

**Minutes of the February 10, 2025
Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting**

The 2197th meeting of the Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, February 10, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with New Jersey Law.

The meeting was called to order by President JoAnn McCullough at 7:05 p.m.

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, Andrew Silver, Diana Lunin and Brian Clarkson

Board Members Absent: Tamar Campbell, Lilian Ferguson, Geoffrey Borshof and Erika Pierce

Library Staff Present: Director Radwa Ali, Assistant Director Selwa Shamy, Recording Secretary Linda Welch, BAB Manager Kristen Comeaux and Adult School Manager Maurice Boyer

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the January 13, 2025 Regular Meeting stood approved. Theodore Graham made the motion and Brian Clarkson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Presidents' Report:

JoAnn McCullough reported that she enjoyed attending the "Wishbone: A Play Reading by Phoebe Farber on Sunday, February 9, 2025, 3:00pm - 5:00pm. The auditorium was filled with people having a wonderful time.

Treasurer's Report:

Brian Clarkson presented the Treasurer's Report:

Brian Clarkson moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-12 Approving the Bills and Payables between the January 13, 2025 and February 10, 2025 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.

Brian Clarkson moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-13 Pre-Approving Bills and Payables Due Between the February 10, 2025 and March 17, 2025 Board of Trustees

Meetings be approved and the itemized summary be made part of the minutes and Diana Lunin seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Theodore Graham moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-14 Approving the January 2025 Bank Reconciliation Statements and Brian Clarkson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Reports from Support Organizations:

Montclair Public Library Foundation - *Foundation Board Co-Chair Emily Hagen*

2025 Distribution to the Library

At the January 16th meeting, the Foundation Board approved the 2025 budget. The budget includes a \$213,000 distribution to the Library in support of adult and youth programs, a part-time Social Worker, Open Book / Open Mind, materials (including digital materials and items for the Library of Things), community programs, electronic resources, hotspots, museum passes and more! The budget also includes \$65,000 in direct library investment for technology and modernization, including A/V upgrades in the library auditorium.

The Foundation's investment in the library continues to follow the upward trajectory of the past five years, in accordance with the Foundation's strategic plan and made possible through successful efforts to grow fundraising in the areas of corporate and foundation support, individual giving, and special events.

The Lit Gala

The Foundation has been hard at work securing sponsorships for the 2025 Lit Gala. We are also beginning to reach out for items and unique experiences to feature in our live and silent auctions at the event. If you have ideas or would like to help out, please let me know. Introductions to potential sponsors or auction donors are very helpful and much appreciated.

Donor Appreciation

The Foundation is in the early stages of planning a donor appreciation event in June. Tentatively scheduled for Sunday, June 1, we plan to hold a family-friendly film screening to thank donors for their support. More details in the coming months.

Montclair Library Friends: Ed Robin

The Friends will be volunteering at 2 Open Book / Open Mind events.

Ed Robin met with the Library Director, council person Eric Demato and the architectural engineer to discuss the Library's Capital Needs Assessment. The report is needed by the beginning of March and will be presented at the March Board Meeting.

Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library: Ilmar Vanderer

The January 18 Murder Mystery event was a huge success.

The Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library wished Kristen a farewell.

The next book sale is scheduled during May in Montclair.

Library Report:

Assistant Director Report: *Selwa Shamy*

Schools

- Through the Mini Mounties program, Literacy Specialist Gina Chung Fortt visited four classes at the districts Developmental Learning Center, located inside Montclair Community PreK.
- A class of 27 Montclair Kimberley Academy high school students came to the Library to do community service in the children's department on January 17.

Programming

- Adult School Winter Session
 - 75 classes
 - 831 registrations
- MILL/MPL Senior Fridays resumed on January 17 (1/17, 169 attendees; 1/24, 158 attendees; 1/31, 171 attendees).
- Open Book / Open Mind: On January 25, author Rumaan Alam spoke to Alice Elliott Dark about his new book "Entitlement." Alam wrote the New York Times bestseller "Leave the World Behind."
- On February 2, the Adult School presented a free Korean Lunar New Year Dance and Drum Concert with an attendance of 110.

Community

- Dumpling Diplomacy will donate half of their proceeds to the Library from a fundraising event celebrating Lunar New Year that featured dumplings from the Chinese diaspora. The fundraiser took place on February 1. Eight library staff were available to offer information and answer questions at six different stations throughout the event.

Staffing

- Interviews have begun to fill the Bellevue Branch Manager position.
- Adult School Dept. Marketing and Technology Assistant position has been posted.

Library Director Report: *Radwa Ali*

Building & Security

- Capital Needs Assessment: Site visits completed; report expected soon.
- HVAC: Boilers scheduled for April delivery; chiller in May. Pending further assessment of air handlers.
- Auditorium A/V: Awaiting proposal for equipment overhaul, funded by MPLF.
- New tables for Main Library and Bellevue classrooms, funded by MPLF, arriving this week.

Operations

- Passports: Additional staff being trained to become agents, easing operational strain.

- Procurement Card: Paperwork submitted; policy committee to meet on related policy.
- ADP: Downgrading to cost-saving product, expected savings of ~\$20,000 annually.
- Operating Budget: Mayor has agreed to \$515k remittance for Q1 and Q2.
- Capital: Attending Council's F&I committee meeting to discuss \$5M capital repairs request.

Grants

- CAFE: Exploring promising funding for non-essential library enhancements.
- Historic Preservation Fund: Considering funding for Bellevue Library, contingent on capital approval.

Community

- Dumpling Diplomacy Lunar New Year: Successful outreach event and fundraiser.
- Storywalks: Preliminary plans for four locations, launching June 5th.
- Jazz Library: Receiving 500+ jazz books; planning a September launch during Jazz Fest.

Ongoing / Working on

- Streamlining financial workflow; exploring QuickBooks Online for automation.
- Transitioning to Libcal in March, saving \$11,000.
- New website launch by end of Q2.
- BCCLS Network transition planning, saving \$21,000.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Resolution #25-15 Authorizing the Award of a Maintenance Contract for Elevator Services for the Montclair Public Library

Diana Lunin moved. Brian Carlson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution #25-16 Authorizing the Montclair Library Foundation to Apply for NJ Historic Funds in the Event that Matching Capital Funds are Available

Brian Clarkson moved. Andrew Silver seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

As a member of the Friends of Howe House Theodore Graham expressed his appreciation to the Library for hosting the PBS Special "The Price of Silence".

Adjournment:

At 8:10 p.m. Theodore Graham moved to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting and Andrew Silver seconded. The motion was carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.