

East Brunswick Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
October 15, 2024

Attendees:

Otu Amankwah
Dr. Joyce Boley
Wayne Christie (arr. 7:11 pm)
Dr. Kenneth Freedman
Patricia Palumbo
Colleen Talbot
Ashish Verma

Karen Parry, Interim Library Director
Maria Carmelo, Exec. Admin. Assistant
Karen Geist, Accessibility Librarian
Zainab Jaorawala, Teen Representative

Mr. Amankwah called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm. A roll call was made and a quorum was present. Mr. Amankwah stated that the meeting was advertised and the Open Public Meetings Act requirements were met.

All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes of September 24, 2024:

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2024 meeting. Ms. Talbot seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Public Participation:

Ms. Jaorawala presented the Teen Report. 37 TAG members volunteered in the Circulation Department, 16 of which returned for a 6 month commitment. 21 Teens helped with regular monthly activities and there has been a shift in TAG meeting procedures. The Pokémon club met in September as well, and the Teens helped with a community art project in which patrons colored in owls which were placed on a tree during Welcoming Week. The Teens were also involved in a program on 80's Culture and are looking forward to planning some new and fun fall and winter programs.

The Friends were unable to attend tonight's meeting as they are busy hosting their 49th Annual East Brunswick Friends of the Library Booksale at the Brunswick Square Mall. The Booksale runs from Monday, October 14th through Sunday, October 20th.

There was no Foundation Report.

Colleen Talbot presented the Township Report, sharing that Mayor Cohen would like to thank East Brunswick Library staff and the Friends of the Library for their participation in EB Day. The Mental Health Task Force was able to provide information and resources to many people at EB Day, one of whom reached out for and received help on that day. Legacy Builders are beginning a new phase of building, which should be complete in approximately one year and there will be retail space available, in which a library branch may be a possibility. Mayor Cohen

also expressed the importance of marketing for the library's Accessibility Librarian. Finally, the Mayor's Gala is scheduled for the evening of Tuesday, December 3rd.

In the School District Report, Dr. Boley reported a smooth opening to another school year. Back to School Night was held in September and parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for next week. Parents can sign up online to book their time slots to meet with teachers. Halloween parades and costume contests will be held at the schools on Halloween Day.

There were no public comments.

Financial Report:

Ms. Parry reported no major changes in the Financial Report.

Ms. Talbot made a motion to approve the October 16th Bill List. Dr. Boley seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Correspondence:

There was no correspondence.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees:

There were no reports of standing or special committee reports.

Director's Report:

Ms. Parry presented the September Director's Report, reporting that everything is going well at the library and that she is very proud of the staff. October is Health Literacy month and many departments are collaborating on putting together a health table that will be displayed at the front lobby of the library. The library is partnering with Parlin Pharmacy this Friday, October 18th for a vaccine clinic from 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm in the library meeting rooms. 70 people have signed up to date, including 15 children. The Youth Services department is putting together goodie bags for children to take home after they receive their vaccinations. October 20th is a Day of Wellness at the library, a multi departmental program focusing on wellness for the mind and body. Free Covid tests will be given out, there will be a do it yourself lip scrub activity, Meditation with Reiki and a Bollywood Dance workshop. The township is hosting a Job Fair at the library on October 25th. So far, 190 people have registered and walk-ins are also welcome to attend. Light refreshments will be served. Election Day is coming up and library staff and volunteers are making a push for residents to vote, with information on the library website, a kiosk located at the library lobby where patrons can learn how to vote, a table in the lobby to learn more about registering to vote, checking your registration status, requesting a vote-by-mail ballot, and more on National Voter Registration Day, as well as a multilingual initiative.

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

Old Business:

There was no old business.

New Business:

Karen Parry was excited to introduce the East Brunswick Library’s Accessibility Librarian, Karen Geist to the Board. Ms. Geist shared that this is her second career, the first being in behavioral healthcare, dealing with substance abuse and working with hospitals and schools. Ms. Geist has always wanted to be a librarian and began graduate school when her oldest son was a junior at Rutgers University. Ms. Geist shared that her middle son was born with Quadruple XY Syndrome and she spent a lot of time doing research and working with and providing information to doctors. Familiar with many different systems, big and small and ranging from school aged children to adults, Ms. Geist finds that her greatest resources are parents and she understands the need for inclusivity. Her goal is to assist in helping people feel included and accessible whether they are special needs or not. Some of Karen’s plans include a Sensory Hour which will be held the third Sunday of every month, beginning in November. Parents and caregivers can register for this program, which will take place from 11:00 am – 12:00 noon, an hour before the library opens to the public. Lights will be dimmed and sensory bags filled with items such as noise cancelling headphones, fidget toys and weighted blankets will be available. All this in an effort to provide a calm environment for attendees. Ms. Geist is also in the process of putting together a book club for adults with special needs, parent and caregiver support groups and a Special Olympics program in the spring for both special and non-special needs children aged 3-7 years. Ms. Geist will also working on filling in gaps in services to Veterans and the LGBTQ+ community, as well as working on health screenings and collaborations.

Resolution #10,870

**Authorizing Township of East Brunswick to Advertise for Library Board Attorney
Under the Fair and Open Process for Professional Contracts**

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Township Council has adopted a proposal for a Fair and Open Process for the award of professional contracts and contracts for extraordinary unspecifiable services; and

WHEREAS, the Township of East Brunswick has invited the Library Board to utilize the services of the Township of East Brunswick website for the purposes of receiving Requests for Quotations for the position of Library Board Attorney;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Library Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the Township of East Brunswick to utilize its website for the benefit of the East Brunswick Public Library and specifically to advertise for Requests for Quotations for the position of Library Board Attorney.

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve Resolution #10,870 – Authorizing Township of East Brunswick to Advertise for Library Board Attorney Under the Fair and Open Process for Professional Contracts. Dr. Boley seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Resolution #10,871

Authorizing Township of East Brunswick to Advertise for Labor Counsel Under the Fair and Open Process for Professional Contracts

WHEREAS, the East Brunswick Township Council has adopted a proposal for a Fair and Open Process for the award of professional contracts and contracts for extraordinary unspecifiable services; and

WHEREAS, the Township of East Brunswick has invited the Library Board to utilize the services of the Township of East Brunswick website for the purposes of receiving Requests for Quotations for the position of Library Labor Counsel;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Library Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the Township of East Brunswick to utilize its website for the benefit of the East Brunswick Public Library and specifically to advertise for Requests for Quotations for the position of Library Labor Counsel.

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve Resolution #10,871 – Authorizing Township of East Brunswick to Advertise for Labor Counsel Under the Fair and Open Process for Professional Contracts. Dr. Freedman seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Dr. Boley, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Talbot and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Information Items:

There were no information items.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Christie made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 pm. Ms. Talbot seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Wayne Christie, Secretary