

Middlesex Public Library
1300 Mountain Avenue
Middlesex, NJ 08846

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting on September 9, 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, September 9, 2024. 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's public bulletin board.

Roll Call of Members

X – Represents member present at meeting

- X James Benson, President
- X Emily DeScenza, Vice President
- Melissa Fedosh, Treasurer
- X Susen Edwards, Secretary
- X Barbara Ferris, Member At Large
- X Beverly Weber, Member At Large
- X Dina Fomataro, Member At Large
- Erin Gomez, Representative of the Superintendent of Schools
- 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 and the previous Executive Session both held on July 8, 2024, was made by Emily DeScenza and seconded by Beverly Weber. 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.

Director George noted that the first two checks listed had been approved for payment at the July Board meeting.

Fosbe Town Plumbing and Heating was paid \$300 to repair a sewer backup. Checks to Linda Kamholz (\$193.20) and Komal (\$100) were for Zoom programs. Director George and Kaila Ward-Merritt were reimbursed for supplies. Amazon Capital Services was paid \$483.45 for chairs and furniture for the History Room.

Stella (formerly LMxAC) was paid \$7,800 for supplemental Hoopla funds. Director George noted Hoopla averages around \$650 per month. Stella was also paid \$1,422 for computers, \$1,179 and \$305.91 for software. LibraryLinkNJ was paid \$823.86 for our yearly ILL fee.

There were no other unusual expenses.

Susen Edwards moved to accept Resolution 2024-12 authorizing payment of all bills including the additional checks mentioned above. Barbara Ferris 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 August and September was provided to Board Members. Director George noted Internet/Technology is \$10,903.21 in the red due to the new computers (noted above); \$5,000 for a three-year contract for our sonic wall/antivirus program; and new printers to accommodate Polaris, our new software system. Magazines and Newspapers is \$1,959.22 in the red due to increasing costs for newspapers. Everything else is on target for the year.

Circulation Report

Director George gave the circulation report for July and August. See the Circulation Reports for details.

She noted that the report is incomplete because of the update of our computer operating system to Polaris. ILLs In and Out, Fines, Total Circulation, and Current Total Users could not be calculated. Adult, Juvenile, Hoopla and Overdrive numbers are strong.

Attendance at Children's programs is back to pre-COVID levels for both months. Adult program attendance is solid for the time period.

Director's Report

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

1. The new doors for the Library and Community Room have been installed. Director George noted the installers did a fantastic job. Accessibility to the building is much improved. It should be noted that the funds for the doors came via HUD.
2. The new doors require that our security system be rewired and some security panels need to be relocated. If a meeting in the Community Room goes past the hours the Library is open, guests must leave through the side emergency exit door. It is important to check that lighting is adequate on that side of the building.
3. The butterfly garden will be relocated to the side of the building closest to the main parking lot.
4. The damage from the July 5 roof leak is estimated at a little over \$10,000. The insurance estimate has been submitted to JIF.
5. We have had two additional plumbing issues: a sewer line backed up and leaked in the main Library area, and the roof leaked in the Makerspace/New Book area. We are hoping Capital funds can pay for a new roof in the next few years.
6. The Kingston Presbyterian Church has requested ten of our old chairs for their Sunday School. Barbara Ferris moved to donate the chairs. Dina Fomatero seconded the motion. All were in favor.
7. Security cameras work well but do not transmit video outside the Library network. TK1 will be coming to the Library on September 11 to assess the situation. They may charge for the visit as they did not install the system.
8. The new Polaris system is becoming easier to work with, but problems are still occurring. Stella (LMxAC) has become more receptive to member library concerns.
9. Summer reading programs have returned to pre-COVID levels.
10. The next wave for the Legacy Lawn will open next week.
11. Kaila Ward, Children's Librarian, reported that summer programs were always full, volunteers were busy, and patrons enjoyed themselves.

12. Mary Toole, Reference Librarian, reported that the Adult Summer Reading program was a success. Monthly movies adapted from books are planned beginning this week.

13. Theresa Bond continues to keep active with social media and community programs. Zoom programs continue to be popular and patrons are showing interest in in-person programs.

Committee Reports

Beverly Weber from the Sunshine Committee asked if anyone was in need of a care basket. Fortunately, no one replied.

There were no other committee reports.

Friends of the Library Report

Friends President, Susen Edwards, handed out Fall Newsletters to Board Members. The Friends first program features the Florian Schantz Jazz Combo on Sunday, September 22.

Unfinished Business

President Benson mentioned some confusion regarding Director George being eligible for a stipend once she goes on her husband's health insurance plan. The good news is that she is eligible for a \$5,000 stipend. The Library will also see a yearly saving of \$26,200 from this move. However, because it is retroactive only to July 1, we will see \$13,100 this year.

Unfortunately, a 17.5% increase in health insurance costs is anticipated in 2025.

New Business

There was no New Business.

Public Discussion

Councilman Michael Conahan mentioned a number of Borough buildings, including the Library, will be in need of roof repairs over the next few years.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m. on a motion made by Dina Fomatero and seconded by Barbara Ferris. All were in favor.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on Monday, October 14, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Susen Edwards
Secretary
September 10, 2024

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