

East Brunswick Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
November 18, 2025

Attendees:

Otu Amankwah	Karen Parry, Library Director
Dr. Joyce Boley	Maria Carmelo, Executive Administrative Assistant
Wayne Christie (arr. 7:06 pm)	Myer Kodsy, Teen Representative
Dr. Kenneth Freedman	Muyassarkhan Abdurasulova, Teen Representative
Lisa Gurevich	Debbie LeSeur, President, Friends of the Library
Colleen Talbot	Deborah Matra-Grossman, VP Book Sale, Friends of the Library
Ashish Verma	Robin Rushfield, Treasurer, Friends of the Library

Mr. Amankwah called the meeting to order at 7:02 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 October 21, 2025:

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2025 meeting. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Boley, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Mr. Amankwah.

Closed Session Minutes of October 21, 2025:

Ms. Gurevich made a motion to approve the closed session minutes of the October 21, 2025 meeting. Dr. Boley seconded. Voting yes: Dr. Boley, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Mr. Amankwah.

Public Participation:

Muyassarkhan Abdurasulova and Myer Kodsy presented the Teen Report. 89 volunteers contributed a total of 121 hours of their time during the month of October. This includes the many teen volunteers that helped library staff run a busy and successful Diwali program. Teens also put together themed endcaps including some of their favorite books to recommend to other teens. Volunteer Rafaela started a series of programs to help kids learn public speaking. Other programs include trick-or-treat tote bags and a teen resume building workshop that was hosted by the library's new social work intern. There was also a month-long "Vote for Manga Governor of New Jersey" display by the Manga collection where participants could vote in the "primaries" for which Manga characters they would like to see run against each other for Governor. The event teaches how primary and general elections work, as well as promotes the

Manga collection. Many teens cast their vote and the top two candidates face off in a final election in November. Teens have started using the teen kits with art and school supplies and have given positive feedback about the kits. Work began on reclassifying the genres of the Young Adult books to make the collection more browsable and accessible.

Ms. Rushfield presented the Friends Report. The Friends had a wonderful book sale, which raised \$21,331.15. The Friends appreciate the library's consideration during the weeklong event. The in-house book sale has raised \$8,197.55. Thank you to Cindy and Criselda of the library's Technical Processing Department for their hard work throughout the year in keeping the in-house sale successful. Bunco raised \$360.00 and the Handmade Craft Sale raised \$800.00 from vendor tables and about \$200.00 from items sold by the Friends of the Library.

Ms. Talbot presented the Township report. Mayor Cohen is currently attending the annual New Jersey League of Municipalities Conference in Atlantic City. The Mayor's Gala will be held on Tuesday, December 9th at the Park Chateau.

Dr. Boley presented the School District Report. New School Superintendent Dr. Evelyn Mamman will begin on December 1st and we wish Dr. Valeski all the best in his retirement. On October 30th, the district hosted a Math Night for grades K-6. Parents attended to learn about the exciting math learning happening in classrooms. Students enjoyed a very successful Halloween event. East Brunswick High School hosted a "Trick or Treat" event, where high school students from various clubs engaged younger students in activities throughout the building. Librarian Paul Kibala will attend ESL Parent Night tomorrow at Hammarskjold Upper Elementary School and will share with families the resources available through the East Brunswick Public Library.

There were no Public Comments.

Financial Report:

Ms. Parry presented the Financial Report. Ms. Parry stated that the management team are putting numbers together for next year's budget. Ms. Parry advised the board that no positions will be backfilled because of pending, yet undetermined, cuts to the library budget from municipal appropriations. The board expressed concern that the library has staffed our public service desks with many paraprofessionals instead of MLS-level librarians. The director stated that NJ Statute requires an MLS (or MLIS) degree in order to conduct research and that paraprofessionals bring value, but their services are limited to programming and finding items in the collection for patrons. Per New Jersey Statute, paraprofessionals are not permitted, nor trained, to conduct health, business, or any other type of customized research. The director expressed that it is misleading to the taxpayers who expect a professional-level librarian, especially on weekends. The library is looking at large capital expenses in 2026, including a new Genetec camera system that is connected to the police department. This will impact the 2026 budget as a capital expense. The library will also be migrating to the 911 Inform system in early 2026 to align with the township. This is a cloud-based 911 system that uses cell towers to pinpoint exact locations of 911 calls. The Police Department will be able to remotely lock the building down in the event of an active emergency.

Ms. Gurevich made a motion to approve the November 19, 2025 Bill List. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Director's Report:

Ms. Parry presented the Director's Report. We are working with Mayor Cohen and the East Brunswick Advisory Health Council on a Women's Pelvic Health and Birth Control Series. The library won a 2025 Environmental Sustainability Award for our partnership with the EB Sustainability Task Force and the Friends of the EB Environmental Commission and a Good Service Award from the Indian Cultural Society. ICS will be awarding the library with \$500.00 which will be spent on physical and mental health. The library's emergency procedures were updated and reviewed by police chief John Kosik at Staff Development Day in October and a fire drill was performed on November 17th. The library will be purchasing a Knox Box that will contain keys to the library building and interior doors to give the Fire Department access to all areas of the building, as well as access to the fire alarm panel. Tween Stress-Less night with the Mental Health Task Force was a success on November 14th. The program hosted 92 children in grades 5 through 7 and their parents for a fun evening of crafts, a visit from therapy animals, pizza, ice cream sundaes and more! NJ4S did a presentation for parents on identifying signs of mental stress and also spoke with the children about mental health and peer pressure. Mayor Cohen attended the event as well. The Mental Health Task Force will be organizing a walk around the municipal pond in the spring to relay the message that it is OK to not be OK and it is OK to ask for help.

