

**Minutes of the February 12, 2024  
Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting**

The 2186th meeting of the Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, February 12, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with New Jersey Law.

The meeting was called to order by President JoAnn McCullough at 7:08 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.

Ilmar Vanderer presented the Library with a check for \$1,000.00 from the Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Branch. This donation is earmarked for a video screen at the Bellevue Avenue Branch Library.

Swearing in of new trustees: Lilian Ferguson, Thamar Campbell, and Damen G. Cooper

Roll Call:

Board Members Present: JoAnn McCullough, Presiding, Theodore Graham, Diana Lunin, Andrew Silver, Brian Clarkson, Lilian Ferguson, Thamar Campbell, and Damen G. Cooper

Board Members Absent: Geoffrey Borshof

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

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the January 8, 2024 Regular Meeting stood approved. Brian Clarkson made the motion and Theodore Graham seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Presidents' Report:

JoAnn McCullough reported that:

- The Executive Committee met on January 24 to review the Agenda.
- The Climate Committee met with Auros on January 26 to discuss Sustainable building.

Treasurer's Report:

Brian Clarkson presented the Treasurer's Report:

Theodore Graham moved for the adoption of Resolution #24-14 Approving the Bills and Payables between the January 8, 2024 and February 12, 2024 Board of Trustees Meetings be approved and the itemized summary be made part of the minutes and Andrew Silver seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Andrew Silver moved for the adoption of Resolution #24-15 Pre-Approving Bills And Payables Due Between the February 12, 2024 and March 18, 2024 Board of Trustees Meetings be approved and the itemized summary be made part of the minutes and Lilian Ferguson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Theodore Graham moved for the adoption of Resolution #24-16 Approving the January 2024 Bank Reconciliation Statements and Lilian Ferguson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Reports from Support Organizations:

Report from The MPL Foundation - Janet Torsney

2024 Distribution to the Library

- At the January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Foundation Board approved the 2024 budget. The budget includes a \$200,000 disbursement to the Library in support of adult and youth programs, a part-time Social Worker, Open Book / Open Mind, materials (including literacy and science kits and items for the Library of Things), community programs, electronic resources, databases, hotspots, museum passes and more! The budget also includes \$17,500 in direct library investment for a sustainability consultant and literacy initiative.
- This will be the highest level of Foundation support since 2014. MPL Foundation grants to the Library have exceeded \$200,000 in only five years since its inception: in 2011, 2014, 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Leap Year Trivia Night – February 29, 2024

- The Foundation is hosting a Trivia Night at Tierney's on February 29<sup>th</sup> with a leap-year theme. Sponsoring the event are Beacon Wealth Partners, Cohen/Winters Aesthetic & Reconstructive Surgery, and Local Coffee. Sparo's Deli & Catering is an in-kind sponsor, providing sandwiches for the event.
- To date, 69 tickets have been sold. Capacity is 100 people. To join in the fun, tickets can be purchased at <https://montclairplf.org/leap-year-trivia-night/>

Wine Tasting with Ray Isles

- In partnership with Amanti Vino, the Foundation will be hosting a wine-tasting fundraiser following the Open Book / Open Mind conversation with Ray Isle, executive wine editor for Food & Wine magazine. We are speaking to potential sponsors for the event, and tickets will go on sale next week.

Montclair Library Friends: Ed Robin

Ed Robin presented an overview of the Friends.

- The architect who is working with the library on Bellevue Avenue Branch Plaza renovation reported that the roof should be replaced.
- Ed discussed his plans for moving on with the renovations including landscaping and preventing flooding.

Friends of Bellevue Avenue Library, Inc.: *Ilmar Vanderer - None*

Library Report:

Assistant Director Report: Selwa Shamy

Building & Safety

- The transition to library staff taking over cleaning duties of both buildings is planned for March.
- Minor issues found in fire inspection have been remedied (ceiling tile replacement in various areas and closing doors in the basement).

Programming

- The Montclair Reads Kickoff took place on Feb. 8 and 21 people attended. Copies of "The Best We Could Do" by Thi Bui and a branded tote bag were distributed.
- The first MILL and MPL collaboration of Friday senior programming on January 26 was a great success with over 71 participants throughout the day.
- Writing Our Future: A Celebration of Black Children's Literature event with Just Us Books will take place on Sat. 2/17.
- New York Historical Society virtual presentation of Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow will take place 2/22
- Local History has been accepted as a participant in the 2024 cohort of the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Community History program.
- Youth Services upcoming African American History program highlights: Jerry Pinkney storytime / craft, box craft with Mansa Mussa, Beyond the Boogie: Hip Hop for Tweens, and Swahili Storytime.

