

**Minutes of the March 17, 2025  
Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting**

The 2198th meeting of the Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, March 17, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with New Jersey Law.

The meeting was called to order by President JoAnn McCullough at 7:06 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 a Hybrid meeting was posted on the Library website.

Roll Call:

Board Members Present: JoAnn McCullough, Presiding, Theodore Graham, Andrew Silver, Brian Clarkson, Tamar Campbell, Lilian Ferguson and Geoffrey Borshof

Board Members Absent: Diana Lunin and Erika Pierce

Library Staff Present: Director Radwa Ali, Assistant Director Selwa Shamy, Recording Secretary Linda Welch

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the February 10, 2025 Regular Meeting stood approved. Theodore Graham made the motion and JoAnn McCullough seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Presidents' Report:

JoAnn McCullough reported:

- The Policy Committee met on March 14 to begin reviewing policies.
- The Executive Committee met on March 10 to review the Agenda.
- The Finance and The Building/Ground Committees met on March 7.

Treasurer's Report:

Brian Clarkson presented the Treasurer's Report:

Brian Clarkson moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-17 Approving the Bills and Payables 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 Andrew Silver seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Brian Clarkson moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-18 Pre-Approving Bills and Payables Due between the March 17, 2025 and April 21, 2025 Board of Trustees Meetings be approved and the itemized summary be made part of the minutes and Tamar Campbell seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Brian Clarkson moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-19 Approving the February 2025 Bank Reconciliation Statements and Lilian Ferguson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

#### Reports from Support Organizations:

Montclair Public Library Foundation - Sheila Boyd (read by Radwa Ali)

##### The Lit Gala

The Lit Gala invitations have gone out via postal and email, and tickets and tables are now on sale. Consider becoming a table captain and organizing a group of friends and neighbors to attend. Please help us spread the word and encourage others to attend.

There are lots of ways to participate and support the Gala – tributes to Honorees, program ads, tickets, tables, sponsorship or donating a unique item for the auction.

#### Staff Appreciation

The Foundation is delighted to recognize the MPL staff with a celebratory breakfast on Tuesday, April 8, on National Library Workers Day during National Library Week.

At the event, the Foundation will announce this year's winner of the Margery Quigley Award. This award was established in 2021 in honor of the Montclair Public Library's longest serving director.

#### CAFE Program

Foundation staff and Board members are taking part in webinars and conversations to learn more about the Cultural Arts Facilities Expansion (CAFE) program that will be launching in New Jersey this spring. Should the Trustees decide to apply for this unique opportunity, the Foundation is happy to offer the assistance and expertise of our Board members and staff as you engage in the application process.

#### Montclair Library Friends: *Ed Robin*

- Members of the Montclair Library Friends volunteered at the Anna Quindlen Open Book / Open Mind event.
- New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund: Considering funding for Bellevue Avenue Branch Library.

#### Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library: *Ilmar Vanderer*

- Preparing for the May-in-Montclair Book Sale
- Expressed his appreciation for the party at the Clarkson's home
- Enjoyed the latest Murder Mystery program at the BAB.

#### Library Report:

Assistant Director Report: *Selwa Shamy*

##### Schools

- Buzz Aldrin Study Skills classes continue to visit the Bellevue Ave Branch Library

- Youth Services Reading Specialist Gina Chung Fortt visited Lacordaire Academy on March 7 with bins of books for them to check out.
- Youth Services Department Head Deivis Garcia visited Montessori Edgemont School on March 14 to talk about librarians in communities.

### Programming

- Adult School
  - So far, winter session registration has slightly exceeded the winter '24 session and class fees collected are on track to have more than a 23% increase.
  - Spring semester registration begins March 31 and the semester starts April 14.
  - NJ PBS: "The Price of Silence" - a Free Screening and Discussion with the Filmmaker attracted an audience of 120 people.
- Open Book / Open Mind
  - Jennifer Jones, "Becoming Spectacular" - The First African American Rockette had an audience of 90 people.
  - Curtis Sittenfeld, "Show Don't Tell" at the First Congregational Church was a ticketed event with an audience of 96 people.
- Youth Services
  - The Garden of the Shadows' The Three Little Pigs: Shadow Puppet Show was a popular Saturday event that attracted an audience of 85 children and adults.
- Adult Services
  - Warming Wednesdays, run by the library's social worker Margarette Ouji, has attracted a steady flow of people with hot coffee and tea plus snacks provided by Toni's Kitchen.
  - Author Talk: "The Nine O'Clock Whistle: Stories of the Freedom Struggle for Civil Rights in Enfield, North Carolina" with Dr. Willa Cofield. Over 60 people attended.

### Community

- Selwa did outreach at the town halls for Fourth Ward Councilor Aminah Toler on February 27 and Second Ward Councilor Eileen Birmingham on March 6.

### Staffing

- MariAnne Yeterian, who has been with the library for over 15 years in Borrower Services, retired this month.
- Andrew Ng, the library's marketing and public relations specialist, will be moving on to a position with the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

### Library Director Report: Radwa Ali

#### Building & Security

- Capital Needs Assessment: 1st Draft submitted.
- HVAC: Old chiller is targeted for removal sometime in April, with new chiller & boilers likely installed by June, maybe even May. Report of short term and long term recommendations submitted.

- Energy Supply. After thorough discussions with Northeast Energy professionals, we concluded that it would be prudent to monitor the market and await stabilization before proceeding with another auction.
- Auditorium A/V: Met with Gary Albaugh, whom MLPF is engaging with directly to redesign the A/V in the auditorium.

#### Operations

- The Annual State Aid Report has been submitted.
- Procurement card: Application completed with 2 cards in process and to be shipped by the end of the March.
- Capital: \$5 Million Bond Ordinance draft attached. The town manager has assured me it will be on the agenda on 3/25 with a 2nd reading on 4/8.
- Computer Networks: Two of the switches previously acquired for the staff network, have now been successfully integrated into the BCCLS network.
- Policies committee met on 3/14 to start reviewing library policies.

#### Grants

- New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund: Considering funding for Bellevue Library Applying to this is contingent on the township approving capital funds for Bellevue's repairs projects.
- [NJDEA Cultural Arts Facilities Expansion Program \(CAFE\)](#): We, along MPLF and the Township, are exploring a promising funding opportunity that could provide significant financial support for major library improvements.

After a discussion of the NJDEA Cultural Arts Facilities Expansion Program Theodore Graham made a motion to authorize the Library Director to engage Andrew Berman to update the 2018-2019 building plans and engage the township building assessor. The cost is not to exceed \$20,000.00. Brian Clarkson second and the motion was carried unanimously.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Public Comment: None

#### Adjournment:

At 8:30 p.m. JoAnn McCullough moved to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting and Tamar Campbell seconded. The motion was carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.