

March 19, 2025
MVPL Board of Trustees Meeting

Good evening Trustees, staff and fellow citizens, my name is Tamara Stewart.

Let me start by saying that I strongly disagree with your decision to require the public to email the Director with our name and what we want to say in order to speak during the Period of Public Expression. The library is not the City Council, and your decision is out of keeping with the ALA Bill of Rights that you will claim to uphold in Resolution #018-25 tonight.

What is wrong with this board? Why aren't you fulfilling your duties of care, loyalty and obedience to this library? I was at the January 15th meeting, and I witnessed when the 101 Summit resolution failed to get a motion and a second. Let me repeat, Resolution #099-24 failed at the January 15th meeting, and its passage at the illegal January 7th meeting doesn't count. You know this, yet all of you, except Trustee Thomas, allow Trustee Marable to lie about your vote and say that the resolution passed without making any attempt to correct her. What are you afraid of?

Why is Trustee Thomas the only one who is concerned that the library spent \$8,000 on the Jamaal Bowman reception without the event first going to the board for approval? The Director only has discretion for spending up to \$4,000, and the library was already way over its programs budget. I sincerely hope that taxpayer dollars weren't used to pay for the wine that was served at the reception.

Why are you trying to keep people from running for a seat on this board? For the first time in years, candidates had to come to the library in the middle of the day to pick up a print copy of the petition, rather than the petition being available online to download. Petitions only started being distributed on March 3rd, and now the website has been changed to say that candidates only had until March 14th to pick up a petition! Candidates have until April 30th to collect signatures and turn their petitions in to the school district. That's six weeks from now! The school district allows candidates to pick up petitions up to April 30th; why isn't the library doing the same thing? Given that the two appointed trustees are running to keep their seats, the decision to cut off potential candidates' opportunity to run six weeks before the deadline looks like election interference to limit the competition.

Fortunately for me, I picked up my petition on March 3rd, and I'm running for a seat on this board. I'm running because I've been advocating for this library since 1999 and I want to see MVPL thrive and provide the services that this community needs and deserves. If elected, I promise to adhere to the library's bylaws, Open Meetings Law, and all other laws that govern this institution. I will serve our library with integrity, transparency and decorum, and I will take my responsibility to act and vote in the best interests of this library seriously.

Thank you for your time and attention, and I respectfully request that the written version of these remarks be included in the board's record of today's Public Expression in BoardDocs.