

Middlesex Public Library  
1300 Mountain Avenue  
Middlesex, NJ 08846

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting on November 8, 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, November 8, 2021. James Benson, Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:03 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
- X Susen Edwards, Secretary
- X Mary Lou Johnson, Member At Large
- X Beverly Weber, Member At Large
- X Cathy Ferris, Member At Large
- X Barbara Ferris, Representative of the Superintendent of Schools
- X Dina Healey, Representative of the Mayor
- X Christine George, Library Director
- X Edward Johnson, Board Attorney

Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting(s)

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous Board meeting held on October 18, 2021, was made by Beverly Weber and seconded by Emily DeScenza. All were in favor.

A motion to approve the minutes of the Executive Session held on October 18, 2021, was made by Susen Edwards and seconded by Mary Lou Johnson. All were in favor.

Reports of Officers

Treasurer Melissa Fedosh reported that the account for May's Memorial Garden has been closed now that the work has been completed. The remaining balance has been transferred into the regular checking account.

### 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.

Because it had only been three weeks since the last Board meeting, only a few bills needed to be paid. No unusual expenses were noted.

A motion for a resolution to pay the bills was made by Dina Healey 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.”

A 2021 Monthly Budget Report was provided to Board Members. Director George noted the report has been updated to accurately report expenditures in each category. Negative balances appeared in Internet/Technology and Library Supplies. She anticipates a negative balance will soon appear in Adult Acquisitions.

Depending upon the remaining amount of funds due from the Borough in 2021, we may need to transfer money from the Library Reserve Account to pay the balance of our yearly bills.

### Circulation Report

Director George gave the circulation report for November. See the Circulation Report for details.

Circulation dipped for September and October, a pattern consistent with past years and other libraries. However, overall circulation is up considerably from 2020 and even 2019.

The Library began collecting fines in October. Two more computers are open.

RB Digital and Libby/Overdrive numbers are down. Director George suspects patrons are not happy with the interface.

Meeting room usage continues to be down due to Covid and flooding of the Community Room. Meeting Room A is open for Borough and Library group meetings but closed to outside groups. Programs will continue to be held on Zoom at least through the end of 2021.

## Director's Report

Director George presented the monthly report for November on the operation of the Library. See Director's Report for details.

1. DPW accidentally backed a lawnmower into a large window in the back of the Library. The glass shattered and has been safely secured until Apollo Glass can install a new window with tempered glass. The new window will have two panes instead of one. A mid-December installation is anticipated. Because none of the old windows are made of tempered glass and will not match the new window, we will investigate possibly replacing the old windows.
2. Director George is working with the Borough and the insurance company to return the Community Room to pre-flood condition. The current estimate is approximately \$60,000 to fix the room and an additional \$20,000 for a potential asbestos abatement. The Board discussed the high costs of repair and expressed concerns about completing the renovations without taking care of the outdoor flooding problem first. Soft vinyl tiles now cover more than half the floor and were purchased for \$200. Director George suggested we purchase additional tiles to cover the rest of the area. She expects the cost would not exceed an additional \$200. The room would be usable but not attractive. The Board agreed on purchasing the additional flooring.
3. Director George interviewed a candidate she believes is perfect to temporarily fill the position of Children's Librarian. She will be interviewing two candidates to fill a part-time vacancy in Circulation.
4. A 2022 Library Holiday and Board Meeting schedule was presented to the Board. Juneteenth now replaces Columbus Day. Because the second Monday in February falls on Valentine's Day, the Board agrees to meet the first Monday of the month, February 7.
5. Director George indicated she has been working on a draft of the 2022 Budget. We will be getting a significant increase in funds from the State (\$7,483.00 compared to \$5,974 in 2021) and from the Borough (\$634,458.00 compared to \$513,606.00 in 2021).
6. Two additional computers have opened up in the adult section of the Library. All tables are now open for patrons. Social distancing can still be maintained.
7. Mikayla Ippich, a part-time Circulation associate is moving to Florida. President Benson read her letter of resignation.
8. Meeting rooms will continue to be closed to outside groups for the rest of the year, but will remain open for Borough committees and Library groups.

9. The Adult department is flourishing. Online program continue to be well-attended. The puzzle exchange begun during Covid is popular and will continue.

10. Social media platforms continue to be active with daily postings. Our display case receives lots of interest and has become a conversation starter for patrons.

### Committee Reports

Beverly Weber said she will purchase a gift for Mikayla Ippich.

### Friends of the Library Report

Friends President Susen Edwards reported the Friends had a Zoom program about The Beatles on November 7. Nineteen people attended.

A Zoom program on decluttering for the holidays will be presented by Jamie Novak on December 5, at 3:00 p.m.

The Friends have sponsored a Memoir Writers Group for the past five years. The group, which is limited to eight, has lost two members. Susen asked the Board to let her know if anyone knows someone who might be interested.

### Unfinished Business

Nothing has been done on the personnel policy update. President Benson will be contacting existing officers to see if they are interested in continuing their roles for 2022.

### New Business

There was no New Business.

### Public Discussion

There was no Public Discussion.

### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m. on a motion made by Cathy Ferris and seconded by Barbara Ferris. All were in favor.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on Monday, December 13, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Susen Edwards  
Secretary  
November 14, 2021

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