

QUEENS PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2022
MINUTES

A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held via Zoom on Thursday, January 20, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by Chair of the Board, Michael E. Rodriguez, Esq.

I. Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Michael E. Rodriguez, Esq.	Chair of the Board	Present	
Earl G. Simons, Ed. D.	Vice Chair of the Board	Present	
Eli Shapiro, Ed. D., LCSW.	Secretary	Present	
Julissa Gutierrez	Treasurer	Present	
Pauline Healy	Assistant Treasurer	Excused	
Judy E. Bergtraum, Esq.	Board Member	Present	
Matthew M. Gorton	Board Member	Present	6:12 PM
James M. Haddad, Esq.	Board Member	Present	
Cloyette Harris-Stoute	Board Member	Excused	
Andrew P. Jackson	Board Member	Present	
Peter Kauffmann	Board Member	Present	
Carl S. Koerner, Esq.	Board Member	Present	
Haeda Mihaltses	Board Member	Present	
Guillermo Patino	Board Member	Present	
George Russo, Esq.	Board Member	Excused	
Robert Santos, Esq.	Board Member	Excused	
Lydon Sleeper-O'Connell	Board Member	Present	6:11 PM
Terri Thomson	Board Member	Present	

Board of Trustees Minutes

January 20, 2022

Eve Cho Guillergan, Esq.	Rep - Speaker	Present	
Elizabeth Guzman, Esq.	Rep - Public Advocate	Excused	
Allan Swisher, Esq.	Rep - Borough President	Present	
Dennis M. Walcott	President & CEO	Present	
Nick Buron	Chief Librarian & Sr. VP.	Present	
Justin Deabler, Esq.	General Counsel & Sr. VP.	Present	
Sung Mo Kim, Esq.	Chief Operating Officer & Sr. VP.	Present	
Gitte Peng	Chief of Staff & Sr. VP.	Present	
Michael Tragale	Chief Financial Officer & Sr. VP.	Present	
Elizabeth De Bourbon	VP, Communications	Present	
Susan Latham	Executive Director, QPL Foundation	Present	
William Funk	VP, Procurement	Present	
William Goldband	VP, Information, Technology & Development	Present	
Larry Vedilago	VP, Risk Management	Present	
Chauncie Brooks	Sr. Manager, Infrastructure & Support	Present	
Justin Carroll, Esq.	Associate General Counsel	Present	
Vishnu Dawah	Controller, Finance	Present	
Sara Hausner-Levine, Esq.	Deputy General Counsel	Present	
Danielle Walsh	Community Library Manager, South Jamaica Library	Present	
LaNiece M. Ince	Executive Assistant to President & CEO	Present	

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of Minutes of the Board - December 16, 2021 (ID # 2602)

Recommended Motion for Consideration:

I move that the Minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting be approved as submitted.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [Unanimous]
MOVER:	Andrew P. Jackson
SECONDER:	Earl G. Simons, Ed. D
AYES:	Rodriguez, Esq., Simons, Ed. D, Shapiro, Ed. D ,LCSW, Gutierrez, Bergtraum, Esq., Haddad, Esq., Jackson, Kauffmann, Koerner, Esq., Mihaltses, Patino, Thomson
EXCUSED:	Healy, Gorton, Harris-Stoute, Russo, Esq, Santos, Esq., O'Connell

III. AGENDA

A. Action Item(s)

1. Approval of Bills for the Month of December 2021 (ID # 2600)

Recommended Motion for Consideration by the Board of Trustees:

I move that the Board of Trustees approve the December 2021 bills in the aggregate sum of \$5,549,537.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [Unanimous]
MOVER:	Terri Thomson
SECONDER:	Earl G. Simons, Ed. D.
AYES:	Rodriguez, Esq., Simons, Ed. D, Shapiro, Ed. D., LCSW, Gutierrez, Bergtraum, Esq., Haddad, Esq., Jackson, Kauffmann, Koerner, Esq., Mihaltses, Patino, Thomson
EXCUSED:	Healy, Gorton, Harris-Stoute, Russo, Esq, Santos, Esq., O'Connell

2. Acceptance of Financial Reports for the Period Ending December 2021 (ID # 2601)

Michael Tragale, Chief Financial Officer and Sr. VP, reported that the Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG) is a budget reduction process pursuant to which the Library must submit a plan to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) outlining proposed spending cuts. Mr. Tragale reported that the Library intends to use vacancy accruals, fringe benefits, hourly accruals, and OTPS savings to absorb the potential PEG.

