

East Brunswick Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
November 21, 2023

Attendees:

Otu Amankwah
Wayne Christie
Dr. Kenneth Freedman
Joseph Palombit
Verne Whitlock

Stephanie Filippone, Interim Library Director
Maria Carmelo, Exec. Admin. Assistant
Zainab Jaorawala, Teen Representative

Mr. Amankwah called the meeting to order at 7:33 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 October 17, 2023:

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2023 meeting. Dr. Freedman seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Mr. Palombit and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Public Participation:

Ms. Jaorawala presented the October Teen Report. The Teens held their monthly TAG meeting on October 5th and 37 members were in attendance. 27 TAG members will be volunteering with the Circulation Department, rotating 1 hour shifts every three months. The teens displayed spooky books for the month of October and a banned book display in the end caps.

The Friends of the Library were unable to attend tonight's meeting but The Friends' President, Ms. LeSeur, provided the Friends Report via email and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. She also reported the Clothing Drive and Handmade Vendor Sale were both successful, raising \$650.00 and over \$500.00, respectively. The Friend's next event is Bunco, on January 19th.

There was no Foundation Report.

Mr. Whitlock presented the Township Report. Mayor Cohen wishes everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and reported that he is getting an early start on the 2024 budget. There will be a 1.5% increase in township employee health insurance premiums for the coming year. Mayor Cohen is also looking forward to meeting with Library Director John Arthur upon his return from paternity leave next week and is especially excited about the 110 Tices Lane project and the possibility of opening a library branch at the location. Parks & Recreation's much anticipated Winter Wonderland event is scheduled for Sunday, December 3rd. The tree lighting will take place at 5:00 pm on that day.

Mr. Whitlock also reported that this will be his last meeting with The East Brunswick Public Library's Board of Trustees (for now), as he is beginning his training with the United States Coast Guard at the end of the month. Board members thanked Mr. Whitlock for his time and service on the Library Board and wished him the best of luck with his new endeavor.

Good luck Verne!

There was no School District Report.

There were no public comments.

Treasurers Report:

The financial report was presented to the board with no major changes.

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the November 22, 2023 bill list. Mr. Christie seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Mr. Palombit and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Correspondence:

There was no correspondence.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees:

The Library Branch Committee held a preliminary meeting on October 24th. The committee discussed pros and cons as well as start up and running costs involved in opening a library branch. The committee is scheduled to meet again on Zoom on November 28th with John Arthur and they also plan on scheduling a meeting with Mayor Cohen in December.

Director's Report:

The Director's Report was presented by Ms. Filippone. Many new library cardholders signed up and existing cardholders renewed their cards at East Brunswick Day on October 1st. Many programs were held in each library department, including a screening of the film "Dear Corky" followed by a Q&A and book signing with filmmaker Curtis Chin, Youth Service's popular Chess Club, the Health Initiative's program with Rutgers NJ Cancer Institute's mobile cancer screening bus, in person, virtual and hybrid programs, such as the Friends of the EB Environmental Commission's workshop on invasive plants, which was attended by 214 people virtually as well as 14 in-person attendees. There was also real live penguin from Jenkinson's Aquarium at the East Brunswick Library. All of this and more took place as the library recovered from the prior month's ransomware attack. A huge thank you to the IT Department for all of their hard work.

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the November 2023 Director's Report. Mr. Whitlock seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Mr. Palombit and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Old Business:

The 2024 Library Board of Trustees meeting dates were presented to The Board.

Dr. Freedman made a motion to approve the 2024 Library Board of Trustees meeting dates. Mr. Christie seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Mr. Palombit and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

New Business:

Resolution #10,852

2024 Salary Increases

WHEREAS the Library Administration and Library Board Finance Committee has determined the following raises to be financially feasible, and

WHEREAS the Library Administration and Board of Trustees acknowledge the exceptional work of the East Brunswick Public Library staff;

BE IT RESOLVED that the 2024 salary increase will be ____% for all East Brunswick Public Library staff. These raises will be effective January 1, 2024.

The Board agreed to table Resolution #10,852 pending further information and union negotiations.

Mr. Whitlock made a motion to table Resolution #10,852 to a future meeting. Mr. Palombit seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Mr. Palombit and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

Special Resolution

Honoring

Verne Whitlock, Jr.

Whereas, Verne Whitlock, Jr. has served the people of East Brunswick as a member of the Library Board of Trustees in 2023; and

Whereas, Verne has served the East Brunswick Public Library by serving on the Board's Policy & Building Committees; and

Whereas, the Library Staff and Administration could count on Verne as an advocate for their concerns;

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved that the East Brunswick Public Library Board of Trustees, in great appreciation, acknowledges and thanks Verne Whitlock, Jr. for his outstanding service to the Library and wishes him all the best as he enters this new chapter in his life in the Coast Guard and many wishes of happiness and health in the many years ahead.

Mr. Christie made a motion to approve the Special Resolution Honoring Verne Whitlock, Jr. Mr. Palombit seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman and Mr. Palombit. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Mr. Whitlock.

Closed Session:

Mr. Christie made a motion to enter executive session at 8:37 pm. Mr. Palombit seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Mr. Palombit and Mr. Whitlock. Voting no: None. Abstaining: None.

The Board returned to open session at 9:14 pm.

Information Items:

The Board voted on rescheduling the December 2023 meeting from Tuesday, December 19th at 7:30 pm to Thursday, December 7th at 7:30 pm.

Mr. Christie made a motion to reschedule the December 2023 Board of Trustees meeting to December 7th. Dr. Freedman seconded. Voting yes: Mr. Amankwah, Mr. Christie, Dr. Freedman, Mr. Palombit. Voting no: None. Abstaining: Mr. Whitlock.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Christie made a motion to adjourn at 9:27 pm. Mr. Palombit seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mr. Wayne Christie, Secretary