

East Brunswick Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
April 22, 2025

Attendees:

Otu Amankwah (left 8:28 pm)
Wayne Christie (arr. 7:18 pm)
Dr. Kenneth Freedman
Patricia Palumbo
Colleen Talbot
Ashish Verma

Karen Parry, Library Director
Maria Carmelo, Executive Administrative Assistant
Vidya Karuppiah, Teen Representative

Ms. Palumbo called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. A roll call was made and a quorum was present. Ms. Palumbo stated that the meeting was advertised and the Open Public Meetings Act requirements were met.

All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes of March 18, 2025:

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2025 meeting. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Closed Session Minutes of March 18, 2025:

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve the closed session minutes of the March 18, 2025 meeting. Mr. Amankwah seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Public Participation:

Vidya Karuppiah presented the Teen Report. 153 teen volunteers put in service hours in the month of March, greeting patrons, assisting staff and assisting the library's Teen Associates with various programs. 62 teens attended programs, including Teen Dungeons & Dragons, the popular monthly Cool Science Stories & Experiments and continued to assist with the Chess and Debate Clubs.

The Friends of the Library were unable to attend tonight's meeting but shared their report via email. Bingo took place on March 18th at the library and they raised over \$3,000.00. The Friends will be having a calendar raffle during the month of May. Tickets are \$15.00 each and there will be 31 chances to win a prize during the month of May. Tickets are being sold at the Circulation desk and all prizes have been donated by local businesses. The Friends' May 15th meeting is being held at Sweet Tea tea house in Belmar and there will be tea and sweets to share,

as well as a presentation about tea. The Friends of the Library's 50th annual book sale will be held at the library the week of October 19th.

There was no Foundation Report.

Ms. Talbot presented the Township Report. The 2025 budget has been approved by the State and Town Counsel. The Township has hired Greg T. as their new Marketing Coordinator. Greg has been going around town shooting pieces for social media and the library is encouraged to use him for advertising programs and special events.

There was no School District Report.

There were no public comments.

Financial Report:

Ms. Parry presented the Financial Report. The 2025 budget is flat and the library is underspent from last year, however costs have risen. The library will not be filling positions unless absolutely necessary and will be focusing on making safety improvements within the building by adding a new emergency exit. Ms. Parry and the Board of Trustees will be inviting the East Brunswick Library Foundation to June's meeting to discuss fundraising ideas.

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve the April 23, 2025 Bill List. Mr. Amankwah seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Closed Session:

Mr. Amankwah made a motion to enter Closed Session at 8:10 pm. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

The Board returned to open session at 8:23 pm.

Ms. Palumbo shared that the trustees discussed Ms. Parry's contract in closed session and they all agree that Ms. Parry has done an exceptional job and has exceeded expectations as Library Director. The Board has decided that they wish to extend Ms. Parry's contract for one year, from August 1st, 2025 through July 31st 2026 at a salary of \$133,500. Ms. Parry expressed her appreciation to the Library Board and to all library staff for doing what they do to make the East Brunswick Library one of the best libraries in the state, adding that she has thoroughly enjoyed being in this position.

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve the extension of Ms. Parry's contract as Library Director. Dr. Freedman seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Correspondence:

There was no correspondence.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees:

There were no reports of standing or special committee reports.

Director's Report:

Ms. Parry presented the March 2025 Director's Report. Ms. Parry is excited to announce that the library has hired a new Youth Service Manager, Jennifer Fitzgerald. Ms. Fitzgerald is an East Brunswick resident, has over 10 years of experience as a librarian and is coming in from the Somerset library system with multiple achievements and awards. As a part of the Mayor's Mental Health Task Force, the library is hosting "Teen Stress-Less Night" on Friday, May 16th. The program is funded by the Opioid Settlement and there are multiple activities for Teens, including a nature walk around the pond, a visit by therapy dogs and pizza! This much anticipated program is being held in an effort to help teens deal with social media, body image and family issues.

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve the March 2025 Director's Report. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Old Business:

There was no old business.

New Business:

- a. Policy Update – Library Group Study Rooms
- b. Personnel Manual Update – Staff Volunteering
- c. Youth Services Librarian – Teen Coordinator Position
- d. Rescheduling of Staff Development Day & Revised Schedule of Days Closed

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve items a., b., c. & d. Dr. Freedman seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Resolution #10,887

Adopt the 2025 Library Budget

WHEREAS, as approved by the City Council on April 14, 2025, the 2025 East Brunswick Township municipal appropriation for the East Brunswick Public Library is \$4,250,000, and

WHEREAS, additional estimated revenues include a total of \$340,000.00;

WHEREAS, \$239,360.49 from prior year fund balances will also be allocated to the 2025 budget, and

WHEREAS, additional estimated State Aid in the amount of \$25,600.00 will be allocated to the 2025 budget,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees adopts the 2025 Library Budget in the amount of \$4,854,960.49

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve Resolution #10,877. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Information Items:

There were no information items.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Christie made a motion to adjourn at 8:55 pm. Ms. Talbot seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Wayne Christie, Secretary