

Statement from The Board of Trustees of the Guilderland Public Library regarding the Guilderland Public Library Investigation completed by Guidepost Solutions

The Board of Trustees of the Guilderland Public Library would like to thank the community for their feedback following closure of the café located inside the library as well as the community's understanding while an external investigation was completed. The administration, staff, and Board of Trustees of the GPL approached the situation with the seriousness the claims deserved. The Board wanted to be thorough and complete due diligence by contracting an outside investigator, Guidepost Solutions, to complete the investigation. We encourage the community to read the report for themselves.

The Board of Trustees has confidence in the investigation, findings, and assessment. Key elements of the report include the following:

- The team of investigators did not find that the incidents in the allegations were racially motivated.
- Guidepost did find that there was a lack of consensus among the staff on the vision for the café that led to a loss of support for the business from some staff.
- The investigation suggests that more could have been done to unify the vision for the café or to educate, inform, or create support for this endeavor amongst the staff. Conflicts were allowed to fester amongst GPL and Café staff without appropriate investigation, follow up, and remediation.

Guidepost Solutions' Guilderland Public Library Investigation report included the following recommendations, of which the Board and Administration are providing status updates:

1. *Provide Board training on fiduciary responsibilities, conflicts of interest, and the NYS civil service law.*

GPL Board members received customized training from the Upper Hudson Library System (UHLS) on Finance 101 for Library Trustees on June 17, 2024. The Board Development Committee will work to coordinate Board training in conflicts of interest and New York State Civil service law by June 30, 2025. All GPL Board members reviewed the Conflict of Interest Policy and signed the certification at the Annual Business Meeting on July 18, 2024.

2. *Hire and/or appoint a Compliance Officer tasked to conduct a risk evaluation and to conduct investigations, as set forth in the Discrimination and Harassment Policies; alternatively, hire a Human Resources professional capable of performing these tasks.*

Administration of the GPL is in the process of hiring a Human Resource Manager. Posting of the position closed on September 16, 2024, with a goal start date for the position of November 4, 2024. The Human Resources Manager will be appointed as a Compliance Officer by the Board.

3. *Provide the Library Executive team basic training on form and process of conducting and documenting investigations, securing evidence, and conducting interviews.*

The GPL Administration is working with GPL's Library Attorneys, Girvin & Ferlazzo, to formalize a training program that includes training on investigation documentation, securing evidence, and conducting interviews in compliance with state, civil service, and internal laws and regulations.

4. *Update the Employee Handbook and other relevant policies and procedures; and task the Compliance Officer to conduct annual updates of policies and procedures.*

GPL's Employee Handbook is currently in review by library Administration and Library Attorneys. Administration has confirmed that a revised version will be prepared, approved, and disseminated to current and future GPL employees by January 31, 2025.

5. *Create key performance indicators for the Executive Director and conduct regular evaluations of the Executive Director and the managerial staff.*

The Personnel Committee of the GPL Board is formalizing a process to establish goals, performance indicators, and evaluation cycle of the Director. The process and subsequent evaluations will be approved by the Board by February 20, 2025. All members of library administration will receive a formal annual evaluation from the Director or their supervisor on their anniversary date. This process began in August 2024.

6. *Delineate roles and responsibilities for all titles and conduct regular evaluations of staff.*

As new positions are filled, Administration and library department management will be delineating the roles and responsibilities for newly hired staff. Annual evaluations of all staff are in process. Revision of the roles and responsibilities of current staff is underway, with all position descriptions estimated to be completed by June 30, 2025.

When the Board of Trustees began their search for a vendor for the café space during the library's renovation, they sincerely hoped that the café would be an enhancement for the community, including the library and café staff, as well as an opportunity for a local business. It is unfortunate that hope was not fully realized.

GPL is committed to continuing to strive to be an inclusive and respectful workplace. The Board, Administration, and GPL staff are committed to serving the community, and upholding the standards of excellence and inclusiveness the town of Guilderland places upon them.