

**Minutes of the May 15, 2023
Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting**

The 2178th meeting of the Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, May 15, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with New Jersey Law.

The meeting was called to order by President JoAnn McCullough at 7:07 pm.

Open Meetings Act:

President JoAnn McCullough announced that the meeting was in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was posted on the Library website, in the Library, at the Municipal Building and advertised in the Star Ledger. Notice of the change of venue to an Hybrid meeting was posted on the library website.

Roll Call:

Board Members Present: JoAnn McCullough, Presiding, Theodore Graham, Geoffrey Borshof, Diana Lunin, Andrew Silver and Lilian Ferguson

Board Members Absent: Marcos Vargas

Library Staff Present: Director Janet Torsney, Assistant Director Selwa Shamy, and Recording Secretary Linda Welch, Comptroller Lisa Connell

Swearing in of Reappointed Trustee - Brian Clarkson

Election of Treasurer to the Board - Diana Lunin moved to elect Brian Clarkson for Treasurer of the Board for 2023 and JoAnn McCullough seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Report from The MPL Foundation - Mary Packer

The Lit Gala

The Gala was a great success with over 200 guests raising nearly \$200,000 in gross receipts. Both the raffle and the Fund-A-Need dramatically outpaced expectations. Final receipts are still coming in, but the net amount raised by the Gala exceeds \$140,000. The Fund-A-Need proceeds of \$38,800 have already been distributed to the library to address the immediate needs described in each category: Community Reads, Teen Room updates, the Children's Room at the Bellevue Avenue Branch, Children & Youth programming, Adult School support, Special Collections, and the Director's Circle. The remainder of the funds will go through the regular request and disbursement process and will support those special projects, programs, and services that enhance our wonderful library beyond the essential municipal funding for personnel, hours, operating costs, and building upkeep.

It remains to be seen whether and to what extent the Gala may impact giving to the Annual Appeal. On the one hand, the Gala attracted new supporters and re-engaged a number of

former supporters and we hope to continue to cultivate those relationships. On the other hand, those who gave so generously in April may be unable to support the library to the same degree at year's end. We will consider these possible outcomes as we move into end-of-year planning in the fall.

Board Development

Having evaluated the skill sets and knowledge that we need on the Foundation Board going forward, the Board has generated a robust slate of prospective Board members and has begun the process of gauging interest and setting up interviews. We hope that this Board recruitment process will result in 2-4 candidates joining the Foundation Board in September.

Grants

Of the seven grant proposals submitted so far this year, in partnership with the library, we have received one award, several declinations, and two remain outstanding. As we complete the follow-up related to the Gala, the Foundation will turn its attention back to pursuing additional grants.

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the April 17, 2023 meeting stood approved. Diana Lunin made the motion and Brian Clarkson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Presidents' Report:

JoAnn McCullough: None

Treasurer's Report:

Lisa Connell presented the Treasurer's Report:

Diana Lunin moved for the Resolution #23-24 Approving the Bills and Payables between the April 17, 2023 and May 15, 2023 Board of Trustees Meetings be approved and the itemized summary be made part of the minutes and Geoffrey Borshof seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Geoffrey Borshof moved for the adoption of Resolution #23-25 Pre-Approving Bills and Payables due between the May 15, 2023 and June 12, 2023 Board of Trustees Meetings be approved and the itemized summary be made part of the minutes and Brian Clarkson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Theodore Graham moved for the adoption of Resolution #23-26 Approving the April 2023 Bank Bank Reconciliation Statements and Brian Clarkson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Reports from Support Organizations:

Montclair Library Friends: Ed Robin

- Congratulations to the MPL Foundation on the Lit Gala

- The Montclair Library Friends will attend the Montclair Town Council meeting on May 16 to advocate for the Library Budget.

Friends of Bellevue Avenue Library, Inc.: Ilmar Vanderer

- The Friends raised close to \$1,000 at their May Book Sale
- Expressed his appreciation for the complimentary tickets to the Lit Gale
- The Friends are gearing up for this summer's Music Mondays.
- Ilmar stated that he is very pleased with all the programs at the Bellevue Avenue Branch Library.

Library Report:

Assistant Director Selwa Shamy reported that:

Building & Safety

- ADA Bathroom Project - all bids from the first round were rejected due to being out of budget range. A second round of bids is in progress and a second walk through was done on May 10. The county is waiting to see what bids come in before deciding whether they will increase the funds and extend the deadline. The bid deadline is May 24.
- A solar umbrella with a mobile charging station was installed at one of the tables outside of the main library. Within a week, the two iPhone charging cables were torn from the unit. Replacement cables will be installed -- if they are removed again they will not be replaced. There are USB outlets where people can use their own cables.
- A table read for an active shooter scenario was led by officer Rober Romito at the library on May 3. Members of the police, fire, and EMS departments sat down with Tim Flowers, Janet Torsney, Tom Hoesly, Adrienne Burke, and Selwa Shamy. The training process for this kind of threat is underway with staff.

Schools

- Tim Flowers, Tracy Crawford, Ruby Williamson and Selwa Shamy met with members of the school system restorative justice team on May 9. The RJ team was very helpful and generous with their time.

Services

- Seed Library - out of 200 packets of seeds that were created, 126 have been taken so far. Flowers and herbs are the most popular.
- Library of Things - The Video to Digital converter is very popular, as are the musical instruments. There were six checkouts in the first week and many compliments and much interest at the STEM Fair at Edgemont School where the collection debuted.

