



BERGENFIELD LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Conducted virtually via Zoom

Minutes
March 14, 2024

Present

Thomas Neats, President
Fanny Cruz-Betesh
Jamie Orlando
Laurie Phipps, Vice President, joined 8:22 pm
Sorah Shaffren, Recording Secretary, joined 8:04 pm; left 8:52 pm
Christopher Langschultz, Alternate for Superintendent of Schools
Thomas Lodato, Council Liaison, left 8:52 pm
Mayor Arvin Amatorio
Allison Ballo, Director
Jennifer Murray, Administrative Assistant

President Neats called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Notification of Public Meeting

President Neats read the report on public notification of this meeting.

Minutes

Motion by Ms. Cruz-Betesh to accept the February 8, 2024 meeting minutes.
Mr. Langschultz seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes
Mr. Neats - Yes
Mr. Orlando - Yes
Ms. Phipps – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Shaffren – Absent at time of vote
Mayor Amatorio – Yes
Councilman Lodato - Yes
Mr. Langschultz - Yes

The motion carried.

Bills

Motion by Mr. Orlando to approve the March 14, 2024 bill list.
Ms. Cruz-Betesh seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes
Mr. Neats - Yes
Mr. Orlando - Yes



Ms. Phipps – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Shaffren – Absent at time of vote
Mayor Amatorio – Yes
Councilman Lodato - Yes
Mr. Langschultz - Yes

The motion carried.

Public Portion

Mr. George Armbruster addressed the board regarding his nomination of Linda Mohr, former President of the Friends of the Bergenfield Library, for the Lucille Tendler Award. Ms. Maria Ng praised the Library for their community support and discussed planning for National Spanish Heritage Month. Nelson Reynoso spoke about collaborating with the Library about possible activities to be held during National Spanish Heritage Month. Discussion followed.

Correspondence

Pastor Daniel Stenberg, on behalf of Calvary Lutheran Church, requested use of the Library building on March 30, 2024 to host an Egg Hunt in case of inclement weather and the event could not be outdoors. Discussion followed.

A motion was made by Ms. Cruz-Betesh to approve the request by Calvary Lutheran Church to use the Library for their event in case of inclement weather.

Mr. Langschultz seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes
Mr. Neats – Yes
Mr. Orlando - Yes
Ms. Phipps – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Shaffren – Abstained
Mayor Amatorio – Yes
Councilman Lodato - Yes
Mr. Langschultz - Yes

The motion carried.

Ms. Courtney Chandler requested use of the Friends room Thursday evenings from 7:15 to 8:45 pm on an ongoing basis for use by a small Improv group. Discussion followed.

A motion was made by Mr. Langschultz to grant permission for the room use on a 3-month trial basis, with Ms. Chandler reporting the number of weekly attendees to the Library.

Ms. Cruz- Betesh seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes
Mr. Neats – Yes
Mr. Orlando - Yes
Ms. Phipps – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Shaffren – Yes
Mayor Amatorio – Yes
Councilman Lodato - Yes



Mr. Langschultz - Yes

The motion carried.

President's Report

President Neats reported that he met with the policy committee as well as the negotiations committee regarding contract negotiations. The Buildings and Grounds committee also met to open the cleaning bids received. President Neats has been in communication with Ms. Ballo in regards to the paperwork and procedures for the grant we received. President Neats reported that he signed off on the Annual Report to the State Library. President Neats observed on his visits to the Library that the train in the Children's room has been repaired and shared that there is an interesting display of African Masks found in the lower level.

Committee Reports

BCCLS and Friends

Ms. Ballo shared a newsletter from the BCCLS Trustee Development Committee with the Board.

Building & Grounds

President Neats shared the Cleaning Bids were opened and will be discussed under New Business.

Finance Committee

The financial summary was distributed and discussed.

Personnel

Ms. Ballo reported that Kara Gilbert, Head of Youth Services, resigned from her position effective April 12th.

Policy

Ms. Ballo introduced three policies up for review:

- The meeting room use policy would include verbiage reiterating that a group cannot make last minute changes.
- The Internet Access Policy and the Children's Internet Use Policy have been merged, streamlined and updated.
- Introduction of a new policy concerning Library Programming

Director's Report

Ms. Ballo reported that she will soon need to sign a formal agreement confirming our commitment to seeing the grant project through. There has been a lot of interest in the Request for Qualifications that was issued for an architect for the YA room renovation. Ms. Ballo recommends that the members of the Grant committee interview the top 3 candidates. Discussion followed. Ms. Ballo shared that we still do not have an approved operating budget for 2024 which is impacting her ability to plan. Mayor Amatorio provided feedback regarding the Borough's anticipated appropriation. Discussion followed.

Trustee Education

President Neats shared an article from The Bergen Record about the "Freedom to Read Act" being introduced to protect librarians from being sued by those who disagree with their book choices. Ms. Cruz-Betesh shared that the NEA, NJEA and BCEA are supporting this bill to protect librarians.

Old Business

No report.



New Business

President Neats reiterated that as per the grant requirements, the Library must deposit funds into an interest bearing account. As our current bank accounts are not interest bearing, Columbia Bank has been selected as the Library currently has an active CD account there.

Motion by Ms. Phipps adopting Resolution 2024-10 approving the opening of a second bank account with Columbia Bank and approving signatories to the account.

Ms. Deauna seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes

Mr. Neats – Yes

Mr. Orlando - Yes

Ms. Phipps – Yes

Ms. Shaffren – Absent at time of vote

Mayor Amatorio – Yes

Councilman Lodato - Absent at time of vote

Mr. Langschultz - Yes

The motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Langschultz to go into closed session to discuss RFP's for custodial services.

Ms. Phipps seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes

Mr. Neats – Yes

Mr. Orlando - Yes

Ms. Phipps – Yes

Ms. Shaffren – Absent at time of vote

Mayor Amatorio – Yes

Councilman Lodato - Absent at time of vote

Mr. Langschultz - Yes

The motion carried. The Board went to closed session at 9:03 pm.

The Board returned to open session at 9:17 pm.

Motion by Mr. Orlando to approve Resolution 2024-11 rejection of bids for Library custodial services.

Ms. Cruz-Betesh seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes

Mr. Neats – Yes

Mr. Orlando - Yes

Ms. Phipps – Yes

Ms. Shaffren – Absent at time of vote

Mayor Amatorio – Yes



Councilman Lodato - Absent at time of vote
Mr. Langschultz - Yes

The motion carried.

Applications for the 2023 Lucille Tendler Community Service Award were discussed.

**A motion was made by Ms. Phipps to select Ms. Linda Mohr as the 2023 recipient of the Lucille Tendler Community Service Award.
Ms. Cruz-Betesh seconded the motion.**

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes
Mr. Neats – Yes
Mr. Orlando - Yes
Ms. Phipps – Yes
Ms. Shaffren – Absent at time of vote
Mayor Amatorio – Yes
Councilman Lodato - Absent at time of vote
Mr. Langschultz - Yes

The motion carried. Ms. Ballo will follow up and advise when Ms. Mohr will receive her award.

The April 8th meeting was discussed and it was determined to be held in person at the Library.

Adjournment

**Motion by Ms. Phipps to adjourn the meeting.
Ms. Cruz- Betesh seconded the motion.**

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes
Ms. Deauna - Yes
Mr. Neats - Yes
Ms. Phipps – Yes
Ms. Shaffren – Absent at time of vote
Mr. Orlando - Yes
Mr. Langschultz - Yes

The motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sorah Shaffren ;

Jennifer Murray, Recorder for
Sorah Shaffren, Recording Secretary