

East Brunswick Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
January 20, 2026

Attendees:

Dr. Joyce Boley	Karen Parry, Library Director
Lisa Gurevich	Maria Carmelo, Executive Administrative Assistant
Joseph Palombit	Bilagia Awad, Teen Representative
Patricia Palumbo	Debbie LeSeur, President, President. Friends of the Library
Dr. Bernard Rosenthal	Deborah Matra-Grossman, VP Book Sale, Friends of the Library
Colleen Talbot	Wayne Christie
Ashish Verma (arr. 7:08 pm)	

Ms. Palumbo called the meeting to order at 7:01 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.

Introduction – Incoming Board Member Dr. Bernard Rosenthal

The Library Board of Trustees were introduced to new Board Member Dr. Bernard Rosenthal. Dr. Rosenthal is a physician specializing in Family Medicine. Dr. Rosenthal also serves on the East Brunswick Advisory Health Council and will be a great addition to the board for the library’s strong emphasis on healthcare.

Minutes of November 18, 2025:

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2025 meeting. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Boley, Ms. Gurevich, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Mr. Palombit and Ms. Palumbo.

Closed Session Minutes of November 18, 2025:

Ms. Gurevich made a motion to approve the closed session minutes of the November 18, 2025 meeting. Dr. Boley seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Boley, Ms. Gurevich, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Mr. Palombit and Ms. Palumbo.

Public Participation:

Bilagia Awad presented the November and December Teen Report. There were 66 teen volunteers in the month of November that completed a total of 66.75 hours, doing tasks including helping with and running their own programs, doing themed displays, and helping prep the children’s bulletin board. November finished out the “Vote for Manga Governor of New Jersey” interactive display, where teens could participate in the general election after

choosing their candidates in the primary. Anya Forger from Spy x Family won by 2 votes! The project to relabel the fantasy books is underway, and the new teen furniture was ordered with an expected arrival date in early 2026. In December there were 81 volunteer hours helping with tasks such as weeding, craft prep, and redecorating the teen space. The space now has post-it art on the windows reflecting a winter theme, as well as a new bulletin board and end cap displays. Teen events in December included Young Writer's Group, run by teen volunteer and executive board member Myer, as well as holiday cookie decorating.

Ms. LeSeur presented the Friends Report. The Friends Bling Sale was a success and a great time, raising \$6,946.79 in a day and a half. The in house Bling Sale cabinet has raised over \$7,000.00 since it's been up. The Friends are always accepting donations. The Puzzle and Game Sale has been rescheduled to Sunday, February 1st. Bunco is scheduled for Friday, February 6th and will be Valentine's Day themed. The Friends will be rescheduling International Desert Day, please check the library's website for updates.

Mayor Cohen presented the Town Hall for the Library Board. Key topics included redevelopment, the budget, projects and goals. Mayor Cohen discussed plans for the expansion of the Community Arts Center in 2026, with an outdoor theater, as well as indoor recreation at the Brunswick Square Mall site and a grant that was received for a pool at one of the schools. The Ice Rink is opening within the next two weeks. Local Women and Minority Owned Businesses were proudly used in the construction of the ice rink. The project came in under budget and ahead of schedule and the schools now have a home ice hockey rink!

Dr. Boley presented the School District Report. The schools are welcoming new Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Evelyn Mamman. Schools were closed for winter recess. The Course Guide for the 2026-2027 school year is available and scheduling has begun. Schools will be closed in observance of Orthodox Christmas and Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January and President's day in February. Band and chorus concerts are in full swing and they sound great!

There were no Public Comments.

Financial Report:

Ms. Parry presented the Financial Report. The library closed out 2025 at 94% expended budget wise. We are handling funds judiciously until we receive our final budget number from the town. Library funding is calculated by a third of a mil formula as a minimum budget and East Brunswick Township provides additional funding to the library. Additional revenue is earned through passports, fines, proctoring fees, vending machines and print, fax and photocopy fees. State Aid and E-Rate funds are also included in the budget. Ms. Parry met with Edward Mendlowitz of the Library Foundation and also worked with Business Administrator Joseph Criscuolo to get a rough estimate for the patio and camera installation at the library. A KnoxBox was installed outside the library entrance to allow Firefighters to obtain access to areas of the library that are closed off to the public in the event of a fire emergency.

