

**Minutes of the September 18, 2023
Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting**

The 2181st meeting of the Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, September 18, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with New Jersey Law.

The meeting was called to order by President JoAnn McCullough at 7:09pm.

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, Diana Lunin, Andrew Silver, Brian Clarkson, Geoffrey Borshof and Lilian Ferguson

Board Members Absent: none

Library Staff Present: Director Janet Torsney Assistant Director Selwa Shamy and Recording Secretary Linda Welch

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the July 17, 2023 meeting stood approved. Theodore Graham made the motion and Diana Lunin seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Presidents' Report:

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Ponds has appointed David Cantor as the new BOE designee to the MPI Board of Trustees.

Treasurer's Report:

Brian Clarkson presented the Treasurer's Report:

Brian Clarkson moved for the Resolution #23-39 Approving The Bills and Payables between the July 17, 2023 and September 18, 2023 Board of Trustees Meetings be approved and the itemized summary be made part of the minutes and Theodore Graham seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Brian Clarkson moved for the adoption of Resolution #23-40 Pre-Approving Bills and Payables due between the September 18, 2023 and October 16, 2023 Board of Trustees Meetings be approved and the itemized summary be made part of the minutes and Theodore Graham seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Brian Clarkson moved for the adoption of Resolution #23-41 Approving the July and August 2023 Bank Bank Reconciliation Statements and Diana Lunin seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution #23-42 To Accept The FY22 Audit

Whereas, NJAC §15:21-12.7(d) states “A certified audit of the Library Board of Trustees shall be performed annually as required by N.J.S.A. 40A:5-4 et seq. and described in N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.1”; and

Whereas, the Board of Trustees passed Resolution #23-11 on January 9, 2023 to engage the firm of Lerch, Vinci & Higgins, LLP P.A to perform the annual audit of the library’s finances for FY22 which ended on December 31, 2022 and

Whereas, the audit has been completed and has been presented to the Library Director, Comptroller and Finance Committee; and

Whereas, the Finance Committee recommends acceptance of the FY22 audit and taking the recommended corrective action.

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Board of Trustees accept the audit dated July 6, 2023 and instructs the Library Director to submit a copy to the Chief Financial Officer of the municipality as directed by NJSA §40:54-15(a).

Brian Clarkson moved to accept Resolution - #23-42 To Accept the FY22 Audit Geoffrey Borshoff seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution #23-43 Approving the Use of Funds From the Kathryn Perino Bequest for ADA Bathroom Renovation and Rebuilding Network Infrastructure

Whereas, Kathryn Perino made a very generous undesignated donation to the Montclair Public Library in 2022; and

Whereas, the ADA renovation of bathrooms in the Main Library, primarily funded by a Community Development Block Grant, requires \$14,900 of additional funding; and

Whereas, the reconstruction of our network infrastructure requires \$80,018.89 in funding. The total project budget is \$133,364.82, \$53,345.93 will be reimbursed through the e-rate program; and

Whereas, both of these projects are essential to Library operations and there are adequate funds available;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Board of Trustees approves allocating \$94,918.89 from the Kathryn Petrino bequest for these two projects.

Brian Clarkson moved to accept Resolution #23-43 Approving the use of Funds from the Kathryn Perino Request for Ada Bathroom Renovation and Rebuilding Network Infrastructure Diana Lunin seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Reports from Support Organizations:

Report from The MPL Foundation - Mary Packer

The Montclair Public Library Foundation welcomed four new Board members in August –

- Eileen Brackenbury, Historic Preservationist
- Michael Cocco, Certified Financial Planner with Beacon Wealth Partners
- Henry Neff, Author
- Elizabeth Rich, Director of the Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation at Montclair State University

The Foundation Board gathered for a retreat earlier this month at Montclair State University. We were thrilled to have former Board Chair Jonathan Simon join us to lead participants through an analysis of the Foundation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The resulting conversation helped to focus and refine the Foundation goals for this year, including the expansion and refinement of communications and advocacy messaging and continued growth in fundraising.

During the retreat, Sue Mellin described the progress and achievements of the Foundation since 2020:

- Negotiated and executed Operating Agreement with Montclair Public Library to define mutual responsibilities and formalize space sharing arrangement for MPLF Executive Director
- Hired Executive Director
- Built MPLF Board to 19 members
- Developed and codified Board Committee structure
- Investment policy developed and passed, investments shifted to Wells Fargo with a greater percentage of funds invested in order to maximize growth while maintaining needed liquidity
- Strengthened political advocacy to help preserve supplemental town funding
- Honed marketing and messaging for annual appeal and public awareness about the MPLF
- Increased the average gift size for the annual appeal (\$303 to \$370) and retained more donors (364 to 423 retained) (2021 - 2022)
- Exceeded fundraising goal for the Foundation's first gala since 2015
- Increased grant funding between 2021 and 2022 by 144% (from \$27,500 to \$67,000)

At present, the Foundation is awaiting notification on more than \$100,000 in potential grant funds for which we've applied. The largest of these, a grant proposal to Partners for Health, would fund a part-time social worker at the library for two years.

We are currently more than 2/3 of the way to our goal for Little Read sponsorships, and have a number of new businesses participating this year. Current sponsors include: Mountainside Medical Center, Rosemary Iversen, EastSide Mags, Leslie Kunkin of West Hudson Real Estate, Kurly Kurtosh, Montclair Cooperative School, Montclair Tutoring, Pigtales & Crewcuts, the Tutor Shack, Montclair YMCA, and Brinker International. These sponsorships support children's programming and the purchase of materials.

