

Minutes

September 18, 2024

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Andrea Cobb, President; Sara Irish, Vice President; Theresa Pan Hosley, Trustee; Manny Santiago, Trustee; Elizabeth Bowman, Trustee

MEETING LOCATION

Wheelock Branch, 3722 North 26th Street, Tacoma WA, 98407

CALL TO ORDER

Called to order by President Cobb at 5:33pm

Present: Andrea Cobb, Theresa Pan Hosley (enters at 5:45pm), Manny Santiago, Elizabeth Bowman, Sara Irish, Kate Larsen

Staff: Gabby Fuentes, Maria Shackles, Lyndea Kelleher, Amita Lonial, Angelo Defazio, Lisa Bitney, Mariesa Bus, Zac Matthews, Perlita Payne, Manny Sandoval, Samie Iverson, Rebekah Messick

2 members of the public and Deputy Mayor Hines

LAND AND CULTURAL HISTORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONSENT AGENDA

RESOLUTION 24057

1. Minutes of the August 21, 2024, Regular Meeting
2. Financial Report for August 2024
3. HR Report for August 2024
4. Library Services Report for August 2024

Motion, Seconded, Approved

PAYMENT OF BILLS

RESOLUTION 24058: Payment of Bills Per Vouchers – Authorization

The Board authorizes the payment of bills per voucher as presented, and further, the Board approves and ratifies the checks issued in August 2024 by the City of Tacoma for Tacoma Public Library claims as summarized and documented in materials submitted to the Board.

Motion, Seconded, Approved

RESOLUTION 24059: Ratify Recurring Monthly Expenditures – Approval

The Board approves and ratifies the August 2024 payments for the City of Tacoma services provided to Tacoma Public Library, as presented.

Motion, Seconded, Approved

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Deputy Mayor Hines: Shared his appreciation for Kate and the work she has done in the past 7 years,

and his excitement for the new Director, Amita Lonial.

STAFF RECOGNITION – September Staff Anniversaries

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Library Director Transition Update
 - a. Search has come to an end. Will be taking action tonight according to the agenda.

BOARD ELECTIONS

NOMINATION OF OFFICERS – PRESIDENT

RESOLUTION 24060: ELECTION OF OFFICERS – PRESIDENT

Be it hereby resolved that the Board elects Andrea Cobb, as President of the Board of Trustees per the Tacoma Public Library - Rules and Regulations – Annual Meeting.

Sara Irish nominates Andrea Cobb for president. Andrea accepts. No discussion. Unanimous vote of approval.

NOMINATION OF OFFICERS – VICE-PRESIDENT

RESOLUTION 24061: ELECTION OF OFFICERS – VICE-PRESIDENT

Be it hereby resolved that the Board elects Manny Santiago, as Vice-President of the Board of Trustees per the Tacoma Public Library - Rules and Regulations – Annual Meeting.

Andrea Cobb nominates Manny Santiago. Manny accepts. No discussion. Unanimous vote of approval.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 24062: Recognizing Kate Larsen for Outstanding Service to Tacoma Public Library

WHEREAS, Kate Larsen has announced that she is stepping down after 7 years as Director of Tacoma Public Library where she provided visionary leadership, fostering a culture of innovation and inclusivity at the library while tirelessly advocating for equitable access to information for all Tacomans and increased resources for our community; and

WHEREAS, Director Larsen spearheaded the process to create a comprehensive, community focused Strategic Plan in 2018, starting with numerous Libraries Transform Tacoma input meetings, whose outcomes served as the foundation for the plan to inform library services moving forward; and

WHEREAS, Director Larsen successfully implemented Tacoma Public Library's Strategic Plan that has guided the library's growth and reflects the library's deep commitment to meeting the needs of our community, staff, and partners, enhancing library services and ensuring the library remains a vital resource for all; and

WHEREAS, Director Larsen strengthened the collaborative relationship between the Tacoma Public Library and the City of Tacoma resulting in the Library IT Uplift / Onboarding project, advancing the library's technology by decades and bringing the stability required for the library to advance its mission and vision; and