Mr. Palombit made a motion to approve the January 21, 2026 Bill List. Dr. Boley seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Boley, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Director’s Report:

Ms. Parry presented the Director’s Report. There were approximately 250,000 in person visitors at the library in 2025 and about 500,000 patrons used services through our website. The library’s big focus is on inclusivity with programs offered. Some popular programs include Memory Café, Next Chapter Book Club, Rainbow Reads and our monthly Sensory Friendly Browsing Hour, where the library opens an hour early one Sunday every month to offer a quiet and calm experience for patrons of all ages with sensory sensitivities. Other popular programs include Repair Café, which focuses on sustainability and Craft Swap. The library, along with the Mayor’s Mental Health Task Force are planning an East Brunswick Stress Less Day on April 11th for people of all ages to create affirmation signs, enjoy pre-packaged food and take a walk around the pond with alpacas!

Ms. Gurevich made a motion to approve the November and December 2025 Director’s Reports. Mr. Verma seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Boley, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Consent Agenda:

Resolution #10,897

Naming Authorized Banks

BE IT RESOLVED that the Library Board of Trustees approves the following and their successors and assigns as its authorized banks in which funds may be deposited or invested in the name of the East Brunswick Public Library.

- TD Bank

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the following individuals be authorized as signatories and empowered to invest funds on behalf of the Library Board of Trustees: The Board Treasurer; Karen Parry, Library Director; and Padmaja Krishna, Accounting Clerk.

Resolution #10,898

Naming Official Newspapers for 2026

BE IT RESOLVED by the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees that the *Home News Tribune* and the *Asbury Park Press* are hereby designated as official newspapers for the East Brunswick Public Library.

Resolution #10,899

To Approve State Contract Purchases

WHEREAS, the purchase of goods and services by local contracting units is authorized by the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-12; and

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Public Library purchases commodities from authorized vendors under the State Of New Jersey Cooperative Purchasing Program 1-N.J.C.P.; and

WHEREAS, utilization of State contracts represents the best prices available;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees that the aggregate purchases in 2026 from the following State contract vendors may exceed \$26,000:

- Demco
- HP Inc.
- W.B. Mason Co Inc.
- SHI International

Resolution #10,900

**Authorizing the Library Director to
Make, Negotiate, & Award Certain Contracts up to the Bid Threshold**

WHEREAS, the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-3 provides that when the cost or price of any contract awarded by the contracting agent in the aggregate does not exceed in a contract year the total sum of \$17,500.00, the contract may be awarded by a purchasing agent or other employee so designated by the governing body when so authorized by resolution without public advertising for bids; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees may designate the Library Director as the contracting agent and the governing body of any contracting unit, in this case the Board of Trustees of the East Brunswick Public Library, may adopt a resolution to set a lower threshold for the receipt of public bids or the solicitation of competitive quotations; and

WHEREAS, effective January 1, 2026, the bid threshold has been established at \$17,500.00.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the East Brunswick Library Board of Trustees ratifies its designation of the Library Director as the contracting agent so authorized to make, negotiate and award contracts in the amount up to the bid threshold without the need for advertising for bids, but all such contracts in excess of \$15,000.00 shall be furnished to the Board of Trustees before they are signed and all change orders shall be governed by New Jersey Administrative Code, including, but not limited to, N.J.A.C. 5:30-11.1 through 5:30-11.10, and change orders shall not be used to substantially change the quality or character of any items or work to be provided.

Resolution #10,901

Appointing a Library Board Attorney

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees authorized the Township of East Brunswick to utilize its website for the benefit of the East Brunswick Public Library and to publish a legal advertisement for Requests For Quotations for the position of Library Board Attorney; and

WHEREAS, the Library Board received Qualification Statements from Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri, Jacobs, LLC – Matthew Giacobbe, Esq. and Weiner Law Group, LLP – Douglas Zucker, Esq.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees that it hereby appoints Weiner Law Group, LLP – Douglas Zucker, Esq., as Library Board Attorney, effective January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, in accordance with the response to the Request for Quotations for the provision of professional services for the position of East Brunswick Public Library. In the case of a conflict for Weiner Law Group, LLP – Douglas Zucker, Esq., Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri, Jacobs, LLC – Matthew Giacobbe, Esq. will serve as Library Board Attorney.