The Foundation is making progress in the design and messaging of our annual appeal campaign, which we expect to launch the first week in November.

Montclair Library Friends: *Janet Torsney*

1. A guided tour of the Bellevue Avenue Branch Library will be conducted on October 7, 2023 at 2:00 PM by noted Montclair historian, Lisanne Renner.

2. A guided tour of the Main Library will be conducted on October 20, 2023 by Erin Roll, former reporter for the Montclair Local, in conjunction with the Little Read.

3. Members of the Montclair Library Friends Steering Committee will serve as check-in volunteers for Open Book/Open Mind events on October 14 and October 21, 2023.

4. On a personal note, Ed Robin has been working with the Library Director on capital improvement priorities for the Montclair Public Library. These include a detailed sustainability renovation plan for the Main Library and, at the Bellevue Avenue Branch Library plaza, removal of two trees, which represent a trip hazard, planting two new trees elsewhere on Library property and restoration of the plaza to the way it looked during the period after the Bellevue Avenue Branch Library opened. These capital improvements will be privately funded.

Friends of Bellevue Avenue Library, Inc.: Cordelia Siporin

The Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library will hold their Book Sale on Saturday, September 23 from 12pm-6pm at the Bellevue Avenue Branch Library. Hardcover books, DVDs and CDs will be \$1.00 each and Softcover books will be \$.50 each. The Friends will have a special sale (purchase a Friend's tote bag for \$10.00 and fill it up with books at no additional cost.)

Library Report:

Assistant Director Report: Selwa Shamy

Building & Safety

- ADA Bathroom Project - Construction is underway for the first and third floor multi-stall bathrooms and the project is on schedule. The completion date is planned for October 28, 2023.
- The branch lower level hallway has a section where the plywood degraded due to water intrusion; new plywood will be installed.

Community Outreach Events

- Jazz Festival Block Party on August 12 with the etuk. Deivis Garcia did three storytimes and there were 68 interactions.
- Back to School Supply Giveaway with The Sentinels at Wally Choice Center on August 27 with the etuk had 250 interactions.
- Outreach at the Jazz Festival Jamboree on September 9 was cut short due to the rain.

Unhoused Coalition

- The community coalition led by Township Counselor David Cummings met on August 28. The group will focus on Local Organizations, People, Local Government, and Housing/Location. The Library will be in the People group, assisting in getting data about the unhoused population.

September Is Library Card Sign Up Month

- Borrower Services staff will promote two library card signups
 - September 15 at the corner of S. Fullerton Ave. and Church St.
 - September 22 on the Wellmont Arts Plaza.
- An ad will run on the Montclair Local from September 11 through September 30.

Schools

- Youth Services staff from the Main Library will be present at 12 back to school nights spanning from September 11 through October 11.
- The Little Read will take place from October 18-20 at both library locations. The schedule was shared with the public schools and classes are signing up.
 - Reader signup information will be sent the first week of October.
 - A community party is scheduled for Friday, October 20 in the auditorium.

Staffing

- The Youth and Teen Services Department welcomes Jeff Harrison as an hourly librarian.
- Interviews will take place in September for a full time position with the Adult Services Department.

Library Director Janet Torsney:

Building

- Free LED light install on the second floor is complete. Project will resume after inspection
- Work on BAB water-remediation project has begun
- Waiting for approval on Township-funded window film for Youth Services
- BAB Kids Place and Teen Room renovations funded by Gala are underway

Programs and Services

- Welcomed Imani
- Met with Montclair Literary Festival about Colson Whitehead event and other programs

- Community Conversation on Reading planned for 10/2
- Big Read Steering Committee met to plan next spring's program
- Met with Reverend Dunn about collaboration with Wally Choice/MNDC
- Worked with Out Montclair on Queer Lit: Our Stories book club

Township, Mayor, Council

- Working with Township insurers and IT staff to ensure we meet cybersecurity standards
- Consulted with Alisha Dawkins, head of HR, about scope of Township support
- Shared Road Map with Mayor and Council
- Reached out to interim Township Manager about using their fundraising consultant
- Conducting energy audit in conjunction with Environmental Affairs Coordinator

Finance

- Reworked general ledger and budgeting codes. Received personnel and tech requests from department heads, working on departmental requests. Foundation will provide conservative estimate of 2024 funding.
- Budget to be presented at October board meeting
- Renegotiated Comcast bill for improved service and savings. Looking at copier and payroll services for similar advantages.

Foundation

- Thank you for the Quigley Award ceremony
- Attended retreat via video
- Met with MAM Director about possible project for gallery space
- Josh Weston flag donation

Other

- Led NJLA Administration meeting about Difficult Conversation
- Serving on MSU Library Board of Advocates
- Worked with Policy Committee
- Completed community survey
- Participated in meeting on Hot Topics for Seniors
- Completed BCCLS salary survey
- Covid is on the rise; we're following CDC standards

Technology

- Got additional hot spots to meet demand
- Repurposing Chromebooks and laptops
- Working on audio-visual challenges

Old Business:

Report of Policy Committee

The Policy Committee members are Diana Lunin and Lilian Ferguson.

- a. Report of Policy Committee - *Diana Lunin*

1. Theodore Graham made a motion to approval the revised Reconsideration policies; Diana Lunin second. The motion was carried unanimously.
2. Donations for use of public rooms

New Business:

Public Comment: None

Adjournment:

At 8:08 p.m. JoAnn McCullough moved to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting and Theodore Graham seconded. The motion was carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.