

**Minutes of the January 12, 2026  
Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting**

The 2208th meeting of the Montclair Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, January 12, 2026 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, Lilian Ferguson, Diana Lunin, Geoffrey Borshof and Erika Pierce

Board Members Absent: Brian Clarkson and Thamar Campbell

Library Staff Present: Director Radwa Ali, Recording Secretary Linda Welch, Adult School Manager Maurice Boyer

Nominating Committee Report

Diana Lunin presented the current slate of officers:

- President - JoAnn McCullough
- Vice-President - Theodore Graham
- Secretary - Diana Lunin
- Treasurer - Brian Clarkson

Theodore Graham moved to accept the Nominating Committee's recommendations for the slate of officers and Andrew Silver seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

The Minutes of the November 17, 2025 regular meeting stood approved. Diana Lunin made the motion and Theodore Graham seconded. Geoffrey Borshof abstained since he was not at the November 17, 2025 meeting. The motion was carried with a six Trustee vote.

Presidents' Report: None

Treasurer's Report:

JoAnn McCullough presented the Treasurer's Report:

Theodore Graham moved for the adoption of Resolution #26-01 Approving the Bills and

Payables between the November 17, 2025 and January 12, 2026 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 #26-02 Pre-Approving Bills and Payables due between the January 12, 2026 and February 9, 2026 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 #26-03 Approving the November and December 2025 Bank Reconciliation Statements and Diana Lunin seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

#### Reports from Support Organizations:

##### Montclair Public Library Foundation - Mary Packer

##### Annual Appeal

The Foundation raised \$283,803 during the Annual Appeal period (November 1 – December 31) and a total of \$344,348 for the Annual Fund in 2025. This exceeded the budgeted goal by nearly \$70,000, marking a strong close to the year.

In 2025, the Foundation received support from 836 donors, consistent with donor participation over the past three years (typically between 800 and 850 donors). Donor retention — defined as donors who gave in both 2024 and 2025 - was 54%, significantly outperforming the national average of 40–45%.

##### Trivia Night

On Thursday, February 12 the Foundation will host a Trivia Night at Tierney's Tavern. Our 2024 Trivia Night was a sold-out event and a great success, combining friendly competition with lots of fun.

##### Support of the Library

In 2025, the Foundation distributed \$242,900 directly to the Montclair Public Library and made an additional \$45,000 in direct investments in Library projects. Together, this represents \$287,900 in total support—the highest level of annual support the Foundation has provided to the Library to date.

Montclair Library Friends: None

Friends of the Bellevue Avenue Library: None

##### Library Director Report: Radwa Ali

##### Building & Security

- HVAC: PSEG has officially closed out the 2025 project. We can expect to see the costs on our utility bill soon.
- Township Buildings Dept offered the use of their garage and expertise in repairing the eTuk. Tim is coordinating with them and eTuk engineers

- Door handle at BAB replaced. Door mechanisms for main library doors ordered

## Operations

- Tech and Operations:
  - Google Workspace backup service purchased to comply with JIF Cybersecurity requirements. Daily cloud backups now protect all email addresses, shared Google Drives, and individual user drives.
  - Digital Navigation Corps initiative confirmed -- we'll be receiving a FT equivalent AmeriCorps technology assistant in 2026, funded by the NJ State Library and Literacy Minnesota. The position focuses on one-on-one public tech assistance with an annual allowance of \$26,072 covered by AmeriCorps and \$9,000 in host fees from NJ State Library.
- Legal Counsel:
  - Attorney Douglas Zucker has moved from Wiener Law to Hatfield Schwartz Law Group LLC.
- Collections: In addition to Ingram, we're also onboarding with Libraria.
- Services
  - \$5,000 McMullen Family Foundation grants secured which covers most of the cost of LinkedIn Learning Subscription. 30,000+ online courses will soon be accessible to all library cardholders!

## CAFE

- Jan 5 communication: Cost Reasonableness and Financial reviews.
- Spoke with one of the announced CAFE winners and scheduled to speak to the other later this week on their experience with this phase of the application process all the way through acceptance and announcement.
- Speaking to multiple colleagues in library land who have recently gone through a major renovation/expansion project. One piece of advice for us that I'm hearing repeatedly is that we would benefit from an experienced project manager (hourly basis, not a major hire) to guide the early stages of the process so we can hit the ground running upon announcement.

