

East Brunswick Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
August 22, 2023

Attendees:

Otu Amankwah
Wayne Christie
Dr. Ken Freedman
Lisa Gurevich
Joseph Palombit
Patricia Palumbo
Verne Whitlock

John Arthur, Library Director
Maria Carmelo, Exec. Admin. Assistant
Zainab Jaorawala, Teen Representative

Township Attendees:
Mayor Brad Cohen

Mr. Amankwah called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. A roll call was made and a quorum was present. Mr. Amankwah stated that the meeting was advertised and the Open Public Meeting Act requirements were met.

All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes of July 18, 2023:

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 18, 2023 meeting.
Mr. Christie seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich
Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Public Participation:

Zainab Jaorawala provided the July Teen Report. During the month of July, the teens assisted Teen Associate Sarah Zyto with multiple programs, including Brownies & Board Games and the Red Light Paint Party as well as a 4 day Introduction to Python course. The July 6th TAG meeting had 40 attendees, where teens discussed furniture options for the teen space. 34 teen volunteers contributed a total of 50.5 hours of community service sorting and organizing books.

The Friends of The Library were unable to attend the August Board Meeting but wanted to let everyone know that their Family Photo Shoot will take place on September 9th & 10th and they will also be selling some jewelry and handbags that were left over from their Bling Sale at the St. Bart's yard sale on September 9th. The book sale is confirmed to be held at the Brunswick Square Mall the week of October 10th.

In the Foundation Report, Mr. Arthur reported that the book locker should be up and running by the beginning of October, once some software issues are resolved and staff training takes place.

There was no Township Report.

There was no August School District Report.

There were no public comments.

Treasurers Report:

In the Financial Report, Mr. Arthur reported no major changes, passport revenue continues to be strong and there are some finishing touches that need to be completed for the children and teen areas such as furniture and possibly carpeting.

Payment of the ABS installation is shown on this month's bill list. This is the final part of the hearing loop system which was installed throughout the library to accommodate patrons with hearing disabilities.

Mr. Whitlock made a motion to approve the August 23, 2023 bill list. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Correspondence:

There was no correspondence.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees:

Mr. Arthur reported that the Strategic Planning Committee is working on their final draft and approvals and the Notary Policy has been updated and is pending approval later at this meeting.

Director's Report:

July's programs brought in many attendees, including over 400 children signing up for the children's reading program, approximately 1,000 in attendance for the Concerts in the Courtyard series and about 250 people at the International Film Festival showings. Although the library is not back to pre-Covid attendance, most of the programs have been full and things look like they are getting better with time.

Mr. Whitlock made a motion to approve the Director's Report. Ms. Palumbo seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Old Business:

Mr. Arthur presented a report on meeting the demands of the East Brunswick community. He explained that it is very difficult to know whether the library is meeting 100% of the community's demands without offering more programs and seeing how many people attend. He also explained that most of the library's programs are at capacity and patrons are sometimes

turned away due to room capacity safety standards, especially in the summer months. The level of demand is very high and he believes that library staff go above and beyond, given the library's level of staffing and funding.

Mayor Cohen stated that people's demands can be insatiable and that unfortunately not all East Brunswick residents have access to the library, depending on which area of East Brunswick they reside in. The township is looking into a possible shuttle system within East Brunswick to give members of the community easier access to the library in order for them to be able to utilize the many programs and services that are offered. Another option, Mayor Cohen suggested, is to have a discussion with developers of retail space to inquire about opening a library branch location.

Mr. Arthur announced that training will take place during the next 5 weeks or so for the library managers who will be acting as interim directors for the duration of Mr. Arthur's paternity leave in order to learn day to day operations and duties as well as board meeting preparations.

New Business:

Mr. Arthur, the library attorney and Union representatives will be meeting on Tuesday, September 12th to begin contract negotiations. Mayor Cohen recommended that a member of the board be present at the negotiations and Ms. Palumbo asked if there is an agenda for the meeting. Mr. Arthur replied that he has not received anything as of yet and that we are working from scratch and will schedule a Personnel Committee meeting prior to the first negotiation.

Resolution #10,845

Authorizing Application for Middlesex County Arts Grant

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Public Library is applying for a grant, in the amount of \$5,000 from the Middlesex County Division of Arts and History Programs for concerts to be held in 2024; and

WHEREAS, 547 people attended the 2022 Concerts in the Courtyard: A Multicultural Music Series in total and 1,056 people attended the 2023 Concerts in the Courtyard: A Multicultural Music Series in total, and

WHEREAS, the library's goal is to continue to offer this series annually, and

WHEREAS, East Brunswick is a vibrant, diverse town in the heart of both Middlesex County and the State of New Jersey, and as such it is situated in an ideal location for a concert series that will draw interest from residents throughout the region;

BE IT RESOLVED that the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees hereby certifies that permission has been granted to apply for a Grant for a Multicultural Music Series in the amount of \$5,000 from the Middlesex County Division of Arts and History Programs, and will allocate \$2,000 in matching funds if the funds are fully awarded.

Mr. Whitlock made a motion to authorize the application of the Middlesex County Arts Grant. Ms. Palumbo seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Resolution #10,846

Pay Rate for Interim Library Director

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Public Library Director will be taking eight (8) weeks of family leave, commencing on the date of birth of his child; and

WHEREAS, for the ongoing operations of the East Brunswick Public Library it is necessary to name an Interim Director in the absence of the Library Director; and

WHEREAS, the pay rate for serving as Interim Director must be established;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees, that any current employee of the East Brunswick Public Library holding the title of Department Manager may serve as Interim Director, at the discretion of both the Library Director and the Department Manager; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department Manager serving as Interim Director shall be afforded an additional, non-pensionable, \$20.00 per hour for each hour worked as Interim Director or a maximum of \$700 per week for a thirty-five (35) hour work week in the position of Interim Director.

The above has been certified to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees at a meeting held on August 22, 2023.

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the pay rate for interim library director. Mr. Whitlock seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Mr. Christie

The Library's Notary Policy has been revised, adding Power of Attorney documents to the list of documents for which the library does not provide notary services.

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve the revised Notary Policy. Mr. Whitlock seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Information Items:

Mr. Amankwah inquired about the possible purchase of a Magic Table which had been proposed by Karen Parry, Manager of Information Services. Mr. Arthur stated that the library has been speaking with a sales representative and that we would be the second state in the U.S. to have a Magic Table at a library available to patrons. The Magic Table consists of a projector and infrared software designed for people with autism and dementia and has received positive reviews from users and parents, one of which stated that her nonverbal child with autism has become more verbal with use of this innovative technology. Once a budget is preapproved by the board, Ms. Parry will begin the purchasing process.

Mr. Christie made a motion to move into closed session. Mr. Whitlock seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

The Board moved into closed session at 7:19 pm.

Dr. Freedman made a motion to move out of closed session. Mr. Whitlock seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None

The Board returned to open session at 7:52 pm.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Dr. Freedman made a motion to adjourn at 8:01pm. Mr. Whitlock seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Wayne Christie, Secretary