

Demarest Free Public Library
Board of Library Trustees Meeting Minutes
January 8th, 2024

1. Call to order at 7:17 pm

Secretary Shimokawa read the following:

This is a regular meeting of the Demarest Library Board of Trustees. The date, time and location of this meeting has been advertised in the Official Newspaper of the Borough, filed with the Borough Clerk and posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board. All notices of requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act for this meeting have been fulfilled.

2. Roll Call

Present: P. Desai; H. Shimokawa; L. Carson; E. Kass; S. Nankani; D. Hayden;
L. Ma

Absent: A. Keysar, Council Liaison Marks (attending the Mayor & Council Mtg)

3. Approval of the Agenda

- Motion to approve the Agenda made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.
Agenda is approved.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the December 11th, 2023 meeting

- Motion to approve the December meeting minutes made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E. Kass.
Minutes are approved.

5. Treasurer's Report

- L. Ma presented a summary of the 2023 account balances. The annual change of the operating account would be approximately \$28k positive. The surplus has been taken into consideration by the Director's proposed 2024 budget.
- L. Ma is still unable to fully reconcile the accounts because the staff costs, which are provided by the Borough, have not yet been shared. However, beginning in 2024, the Borough CFO will be providing a quarterly breakdown of all the staff costs.
- The donation account received an annual donation of \$1,000 from a Patron trust fund that is earmarked to cover an annual staff appreciation event.
- Children's Room Renovation costs were approximately \$82k. This was slightly over budget due to the Asbestos finding and subsequent repair.
- The Fidelity investment has yielded a \$5k increase over a 5-mo period, which, annualized, is over 5.8% (more than double the interest rate provided by Spencer Savings Bank).
- Looking forward to 2024, this year's appropriation is approximately \$663k. The proposed 2024 budget is close to 696k, which is 80k above the 2023 budget. This increase is mainly a result of staffing cost increases, to meet with NJLA 2024 recommendations. The upper floor renovation in January is estimated at approximately \$178K. L. Ma recommends that we

transfer \$85K from the operating account to the Capital Account to cover the balance of construction costs. P. Desai will put together a list of projects that these funds will address in addition to a resolution that will be presented at the February Board Meeting.

- L. Ma and P. Desai reviewed the 2024 budget- there is a \$75K increase in the annual appropriation which addresses the recommended salary increases.

Motion to approve the Bill List made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by L. Carson.

Roll Call Vote: All present vote yes.

Bill List is approved.

6. Director's Report

- Staff provided a thank you card for the Board to express their gratitude for the Holiday Dinner.
- Demarest Resident, Amy Masner, provided a holiday lunch for the staff. This is the 3rd year in a row that she has provided such a thoughtful expression of gratitude and support for the library staff.
- In December, the library organized a diverse range of programs, including a holiday concert, a presentation on Artificial Intelligence, a TAB (teen advisory board) holiday party (with over 40 teens in attendance), a gingerbread house event and a recipe swap.
- Library staff is looking into applying for an ALA grant to help create an archive for Demarest History. If they can secure this grant, it will provide the library an opportunity to do more local town history events and perhaps work with the TAB to create some editorial coverage on these Demarest history events on the library website.
- P. Desai will be chairing the BCCLS Bylaws committee.
- P. Desai is looking to schedule an Active Shooter training for the Library Staff. Unfortunately, Demarest PD does not provide Active Shooter training. She is speaking with the Bergen Co Prosecutor's Office to explore finding a qualified officer to provide this active shooter training to the staff and to review the library grounds.
- The redesigned Demarest Library Website went live on December 27th. It will be announced to the community in the upcoming newsletter.

7. Committee Report

a) Buildings and Grounds Committee

- Construction upstairs will begin January 22nd. The work will be done in two phases- 1: The Quiet Room; 2: Circulation desk, staff room and small mtg room.
- Monday/Tuesday (22nd/23rd) will have curbside pick-up only.
- The Quiet Room will be under construction for several weeks.
- Library will be communicating about the construction plan via the Library Newsletter, Building signage in addition to weekly emails and posts on library Social Platforms.

b) Communications Committee

- Redesigned Website went live at the end of December. We are testing the site and reviewing for accessibility, etc.

- A thorough review and edit of the website content will be conducted throughout the Spring.
- Some minor changes, including colors and graphics, will be updated this month.
- An announcement of the relaunched website will be included in the upcoming Newsletter and via email.

8. Old Business

- a) Low hanging wire on the Inlsey side of the building
 - P. Desai attempted to locate the appropriate agency to address this issue—she contacted Rockland Electric, PSE&G and Verizon—and unfortunately, was unsuccessful. P. Desai spoke with the Borough Administrator, who suggested she request assistance from the Demarest PD. The DPD came by to inspect the wire and said they would reach out to Cable Vision. Despite these efforts, the wire remains hanging low and the issue has yet to be resolved.
- b) Door donation Language
 - Board-proposed language has been approved by the Bar-Nissim family. “This quiet room was supported by a generous donation in loving memory of Demarest resident Barbara Bar-Nissim.”
- c) Board meeting calendar 2024 – April meeting
 - Board received communication from Mayor Bernstein expressing his dismay that the April Board meeting was confirmed for the 1st day of Passover.
 - Board proposed moving the April mtg to April 29th

Motion to move the April Board Meeting to April 29th in observance of the 1st day of Passover made by S. Nankani; Seconded by H. Shimokawa.

New April date approved.

9. New Business

- a. Annual budget (vote)
 - Professional development funds are targeted for:
 - a. ALA Conference attendance for P. Desai and staff
 - b. Online Customer Service training for the staff

Motion to approve the annual budget made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E. Kass.
 Roll Call Vote: All present vote YES
 2024 Budget is approved.

- b. Vision Benefits reimbursement (vote)

Motion to approve the Vision Benefits reimbursement made by H. Shimokawa;
 Seconded by D. Hayden.

Roll Call Vote: All present vote YES.

The Vision Benefits reimbursement is approved.

- c. Resolution to authorize the Board President and Board Treasurer to sign and execute on behalf of the Demarest Library and for the donation from the Nancy Richman estate (vote)

- The library will be receiving a significant donation from the estate of Nancy Richman which will be paid out in May of 2024. The donation is pending some paperwork from the library.

Motion to authorize the Board President and Board Treasurer to sign & execute on behalf of the Demarest Library made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E. Kass.

All present vote YES
Resolution is approved.

10. President's Report

- Evaluations and Staff review mtgs to be scheduled this month (Personnel Committee made up of S. Nankani and D. Hayden)
- The Personnel Committee and Board Treasurer will be reviewing staff and Director's salary proposals at next month's board meeting.
- The member of the public who attended last month's meeting has requested that the Board pass a resolution that addresses the library's support of the ALA Freedom to Read Initiative that protects the library's ability to curate its collection against book bans. P. Desai is exploring a resolution to designate the Library as a Book Sanctuary. She would like to do so in collaboration with the Borough.
- It is a general practice for Library Directors to make a presentation to the Mayor and Council on an annual basis. P. Desai has not had an opportunity to attend and present the library's activities at a Mayor & Council mtg. She will be looking for a date to do so this year.
- The Director plans to review the employee policy handbook for COMP time, Sick Days, Vacation time, etc.
- Borough has a new payroll system called PrimePoint which also tracks employee Sick days and Vacation time. The library will begin using this program this year.

11. Meeting Open to the Public for Comment

- Motion to open the meeting to the public made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden. The meeting is open to the public.

12. Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Next Board Meeting will be Monday, February 12th at 7:00 pm.