Board trustee, Andrew Jackson asked if there was any indication as to why the Library is losing librarian positions and if there was a solution to filling these vacancies.

Board of Trustees Minutes

January 20, 2022

Mr. Tragale reported that staff vacancies are mostly due to attrition, which has affected the job market across the country. Mr. Walcott reported that many of the library staff are at retirement age and are assessing their lives. The Library is collaborating with NY Public Library and Brooklyn Public Library to assess current staffing levels, specifically librarians, to implement a plan to fill these vacancies.

Nick Buron, Chief Librarian, reported that since February 2020 the Library has lost staff, specifically librarians, and is currently working to fill these vacancies in order to get back to pre-pandemic levels.

Board trustee, Earl Simons stated that before the pandemic, it was reported to the board that there was a shortage of children librarians and asked whether the pandemic affected filling these vacancies. Mr. Tragale reported that prior to the pandemic, several children librarian positions were filled. However, during the pandemic, these positions were vacated.

Mr. Buron reported that there are currently 16 children’s librarian vacancies, which equates to 16 library locations that are not staffed with a children’s librarian. The Library is prioritizing filling vacancies, especially children’s librarians, that are critical.

Board Trustee Andrew Jackson asked, in light of recent changes in the Queens City Council delegation, whether the library would be affected in funding and support from the new elected officials.

Mr. Walcott reported that the tri-library presidents are scheduled to meet with Mayor Eric Adams next week to discuss the importance of the role of libraries. With approximately two-thirds of the City Council consisting of newly-appointed members, the three library systems will be working diligently to educate the new council members on the importance of library advocacy and funding.

Recommended Motion for Consideration by the Board of Trustees:

I move that the Board of Trustees accept the Budget Reports for Board-approved operating funds and Balance Sheets for all funds as of December 31, 2021.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [Unanimous]
MOVER:	Carl S. Koerner, Esq.
SECONDER:	Andrew P. Jackson
AYES:	Rodriguez, Esq., Simons, Ed. D, Shapiro, Ed. D ,LCSW, Gutierrez, Bergtraum, Esq., Gorton, Haddad, Esq., Jackson, Kauffmann, Koerner, Esq., Mihaltzes, Patino, O'Connell, Thomson
EXCUSED:	Pauline Healy, Cloyette Harris-Stoute, George Russo, Esq., Santos, Esq.

Attachment: BOT Minutes - January 20, 2022 (2622 : Approval of Board Minutes - January 20, 2022)

January 20, 2022

3. Election of Officers – 2022 (ID # 2608)**Recommended Motion for Consideration by the Board of Trustees:***I move that the Board of Trustees accept the resolution on election of officers as presented:***RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, at the Board's regularly scheduled meeting held on Thursday, December 16, 2021, the Nominating Committee recommended the following slate of officers of the Library for calendar year 2022:

Chair of the Board: Michael Rodriguez, Esq.
 Vice Chair: Earl Simons, Ed. D.
 Secretary: Eli Shapiro, Ed. D., LCSW
 Treasurer: Julissa Gutierrez
 Assistant Treasurer: Pauline Healy

WHEREAS, at the December 16, 2021 meeting, the Trustees were asked if they would like to nominate any other officers and no other nominations were offered; and the Board unanimously approved a motion to close nominations for officers of the Library for calendar year 2022.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees that, after due deliberation, the following Trustees are elected as the officers of the Library for calendar year 2022 and shall continue in office until their successors shall have been elected and qualified:

Chair of the Board: Michael Rodriguez, Esq.
 Vice Chair: Earl Simons, Ed. D.
 Secretary: Eli Shapiro, Ed. D., LCSW
 Treasurer: Julissa Gutierrez
 Assistant Treasurer: Pauline Healy

RESULT:	ADOPTED [Unanimous]
MOVER:	Andrew P. Jackson
SECONDER:	Terri Thomson
AYES:	Rodriguez, Esq., Simons, Ed. D, Shapiro, Ed. D., LCSW, Gutierrez, Bergtraum, Esq., Gorton, Haddad, Esq., Jackson, Kauffmann, Koerner, Esq., Mihaltses, Patino, O'Connell, Thomson
EXCUSED:	Pauline Healy, Cloyette Harris-Stoute, George Russo, Esq., Santos, Esq.