Resolution #10,902

Appointing Library Board Conflict Counsel

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees authorized the Township of East Brunswick to utilize its website for the benefit of the East Brunswick Public Library and to publish a legal advertisement for Requests For Quotations for the position of Library Labor Counsel; and

WHEREAS, the Library Board received Qualification Statements from Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri, Jacobs, LLC – Matthew Giacobbe, Esq.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees that it hereby appoints Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri, Jacobs, LLC – Matthew Giacobbe, Esq. as Library Board Conflict Counsel, effective January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, in accordance with the response to the Request for Quotations for the provision of professional services for the position of East Brunswick Public Library.

Resolution #10,904

Appointment of Auditor for 2025 Audit

WHEREAS, NJSA 40A:5-4 requires that the Board of Trustees appoint a registered municipal accountant to audit the library's financial records; and

WHEREAS, PKF O'Connor Davies, LLP has submitted a proposal to perform the audit for 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Township of East Brunswick has appointed PKF O'Connor Davies, LLP to perform its 2025 audit; and

WHEREAS, the Local Public Contracts Law (NJSA 40:11-1 et seq.) requires that the Resolution authorizing the award of a contract for professional services without competitive bids be publicly advertised;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that

1. The Board of Trustees of the East Brunswick Public Library appoints PKF O'Connor Davies, LLP to perform the library's 2025 audit at an estimated fee of \$8,000.
2. This contract is awarded without competitive bidding as a professional service [NJSA 40A:11-(1)].
3. Notice of this contract award shall be published in the *Home News Tribune* within ten (10) days after passage of same.

I certify the above to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees at a meeting held on January 20, 2026.

Resolution #10,905

Temporary 2026 Library Budget

WHEREAS, the Township of East Brunswick will approve the municipal budget, including the library appropriation, later in the year 2026; and

WHEREAS, the library needs funding in order to operate; and

WHEREAS, it was determined that the temporary budget for 2026, based on 1/3 mill library funding is \$3,697,062.00,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees approves a temporary budget of \$3,697,062.00.

Mr. Palombit made a motion to approve Resolutions 10,897 through 10,905. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Boley, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Old Business:

Ms. Parry discussed the 2026 budget and board training requirements with the board members.

New Business:

Nomination & Election of Officers:

Ms. Palumbo opened up the floor for nominations.

President: Ms. Palumbo was nominated by Mr. Palombit. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Boley, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Dr. Rosenthal, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Ms. Palumbo.

Vice President: Dr. Freedman was nominated by Ms. Gurevich. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Boley, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Treasurer: Mr. Verma was nominated by Ms. Palumbo. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Boley, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Mr. Verma.

Treasurer: Mr. Verma was nominated by Ms. Palumbo. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Boley, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal and Ms. Talbot. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Mr. Verma.

Secretary: Ms. Gurevich was nominated by Ms. Palumbo. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Boley, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo, Dr. Rosenthal, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Ms. Gurevich.

Special Resolution Honoring Wayne Christie:

Ms. Palumbo presented a Special Resolution Honoring Wayne Christie:

WHEREAS, Wayne Christie has served the people of East Brunswick as a member of the Library Board of Trustees from July 11, 2013 to January 7, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Wayne has served as Secretary on the Board of the East Brunswick Public Library;

WHEREAS, Wayne has also served the East Brunswick Public Library by serving on the Board's Building, Policy & Finance Committees; and

WHEREAS, Wayne helped to lead the library through unprecedented changes due to a worldwide pandemic, and

WHEREAS, the Library Staff and Administration could always count on Wayne as an advocate for their concerns;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees, in great appreciation, acknowledges and thanks Wayne Christie for his outstanding service to the Library and wishes him happiness and health in the many years ahead.

The board members thanked Mr. Christie for his many years of service on the East Brunswick Library Board of Trustees and wished him all the best in the years ahead.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Palombit made a motion to adjourn at 8:49 pm. Ms. Talbot seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Ms. Lisa Gurevich, Secretary