

**Minutes of the September 15, 2025
Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting**

The 2205th meeting of the Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, September 15, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with New Jersey Law.

The meeting was called to order by President JoAnn McCullough at 7:00 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, Geoffrey Borshof and Tamar Campbell

Board Members Absent: Diana Lunin, Lilian Ferguson and Erika Pierce

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

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the July 21, 2025 regular meeting stood approved. Brian Clarkson made the motion and Theodore Graham seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Presidents' Report:

JoAnn attended the Open Book/Open Mind event featuring Richard Rothstein and Leah Rothstein, "Just Action," How to Challenge Segregation Enacted Under the Color of Law."

The Policy Committee has been working on the Code of Conduct Policy.

Treasurer's Report:

Brian Clarkson presented the Treasurer's Report:

Brian Clarkson moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-43 Approving the Bills and Payables between the July 21, 2025 and September 15, 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 #25-44 Pre-Approving Bills and Payables due between the September 15, 2025 and October 20, 2025 Board of Trustees meetings be approved and the itemized summary be made part of the minutes and Theodore Graham seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Brian Clarkson moved for the adoption of Resolution #25-45 Approving the July and August 2025 Bank Reconciliation Statements and Tamar Campbell seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Reports from Support Organizations:

Montclair Public Library Foundation - *Mary Packer*

New Foundation Board Member

The MPLF Board of Directors voted in Jason Niederkorn for a 3-year term. Jason has been a Montclair resident since 2021, and along with his wife and two elementary school-aged children, is an avid patron of the Montclair libraries. Jason has 20+ years of legal experience and is currently General Counsel to a large non-profit educational organization. Originally from Chicago, Jason earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, his JD from William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota, and his MBA from George Washington University in Washington DC. Jason is also involved with his children's hockey, baseball, and figure skating programs.

Open Book / Open Mind

Foundation staff and board members were in attendance for the season kick-off of Open Book / Open Mind, a conversation with Richard and Leah Rothstein at the First Congregational Church about their book "Just Action," co-presented by the Library and Partners for Health. In opening remarks, Foundation Board member Aman D'Mello urged attendees to support programs like Open Book / Open Mind and recognized the circle of Underwriters who help make the program possible. The Foundation is continuing outreach this month to secure additional Underwriters for the 2025-26 season.

Little Read

The 17th annual Little Read is scheduled to take place October 15-17, and the Foundation is hard at work securing sponsorships. Support for the Little Read funds children's programs and materials in the upcoming year. This year's sponsors (so far) include Mountainside Medical Center at the \$2,500 Picture Book level, Rosemary Iversen at the \$1,000 Nursery Rhyme level, and Itsy Bitsy Dental, Montclair Orthodontics, Pigtails & Crewcuts, the Tutor Shack, the YMCA, and Watchung Booksellers at the \$500 Reading Buddy level. Macaroni Kid is the media sponsor.

A few other brief updates: The Foundation is preparing for a half-day Board Retreat in October with a focus on strategic planning. The annual appeal is currently in development and will take place in November and December. The 2024 Annual Report was completed over the summer and can now be found on both the Foundation and Library websites. Have a look, and take a moment to celebrate all the accomplishments and successes of last year.

Montclair Library Friends: *Ed Robin*

Ed Robin wished Selwa Shamy all the best in her new position.

The Montclair Library Friends volunteered at the Open Book/Open Mind event featuring Richard Rothstein and Leah Rothstein, "Just Action," "How to Challenge Segregation Enacted Under the Color of Law."

Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library: *Ilmar Vanderer*
Ilmar Vander wished Selwa success on her career move.

The Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library are holding their semi annual book sale on October 20.

The Music Mondays Concert Series is a huge success.

Library Report:

Assistant Director Report: *Selwa Shamy*

Resignation

Selwa will be resigning from the Library and has accepted the position of Deputy Director/Chief Public Services Officer with Sacramento Public Library.

Building

- The first floor's air handler went kaput in late July but was restored on August 28th.

Programming

Adult School

- The summer session yielded a 48% increase in registrations and an 89% increase in revenue.
- Fall session registration began on September 2 and classes started the next day.

Library Social Worker News

- Kelly Ziek of the MPL Foundation won a NJ State Bar Foundation Grant Award for \$15,000. The grant will fund a multimedia series of educational materials on housing laws. Topics will include affordable housing, discrimination, and tenants rights.
 - Library Social Worker, Margarett Ouji, is taking the lead.
- Margarett began a program called Kool off with Koko, a chance for adults to destress and chill with a friendly and calm dog. Koko has been doing children's programs at the library for a few years. The program proved to be successful and will continue into the fall.
- Montclair State University Social Work Intern, Riley Roback started with the library earlier this month. Riley has experience working with adults with developmental disabilities and will partner with a community group to provide vocational experiences for this population.

Summer Reading

A separate detailed report is in the board packet.

Youth Services News

The Mexican Consulate of New Brunswick donated 36 children's Spanish language scholastic books on varying non-fiction subjects to Montclair Public Library.

