

East Brunswick Public Library  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
April 18, 2024

Attendees:

Otu Amankwah	Karen Parry, Interim Library Director
Wayne Christie (arr. 7:10 pm)	Maria Carmelo, Exec. Admin. Assistant
Dr. Kenneth Freedman (arr. 7:38 pm)	Deborah LeSeur, Friends of the Library President
Lisa Gurevich	Eliana Zhang, Teen Representative
Patricia Palumbo	Mayor Brad Cohen
Colleen Talbot	
Ashish Verma	

Mr. Amankwah called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. A roll call was made and a quorum was present. Mr. Amankwah stated that the meeting was advertised and the Open Public Meeting Act requirements were met.

All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes of March 19, 2024:**

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2024 meeting. Ms. Palumbo seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

**Closed Session Minutes of March 19, 2024:**

Ms. Gurevich made a motion to approve the closed session minutes of the March 19, 2024 meeting. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

**Public Participation:**

Ms. Zhang presented the March Teen Report. 48 volunteers attended the March TAG meeting. 41 volunteers assisted with Youth Services and Makers Day programs. Some of the more popular programs the teens were involved in include preparing take and make kits, stuffed animal crochet programs and Alex's Cool Science Experiments program.

In the Friend's Report, Ms. LeSeur reported that the Friends raised approximately \$4,900.00 at Pocketbook Bingo. Some upcoming events include "What's it Worth" on May 5<sup>th</sup>, Defensive Driving on May 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> and Author Talk guest Ken Kunken on May 9<sup>th</sup>. The Bling Sale is scheduled for May 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> and the Pop Up Bling Sale has raised over \$400.00 since the new display case has been up.

Mayor Cohen thanked the Board for moving their meeting to Thursday so that members were able to attend the Township's Volunteer Appreciation event on Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Cohen thanked the board for their service to the library and East Brunswick residents and shared that one person received two awards and has been a member of two separate committees for over 20 years.

There was no School District Report.

There were no public comments.

### **Financial Report:**

Ms. Parry presented the Financial Report and shared that the Unrestricted Reserve balance is at approximately \$619,000.00 and that the library's budget has been underspent by about 25% for the first quarter of 2024.

Ms. Palumbo made a motion to approve the April 19, 2024 bill list. Mr. Christie seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

### **Correspondence:**

There was no correspondence.

### **Reports of Standing and Special Committees:**

Mr. Amankwah reported that the Director Search Committee has put a hold on the Director Search. Ms. Parry has been appointed Interim Director for 6 months and the Board will meet with Ms. Parry in 3 months to evaluate the appointment.

### **Director's Report:**

Ms. Parry presented the March Director's Report. Statistics and trends show that patrons are returning to the library building, not quite to pre-Covid standards but up 49% with door counts from this time last year. While circulation of materials is up 29% from 2023, a major paradigm shift is apparent with digital and electronic resources. Our IT Supervisor, Christopher Dumbreski has left the East Brunswick Library for a managerial position at another library. While he will be missed, we wish him the best of luck! The library has hired a new IT Supervisor, Samantha Michael. Ms. Michael is currently a township employee and will be transferring over to the library at the end of the month. The procedure for filing incident reports within the library is being updated, with reports being uploaded to a central location and a non-emergency phone number has been provided to all staff. John Kosik, the town's Emergency Management Coordinator, met with library managers on April 17th to discuss safety precautions within the library building. Upcoming professional development training courses are being scheduled for staff. There has recently been an uptick in homeless patrons visiting the library and referrals to food pantries and homeless shelters have been provided to those affected.

Ms. Parry has run the library's health program and worked with hospitals since 2010 and now as Interim Director, she has a macro view on all departments of the library. Her son graduated through the East Brunswick school system and she is very invested in the library as an East Brunswick resident. Ms. Parry would like to make the library a happy place to work in by bringing back harmony and trust while providing beneficial services to the community. She would like to begin by eliminating unnecessary positions and using the library's financial resources to hire a full-time Accessibility Librarian, providing resources to people living with autism and other intellectual disabilities as well as a part-time, 24 hour per week Librarian, restoring professional Librarian services to the residents of East Brunswick.

Ms. Palumbo made a motion to approve the March 2024 Director's Report. Ms. Gurevich seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

**Old Business:**

There was no old business.

**New Business:**

There was no new business.

**Closed Session:**

Mr. Christie made a motion to enter closed session at 7:46 pm. Mr. Verma seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Gurevich, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

The Board returned to open session at 8:02 pm.

**Information Items:**

There were no information items.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business, Mr. Christie made a motion to adjourn at 8:07 pm. Ms. Palumbo seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mr. Wayne Christie, Secretary