

East Brunswick Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
February 24, 2026

Attendees:

Dr. Kenneth Freedman
Lisa Gurevich
Patricia Palumbo
Dr. Bernard Rosenthal
Colleen Talbot

Karen Parry, Library Director
Maria Carmelo, Executive Administrative Assistant
Wayne Christie

Ms. Palumbo called the meeting to order at 7:05 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 January 20, 2026:

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2026 meeting. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Dr. Freedman.

Public Participation:

The Teens shared their January Teen Report by email as a representative was unable to make tonight's meeting. There were 75 teen volunteers in the month of January that completed a total of 86 hours. Some of the tasks they helped with included sorting our large collection of Legos in preparation for Lego programs and pulling books from weeding lists to help free up space on the shelves for new items. Social work intern Stephanie started a new series of programs designed to help both teens and parents of teens navigate things like college applications and getting jobs. Cornerstone Solution also helped our young patrons by hosting a program about financing college called "Cracking the Code". Teen volunteer Lilian hosted her bi-monthly Pokémon club, which saw over two dozen participants that wanted to stay late to keep trading cards!

The Friends of the Library were unable to attend tonight's meeting but emailed their monthly report to let the board know they will be hosting their annual Bingo Night at the library on Friday, March 27th. The Friends will also be having their Calendar Raffle in May and will start selling tickets in April.

There was no Township Report.

There was no School District Report.

There were no Public Comments.

Introduction – Circulation & Finance Manager, Tracey Squires

Circulation and Finance Manager, Tracey Squires was introduced to the board members and took them on a tour of the circulation department.

Financial Report:

Ms. Parry presented the Financial Report. The library was underspent by about \$344,000 from last year, which is good news. Ms. Parry asked the board for permission to eliminate the \$1.00 media fee the library currently charges for DVD's and video games.

Dr. Rosenthal made a motion to approve the elimination of media fees. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the February 25, 2026 Bill List. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Director's Report:

Effective March 1, 2026, all public bodies are required to create a section on their website where all public notices are to be posted, as well as share the link to their public notice page with the Secretary of State to be added to a statewide directory. The library website now has a link named "Legal Notices", where all public notices, including board meeting notices and Requests for Proposals, will be posted for seven days and then moved to an archive page. This is in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. A memo was sent out to all part time staff notifying them of the elimination of a longstanding tradition of library staff members taking unpaid time off. Ms. Parry met with Ed Mendlowitz of the Library Foundation to discuss the addition of an outdoor patio and exit door. Mr. Mendlowitz agreed on behalf of the Library Foundation to fund the project. The addition of an outdoor space aligns with the library's health initiative and Mayor's Mental Health initiative.

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

Old Business:

Committee Assignments were presented to the board based on preference.

2026 Library Board of Trustees Committee Assignments

<u>Building</u>	<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Director Goals</u>
Dr. Kenneth Freedman	Patricia Palumbo	Lisa Gurevich
Lisa Gurevich	Colleen Talbot	Otu Amankwah
Dr. Bernard Rosenthal	Dr. Kenneth Freedman	Dr. Bernard Rosenthal
Patricia Palumbo	Joseph Palombit	Dr. Joyce Boley
<u>Finance</u>	<u>Policy</u>	<u>Patio</u>
Patricia Palumbo	Patricia Palumbo	Patricia Palumbo
Dr. Kenneth Freedman	Dr. Kenneth Freedman	Dr. Kenneth Freedman
Ashish Verma	Colleen Talbot	Lisa Gurevich
Otu Amankwah	Joseph Palombit	Colleen Talbot

New Business:

Resolution #10,906

Construction of an Outdoor Patio and Exit Door

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees authorize the construction of a 52’ x 20’ outdoor patio and exit door, fully funded by the Library Foundation; and

WHEREAS, the patio that would expand the library’s usable space and enrich the Library experience by connecting patrons with nature and natural elements. The patio would add a new dimension to the library experience that includes physical and numerous psychological benefits in addition to expanded programming options in a relaxed and sensory-friendly outdoor setting.

WHEREAS, it is projected that the project will cost between **\$185,000 and a maximum of \$225,000** to cover the costs of Soil Grading; Structural Engineer and Architect; Patio hardscape materials and installation; Construction of an Exit Door; Electrician to install outdoor lighting; and a Landscaper to create a tranquil, nature-inspired setting with plants, trees, and shrubs.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees authorizes the construction of an outdoor patio and exit door, fully funded by the Library Foundation.

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve Resolution #10,906 – Construction of an Outdoor Patio and Exit Door. Ms. Palumbo seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Ms. Talbot made a motion to adjourn at 8:33 pm. Dr. Freedman seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Ms. Lisa Gurevich, Secretary