

East Brunswick Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
August 18, 2026

Attendees:

Otu Amankwah (arr. 7:28 pm)
Dr. Kenneth Freedman (left 7:28 pm)
Lisa Gurevich
Patricia Palumbo
Dr. Bernard Rosenthal
Colleen Talbot

Karen Parry, Library Director
Maria Carmelo, Executive Administrative Assistant
Margaret Pemberton, Co-President, Friends of the Library
Alexa Backhouse, Teen Representative

Ms. Palumbo called the meeting to order at 7:11 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 June 16, 2026:

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2026 meeting. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Closed Session Minutes of June 16, 2026:

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve the closed session minutes of the June 16, 2026 meeting. Ms. Palumbo seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Minutes of August 4, 2026 Special Meeting:

Ms. Gurevich made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2026 special meeting. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Closed Session Minutes of August 4, 2026 Special Meeting:

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve the closed session minutes of the August 4, 2026 special meeting. Ms. Palumbo seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Public Participation:

Alexa Backhouse presented the June and July Teen Reports. In June there were 46 volunteers that completed 73 hours of service, and in July there were 64 volunteers that completed over 95 hours of service, including things like decorating the makerspace windows and door, helping prepare for summer reading, and working at the library-wide Pride event. Applications for new teen volunteers were open for the month of June, and over 70 teens applied to join TAG. Orientations for new members were held in July. Applications will be closed again until December to keep the number of teen volunteers manageable. New TAG Executive Board Members had their first meeting with existing Executive Board members to discuss responsibilities and projects. We're looking forward to working with our three new members and three continuing members. The Teen Summer Reading Program began on June 25th, and 40 teens have signed up so far. Students entering grades 7-12 can earn prizes like free books and craft kits for reading, completing challenges, and attending programs. Several teens have already claimed their first prize! The new TAG members attended virtual orientations, and many of them have made a great first impression helping with our large array of summer programs. Our new Executive Board members had their first big task with presenting the slideshow with volunteering information to orientation attendees. Bedazzling proved to be the most popular program in July, and many were asking for additional similar events. Most of the teens brought their own items to bedazzle, like Tamagotchis and journals. Teen volunteers helped go through the teen booklist binders. These binders help readers find suggested titles by genre. The teens weeded out which titles were no longer owned, and Teen Librarian Dana is updating them with more recent titles and adding a new "Romantasy" binder, as well as Manga and graphic recommendations to each existing genre.

Ms. Pemberton presented the Friends Report. The Friends hosted Bunco at the VFW last Friday and raised \$180.00. Things started off slowly but 20 players ended up attending and the Friends have been asked to make Bunco a monthly event by numerous attendees. The Friends Fundraising Committee met last night to discuss and confirm events through June 2027. Next year is the library's 60th anniversary and the Friends are planning on meeting with librarian Martha Hess to get some input on special events and learn more about the history of the library. Dine to Donate at EB Chinese is Wednesday, August 26th and the annual Clothing Drive is coming up soon.

There was no Township Report.

There was no School District Report.

The East Brunswick Library Foundation hosted an Ice Cream Truck at the library to thank staff for doing a great job. Patrons were invited to enjoy some ice cream as well! Board members discussed the preliminary plans submitted by Settembrino Architects for the outdoor patio which will be funded by the East Brunswick Library Foundation.

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the revised rendering of the proposed patio and door as submitted by Settembrino Architects with the provision that it comes in at the budgeted amount as approved by the East Brunswick Library Foundation and the East Brunswick Library Board of

Trustees. Dr. Rosenthal seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

There were no Public Comments.

Financial Report:

Ms. Parry presented the Financial Report. 26 Cameras were installed and hooked up to the police department. The cost of the cameras and installation came to about \$45,000.00. There will also be a camera at the outdoor patio once it is completed next year. The 911 inform system will be in effect next month. The system uses GPS and cell phone towers to locate and ping callers within 3 feet and EBPD will have the ability to remotely lock the building down. This is one of many safety enhancements made to the library building in the past year.

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve the August 19, 2026 Bill List. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Closed Session:

Ms. Palumbo made a motion to enter closed session at 7:30 pm. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

The Board returned to open session at 8:02 pm.

Ms. Palumbo made a motion to rename the Sidebar Agreement between CWA 1031 and the East Brunswick Public Library to First Amendment to Collective Bargaining Agreement and to approve same with noted changes. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Director's Report:

Ms. Parry presented the Director's Report. It has been a busy couple of months. The Colors of India finale took place last Saturday, following a week full of workshops, including Bollywood, Bhangra, Quilling, a Special Needs Workshop and an Acting Workshop with the Indian Cultural Society. The library held its first Youth Entrepreneurs Market, where children from 6 years old through high school age sold crafts in the library. Over 60 children participated in this exciting event!

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve the June and July 2026 Director's Report. Mr. Amankwah seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

New Business:

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve the revised Youth Safety Policy. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Mr. Amankwah made a motion to reschedule the September Library Board of Trustees meeting from Tuesday, September 15th to Tuesday, September 22nd. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Dr. Rosenthal made a motion to adjourn at 8:38 pm. Ms. Talbot seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Ms. Lisa Gurevich, Secretary