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

Closed Session:

Ms. Talbot made a motion to enter Closed Session at 8:02 pm. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Mr. Christie made a motion to leave Closed Session at 8:20 pm. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Old Business:

A revision to the Cultural and Community Celebrations Policy was presented to the board, requiring participating organizations to comply with all state and local ordinances.

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve the revised Cultural and Community Celebrations Policy. Dr. Boley seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

New Business:

After receiving complaints from patrons about a vendor selling politically charged items at the Friends Handmade Craft Sale, Ms. Parry discussed with the board the following section of the library's Code of Conduct:

Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to the following:
Proselytizing, campaigning, or attempting to persuade a library patron or staff member with regard to any religious or political belief(s), opinion(s), or viewpoint(s), however, discussions of religious and political belief(s), opinion(s), or viewpoint(s) may be permitted if part of a pre-approved program, which includes these topics as part of the intended program.

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the consultation with the library attorney to develop a policy to be used for vendors and programs that is compliant with constitutional law. Mr. Christie seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Resolution #10,893

**RESOLUTION AWARDING CONTRACT FOR
REPLACEMENT OF LIBRARY FIREPLACE
TO ZOSEMAX FIREPLACE EXPERTS
7 COUNTY ROAD, JACKSON, NJ 08527**

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Public Library, issued a Request for Quotation (RFQ”) to be received by the Municipal Clerk of the Township, for the replacement of the library fireplace and proposals were received on September 24, 2025, from:

Zosemax Fireplace Experts
7 County Road
Jackson, NJ 08527
in the amount of \$11,707.00; and

on March 6, 2025, from:

East Coast Fireplace & Patio
313 NJ-33
Manalapan, NJ 07726
in the amount of \$7,887.00;

WHEREAS, funds are available in the Building Reserve Restricted Fund; and

WHEREAS, the Proposal submitted by Zosemax Fireplace Experts is responsive to the RFQ and for qualitative reasons is preferred by the East Brunswick Public Library.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees that it accepts the Proposal submitted by Zosemax Fireplace Experts and awards a Contract in the amount of \$11,707.00 and subject to the furnishing of options set forth on Schedule “A” annexed hereto.

Ms. Gurevich made a motion to approve Resolution #10,893 – Awarding a Contract for Fireplace Replacement. Dr. Boley seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Resolution #10,894

**Authorizing Township of East Brunswick to Advertise for
Library Board Attorney
Under the Fair and Open Process for Professional Contracts**

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Township Council has adopted a proposal for a Fair and Open Process for the award of professional contracts and contracts for extraordinary unspecifiable services; and

WHEREAS, the Township of East Brunswick has invited the Library Board to utilize the services of the Township of East Brunswick website for the purposes of receiving Requests for Quotations for the position of Library Board Attorney;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Library Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the Township of East Brunswick to utilize its website for the benefit of the East Brunswick Public Library and specifically to advertise for Requests for Quotations for the position of Library Board Attorney.

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve Resolution #10,894 – Authorize Township to Advertise for Library Board Attorney. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Resolution #10,895

**Authorizing Township of East Brunswick to Advertise for
Library Labor Counsel
Under the Fair and Open Process for Professional Contracts**

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Township Council has adopted a proposal for a Fair and Open Process for the award of professional contracts and contracts for extraordinary unspecifiable services; and

WHEREAS, the Township of East Brunswick has invited the Library Board to utilize the services of the Township of East Brunswick website for the purposes of receiving Requests for Quotations for the position of Library Labor Counsel;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Library Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the Township of East Brunswick to utilize its website for the benefit of the East Brunswick Public Library and specifically to advertise for Requests for Quotations for the position of Library Labor Counsel.

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve Resolution #10,895 – Authorize Township to Advertise for Library Labor Counsel. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Resolution #10,896

2026 Salary Increases

WHEREAS the Library Administration and Library Board Finance Committee has determined the following raises to be financially feasible; and

WHEREAS the Library Administration and Board of Trustees acknowledge the exceptional work of the East Brunswick Public Library staff;

BE IT RESOLVED that the 2026 salary increase will be 3.00% for all East Brunswick Public Library staff exempt from the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The 2026 salary increase will be 2.5% for all East Brunswick Library staff members of the Collective Bargaining Agreement as per their contract dated January 1, 2024. These raises will be effective January 1, 2026.

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve Resolution #10,896 – 2026 Salary Increases. Dr. Boley seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

The Library Board discussed and approved the following 2026 Board Meeting Dates:

All 2026 meetings will be held starting at 7:00 pm, at the East Brunswick Public Library, 2 Jean Walling Civic Center, East Brunswick, NJ:

January 20	July 21
February 24	August 18
March 17	September 15
April 21	October 20
May 19	November 17
June 16	December 15

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve the 2026 Library Board of Trustees Meeting Dates. Dr. Boley seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Christie made a motion to adjourn at 8:31 pm. Dr. Boley seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Wayne Christie, Secretary