

**Minutes of the June 16, 2025
Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting**

The 2203rd meeting of the Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, June 16, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with New Jersey Law.

The meeting was called to order by President JoAnn McCullough at 7:07 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, Diana Lunin, Andrew Silver, Brian Clarkson, Lilian Ferguson (arrived at 7:27pm) and Erika Pierce

Board Members Absent: Geoffrey Borshof and Thamar Campbell

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

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the May 19, 2025 Regular Meeting stood approved. Diana Lunin made the motion and Brian Clarkson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Presidents' Report:

JoAnn McCullough reported:

- On June 11 JoAnn participated in the Story Walk Kick-off at the Judy Weston Gardens. She expressed her appreciation to Radwa and Selwa for making this program possible.
- The Executive Board Committee met on June 9 to discuss the Agenda.
- The Policy Committee met on June 11 & June 13 to discuss revisions to the Code of Conduct Policy.

Treasurer's Report:

Brian Clarkson presented the Treasurer's Report:

Theodore Graham moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-35 Approving the Bills and Payables between the May 19, 2025 and June 16, 2025 Board of Trustees meetings be approved and the itemized summary be made part of the minutes and Brian Clarkson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Theodore Graham moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-36 Pre-Approving Bills and Payables due between the June 19, 2025 and July 21, 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.

Diana Lunin moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-37 Approving the May 2025 Bank Reconciliation Statements and Brian Clarkson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Reports from Support Organizations:

Montclair Public Library Foundation - Sheila Boyd

MPLF Board

The slate of officers for the upcoming year were voted in at the Foundation Board's recent June meeting. All those who served in 2024-2025 will continue to serve for another year – Sheila Boyd as Chair, Emily Hagen as Vice-Chair, Jennifer Dann-Phillips as Secretary, and Jared Miller as Treasurer.

Stepping down from the Board at this time is Robert Tortoriello, a dedicated and deeply engaged member since 2018. Affectionately known as "Tort," he has provided invaluable legal insight and wise counsel throughout his tenure. In addition to his contributions on legal matters, he brought thoughtful leadership to the Advocacy and Communications Committee and played a key role on the Finance Committee. Tort's unique perspective, steady presence, and warm sense of humor will be greatly missed. We are grateful for his years of service and wish him all the best as he begins a new chapter.

CAFE Application

As part of the Library's application to the Creative Arts Facilities Expansion (CAFE) program last week, the Foundation provided a letter of intent and a comprehensive capital campaign plan in support of the project. Should the application be successful, this will be the first capital campaign since the Foundation was established in 2002. We will continue to work closely with Library leadership to clarify roles, establish protocols, and identify best practices to lay the groundwork for effective collaboration and success.

Summer Priorities

Over the next two months, Foundation staff will focus efforts on planning for the upcoming year, completing and distributing the 2024 annual report, and outreach to donors. Specifically, we will be reaching out to potential sponsors of the Little Read this fall as well as new and returning "Underwriters" for the Open Book / Open Mind program.

Montclair Library Friends: Ed Robin - No Report

Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library: Ilmar Vanderer - No Report

Library Report:

Assistant Director Report: Selwa Shamy

Selwa presented an overview of programming including:

- Adult School Spring Semester enrollment and revenue are almost double they were last year.
- Open Book / Open Mind on June 3, New Ways to View Marriage with Ada Calhoun, Molly Roden Winter, Jaclyn Geller, and Kate Tuttle
- MPL's Research Your Home's History program conducted by Marisa Shaari and the Montclair History Center to fulfill Essex County grant requirements
- The library will be hosting a community read for "Just Action: How to Challenge Segregation Enacted Under the Color of Law" by Richard Rothstein and Leah Rothstein. Thanks to the generosity of Partners for Health Foundation, we are giving away free copies to 13 book clubs in the community.
- The Summer Reading Kickoff will happen on July 1.
- Ruby Williamson and Daisy Lorenzo are organizing an anime and pop culture event called [Natsu Pop Con](#) for teens and adults on July 12. The event will feature an artists alley, panel discussions, tabletop games including Pokemon and Dungeons & Dragons, and food vendors.

Community

- Liberation Literacy took place at the library on May 31 with teens reading with younger children with an attendance of 102.
- The library took part in a Children of the Sun event on June 6 at Nishuane School by registering children for library cards and providing curated books about Black joy in the etuk.
- The African-American Heritage Festival and Parade took place on June 7 despite the rain. The library van featured large photos of some prominent African American authors.

School

- In May the etuk visited Lacordaire School and had multiple visits to Nishuane School.
- The Bullock School Eco Fair took place on their rain date of June 1 with the etuk and 106 interactions.
- Youth services staff are visiting schools to get the word out about Summer Reading.

Staff

- The library is hiring for a part-time Library Assistant position for the Bellevue Ave. Branch.
- Guitry Banks resigned as of June 2.
- June's All Staff Meeting featured a presentation by Garden State Equality called LGBTQ 101, arranged by Library Social Worker Margarete Ouji.

Library Director Report: Radwa Ali

Building & Security

- HVAC:
 - Chiller connected and calibrated. The 1st and 2nd floor have A/C. The 3rd floor does not due to delay in the fan assembly / air handler.

- Security:
 - Vetting an upgrade to the walkie talkies we currently use to a “smart” walkie system that has nationwide coverage.
 - Other: All building services companies must adhere to prevailing wage requirements.

Operations

- Computer Networks: Staff PCs starting to migrate to the BCCLS network over the next few weeks.
- Finance
 - Audit review taking place this week
 - Planning to switch to Quickbooks Online in August,
- Policies committee: met 6/11 and 6/13
 - Code of Conduct draft attached for review, however it must be vetted by our attorney before adoption.

CAFE

- Last remaining board item for CAFE (for now!) is formally approving the Fallbrook Financial agreement
- CAFE application was submitted on Thursday, June 12th. A meeting between our lawyers and Fallbrook’s lawyers took place that evening at 6pm, with the fully executed agreement landing in my inbox a couple of hours later!
- Presented briefly on the topic at Councilor D’Amato’s Ward 1 meeting on 6/11.

Old Business:

Code of Conduct Policy

The policy committee met to discuss revising the Code of Conduct Policy. JoAnn invited the Board to review it and make recommendations. The Policy is being reviewed by the library managers and the library’s attorney.

New Business:

Resolution 25-38 Approving Tax Credit Agreement with Fallbrook Financial

JoAnn McCullough moved to Approve Resolution #25-38 Approving Tax Credit Agreement with Fallbrook Financial and Diana Lunin seconded. The motion was carried unanimously

Public Comment: None

Adjournment:

At 8:15 p.m. Theodore Graham moved to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting and Diana Lunin seconded. The motion was carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.