

Middlesex Public Library
1300 Mountain Avenue
Middlesex, NJ 08846

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting on February 12, 2024

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Middlesex Library Board of Trustees was held in the Community Room of the Library on Monday, February 12, 2024. 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's public bulletin board.

Roll Call of Members

X – Represents member present at meeting

- X James Benson, President (attended via Zoom)
- Emily DeScenza, Vice President
- X Melissa Fedosh, Treasurer
- X Susen Edwards, Secretary
- X 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 January 8, 2024, was made by Dave Oliver and seconded by Susen Edwards. All were in favor.

Reports of Officers

President Benson reported that the Council liaison to the Library, Michael Conahan, will attend our meetings whenever possible.

The Borough does not want the conference table currently located in Meeting Room A. President Benson is looking for another entity that can use the table (possibly the Board of Education). He has written a Surplus Policy Resolution stating that donations of this nature be given to a Borough entity. Dina Healey moved to approve the resolution. Dave Oliver seconded the motion. All were in favor.

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 noted the \$20 check to NJLTA is our yearly membership fee for the Library Trustee Association. A check written to WB Mason Co., Inc. for \$443.63 is for a \$350 water dispenser which we now own, plus our monthly drinking water payment. Through Amazon Capital Services, we paid \$456.14 in the Contingency Category for the Staff Room redo.

No other unusual expenses were noted.

Beverly Weber moved to accept Resolution 2024-03 authorizing payment of all claims. Melissa Fedosh 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 February was provided to Board Members. Director George noted Magazines and Newspapers is negative (\$1,721.56) as WT Cox was paid for newspapers for the entire year. The monthly cost for hospitalization has increased from \$3,542.86 to \$4,403.12. This month's report shows the previous amount. Next month's statement will show the new balance for February of \$860.26 plus the new monthly fee.

Circulation Report

Director George gave the final circulation report for 2023 as well as the circulation report for the month. See both Circulation Reports for details.

The overall circulation number for 2023 is an astounding 68,765, up significantly from the prior two years.

The Circulation Report for February shows a slight decrease from January, but ILLs In and Out have increased dramatically. Hoopla and Overdrive numbers are strong. LMxAC has a new way of calculating Overdrive numbers and as such, cannot be compared to months prior to January 2024.

Fines were more than double those of February 2023.

Meeting room attendance at Adult/Friends and Community programs is strong. No children's programs were scheduled during January.

Director's Report

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

1. The HVAC system in the Community Room has been repaired.
2. The staff room redo is complete. Employees are enjoying the new space and are appreciative.
3. Central Jersey Security Cameras performed a safety audit and provided a quote of \$3,079.58 (parts and labor) for six additional cameras which will cover current blind spots.
4. We are waiting on three quotes from TriStarr Electric. We hope to soon upgrade the outdoor lighting under the new awnings.
5. WT Cox has taken over our newspaper service beginning February 2. They have been consistent and effective in their delivery. We still have problems receiving the *Courier News* delivery which they do not handle.
6. The Library did not receive a grant from the Middlesex County Arts and Humanities to digitalize old editions of the *Middlesex Chronicle*. Because the editions are so old, copyright cannot be proven.
7. All required full-time and part-time employees attended CRASE—Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events—training from the police department.
8. LMxAC has adopted a new operating system/catalog system. Training for the new system will be held in April and May.
9. Director George provided Board members with several new policies to review. She has done considerable research into other library policies.
10. Effective immediately, weather delays and closings will be posted on social media and on our voicemail system.

11. Kaila Ward, Children's Librarian announced their winter/spring programming began last week. Clifford the therapy dog is returning. Grab & Go kits continue to be popular. Two passive programs (scavenger hunt and interactive Valentine's Day display) are also popular.
12. Mary Toole, Reference Librarian, reported that the Library will print out the two-page tax form, but will not print out the entire manual for patrons. We have a printed copy of the manual for patrons to refer to.
13. Theresa Bond continues to keep active with social media and community programs. Her new promotion, "Read Twenty-four Books in 2024 and Receive a Middlesex Public Library mug," has begun.

Committee Reports

President Benson announced he has contacted Dave Oliver regarding the capital budget plan. President Benson has worked with Director George on a three-year plan, but now believes a five-year plan will be more effective. Director George and Dave will meet in the next few weeks for further discussion.

Beverly Weber read a thank you note from a staff member who had been hospitalized. A Board member is currently hospitalized. Beverly will follow up. Board members were asked to contribute to the Sunshine fund, noting that all contributions are voluntary.

There were no other committee reports.

Friends of the Library Report

Friends President, Susen Edwards, reported the Friends have received a \$4,000 grant from the Middlesex County Arts and Humanities for a series of jazz programs to be held in the fall. When Susen received the contract for the grant, she noted that insurance riders need to be provided to the county. Susen forwarded the contract to President Benson and Director George who recommended a meeting with Linda Chismar to discuss the possibility of being added to the Borough's policy or securing their own insurance. Susen will follow up.

A W.A.S.P. Takes Wings was held on Wednesday, February 7, in memory of Ann Bruggner, who served in WWII. Ann's niece, Marie Breen, attended the program and displayed WWII memorabilia from her aunt.

Sherley Penrose took more than a dozen boxes of used handbags from the Friends and donated them to Unique Thriftshop in South Plainfield.

Unfinished Business

Dina Healey moved to approve the total cost of the lighting project for the under-the-awning-lights, with work to be done by TriStarr Electric. Dave Oliver seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Dave Oliver moved to approve the \$3,079.58 estimate for Central Jersey Security Cameras to install six additional security cameras. Beverly Weber seconded the motion. All were in favor.

New Business

Board Members were provided with drafts of four new Library policies and asked to review the documents prior to the next Board meeting.

Public Discussion

There was no Public Discussion.

Executive Session

Susen Edwards moved to exit the regular meeting and move into Executive Session. Barbara Ferris seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 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 Monday, March 11, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Susen Edwards
Secretary
February 13, 2024

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