

East Brunswick Public Library  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
July 19, 2022

Attendees:

Otu Amankwah	John Arthur, Library Director
JoAnn Chmielowicz	Michael Bobish, Assistant Library Director
Mayor Brad Cohen	Daragh McAuley, Exec. Admin. Assistant
Ken Freedman	Angel Albanese, CFO, Township of East Brunswick
Aarti Punjabi	Shreya Bhardwaj, Student Representative
Ashish Verma (left 9:05)	

Ms. Chmielowicz called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm. A roll call was made and a quorum was present. Ms. Chmielowicz 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 21 2022:**

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2022 regular meeting. Mayor Cohen seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Punjabi and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None.

**Public Participation:**

The Friends of the Library Presidents were not in attendance.

Shreya Bhardwaj, the Student Representative, read the teen report for June. Seven programs were held in June, which were attended by 136 students. Programs included TAG, Debate Club, and 2 Minecraft for Beginners sessions. Fifty-nine volunteer hours were logged.

Mr. Arthur reported that the Foundation did not meet.

Mayor Cohen reported that Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman submitted a bill before Congress which includes \$750,000 for HVAC replacement for the library. The hope is for this to get passed by September. The redevelopment project is underway, and \$3 million was received from the state for an ice rink on Tices Lane.

Ms. Chmielowicz reported that the schools have been realigned. The elementary schools are now all Pre-K-4; Hammarskjold Upper Elementary, Grades 5-6; Churchill Junior High School, Grades 7, 8 & 9; and the High School Grades 10-12. The school start and ends times have been adjusted slightly.

### **Treasurers Report:**

Mr. Arthur reported that the salaries expenditures so far in 2022 are slightly lower than what was budgeted, due to so many open positions. Most of these have been filled now, however. The purchasing of digital items has been slow, as managers were reluctant to spend money until the budget was finalized. Ms. Albanese suggested that the Sick leave reserve fund be renamed to the Compensated Absences Fund. Mr. Arthur explained that the amount in this fund is sufficient to cover the cost of any potential retiree payouts. The income from passports is exceeding what had been budgeted.

Mr. Verma made a motion to approve the July 20, 2022 bill list. Mr. Amankwah seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Punjabi and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None.

### **Correspondence:**

Mr. Arthur shared that an email was received from a library patron apologizing for videos created in the library without approval, and saying that they will remove them from the internet.

### **Reports of Standing and Special Committees:**

#### *A. Building Committee*

Mr. Arthur reported that he would like for the committee to help pick the carpet and flooring for the Youth Services area. The Architect submitted a lighting plan, which is currently being reviewed.

#### *B. Policy Committee*

This committee did not meet.

#### *C. Personnel Committee*

The committee finalized the Library Director's review and new contract, which will be voted on later in the meeting.

#### *D. Strategic Planning Committee*

Mr. Arthur reported that Rutgers is working on the final draft of the survey. A date for the focus group at the Senior Center has been set. Gift cards are being offered for participating in the focus groups. Mr. Verma asked if purchasing a book mobile would be considered. Mr. Arthur responded that this idea will be addressed in the strategic plan. He also shared that he had an idea about doing a shared services agreement with neighboring libraries' book mobiles. Mayor Cohen would like for the survey to address what patrons are actually coming to the library for, before investing money in a book mobile.

**Director’s Report:**

Mr. Arthur reported that the Concerts in the Courtyard series brought in 547 attendees. Staff is working on applying for the same grant for next year. Most statistics are trending upwards, and are nearing pre-pandemic levels. Passports is doing well, and administration is considering hiring another agent.

Dr. Freedman asked what administration does for a staff member who goes ‘above and beyond’? Mr. Arthur responded that the library administration has been working to create opportunities for promotions. Dr. Freedman asked specifically about doing something for passport staff. A discussion was held about buying them treats or gift cards. A suggestion was made about naming a ‘Staff member of the month,’ and possibly giving them a designated parking spot.

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the staff changes in the June 2022 Director’s Report. Ms. Punjabi seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman and Ms. Punjabi. Voting no: None.

**Old Business:**

*A. Building Projects Update*

Youth Services flooring replacement was discussed earlier in the meeting.

**New Business:**

*A. Approve Updated 2022 Salary and Wage Table*

Mr. Arthur explained that administration would like to add a Library Associate position. This person would not have an MLS degree, but would have a unique skill set, and can provide a leadership role in the library. This would give the library flexibility to possibly give an existing staff member an additional role in the library.

Mayor Cohen made a motion to approve the updated 2022 salary and wage table. Dr. Freedman seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman and Ms. Punjabi. Voting no: None.

*B. Resolution #10,814 Accepting the 2021 Audit*

Resolution #10,814

**Acceptance of the 2021 Audit of Library Accounts**

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

WHEREAS, Wiss and Company, LLP performed the audit for the year ending December 31, 2021 and submitted the report on June 30, 2022.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that that the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees accepts the audit report from Wiss and Company, LLP.

Mr. Arthur explained that the auditor did not have any comments.

Mr. Amankwah made a motion to approve the above resolution. Ms. Punjabi seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Chmielowicz. Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman and Ms. Punjabi. Voting no: None.

*C. Resolution #10,815 Library Director Contract*

Resolution #10,815

Library Director Contract

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Public Library Board Personnel Committee and the Library Director, John Arthur, have agreed to the terms and conditions of the attached Employment Agreement, effective July 8, 2022 through December 31, 2023, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Library Board of Trustees of the East Brunswick Public Library approves the attached contract, effective July 8, 2022 through December 31, 2023.

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the above resolution. Mr. Amankwah seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman and Ms. Punjabi. Voting no: None.

*D. Patron exclusion letters*

Mr. Bobish distributed drafts of the letters to the Trustees. Mr. Bobish shared that administration still has not been able to name the patron who created the videos' accomplices. Ms. Chmielowicz suggested a 60-day suspension for all of the involved parties. The Board discussed the length of the extension time and the following motion to revise the letters was made by Dr. Freedman:

1. All parties involved will have their library privileges suspended until January, 2024; and
2. The videos must be taken down within 7 days; and
3. Pursuant to attorney review, if #2 above does not happen, a letter will be sent to the patron's school. If the attorney will not allow that, then library privileges will be permanently suspended;
4. The letters shall be signed by the attorney.

Mayor Cohen seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Punjabi and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None.

*E. Resolution #10,816 Closed Session*

The Board did not need to move into closed session.

*F. Resolution #10,817 Library Director Merit Pay*

Resolution #10,817

Library Director Merit Pay

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Public Library Board Personnel Committee has determined that, in accordance with the Employment Agreement previously agreed upon and effective July 8, 2021 through July 7, 2022, the Library Director, John Arthur, has performed at a level which merits the maximum non-pensionable, merit-based bonus described in that agreement (\$5,000),

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Library Board of Trustees of the East Brunswick Public Library approves the merit-based bonus payment of \$5,000, to be paid in the next pay period in which it is able to be processed by the Township Payroll department.

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the above resolution. Ms. Punjabi seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman and Ms. Punjabi. Voting no: None.

**Information Items:**

There being no further business, Dr. Freedman made a motion to adjourn at 9:10 pm. Mayor Cohen seconded.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mr. Wayne Christie, Secretary