

Middlesex Public Library
1300 Mountain Avenue
Middlesex, NJ 08846

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting on January 10, 2022

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 10, 2022. 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 (attended on Zoom)
- X Melissa Fedosh, Treasurer
- X Susen Edwards, Secretary (attended on Zoom)
- Mary Lou Johnson, Member At Large
- X Beverly Weber, Member At Large
- X Dina Healey, Member At Large
- X Barbara Ferris, Representative of the Superintendent of Schools
- X Dave Oliver, Representative of the Mayor
- X Christine George, Library Director (attended on Zoom)
- X Edward Johnson, Board Attorney (attended only to swear in of officers)

Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting(s)

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous Board meeting held on December 13, 2021, was made by Beverly Weber and seconded by Dina Healey. All were in favor.

Nominations and Elections

President Benson presented the slate of officers for 2022.

The proposed slate is as follows:

President: James Benson
Vice-President: Emily DeScenza
Secretary: Susen Edwards
Treasurer: Melissa Fedosh

He asked for nominations from the floor for each position. No new nominations were given. The Secretary cast one vote for the entire slate of officers.

Board Attorney Ed Johnson administered the oath of office to each new officer: Melissa Fedosh, Treasurer (five-year term), Dina Healey, Member at Large (completing the three years remaining on Cathy Ferris's term), and Dave Oliver, Mayor's Representative. A question arose as to the length of term for the Mayor's Representative. Is it one year or the length of the current mayor's term? The issue will be researched.

Reports of Officers

There were no Reports of Officers.

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.

Director George mentioned that the PSEG bill of \$5,143.59 represented two months of service. A \$500.00 check was written to Violet Petals Yoga Oasis for a four-week adult mindfulness program beginning in February. A \$40.42 check was paid to Verizon for our hard-wired security alarm. All other phone service is VOIP.

No other unusual expenses were noted.

A motion for a resolution to pay the bills was made by Melissa Fedosh and seconded by Dave Oliver. 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 2022 Monthly Budget Report was provided to Board Members. Director George noted that no payroll checks had been issued at the time of the report. She also noted that the auditor has finally completed the 2019 audit. She suspects the Annual Audit line item will move into negative territory

as the 2020 and 2021 audits will be completed this year. A new auditing company has been hired by the Borough.

Circulation Report

Director George gave the circulation report through the end of 2021. See the Circulation Report for details.

December's numbers, except for Hoopla, are lower than the prior month due to holiday closings. Overall circulation numbers for 2021 are up significantly over 2020 and 2019. New Users and Fines were unavailable for the month but will be made available next month.

Meeting room usage continues to be down due to Covid and flooding of the Community Room. Meeting Room A and the Community Room are open for Borough and Library group meetings but closed to outside groups.

Director's Report

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

1. Three exit signs/lights failed the Fire Inspection. DPW is handling this as well as other lighting issues on the property.
2. The Borough insurance company is issuing a check for \$65,471.83 to cover repairs to the Community Room and the outside drainage issue. The Borough engineer will assess the area and present a plan to fix the drainage problem. Once the problem is resolved the interior work will be done.
3. Heating in the Community Room failed last week, but the problem was taken care of the same day.
4. The part-time temporary Children's Librarian hired last month has resigned. The position of full-time Children's Librarian is currently being advertised in-house. Next week it will be shared to social media and other outlets.
5. The staff development day originally planned for January 21 has been postponed to sometime in February. The program will deal with setting boundaries. A mindful breathing program will also be included in the training.
6. Director George recommended fines be forgiven through the end of February. Patrons often cannot get to the library due to Covid and quarantining. The Board agreed to the recommendation and will revisit the issue at the February 15 meeting.

7. Director George noted that we have been approved for \$10,000.00 in capital funds. We will purchase new light-weight tables to replace the brown tables currently in use. Once the tables have been purchased, we will donate the old tables to DPW. For next year, Director George put in a request for four new tempered glass windows (\$5,000.00 per window).
8. The Library will remain closed at least until February 15. Walkup/pickup service will continue and has been well-received by our patrons. We are following the direction of approximately 50% of LMxAC libraries. Closures are affected not only by Covid cases but also by staffing issues. Director George pointed out the importance of considering the decisions of Dunellen and Piscataway libraries so we do not get an influx of their patrons. Our staff is relieved that our Library is closed.
9. We have not had much success with Zoom programs for school aged children. Director George suspects the children are burned out on Zoom. Zoom continues to be popular for younger children. She hopes to have a new Children's Librarian by the end of February.
10. The transition to walk-up/pick-up has been smooth. Patrons are emailing printing and requests for material to the Reference department.
11. Social media platforms continue to be active with daily postings. Several adult virtual programs are planned for the upcoming months. We are finally reaching new people with the programs and bringing new life into the Library.

Committee Reports

Beverly Weber indicated she sent a basket to an employee who has been out on extended sick leave. Beverly will follow up with another employee who lost her mother-in-law and a Board member who has experienced an injury. Something is in progress for former Board member, Cathy Ferris, who resigned last month after close to thirty years of service.

Friends of the Library Report

Friends President Susen Edwards reported that a Zoom program on Shipwrecks off the Jersey Shore will be presented by Richard Veit, PhD (Mary Ann Veit's son) on Sunday, February 20, at 3:00 pm. She hopes to schedule another virtual program in March.

Unfinished Business

Nothing has been done on the personnel policy update.

New Business

There was no New Business.

Public Discussion

There was no Public Discussion.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. on a motion made by Dina Healey and seconded by Barbara Ferris. All were in favor.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on **Tuesday**, February 15, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Susen Edwards
Secretary
January 11, 2022

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