

Middlesex Public Library
1300 Mountain Avenue
Middlesex, NJ 08846

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting on September 18, 2023

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Middlesex Library Board of Trustees was held in the Community Room of the Library on Monday, September 18, 2023. James Benson, Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 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
- Barbara Ferris, Member At Large
- X Beverly Weber, Member At Large
- X Dina Healey, Member At Large
- Erin Gomez, Representative of the Superintendent of Schools
- X Dave Oliver, 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 August 14, 2023, was made by Beverly Weber and seconded by Emily DeScenza. All were in favor.

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.

Two checks were written to Central Jersey Security Cameras: \$2,395.91 for cameras, and \$4,791.82 for the security system.

The \$600 check paid to Natacha Riley was approved at the August Board meeting.

Clare Levourne was reimbursed \$159.59 for plants and gardening supplies.

Kaila Ward-Merritt was reimbursed \$359.81 for prizes for the Children's Summer Reading program and for a course she is taking.

Chrissy George was reimbursed in part for bringing the Scream Truck to the summer volunteers' party.

No other unusual expenses were noted.

Dave Oliver moved to accept Resolution 2023-11 authorizing payment of all claims. Susen Edwards seconded the motion. 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.”

The Monthly Budget Report for September was provided to Board Members. Director George noted that the Library Supply balance is in negative territory, but significantly less money was spent for printer toner this month. A government account will be opened with WB Mason, which will lessen the cost of Library Supplies (currently ordered through Amazon). Funds to pay for the alarm system were taken from the Fines Account.

Everything else is on target for the year to date.

Circulation Report

Director George gave the circulation report for September 2023. See the Circulation Report for details.

All circulation numbers are up significantly and have surpassed 2021 and 2022 figures. Juvenile and Adult Circulation are at the highest for the year. Internet usage is the highest for 2023.

ILL In and Out numbers are also the highest for the year and close to equal, signifying we are lending and receiving nearly the same amount of material.

Director George indicated we are at pre-Covid levels with all our numbers.

Director's Report

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

1. The new security system and cameras have been installed.
2. Lenny from DPW is working on getting a new fence between the Library and Borough Hall.
3. The Legacy Lawn project currently has forty-two participants.
4. Director George has filed for a grant with Middlesex County to digitize copies of *Middlesex Chronicle*.
5. The free print button has been disabled. No issues have been noted.
6. Teen volunteers are making bracelets and hiding them throughout the Library. Patrons are enjoying the project.
7. Quickbooks will replace Quicken beginning in January.
8. A patron approached Director George about hosting a program at the Library. She asked him for a proposal, which did not meet the criteria for a proper proposal. The Board has given Director George the final say over program proposals. Her decisions are not appealable to the Library Board of Trustees.
9. Children's Librarian, Kaila Ward-Merritt, reported her drop-in programs continue to be the most popular. She had an average of forty-nine volunteers shifts per week during the summer, and approximately ninety participants in our summer game board challenge. She has registered for a course hosted by *Library Journal*, "How to Build and Defend Inclusive Collections." The course will equip librarians with tools on how to handle censorship and challenges.
10. Reference Librarian, Mary Toole reported forty patrons participated in the Adult Summer Reading Program and submitted 140 reviews. Reference requests continue to keep her busy.
11. Theresa Bond reported that they took a break from adult programming in September. Registration for the Fall Wreath Watercolor Program opened on September 11 and was filled in less than forty-

eight hours. Book displays and other displays continue to be popular. She continues to share regularly on social media.

Committee Reports

Beverly Weber reported a cheer basket was given to an employee who returned after a long absence.

There were no other Committee Reports.

Friends of the Library Report

Friends President, Susen Edwards, reported the Friends have applied for an Arts and History grant from Middlesex County.

The Friends will have their first program on Sunday, September 24. The concert by Amani has over forty registrants. Two programs are scheduled for October.

The Friends will also have a tent at the Food Truck Festival on September 30.

Unfinished Business

Outside awnings are currently being constructed.

Director George provided Board members with a demonstration of the new security system, which included live and pre-recorded views from the cameras. She indicated that cameras are motion-activated and store data until the system is full. At that point, we have the option to buy more space or delete earlier recordings. Staff members have received training on using the system as well as the codes. Director George has an app for the system on her phone and is the first point of contact. Panic buttons have been installed where old panic buttons had been. With the new system, two buttons must be pressed and held for three seconds.

New Business

There was no new business.

Public Discussion

There was no public discussion.

Executive Session

Emily DeScenza moved the Board enter Executive Session. Dave Oliver seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m. on a motion made by Dina Healey and seconded by Dave Oliver. All were in favor.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on Monday, October 9, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Susen Edwards
Secretary
September 19, 2023

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