WHEREAS, Director Larsen has secured critical funding and resources to aid in the growth and stability of services and staff, including a remodel of the Main library first floor into a first-rate library with modern maker labs, children and teen areas, “Tacoma’s Livingroom”, and a second-floor community hub that houses mission-aligned partner organizations in one central location; and

WHEREAS, Director Larsen built strong partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and schools to further the library’s mission and impact and enhance the educational opportunities available to members of Tacoma’s community through increased programming and services with Tacoma Creates, the Tacoma Tool Library, Write253, Tacoma Public Schools, Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, Pierce County Voter Points of Assistance and countless other local organizations; and

WHEREAS, Director Larsen prioritized equity and access to reach a broader audience in response to Tacoma’s ever-changing community needs, including undertaking feasibility and site studies to restore library services to the Hilltop and Eastside neighborhoods and suspending the use of overdue fines and expanding material access to include wireless hotspots, podcast kits, sensory accessibility kits, naloxone, and COVID 19 tests; and

WHEREAS, Director Larsen’s restored and created critical staff positions such as Deputy Director, Outreach Librarian, Graphic Arts & Public Information Specialist, IT Analyst, Social Worker, Safety and Security Coordinator, Neighborhood Libraries Equity Manager, and created a new class of supervisors so current employees have a path to promotion within the organization; and

WHEREAS, Director Larsen skillfully and compassionately guided the Library through the 2020 global pandemic and economic crisis by quickly transitioning our services to virtual and drive-through options, implementing strict health and safety standards for the good of the public and library staff, and collaborated with local organizations to provide access to essential resources, and provided ongoing training and support for staff to adapt to new technologies and service models; and

WHEREAS, Director Larsen worked with library advocates and fundraisers for a successful resurgence of the long-dormant Tacoma Public Library Foundation, leading it to become a stalwart non-profit partner in advocacy and fundraising for sustained community engagement and financial support of key library programs and endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Director Larsen is a tireless advocate for the importance of libraries in fostering lifelong learning and launched the equity-focused Community Archives Center project, secured an unprecedented level of grant funding including from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Archive National Historical Publications and Records, American Library Association, and the Washington Department of Commerce, and received several prominent awards locally and nationally including two John Cotton Dana Awards for excellent strategic communications and the Leadership in Preservation award; and

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Library Board of Trustees recognizes and commends Kate Larsen for her outstanding service and contributions to Tacoma Public Library and the Tacoma community as Director of Tacoma Public Library and expresses its deepest gratitude for her unwavering commitment to our mission, vision, and values which has created a radically welcoming library for all.

RESOLUTION 24063: Approval of hiring contract and appointment of Amita Lonial as Library Director

Motion by Trustee Bowman: Pursuant to RCW 27.12.210 (4) and 42.30.110(g) I move that the Library Board of Trustees appoint Amita Lonial as Tacoma Public Library's next Director beginning on October 7th, 2024 with an annual salary at Step 7 of the Library Director Salary range, including all benefits as outlined in the offer letter of employment in the form on file in the office of the Human Resources Manager. Motion seconded by Trustee Santiago.

Discussion:

President Cobb: There are many factors that the Search Committee considered during the hiring process, such as our interest in providing opportunities for staff currently at the library and our interest in finding someone who will keep the current TPL work moving forward. We are excited to continue to support Amita's leadership.

Motion unanimously approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Larsen: Overview of Library snapshot. Announcement of additional partners for Community Hub.

Cobb: Asked when registration for Tacoma reads opens. Expressed excitement about new community hub partners.

TRUSTEES REPORT

Cobb: Reviewed Trustee appointments and board recruitment needs— last time the board used the City's process, so thinks we should do that again to recruit 2 new trustees. Just completed elections – does the President need to be on the Foundation board? Agreement that it can be the President, "or designee".

ADJOURNMENT

President Cobb adjourned the meeting at 6:13pm

The next regular Board meeting is Wednesday, October 16, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. at the Swasey Branch, 7001 Sixth Avenue, Tacoma WA, 98406.


Manny Santiago, Vice President


Amita Lonial, Secretary