

Middlesex Public Library
1300 Mountain Avenue
Middlesex, NJ 08846

Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting on January 13, 2025

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 13, 2025. 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 Courier News, 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
- X Melissa Fedosh, Treasurer
- X Susen Edwards, Secretary
- X Barbara Ferris, Member At Large
- X Beverly Weber, Member At Large
- Dina Fomataro, Member At Large
- Erin Gomez, Representative of the Superintendent of Schools
- X Dave Oliver, Representative of the Mayor
- X Christine George, Library Director

Oaths of Office

Positions on the Board for Emily DeScenza and Beverly Weber were renewed for another five-year period. Both read aloud and signed their Oath of Office.

Election of Officers

At the December 2024 meeting the existing officers indicated they wished to stay in their present positions. President Benson asked if there were any nominations of officers from the floor. Hearing

none, Dave Oliver moved to close nominations. Barbara Ferris seconded the motion. All were in approval. The current slate of officers will remain in 2025.

Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting(s)

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous Board meeting held on December 9, 2024, was made by Dave Oliver 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 bills remained from 2024: Director George was reimbursed \$1,049.17 for food and expenses related to the staff and board luncheon on December 30, 2024. Amazon Capital Services was paid \$3,652.52 for various expenses.

For January 2025: STELLA (formerly LMxAC) was paid \$3,692.72 for quarterly dues. Swank Movie Licensing was paid \$474.00, which allows the Library to show films for the upcoming year. We receive three bills from New Jersey American Water. One account was paid \$914.46, which accounts for two months of water usage.

There were no unusual expenses for the month.

Susen Edwards moved to accept Resolution 2025-01 authorizing payment of all bills. 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.”

Director George provided Board members with a year-end 2024 Monthly Budget Report and a Monthly Budget Report for January 2025. Director George has spoken to STELLA regarding the division of expenses between Internet/Technology and Digital Media. They have indicated they will begin itemizing our expenses in 2025, which should give a more accurate picture for our budget.

Capital Items have not yet been updated for 2025.

Everything is on target for the year.

Circulation Report

Director George gave the circulation report for January. Juvenile circulation is down slightly for the month, but this is to be expected with holiday closings. ILLs In and Out are down due to four or five days without service in December. Overall, Total Circulation is up significantly from the prior two years. See the Circulation Report for details.

Hoopla and Overdrive numbers are strong.

The Hot Cocoa and PJ holiday party was a huge success. More than 100 cups of cocoa were given out. Borough departments continue to use the Community Room. Adult/Friends program attendance is strong.

Director's Report

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

1. Chris Anderson Roofing has repaired the roof.
2. During the holidays, DPW fixed ceiling tiles and performed other necessary maintenance.
3. New computers are being installed and updated.
4. The Library has seven WiFi access points which need to be upgraded. TK1 can do the upgrade and provide us with a three-year contract for \$3,320. Barbara Ferris moved to approve the work. Dave Oliver seconded the motion. All were in favor.
5. The opening of the History Room has been moved to March. A group of volunteers met on January 10 to discuss the opening and will meet again on January 17.
6. Bound Brook Library has closed permanently. Many of their patrons visit our Library as we're the nearest library. We have no reciprocal agreement with Bound Brook as they are part of Somerset County Library System. Director George will contact STELLA to discuss how to handle the situation.
7. Kaila Ward, Children's Librarian, reported that the Hot Cocoa and PJ party was a huge success. She has no programs scheduled in January but will resume in February and March. March is Maker's Month. The Library is hosting Maker's events for all ages and is looking for patrons with creative talents to teach Maker's Space workshops.

8. Mary Toole, Reference Librarian, reported that the “25 Books in 2025” challenge is underway. All ages are invited to join in. Mugs and tote bags will be given as prizes. Celebrity Book Clubs are popular and influencing readers’ book choices.
9. Theresa Bond reported that local artist, Ted Ferkecki, is displaying his artwork of the area. Paint and Sip, a popular Zoom program, is scheduled in February. Forty people have already registered. She continues to share events, new books, and other Library information on social media.

Committee Reports

President Benson presented a new form for our Director Evaluation to Personnel Committee members. With minor edits, the form is now acceptable.

Beverly Weber thanked Board Members who contributed to the Sunshine Fund. She also asked the Board their opinion on what point the Board should recognize long-term employees. After a brief discussion, the Board decided it should be after twenty-five years of service.

There were no other committee reports.

Friends of the Library Report

Friends President, Susen Edwards, reported that the Friends will have their first program of the season on Wednesday, January 15, at 2:00 p.m.: Hypnosis for New Year’s Resolutions. A vocal/piano concert will be held on Sunday, January 26, at 2:00 p.m.

Susen has filed the final Grant Report to the County. The Friends received a \$4,000 grant but not all the money was used. Approximately \$500 remains in the account. She noted this in her report and is waiting to hear back from the County.

Unfinished Business

Director George gave an update on the roof repairs in her Director’s Report. President Benson discussed the new Director Evaluation form in Committee Reports.

New Business

Director George provided Board Members with a list of exterior projects (install new lighting and minor repainting) and interior projects (open History Room, replace blinds throughout the building). She also suggested we review the By-Laws and revise if necessary, and to use some of the funds in the Library Fines Account to make needed purchases.

Public Discussion

There was no Public Discussion.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m. on a motion made by Melissa Fedosh and seconded by Barbara Ferris. All were in favor.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on Monday, February 10, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Susen Edwards
Secretary
January 14, 2025

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