Community

- Montclair Literary Festival sessions were held on the main library lawn and in the auditorium on May 6. Attendance at library hosted sessions was over 500.
- Montclair Gateway to Aging has been partnering with the library to offer SmartSeniors/SmartTECH classes taught by seniors for seniors. The next set of sessions will be May 17, May 24, May 31 and June 7.

- Outreach events
 - Geyer Family YMCA Storytime (45 attended)
 - Montclair Art Museum Family Day Storytime (5 children attended)
 - Edgemont STEM Fair (174 interactions)
 - Walnut Street Fair (290 interactions, 18 library card registrations, 3 renewals)

Library Director Janet Torsney:

Programs and Services

- More than 400 people came through the first Flea for All; 35 of them got new library cards. Also raised \$400 for the library.
- More than 200 people attended the screening of the Judy Blume documentary.
- Leading French author, Anne Berest, closed out Montclair Literary Festival at the library on May 11.
- Gearing up for major Big Read next spring with our partners Montclair High and MFEE. Book: *The Best We Could Do*, a graphic novel by Thi Bui. Period: February-May, 2024.

Building

- The Building Committee is reviewing RfQs for HVAC and water-remediation at BAB. Vendor should be hired soon
- Continue to talk to Bryan Murdock about how MSU could help develop the cafe space
- Josh Weston has graciously offered to replace the benches in the Plaza at the main library.

Funding

- So much library love at the gala! Especially pleased with Fund a Need, which raised \$37,000 for specific projects: Community Read, Adult School business classes, BAB Kids Space, Teen Room, Children’s programming, special collections and Director’s Circle.

Old Business:

Building Committee Report - Theodore Graham

The Building Committee is reviewing RfQs for HVAC at the Main Library and the water abatement issue at the Bellevue Avenue Branch Library.

New Business:

Resolution 23-27 Honoring Lois Whipple

Whereas, Lois Whipple served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of the Township of Montclair from January 2008 – December 2022, and

Whereas, during her tenure Lois Whipple served as Treasurer for the Board from January 2013 – June 2021 and again from July 2021 - December 2022, and

Whereas, during her tenure she served on the Nominating Committee and assisted in the presenting the Officers of the Board during her tenure, and

Whereas, Lois Whipple served on a committee to develop the Library's 2013 - 2016 Strategic Plan, and

Whereas, while serving as Treasurer Lois Whipple advised the Board of Trustees in the Library Budget in the midst of a global pandemic, and

Whereas, her efforts and insight has been invaluable as a member of the Library Trustees, and

Whereas, she has demonstrated her unflinching support of the mission of the Library changing lives every day through words, ideas, and community building, and

Whereas, Lois Whipple's life-long love for the Library and for the people of Montclair have continually enhanced her generous support of this Institution,

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of the Township of Montclair expresses its gratitude and deepest respect for her years of faithful service.

Theodore Graham moved to accept Resolution 23-27 Honoring Lois Whipple and Brian Clarkson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution 23-28 Honoring Wilfred Adkins

Whereas, Wilfred Adkins served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of the Township of Montclair from September 2008 through December 2022, and

Whereas, Wilfred Adkins served as officer of the Board of Trustees, as Treasurer from January 2010 – December 2012, President from January 2013 to December 2020, and as Vice-President from January 2021 to December 2022, and

Whereas, during his tenure he appointed a Search committee of the Board of Trustees, who hired a consultant to conduct a successful national search that selected and ultimately hired Director Peter Coyl, and

Whereas, during his tenure he was on the Search committee that selected and hired of library Director, Janet Torsney, and

Whereas, as President of the Board of Trustees Wilfred Adkins led the Library through a very difficult time during in the midst of a global pandemic, and

Whereas, Wilfred Adkins initiated the formation of a committee to develop the Library's 2013 - 2016 Strategic Plan, and

Whereas, during his tenure he has given generously of his time and talent to promote the mission and vision of the Montclair Public Library, and

Whereas, the members of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library recognize the outstanding and steadfast service that Wilfred Adkins has given to the Library and his community, and

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of the Township of Montclair expresses its gratitude and deepest respect for his years of dedicated service.

Diana Lunin moved to accept Resolution 23-28 Honoring Wilfred Adkins and JoAnn McCullough seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution #23-29 Pledge To Stand Up For The Other

Whereas, Racial or ethnic bigotry, religious persecution, such as anti-Semitism or Islamophobia, bias based on sexual orientation or gender identity or any other form of hatred, cannot be wiped out unless each and every one of us confronts it within our own circles of family and friends.

Whereas, Silence is seen as consent.

Whereas, It takes courage to stand up for the other!

Whereas, all may sign the Stand Up for the Other Pledge at NJ Interfaith Coalition site:
<https://www.njifc.org/>

Therefore be it resolved, that the Board of Trustees of the Montclair Public Library pledges to stand up for the other and speak up to challenge bigotry in any form.

Theodore Graham moved to accept Resolution #23-29 Pledge To Stand Up For The Other and Brian Clarkson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

Ilmar Vanderer expressed his best wishes for Lois Whipple and Wilfred Adkins on their retirement from the Library Board.

Gina Chung Fortt expressed her appreciation to the Board of Trustees for their support of the Lit Gala.

Adjournment:

At 8:15 p.m. Brian Clarkson moved to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting and Diana Lunin seconded. The motion was carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.