

**Minutes of the April 21, 2025
Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting**

The 2199th meeting of the Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, April 21, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with New Jersey Law.

The meeting was called to order by President JoAnn McCullough at 7:10 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 a change of venue to a Hybrid meeting was posted on the Library website.

Roll Call:

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

Board Members Absent: Geoffrey Borshof, Thamar Campbell and Erika Pierce

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

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the March 17, 2025 Regular Meeting stood approved. Brian Clarkson made the motion and Theodore Graham seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Presidents' Report:

JoAnn McCullough reported:

- Policies committee: met 3/28 to discuss
 - Alcohol policy for outside groups (new)
 - Professional Development Policy (amendment)
 - Zoom protocols for board meetings
- The Executive Committee met on April 14 to discuss the Agenda

Treasurer's Report:

Brian Clarkson presented the Treasurer's Report:

Joann McCullough moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-20 Approving the Bills and Payables 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 Andrew Silver seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Brian Clarkson moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-21 Pre-Approving Bills and Payables due between the April 21, 2025 and May 19, 2025 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.

Brian Clarkson moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-22 Approving the March 2025 Bank Reconciliation Statements and JoAnn McCullough seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Reports from Support Organizations:

Montclair Public Library Foundation - Radwa Ali reported for Mary Packer

The Foundation is hard at work on all things Gala -- it's the last week to buy tickets.

The foundation was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Montclair Foundation, which will expand the K-6 decodable books collection and create "Lit Kits".

Kelly and Mary are meeting virtually with representatives from Senator Booker's office to discuss our request for Congressionally Directed Spending (more commonly known as earmarks) for 2026. A long shot at the best of times, but an opportunity to communicate the importance of the library's work to our representatives.

Montclair Library Friends: Ed Robin

Ed Robin reported that 2 members of the Montclair Library Friends volunteered at the Open Book / Open Mind event on April 3.

Ed Robin and Ilmar Vanderer are attending meetings to discuss concepts for the new corner design for a proposed community space at the Bellevue Avenue Branch.

Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library: Ilmar Vanderer

The Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library will hold their next book sale during the May in Montclair events.

Ilmar vanderer is participating in the CAFE meetings.

Ilmar expressed his interest in the parking signs at the head of the driveway leading to the parking lot.

Library Report:

Assistant Director Report: Selwa Shamy

PROGRAMMING SAMPLINGS

- Adult School
 - The Spring Semester began on April 14. Enrollment has already exceeded Spring 2024 by 11% and revenue by over 13%.
- Open Book / Open Mind
 - March 15: Anna Quindlen, "After Annie." In conversation with Elisabeth Egan Attendance 150
 - April 3: Chris Bohjalian, "The Jackal's Mistress." In conversation with Christina Baker Kline Attendance 60

- Youth Services
 - Authors Nichelle Simon and Hala Ghanem discussed their book “Girls Rule the Ice: a Girl’s Guide to Ice Hockey” on March 15.
 - College Essays Simplified was offered on March 19.
 - Arab American Heritage Month was celebrated with these programs:
 - A showing of Khalil Gibran’s The Prophet: Animated Family Movie was held on April 8 in partnership with Foundation of Arab American Heritage (FARAH)
 - A bilingual storytime held at the main library and branch.
- Adult Services
 - On April 10, a showing of the documentary “Maya Angelou: Reflections of a Blessed Soul” included a discussion and Q&A with director Hafiz Farid and executive producer Shelley Grodner Seidenstein.

Community

- Selwa represented the library at the town hall held by Counselors-At-Large, Carmel Loughman and Susan Shin Andersen at Edgemont House on April 10.
- Walk + Read Montclair planning continues with Elly Meeks from the Judy Weston Garden. Four books will be installed in four different parks from June 5 - Sept. 2.

Staffing

- Four new staff started the week of April 14, three in the Borrower Services Dept. and one as a marketing and technology specialist with the Adult School Dept. The Borrower Services staff are doing the certification course for passports. They will all spend time working at the branch and be cross-trained for the reference and children’s desks.
- A new branch manager has been hired and will begin May 5. Gina Scalise is currently an adult services librarian at Cresskill Public Library and formerly worked as a librarian, assistant to the managing director, and special events project manager at Poets House
- Raven Ramirez resigned effective April 18 and will be moving on to a full-time job at Caldwell University.

Library Director Report: *Radwa Ali*

Building & Security

- Auditorium A/V: Testing a smartboard that would be in place in the auditorium and at the Branch.
- Zoom Bombing incident on 3/17 board meeting: Police report filed 3/20. Follow-up visit from Montclair PD on 4/14. Zoom protocols evaluated and changed.
- HVAC: still on track for chiller to be installed in May or (more likely) June.

Operations

- Computer Networks: Ethernet/wiring mapping and server closet cleanup is completed.
- Redundant phone lines are costing the library a great deal of monthly losses. Two of the Verizon bills doubling is what flagged the issue.

- Procurement card: cards arrived and awaiting policy implementation
- Capital: \$5 million bond ordinance passed 1st reading unanimously on 3/25. Due to a procedural, the 2nd reading could not take place on the 8th.

CAFE

Radwa introduced Daniel Davidow from Consultant Conduit Strategies, LLC of West Caldwell, New Jersey. Daniel presented an overview of the CAFE process and explained how the tax credit program works.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- Resolution #25-23 Engaging Conduit Strategies for Consultation Services
Diana Lunin moved. Brian Clarkson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- Resolution #25-24 Engaging Arcari+lovino for Architectural Services
Diana Lunin moved. Lilian Ferguson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- Resolution #25-25 Engaging Windels Marx Lane & Mittendorf, LLP for Legal Services
Theodore Graham moved. Brian Clarkson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- Resolution #25-26 Policy on Use of Alcohol in the Library (with corrections to section 2 of the Alcohol Use Agreement). Theodore Graham moved. Andrew Silver seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- Resolution #25-27 Policy on Use of Procurement Cards Theodore Graham moved. Lilian Ferguson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- Resolution #25-28 Professional Development Policy (as updated) Theodore Graham moved. Lilian Ferguson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment: None

At 9:00 p.m. Theodore Graham moved and Diana Lunin seconded to go into Executive Session to discuss Personnel Matters. Motion carried unanimously.

At 9:10 p.m. The Executive Session ended and the Board returned to the regular session.

Adjournment:

At 9:10 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.