4. 2022 BOT Calendar of Meetings (ID # 2589)**Recommended Motion for Consideration by the Board of Trustees:***I move that the calendar of Board of Trustees and Committee meeting dates for 2022 be approved as presented.*

RESULT:	ADOPTED [Unanimous]
MOVER:	Andrew P. Jackson
SECONDER:	Carl S. Koerner, Esq.
AYES:	Rodriguez Esq, Simons Ed. D, Shapiro, Ed. D LCSW, Gutierrez, Bergtraum, Esq., Gorton, Haddad, Esq., Jackson, Kauffmann, Koerner Esq., Patino, O'Connell, Thomson
ABSTAIN:	Haeda Mihaltses
EXCUSED:	Pauline Healy, Cloyette Harris-Stoute, George Russo, Esq., Santos, Esq.

5. Resolution – President & CEO Salary Increase (ID # 2609)

The board inquired about the effective date of the President's compensation increase, namely going into effect as of the fourth anniversary of his employment as indicated in the proposed resolution, instead of January 1, 2022. Sung Mo Kim, Chief Operating Officer and Sr. VP, stated that the proposed resolution was drafted based upon Mr. Walcott not receiving an increase prior to and during the pandemic. Board Trustee Judy Bergtraum suggested the discussion be conducted in executive session. The board agreed and motioned to go into executive session to discuss the topic further.

The motion was moved by James Haddad, Esq and seconded by Eli Shapiro, Ed. D, LCSW. The motion passed unanimously.

Recommended Motion for Consideration by the Board of Trustees:

I move that the Board of Trustees approve the following resolution as presented:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Library's By-Laws provide, in pertinent part, that the Labor Relations Committee shall annually review and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding the compensation arrangement for the President and CEO; and

WHEREAS, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, most Committee work has been undertaken by the full Board of Trustees, including the aforementioned annual review of the compensation arrangement for the President and CEO.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that: (i) after obtaining and considering appropriate data of similar salaries paid to similar executives at comparable organizations; (ii) evaluating the President and CEO's performance in light of the goals and objectives relevant to his compensation, and the Library's performance relative to the Library's mission; and (iii) evaluating the President and CEO's contribution to the Library's purposes and activities, and how his qualifications contribute to his achievement of such goals, the Board of Trustees has determined that Mr. Walcott's salary be increased to \$350,000, which comports with the increase that other eligible key executive employees have received, effective as of the fourth anniversary date of his employment.

January 20, 2022

RESULT:	WITHDRAWN [Unanimous]
MOVER:	Terri Thomson
SECONDER:	Judy E. Bergtraum, Esq.
AYES:	Rodriguez, Esq., Simons, Ed. D, Shapiro, Ed. D., LCSW, Gutierrez, Bergtraum, Esq., Gorton, Haddad, Esq., Jackson, Kauffmann, Koerner, Esq., Mihaltses, Patino, O'Connell, Thomson
EXCUSED:	Pauline Healy, Cloyette Harris-Stoute, George Russo, Esq., Santos Esq.,

6. Action Resulting from Executive Session Discussion (ID # 2639)

The following resolution was approved as modified during executive session:

Recommended Motion for Consideration:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Library's By-Laws provide, in pertinent part, that the Labor Relations Committee shall annually review and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding the compensation arrangement for the President and CEO; and

WHEREAS, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, most Committee work has been undertaken by the full Board of Trustees, including the aforementioned annual review of the compensation arrangement for the President and CEO.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that: (i) after obtaining and considering appropriate data of similar salaries paid to similar executives at comparable organizations; (ii) evaluating the President and CEO's performance in light of the goals and objectives relevant to his compensation, and the Library's performance relative to the Library's mission; and (iii) evaluating the President and CEO's contribution to the Library's purposes and activities, and how his qualifications contribute to his achievement of such goals, the Board of Trustees has determined that Mr. Walcott's salary be increased to \$350,000, retroactive as of March 1, 2021.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [Unanimous]
MOVER:	Terri Thomson
SECONDER:	Judy E. Bergtraum Esq.
AYES:	Rodriguez Esq., Simons Ed. D, Shapiro Ed. D LCSW, Gutierrez, Bergtraum Esq., Gorton, Haddad Esq., Jackson, Kauffmann, Koerner Esq., Mihaltses, Patino, O'Connell, Thomson
EXCUSED:	Pauline Healy, Cloyette Harris-Stoute, George Russo Esq, Robert Santos Esq.