## Personnel

- 3 Part Time people began and onboarding in Adult Services, Youth Services & Adult School since October
- Assistant Director interviews progressing

## Outreach/Community

- Friends Steering Committee: Adam Grace taking over leadership. Focus shifting to "friend raising" (social engagement) to make Friends the social arm of library support while Foundation handles major fundraising.
- Annual Kwanzaa Celebration (Dec. 13): The 36th annual Kwanzaa event more than doubled its attendance from the prior year with 175 attendees throughout the day. A library-wide collaboration between Adult School, Adult Services, and Youth Services.

- Essex County Arts Grant: \$8,491 awarded for a year-long celebration of the centennial of the creation of African American History Month/Negro History Week in 2026. Adult School, Adult Services, and Youth Services collaborating on programs.
- Jazz Library Programming: Planning underway for listening sessions each month in 2026 (except August and December) and live performances every other month beginning in January, in collaboration with Seed Artists and the Adult School.
- Youth Services Outreach: Monthly visits to preschools resumed: Mini-Mounties at DLC (4 classrooms, about 68 students & teachers) and Mint Daycare (about 25 students & teachers), booked through the rest of the school year.

Departmental Reports (Included in the January Board Packet)

Adult School Update - Maurice Boyer

Maurice Boyer presented an overview of the Adult School Department:

- Class revenue for the 2025 academic year reached approximately \$178,867.81
  - The most successful categories in terms of revenue were Fitness, Languages, Arts & Crafts and Trips.
- There was a spike in interest in Mah Jongg in the Fall on par with national trends after several celebrities lauded its benefits for mental fitness.
  - Mah Jongg instructor Elisa Hirsch and her Adult School classes were the subject of an interview on The Montclair Girl site.
  - An open game play series will be launched on Feb. 2.
- There is heightened student interest in Woodworking, Collage Art, Watercolor Painting and this season's lineup of lectures.
- Bus Trips
  - The Culinary Institute of America/Vanderbilt Mansion trip is on Feb. 12.
  - The Philadelphia Flower Show trip is on March. 5
- MPL received a 2026 Essex County Arts Grant to fund a year-long celebration of the centennial of the creation of African American History Month/Negro History Week. Adult School, Adult Services and Youth Services are collaborating on programs.
- We are planning programs in celebration of America250 and are exploring the possibility of MPL hosting a touring exhibit on the Vietnamese Boat People Experience.

Discussion and Approval of the Adult School Winter and Spring Sessions

The Board unanimously moved to approve the Adult School Winter and Spring Session Tuition Range Fee Schedule.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Resolution #26-04 Designating Official Depositories

Theodore Graham moved to accept Resolution #26-04 Designating Official Depositories and Lilian Ferguson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution #26-05 To Maintain Membership in The Bergen County Cooperative Library System

Theodore Graham moved to accept Resolution #26-05 To Maintain Membership in the Bergen County Cooperative Library System and Lilian Ferguson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution #26-06 For the Petty Cash Accounts

Theodore Graham moved to accept Resolution #26-06 for the Petty Cash Accounts and Lilian Ferguson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution #26-07 Designating The Library Purchasing Agent

Theodore Graham moved to accept Resolution Resolution #26-07 Designating the Library Purchasing Agent and Lilian Ferguson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution #26-08 For Authorized Signers On Checks

Theodore Graham moved to accept Resolution #26-08 for Authorized Signers on Checks and Lilian Ferguson seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution #26-09 To Appoint the Firm of the as the Library Attorney

Theodore Graham moved to accept Resolution #26-09 to Appoint the Firm of the Hatfield Schwartz Law Group, LLC as the Library Attorney and Andrew Silver seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution #26-10 Acceptance of Digital Navigator Americorps Member

Theodore Graham moved to accept Resolution #26-10 Acceptance of Digital Navigator Americorps Member and Diana Lunin seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment:

At 8:31 p.m. JoAnn McCullough moved to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting. The motion was carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.