

Middlesex Public Library
1300 Mountain Avenue
Middlesex, NJ 08846

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting on January 11, 2021

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Middlesex Library Board of Trustees was held in the Community Room of the Library on Monday, January 11, 2021. James Benson, Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Announcement of Compliance with Open Public Meeting Law

The President read the announcement of the meeting in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Law. (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6) stating that notice of the meeting has been published in the Home News and the Star Ledger and has been posted on the Library public bulletin board.

Roll Call of Members

X – Represents member present at meeting

X James Benson, President

X Emily DeScenza, Vice President

X Melissa Fedosh, Treasurer

Susen Edwards, Secretary

X Mary Lou Johnson, Member at Large (attended via Zoom)

X Cathy Ferris, Member at Large

X Beverly Weber, Member at Large

X Barbara Ferris, Representative of the Superintendent of Schools

X Dina Healey, Representative of the Mayor

X Christine George, Library Director

Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting(s)

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous Board meeting held on December 14, 2020 was made by Beverly Weber and seconded by Cathy Ferris

All were in favor.

Election of Officers

President Benson reported that at the December meeting the current executive board members all indicated a willingness to continue serving in their present positions. He then opened nominations from the floor. There were no nominations from the floor and since the current board members were running unopposed the Secretary will cast a vote for each and they will be the new board for 2021.

Oath of Office

Three of our board members have been reappointed, Susen Edwards for a 5-year term and Dina Healey as the Mayor's Representative and Barbara Ferris as the Superintendent of Schools

Representative. Mr. Edward J. Johnson, the board attorney, administered the Oath of Office to Dina and Barbara. Susen was unable to attend the meeting and will be given the oath at a future time.

Reports of Officers

President Benson wished all the board members a happy & healthy new year. He advised them that earlier today he emailed everyone an updated list of board members and that some mistakes have been found in phone numbers. He asked everyone to check their information closely and advise him of any errors. He will then advise the Borough Clerk so she can provide an updated list. He also reminded everyone that the Sunshine Committee fund needs to be replenished and to give any donation towards the fund to Beverly Weber.

Financial Report/Payment of Bills

Bills that arose since the last board meeting and current payments for this month and last were reviewed and approved. The Director reported that a check for \$316.24 was paid to her for expenses related to the Polar Express program, a check for \$1100 to B K & J Spotless LLC is for cleaning services for Nov & Dec during the absence of our custodian, and a check for \$600.00 to Sarah Ochocki is for a fashion program that she is running for the library.

There were no other unusual expenses.

A motion for a resolution to pay the bills was made by Melissa Fedosh and seconded by Barbara Ferris. All were in favor.

The following resolution was passed: **“WHEREAS, the attached bills and claims against the Free Public Library of the Borough of Middlesex have been examined and audited by the Treasurer of the Library, NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Free Public Library of the Borough of Middlesex and the Trustees thereof that the attached bills and claims are hereby approved for payment.”**

An end of the year Budget Report was provided to Board members. As expected, the library operated the year within its budget with a small budget surplus.

Circulation Report

Director George provided the Circulation Report for December. Overall numbers are down, a combination of the pandemic and the holidays. Director George commented that already in January there seems to be an increase in activity.

Director’s Report

Director George presented the monthly report for December on the operation of the Library. See the Director’s Report for details. A few of the highlights are listed below:

1. The new phones have been installed and are working properly. The system has many options that will be very helpful. The staff seems pleased with the new features.
2. There was a problem with the two HVAC systems. [Note: The “old” system, which covers the Children’s Room, the Community Room and some meeting rooms, is serviced by the Borough HVAC contractor. The “new” system, which covers the majority of the library is still under warranty and for the present has to be serviced by the contractor that installed it or by one of their approved vendors) The staff were complaining about it being cold in the library. Once

advised, the Director contacted both HVAC providers. The contractor for the old system located the problem and has made the necessary repairs. The contractor for the new system is still working on the problem. The Director reported that she purchased some additional space heaters so that the staff should be able to keep their individual work areas warm.

3. The annual audit has still not been completed. The audit company has all the information they need to complete the audit, but has excuses for not getting it done. The Director will continue to contact the auditors. NOTE: The borough has appointed a new auditor for this year.

4. The Polar Express program was a big success with over 260 participants.

5. Director George provided an update on the accumulated sick time by the staff. She will be preparing individualized forms to advise staff of their time.

6. Director George provided an update on what surrounding libraries are doing regarding opening. She recommended the library status remain as is and not be considered until at least the March meeting. The Board agreed. This will give staff members who are concerned about reopening too soon some peace of mind.

The Board reviewed the Children's Report, the Adult Reference Report and the Marketing/Community Outreach Report. All 3 reports were very informative and it appears that the staff is making an exceptional effort to continue to provide as many services and programs to the public as possible.

Committee Reports

President Benson reminded the Personnel Committee about the yearly review of the Director.

Friends of the Library Report

Friends President, Susen Edwards, was unable to attend the meeting, but provided the following report by email.

Not much is going on due to the virus. The Friends have two Zoom programs coming up--one in March and one in April. I'll have to check with the agent I booked them through to see whether we use her Zoom account or ours. I wish we didn't have to host them until we're able to do live programs again, but the agent won't let us out of the contract.

I'm scheduled to meet with Theresa, Mary, and Mo tomorrow to discuss themes for the upcoming months (i.e., Kindness, Gratitude, etc.)

That's about it. With any luck, we'll be able to run a few programs in the Fall. Time will tell.

Unfinished Business

The interior of the Library will remain closed due to the uptick in COVID cases.

There are no updates on contract negotiations.

New Business

President Benson reported that regarding the HVAC system not working, a staff member contacted a Board member directly. The problem was never reported to the Director. The President reminded everyone of the importance of clear and delineated lines of communication. If a staff member contacts any member of the board regarding the operation of the library, the board member should advise the staff member to refer to the Personnel Policy or the union

contract for the proper steps to report problems. A staff member should never contact a board member directly.

Public Comment

There was no public discussion. Adjournment

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm on a motion made by Cathy Ferris and seconded by Dina Healey. All were in favor.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on Monday, February 8, 2021 at 7:00 pm in the Community Room of the Library.

Respectfully submitted,

James L. Benson, for Susen Edwards Secretary
January 12, 2021

NOTE: These minutes will be available to the public for inspection and/or copying once they are approved at a subsequent Board meeting.