7. Conflicts of Interest Policy Revision (ID # 2611)

Sung Mo Kim, Chief Operating Officer and Sr. VP, gave the board a brief overview of the proposed Conflict of Interest (COI) policy revisions. He reported that the proposed policy includes three additional revisions to the COI policy. The proposed COI policy was updated to include that the COI forms must be shared with the board, as well as the Audit Committee. Mr. Kim reported that the proposed COI revision mirrors language in the Library's by-laws.

Board of Trustees Minutes

January 20, 2022

The recommended motion to the board was modified to include three additional revisions to the COI Policy as described orally by Mr. Kim.

The motion was moved by Andrew Jackson and seconded by Haeda Mihaltses. The motion was passed unanimously.

Recommended Motion for Consideration by the Board of Trustees:

I move that the Board of Trustees adopt an updated Conflicts of Interest Policy as set forth in the attachment and as amended.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [Unanimous]
MOVER:	Andrew P. Jackson
SECONDER:	Terri Thomson
AYES:	Rodriguez, Esq., Simons, Ed. D, Shapiro, Ed. D ,LCSW, Gutierrez, Bergtraum, Esq., Gorton, Haddad, Esq., Jackson, Kauffmann, Koerner, Esq., Mihaltses, Patino, O'Connell, Thomson
EXCUSED:	Pauline Healy, Cloyette Harris-Stoute, George Russo, Esq, Robert Santos, Esq.

B. Report Item(s)

1. Property/Casualty Insurance Program Update (ID # 2607)

RESULT:	PRESENTED
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2. QPL Workers' Compensation Self-Insurance Program Update (ID # 2606)

RESULT:	PRESENTED
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3. Payroll for the Month of December 2021 (ID # 2598)

RESULT:	PRESENTED
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4. Purchases Over \$50K - December 2021 (ID # 2610)

RESULT:	PRESENTED
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5. Personnel Report - December 2021 (ID # 2603)

RESULT:	PRESENTED
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IV. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Board chair, Michael Rodriguez, Esq. reported that LaNiece M. Ince, Executive Assistant for Dennis M. Walcott, will reach out to update the board members contact information.

Mr. Rodriguez asked that the Programming Committee chair, Andrew Jackson, provide an update to the board. Mr. Jackson reported that the Programming Committee has not met since its

January 20, 2022

inaugural committee meeting. However, he reported that due to the increase in COVID cases, all on-site programming, including story time sessions led by staff, has been suspended until further notice. However, the library will continue to offer virtual programs geared towards patrons of all ages.

Mr. Jackson also reported that in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the Library is offering an array of virtual programs and events for the month of January. In honor of Black History Month, the library has planned a series of virtual programs and events geared towards health and wellness in the black community.

He also reported that in the next several months, the Programs & Services Department would be utilizing city and state funding to support programming, purchase computers, offer an array of digital literacy and ESOL classes, and train customers on how to use hot spots and other technology.

The next Programming Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for late February. Once confirmed, the date and time will be shared with the board.

V. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Nick Buron, Chief Librarian and Sr. VP, reported that due to the recent surge in COVID cases, the Library has suspended floating staff, indoor programming, indoor tabling, outreach activities, and staff conference attendance until further notice.

Mr. Buron also reported that every year the board approves the required state annual reports. Due to the Library's current funding model, the Library failed the maintenance of effort report. The NYS Education Department (NYSED) will issue a letter asking the Library to explain the discrepancies.

Michael Tragale, Chief Financial Officer and Sr. VP, further explained that the alleged failure is a result of the library previously being permitted to front-load funding by the City in prior fiscal years, a situation that changed with the pandemic and a change in procedure by OMB. This led to an appearance in a reduction in funding from the City in the Library's annual reporting to the state (not an actual reduction). The Library is working with NYSED and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to resolve the discrepancies and will keep the board updated.

Sung Mo Kim, Chief Operating Officer and Sr. VP, reported that the Library is required to comply with Mayor de Blasio's employer COVID vaccine mandate. This mandate requires that any staff on site be fully vaccinated. Unvaccinated staff will be allowed to use Leave Without Pay (LWOP) for one month, and thereafter will be deemed to have voluntarily resign from the Library. The Library is working closely with the Union and staff to keep in compliance with the vaccine mandate.