Community & Outreach

- During the month of August, staff engaged in outreach at Montclair State University during freshman orientation for the second year in a row. For a total of six days, staff engaged with 783 students and registered hundreds of library cards.
- Sept. 11: Tabling in the lobby of the Clairidge Cinema for the documentary screening of [The Librarians](#).
- Sept. 13: 16th Annual Montclair Jazz Festival - Family Jazz Discovery Zone
- Sept. 27: Montclair State University Homecoming Street Fair

Schools

- Outreach for Back to School Nights started this month with 2-3 visits each week.

Patron Incidents

- Two patrons were banned from both locations for six months. Another patron was banned permanently due to repeated incidents. Details are in this month's board packet.

Staff

- Kaitlynn Flannagan, formerly Program Assistant in the Adult School Dept., started as the full-time Marketing & Communications Lead on September 8.
- Sam Delgado started as a Library Assistant at the Bellevue Ave. Branch on July 29.
- Luke Spaltro of Adult Services moved out of state, his last day was August 29.

Library Director Report: Radwa Ali

Building & Security

- HVAC:
 - The project is nearly complete. The new BMS controls will give us 24/7 access, and staff will receive training once the system is ready.
 - Liebert unit replacement is too expensive to justify when all indication is this space will be reworked as public space in the very near future
 - HVAC maintenance proposal from Sandor received for both main and branch. Elliot Lewis proposal incoming.
- Cleaning Bid:
 - Read on August 20th. Bids range from \$75k to \$232k. Other than tabulating the bids, we have not done any analysis of the proposals. We have 60 days from August 20th to accept a bid or reject all bids.
- Security:
 - Rolling out a new incident management platform and communication devices to keep staff and patrons safer and more connected. Training on 9/22 in-service day.

Operations

- Staff Development on 9/22
- Finance:
 - 2024 Audit ready for Board's final approval.
 - Quickbooks Online migration delayed but taking place on 9/15.
 - Quickbooks Made Easy will provide migration services, tech support, and ongoing training for finance staff
 - Signed on to Precoro, a cloud-based software that connects to Quickbooks Online and streamline purchase approvals, expense tracking for all departments, automates some of the PO processing and vendor management.
 - Implementation will begin shortly after Quickbooks dust settles!
- Policies:
 - Code of Conduct legal review complete. Policies committee reviewed again.
- Tech/Operations:
 - Computer Network: staff computers and peripherals migrating on 9/22.
 - Phone System: GoToConnect voip system to be installed on 9/22 as well if there are no delays with the number porting process. The cost of the monthly voip bill will be 1/3 of what we're saving by cancelling all the landlines we're not using.
 - Big thank you to the Foundation for covering the cost of the new phones and the new walkie talkies

CAFE

- NJEDA official communication on 9/3 for minor clarifications. One of them involved the LDE however, and it became clear that we needed to shift our approach and name the library as LDE. An explanatory letter was written, vetted by Danny Davidow, and shared with B&G committee, town manager, and township F&I committee. Document uploaded to NJEDA portal before the 9/12 deadline.
- Met with the Architect on 9/8 and discussed potential design changes that we should explore in the next phase if and when that occurs. Of particular concern is the location of the bathrooms on every floor.

Community / Programming / Initiatives Highlights

- Library Card Design Contest – We're having fun with a design contest this year to engage the community. 3 "limited edition" cards will be created after submissions and community voting is complete.
- The Jazz Library (Oct 12) – Unveiling new collection with a concert outside on October 12th at 4pm. We've been working with a local partner, Seed Artists, for the better part of a year. Unfortunately the donor of all the books, Peter Bodes, passed away on 9/5.
- Banned Books Week (Oct 5-11) – Partnering with Java Love to make this celebration especially lively. Java initially reached out to us after the Supreme Court LGBTQ book ruling wanting to sponsor something in that realm. They are covering the cost of bookmarks, mugs and some swag that will be in raffle baskets, booklists,

programming, tabling on site, 10% off if you bring your card on 10/5, and a community submission request to tell us what your favorite banned book is.

- Open Book / Open Mind – A wonderful event on 9/10 in partnership with Partners for Health.
- Little Read (Oct. 14–17)
 - Montclair Public Schools confirmed they will not be bringing classes to the library; instead, we're meeting with them on Sept. 11 to coordinate.
 - Exploring a hybrid approach: library staff visiting schools and inviting Pre-K classes from nearby schools for on-site reading sessions.
- Halloween (Oct. 31) - Full day of activities (11 a.m.–5:30 p.m.) featuring crafts, a haunted space, plaza treats, and a costume contest.

Old Business:

Code of Conduct & Appeals Policy

Brian Clarkson moved to approve Code of Conduct & Appeals Policy and Thamar Campbell seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

New Business:

Resolution #25-46 To Accept the FY24 Audit

JoAnn McCullough moved to approve Resolution #25-46 to Accept the FY24 Audit and Brian Clarkson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously

Public Comment: None

Adjournment:

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