

East Brunswick Public Library  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
March 23, 2021

Attendees:

JoAnn Chmielowicz	Melissa Kuzma, Library Director
Mayor Brad Cohen, President	Mike Bobish, Assistant Library Director
Dr. Ken Freedman	Daragh McAuley, Exec. Administrative Ass't.
Patricia Palumbo, Vice-President	Karen Karnchanapee, Pres., Friends of the Library
Aarti Punjabi, Treasurer	Linda Carbley, Pres., Friends of the Library
Nicole Tibbetts, Secretary	Sofia Sepulveda, Student Representative
Ashish Verma	Melissa Hozik, Adult Programming Librarian
Art Lewin, Trustee Emeritus	Martha Hess, Reference Librarian
	Mary Pan
	Angel Albanese, EB Township CFO

Note: The meeting was held via Zoom conference.

Mayor Cohen called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. A roll call was made and a quorum was present. Mayor Cohen stated that the meeting was advertised and the Open Public Meetings Act requirements were met.

All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Agenda:**

Dr. Freedman made a motion to adopt the March 23, 2021 agenda. Ms. Chmielowicz seconded. Voting yes: Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Punjabi, Ms. Tibbetts and Mr. Verma. Voting no: none.

**Minutes of February 16, 2021:**

Ms. Tibbetts made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2021 meeting. Ms. Punjabi seconded. Voting yes: Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Punjabi, Ms. Tibbetts and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None.

**Minutes of March 25, 2021 Emergency Meeting- Open and Closed Meetings:**

Mayor Cohen moved to revise the meeting minutes to reflect that the Board appointed Michael Bobish Acting Director, upon the resignation of Ms. Kuzma. Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the revised minutes of the February 25, 2021 Open and Closed Emergency meetings. Ms. Chmielowicz seconded. Voting yes: Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Punjabi, Ms. Tibbetts and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None.

### **Public Participation:**

Karen Karnchanapee, co-President of the Friends of the Library, reported that the Friends have plans for a fundraiser at Chipotle on April 17. This is the last week for the Gertrude Hawk candy sale. The spring general meeting on May 13 will feature a talk by Steve Hirdt, a sports statistician. The Book Sale has been set for October 10-17, 2021 at the East Brunswick Mall. The 2021 membership is about the same as last year, and a second mailing will go out soon. There are plans underway for a beer tasting and a fishing tournament, but no dates have been set.

Sofia Sepulveda, the Teen Representative, reported that several clubs met last month, including TAG, with 20 attendees, and EB Meds Unite, at which Mayor Cohen gave a presentation. Watch Your Language Club released their diverse recipes zine, which is now available at the library.

Ms. Kuzma reported that the Foundation Board met on March 3 for a brief meeting. The discussion centered on fundraising and finding new members to serve on the Foundation Board.

Mayor Cohen reported that the 2021 budget will be introduced in the first week of April. Ms. Albanese added that the 2020 audit has commenced, and she is following up with the County to see when the Cares Act money will be received by the township and the library.

Ms. Mary Pan, an East Brunswick resident, and former Board of Trustee member, wished Ms. Kuzma well, and praised her work as Library Director, and her leadership during the pandemic.

Ms. Kuzma read a report from Wayne Christie, giving an update on the Construction Bond Application, and that there will be \$3.9 million available for NJ Libraries from the Pandemic Relief Fund.

### **Treasurers Report:**

The Board reviewed the Treasurer's report, the monthly statistics, and the reserve and bank reports. Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the February 22 and 23, and March 24, 2021 bill lists. Ms. Tibbetts seconded. Voting yes: Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Punjabi, Ms. Tibbetts and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None.

### **Correspondence:**

Mayor Cohen read a proclamation for Ms. Kuzma, praising her for all she has done in her tenure as Director. Several Board members also wished her well.

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

#### **Building Committee:**

This committee report was moved to New Business.

## **Director's Report:**

Ms. Kuzma reviewed some highlights of the February Director's report, including:

- The Library celebrated Black History Month by collaborating with several groups in the township on programs such as *The Art and Politics of the Harlem Renaissance* and *From Jazz to Soul*;
- The Book Discussion met virtually for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic;
- Nine virtual Health programs were held;
- The Youth Services department was busy with programming and creating a new maker kit for the Makerspace;
- The IT department introduced several new training classes, including Introduction to Python, and Wave.

Ms. Palumbo made a motion to approve the staff changes in the February Director's Report. Ms. Tibbetts seconded. Voting yes: Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Punjabi, Ms. Tibbetts and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None.

## **Old Business:**

### *A. Covid-19 Update*

Ms. Kuzma reported that the library reopened on March 1, and the library is seeing an average of 211 visitors per day. The administration and staff feel comfortable with the flow of traffic in the building. Curbside pickups are averaging 28 per day. The administration has discussed the next steps for further reopening including notary service, expanded hours, some seating and outdoor programming, but Ms. Kuzma said that they are not ready to take these steps yet. Mr. Bobish reported that approximately 16% of the staff are vaccinated.

### *B. Staff Appreciation Week – April 4-10, 2021*

Mayor Cohen suggested that the staff be provided with a box lunch or ice cream. Mr. Bobish reported he arranged to have boxed lunches ordered from the Village Deli on Thursday, April 8. The Board members decided that they will supply ice cream for staff on that day from Scoop to My Lou.

## **New Business:**

### *A. Application for Construction Bond Round 2*

Ms. Kuzma reported that the application for Round 2 of the Construction Bond was released on March 15, and submissions are due by June 4. When the Building Committee met, they had agreed to submit a scaled back version of the Round 1 submission, with the total cost not exceeding \$4 million. The professional fees for this submission would be approximately \$25,000.

Ms. Kuzma and Mr. Bobish read through the application package, and they feel that there would be a very small chance of getting selected based on the stated criteria. They reported that most of the round 1 projects selected went to those with ADA improvements, repair projects, and for new buildings.

Mr. Bobish recommends submitting an application for HVAC replacement and ADA improvements to the Youth Services bathrooms only. This would be more in line with the selection criteria, and would likely reduce the professional fees also. Money currently in library reserves could be used to make any further upgrades to the youth services area. A discussion ensued among the Board members and all agreed to submit an application for HVAC replacement and ADA upgrades for the YS bathrooms only.

*B. NK Architects Proposal for Round 2 of the Construction Bond*

Based on the preceding discussion, the Board decided to not vote on the NK Architects proposal.

**Information Items:**

There being no further business, Ms. Tibbetts made a motion to adjourn at 8:37 pm. Ms. Chmielowicz seconded.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ms. Nicole Tibbetts, Secretary