Schools

- A meeting took place with library staff, Executive Director of the MPL Foundation Mary Packer, and Jill McLaughlan, Director of Elementary Education and Damen Cooper, Director of Secondary Education. We discussed how the library can best help support literacy efforts. A web page of resources will be created, a screening of "Right to Read" at the Library during Read Across America week is in the works, and planning will take place for a summer weekly fun literacy program for early readers.
- Buzz Aldrin art students created a beautiful under the sea themed mural on the stairwell wall at the Branch.

Staff

- Noemie (pronounced No-Amy) Maxwell was hired as a part-time library assistant in the Borrower Services Dept.

- Interviews are taking place for various part-time positions, including the Partners for Health grant funded position of a part-time social worker.
- Montclair staff members Ariel Zeitlin, Enola Romano, and Tim Flowers will all present programs for the annual NJ Library Association Conference in June.

### Milestones

- Enola Romano reached her 25 year anniversary last January.
- Adrienne Burke reached her 30 year anniversary in May of '22.
- Ken French has been with the library for 10 years.

### Other

- Soon credit cards will be accepted at the Circulation Desk at the Main Library. The minimum charge will be \$2.00 and a fee of 50 cents will be applied to every charge to cover fees -- this is the same amount that BCCLS charges for credit card payments of fines and lost books.
- Weeding continues to take place for all collections. The short story collection will soon be interfiled with fiction

### Library Director Report: Janet Torsney:

#### Year-End Reports

- We saw significant growth between 2022 and 2023 in almost all areas (see attached). The 50% increase in visits, 76% increase in program participation and tripling of attendance at community-hosted events in the Library were especially welcome.
- The 2023 Road Map Report (attached) showed significant progress on all six priorities.

### Partnerships

- Met with David Placek, owner of The Mills Building next store, about future Library involvement and the parking lot.
- Sold-out Kwame Alexander event (Howe House fundraiser hosted by Watchung Booksellers) was a great success with much library love. We will host another Howe House poetry-reading fundraiser in February.
- Met with representatives from the Board of Education, NAACP and donor to fire up our support of MPS Science of Reading initiatives and continued engagement of our Community Conversation participants.
- Firmed up plans for community read/OBOM event of *Poverty, By America* with Partners for Health. They are going to buy books which will be distributed to community groups and students so they can read and discuss the book before the September event.
- Met with Carin Berkowitz, executive director of the NJ Council on Humanities. They want to focus more on libraries and are interested in funding more multi-year projects with us.

### Programs and Services

- Vijay Gupta concert – our first with MSU – was a great success. Two more concerts – quartet and opera – will follow. Grant from Essex County defrayed costs for library and MSU.
- Montclair Reads *The Best We Could Do* got off to a great start with the Community Leaders Breakfast on January 19 and the Launch on February 8. More than 25 events are planned between February and May.

### Buildings

- Initial meeting with Auros Group about sustainable building took place on January 26. Next steps: Getting more information from Auros and funding for plan/RfP
- Met with Settembrino Architects to get a plan/estimate for improving lighting and replacing windows in the café area.
- Draft report on water-infiltration at BAB cites “blocked pipes and a bad roof “as the major culprits. Next steps are drawings and estimates. There should be enough remaining capital funds to pay for the plumbing work; the roof is another matter.
- Main energy audit is complete (BAB expected in a month or so). Next step: looking into discount HVAC replacement.
- Followed up with Montclair Historic Commission to get recommendations for landscape architects to do courtyard rehabilitation drawings.
- Township lawyer is still reviewing solar panel install and finance proposals.

### Technology

- Met with CTS and Township IT staff to try to break logjam on 2023 e-rate-funded network install.
- Submitted 2024 e-rate application.

### Staff

- Promoted Patricia Way, Adult School staff, to full-time bookkeeper.

### Other

- Attended MPLF board meeting.
- Transition to new ADP services began.
- Met with possible funders about gallery space.
- Consulted with lawyer about café space issues.
- Met with Foundation staff weekly.

### Department Head Report - Kenneth French

Kenneth French presented an overview of the aspects of the Collection & Materials Services Department including:

- Ordering and purchasing,
- Evaluating patron usage and publishing trends
- Weeding.

Ken explained how the Collection Development department maintains the collection on a constant basis.

He presented his thoughts about the collection and what he does regularly to make sure it best suits the Montclair community.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Reformation of the Board Committees

- JoAnn McCullough will send committee information to the Board for their review.

Public Comment:

Montclair resident Michelle Baldwin inquired about the etching by the front door.

She expressed her interest about the computer use time restraints.

Theodore Graham expressed his appreciation to the Library staff for increasing Black History collection and assistance with the Howe House event.

Adjournment:

At 8:45 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.