The Associates of the BPL and encouraged the Board to attend.

The Chair called for public comments. Several public comments were made, notably regarding the denial of sick leave for Eve Griffin, a long-time BPL employee battling metastatic breast cancer.

Eve Griffin (via a colleague) expressed her frustration with the denial of her request for additional paid sick time from the PSA sick bank, emphasizing the library's failure to support employees facing serious health challenges.

Allie Hahn, President of PSA, urged the trustees to use their authority to overturn the decision, stressing the importance of aligning the library's policies with its values of solidarity and compassion.

Other BPL employees who spoke included Amy Layton, Crystal Rogers, Bryce Healy, and Elissa Cadillic, all of whom voiced strong support for Eve and called on the Board to reverse the decision.

A fellow librarian from another metropolitan city named Carissa joined via Zoom. She shared her sentiments of support for the reversal of the decision to aid Eve Griffin.

Anthony Desiderio of the Allston Civic Association requested a discussion with the IT team to improve audio-visual equipment for hybrid meetings at the library with a collaborative partner who has secured funding for it.

The Clerk noted that several written comments were submitted in advance and shared with the Board and posted to the website.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:48 PM.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Pamela Carver  
Clerk of the Board