

East Brunswick Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
April 18, 2023

Attendees:

JoAnn Chmielowicz
Mayor Brad Cohen
Patricia Palumbo
Aarti Punjabi
Nicole Tibbetts
Ashish Verma (arr. 7:43 pm)

John Arthur, Library Director
Michael Bobish, Assistant Library Director
Maria Carmelo, Exec. Admin. Assistant

Township Attendees:

Township Director of Finance Angel Albanese

Ms. Chmielowicz called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm. A roll call was made and a quorum was present. Ms. Chmielowicz 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 21, 2023:

Ms. Palumbo made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2023 meeting. Ms. Tibbetts seconded. Voting yes: Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Tibbetts and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Public Participation:

Jaden reported that the teens held 13 Programs in February, and the debate club and origami club met in February as well. Also, 38 participants attended the Teen Action Group (TAG) meeting and the makerspace window and chalk board were updated.

No members of The Friends of the East Brunswick Library were present at the meeting but Co-President Donna Forte did want to announce that they are busy preparing for their Handbag Bingo event set to take place the evening of Friday, April 28th.

Mr. Arthur reported that the Foundation has voted to purchase a book locker and that the area the book locker will be placed has been paved. The electrician is scheduled to come in on Friday, April 21st to do the wiring for the book locker, which will provide the community with 24/7 pickups of books and other materials.

Mayor Cohen provided the township report, reporting that paving of the sidewalks in the library parking lot has been completed and that the rest of the parking lot is expected to be paved in the near future as a part of East Brunswick's paving program this year. The Mayor expects no

disruptions to the library's service as there is plenty of parking in the police department's parking lot and the paving project will be a minor inconvenience at most.

Mayor Cohen reported that the budget was announced two meetings ago and that the process is a long one, and does not get approved until April or May each year.

For the municipal appropriation portion of the library budget, the township is allocating an additional \$750,000.00 to the library as compared to 2022, after taking a look at the needs of the library and community.

The town's 5 year solid waste project is expiring at the end of this year and there is expected to be a 40% increase in costs of solid waste. East Brunswick currently spends approximately \$5-\$6 million each year on waste removal.

Ms. Tibbetts, representative for the Superintendent of Schools, reported that things have been quiet during spring break and that the Churchill School is currently working on a very meaningful and impactful program called "Living Voices," which tells the story of the Holocaust through the eyes of Holocaust survivors.

Ms. Tibbetts announced that she is the soon to be director of Human Resources and that there are job openings at the schools. Check out the district's website for job postings.

Ms. Chmielowicz opened the meeting to the public, asking that comments are limited to five minutes or less.

There were no public comments.

Treasurers Report:

Mr. Arthur reviewed the reserve reports, and reported that the budget is close to being finalized, The Library has been spending down the reserve fund and Mr. Arthur also expressed his thanks to Mayor Cohen for his continuous generosity in library funds.

The library's passport department earned \$20,000 in revenue in March, despite the library being closed for the first half of the month. Mr. Arthur gave credit to the passport staff and commented that the passport department does a wonderful job.

Ms. Tibbetts made a motion to approve the April 19, 2023 bill list. Mayor Cohen seconded. Voting yes: Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Tibbetts, Ms. Tibbetts and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None.

A reimbursement request was received for a meeting room cancellation during the library closure.

Ms. Palumbo made a motion to approve the refund request. Mr. Verma seconded. Voting yes: Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Punjabi, Ms. Tibbetts and Mr. Verma.

Mayor Cohen suggested that the Policy Committee change the policy regarding Board approvals for refunds as The Board has never denied a refund request.

Correspondence:

There was no correspondence.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees:

Mr. Arthur reported that the Policy Committee is gathering book sanctuary data from around the United States.

The Strategic Planning surveys have been released to The Board, to library staff, schools and on social media. 38 responses have been received by non-library users to date.

Director's Report:

Mr. Arthur reported exciting news about the library's book locker approval. He expressed his thanks to The Foundation for their generosity and added that this is a wonderful new service the library will be providing.

Maker's Day has been rescheduled and is set to take place on Saturday, April 29th.

The first Concert in the Courtyard is scheduled for Sunday, May 21st and every Sunday after Memorial Day weekend through the end of July.

Old Business:

No old Business items were reported.

New Business:

A letter was received from library staff regarding the closure in late February and early March, asking The Board to consider paying all part time staff for the time they would have worked if the library had been open.

A resolution for the library's 2023 temporary budget was presented.

Resolution #10,839

Temporary 2023 Library Budget

WHEREAS, the Township of East Brunswick will approve the municipal budget, including the library appropriation, later in the year 2023; and

WHEREAS, the library needs funding in order to operate; and

WHEREAS, it was determined that 26.25% of the 2022 budget, the maximum allowable quarterly temporary budget for the first quarter of 2023, is \$1,154,167.00.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees approves a temporary budget of \$1,154,167.00 for the second quarter of 2023 (April through June).

Mayor Cohen made a motion to approve the Temporary 2023 Library Budget. Ashish Verma seconded. Voting yes: Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Punjabi, Ms. Tibbetts and Mr. Verma. Voting no: None.

Information Items:

Mayor Cohen shared about the annual Holocaust Remembrance Program Series that took place on Sunday, April 16th at the East Brunswick Jewish Center. The program, entitled “The Jews of Italy,” is a continuation of the legacy of the late Dr. Michael Kesler, who began presenting the program in 2014. This year’s program focused on Jewish populations of Italy prior to the Holocaust and was truly moving.

The series is sponsored by the EBJC, The East Brunswick Public Library and the East Brunswick Library Foundation.

Resolution #10,838

Closed Session

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees wish to move to executive session to discuss the following matters:

Personnel

WHEREAS, minutes will be taken during the closed session and once the confidential matter has been resolved, then the minutes will be made available to the public;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees will hereby move to closed session and that the public will be excluded from this meeting in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Ms. Punjabi made a motion to go into closed session. Mr. Verma seconded. Voting yes: Ms. Chmielowicz, Mayor Cohen, Ms. Palumbo, Ms. Punjabi, Ms. Tibbetts and Mr. Verma.

The Board moved into closed session at 8:00 pm.

The Board returned to open session at 8:18 pm.

Ms. Chmielowicz stated that the letter received from staff was discussed during the closed session and upon thoughtful consideration, the request was denied.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Ms. Palumbo made a motion to adjourn at 8:21 pm. Mayor Cohen seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Wayne Christie, Secretary