

East Brunswick Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
July 18, 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:

Township Director of Finance Angel Albanese

Ms. Palumbo called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm. A roll call was made and a quorum was present. Ms. Palumbo stated that the meeting was advertised and the Open Public Meeting Act requirements were met.

All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes of June 20, 2023:

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2023 meeting. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich and Ms. Palumbo. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Mr. Palombit, Mr. Whitlock and Mr. Christie.

Closed Session Minutes of June 20, 2023:

Mr. Amankwah made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2023 closed session. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich and Ms. Palumbo. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Mr. Palombit, Mr. Whitlock and Mr. Christie.

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

Mr. Arthur reported that of the three managerial positions the Library had posted, there has been one applicant per position. These positions have been posted in expectations of current library managers taking over various duties of the library's former assistant director, who resigned in March. This will result in a decrease in administrative costs and the permanence of these positions is contingent upon a twelve-month probationary period.

Mr. Arthur also reported that he will be taking two of his three months of paternity leave this fall, and will take remaining one-month leave in or around April or May 2024. Mr. Christie suggested hiring an interim library director to take over Mr. Arthur's duties while he is on

paternity leave and Mr. Arthur explained that hiring an interim library director is one of the options being considered however it could cost upwards of \$95.00 per hour.

Public Participation:

Zainab Jaorawala provided the June Teen Report, reporting that the TAG Executive Board met in June and discussed modifications to volunteering applications and policies, including the new web-based volunteer application form on the library’s website and using a Google form to track volunteer time. The Teens also discussed future programs and prizes and the next TAG meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, July 6th.

There was no June Friends Report.

In the Foundation Report, Mr. Arthur reported that the book locker, funded by The Foundation, will be installed in the next couple of weeks and the art installation will be completed shortly thereafter. The software process, which will be linked to LMxAC, is being worked on as well. Mr. Whitlock announced in the Township Report that the final budget has been approved. The hockey rink has also been tentatively approved, pending a second vote on July 24th. East Brunswick Day is coming up, look out for flyers and advertisements. There will be free hot dogs next Wednesday in the Municipal Complex, provided by our local Stop & Shop. Mayor Cohen has released a four-part series which can be viewed on EBTv as well as social media entitled “How to Read a Tax Bill.” In the series, Mayor Cohen gives us an insight on why New Jersey taxes are higher than other areas of the country. A jingle, entitled “Set It and Forget It!” has been recorded with the intent of reminding residents of the convenience of automated tax payments. The jingle was recorded by library and township employees and a music video will be filmed soon at the Municipal Complex. Look out for the video on EBTv and township social media pages!

There was no June School District Report.

There were no public comments.

Treasurers Report:

In the Financial Report, Mr. Arthur reported that the fund balance has been replenished a bit, from unspent funds from last year. Mr. Arthur also suggested starting a library branch start up fund with unspent funds from various reserve accounts. The Board discussed the options of opening a new branch, the possibility of introducing a bookmobile or the addition of programs at the library, which would require additional staffing. The passport department did very well in June, despite numbers being lower than this time last year due to the post-Covid rush that occurred in the spring and summer of 2022.

Mr. Whitlock made a motion to approve the July 21, 2023 bill list. 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.

Correspondence:

There was no correspondence.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees:

Mr. Arthur reported that the Finance Committee has been working on their final budget and the Strategic Plan is expected to be completed in September.

Director’s Report:

June’s Director’s Report included many various programs held by all departments, as well as two of the library’s grant funded programs, Concerts in the Courtyard and the ESL program, which starts their second session next week.

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve the Director’s Report. 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.

Old Business:

There is no old business to be discussed.

New Business:

Election of Board President

Mr. Christie made a motion to elect Mr. Amankwah as the new Board President. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Mr. Amankwah.

Special Resolution

**Honoring
Aarti Punjabi**

Whereas, Aarti Punjabi has served the people of East Brunswick as a member of the Library Board of Trustees from 2015 to 2023; and

Whereas, Aarti has served as Treasurer on the Board of the East Brunswick Public Library;

Whereas, Aarti has also served the East Brunswick Public Library by serving on the Board’s Policy & Building Committees; and

Whereas, Aarti helped to lead the library through unprecedented changes due to a worldwide pandemic, and

Whereas, the Library Staff and Administration could always count on Aarti 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 Aarti Punjabi for over eight years of outstanding service to the Library and wishes her happiness and health in the many years ahead.

Mr. Whitlock made a motion to approve the Special Resolution honoring Aarti Punjabi. 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.

Special Resolution

**Honoring
JoAnn Chmielowicz**

Whereas, JoAnn Chmielowicz has served the people of East Brunswick as a member of the Library Board of Trustees from 2020 to 2023; and

Whereas, JoAnn has served as President on the Board of the East Brunswick Public Library;

Whereas, JoAnn has also served the East Brunswick Public Library by serving on the Board's Personnel Committee; and

Whereas, JoAnn helped to lead the library through unprecedented changes due to a worldwide pandemic, and

Whereas, the Library Staff and Administration could always count on JoAnn 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 JoAnn Chmielowicz for her outstanding service to the Library and wishes her happiness and health in the many years ahead.

Mr. Whitlock made a motion to approve the Special Resolution honoring JoAnn Chmielowicz. Mr. Amankwah seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Mr. Palombit, Ms. Palumbo and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Resolution #10,843

Change Fund Adjustment

WHEREAS, during a recent cash count, excess change funds were noted; and

WHEREAS, those funds are in excess of what is needed for the daily operations of the library; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees approves maintaining a change fund of \$2,293.00, with the excess of \$459.10 deposited into the bank and included in the library's Fund Balance Unrestricted (3-20-400-65-000-001).

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve the Change Fund Adjustment. 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.

Resolution #10,844

Adopt the 2023 Library Budget

WHEREAS, as approved by the City Council on June 26, 2023, the 2023 East Brunswick Township municipal appropriation for the East Brunswick Public Library is \$4,250,000, and

WHEREAS, additional estimated revenues include a total of \$365,600;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees adopts the 2023 Library Budget in the amount of \$4,615,600.

Mr. Christie made a motion to Adopt the 2023 Library Budget. Mr. Palombit 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:

Ms. Palumbo inquired about the status of union negotiations. John Arthur responded that the meeting has not been scheduled yet and that staff morale has improved in the past few months. The August Board of Trustees meeting has been rescheduled from Tuesday, August 15 at 7:30 pm to Tuesday, August 22 at 5:30 pm.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Whitlock made a motion to adjourn at 9:00 pm. Ms. Gurevich seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Wayne Christie, Secretary