Since the vaccine mandate went into effect, approximately 70 employees have been fully vaccinated and 30 employees have requested religious and medical accommodations, which requires biweekly testing. To date, 93.5% of library staff are fully vaccinated.

Susan Latham, Executive Director of the QPL Foundation, reported that the Foundation received approximately \$160,000 in end of year individual donations, a 6% increase from last year. She reported that the Foundation has received more online than mail donations, totaling \$299,000 in overall individual donations, which is a 23% increase from last year, with the average donation \$20 higher than in previous years.

January 20, 2022

Ms. Latham also reported that the Information & Technology Department (ITD) previously secured 2,000 hotspot and Wi-Fi devices from the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), for which the Revson Foundation and New York Community Trust are funding the installation at 40 library locations. NY Community Trust extended the invitation to apply for a \$300,000 grant to fund hotspot distribution, hire digital literacy staff, and install external Wi-Fi devices. The Revson Foundation has also invited the Foundation to apply for a \$100,000 grant to cover the additional cost of installing these Wi-Fi devices, as well as to install external seating areas at several library locations, for customers to use during the spring/summer months.

Ms. Latham also reported that the Robin Hood Foundation is providing a \$400,000 grant funding as part of their PowerFund. The grant will be used for the following three key components:

1. \$300,000 for the President's Council on Racial Equity (PCRE), to be used to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) measures;
2. \$75,000 for a consultant for the early learning staff to create a story time model and evaluation method to measure and tailor story time to meet community needs; and
3. \$50,000 for a self-directed leadership grant, which Mr. Walcott will be using to develop a program, in partnership with Queens College. The program will identify interested high school students attending college to receive their Masters in Library Science (MLS) degree. This program will provide internships, employment, support, mentorship, and upon completion of program, graduates to begin employment at the Library.

Ms. Latham reported that the Robin Hood Foundation is also providing pro-bono management assistance from McKinsey and Company. McKinsey will be working with library staff and board members to develop and implement a plan with benchmarks, goals, and a timeframe to increase the number of QPL card holders and borrowing activity, and to develop a strategy to increase activity and circulation. Ms. Latham also reported that QLF is also working to secure additional pro-bono assistance to update the Library's strategic plan. This will be an opportunity to secure a facilitator to assess and assist in updating the current strategic plan. Ms. Latham also reported that the gala is scheduled for June 8. Gala planning has commenced and the board will receive status updates.

Board trustee Andrew Jackson inquired about the status of the Corona Library expansion to the property next to Corona Library, which was previously owned by the Library. Mr. Walcott and Mr. Buron reported that several community residents advocated for keeping the house as a landmark because it was allegedly owned by Crockett Johnson, author of *Harold and the Purple Crayon*. However, these claims were not confirmed. Mr. Kim reported that the board previously approved the transfer of this property to the city, and the expansion of the Corona Library is currently in administrative review with the city.

January 20, 2022

Board trustee Haeda Mihaltses inquired about the status of the Flushing Library renovation project. Mr. Kim reported that the elevator construction project has commenced. The Department of Design and Construction is currently working to erect construction walls, which will allow staff and customers to safely use the library during construction. The library is anticipated to open to the public by Spring 2022.

He also stated that, as reported at the December 2021 board meeting, only one of the two boilers in the hybrid HVAC system is currently heating the Flushing Library. A feasibility study is currently being conducted regarding the installation of the new HVAC system. The Library is working with four vendors to address this: an engineering firm, electrical firm, general contractor, and a trailer-based equipment vendor that can provide a temporary solution to cool the library during the spring/summer months.

1. Key Performance Indicators Report - December 2021 (ID # 2604)

RESULT:	PRESENTED
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VI. ADJOURNMENT

1. Motion to Adjourn (ID # 2605)

Recommended Motion for Consideration:

I move that the meeting be adjourned.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [Unanimous]
MOVER:	Andrew P. Jackson
SECONDER:	Matthew M. Gorton
AYES:	Rodriguez Esq., Simons Ed. D, Shapiro Ed. D LCSW, Gutierrez, Bergtraum Esq., Gorton, Haddad Esq., Jackson, Kauffmann, Koerner Esq., Mihaltses, Patino, Santos Esq., O'Connell, Thomson
EXCUSED:	Pauline Healy, Cloyette Harris-Stoute, George Russo Esq

The meeting was closed at 8:24 PM.

Secretary