

Demarest Free Public Library
Board of Library Trustees Meeting Minutes
September 15th, 2025

1. Call to order at 7:10 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 the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act for this meeting have been fulfilled.

2. Roll Call

Present: P. Desai; H. Shimokawa; L. Carson; A. Keysar; E. Kass; D. Hayden;
Dan Marks, Council Liaison, (7:45pm Departure); L. Ma (arrival at 7:15 pm);
A. Sandoval

3. Approval of the Agenda

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

All present vote YES.
Agenda is approved.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the July 15th, 2025 meeting

Motion to approve the July 15th, 2025 meeting minutes made by H. Shimokawa;
Seconded by E. Kass.

All present vote YES.
Minutes are approved.

5. Director's Report

General Updates

- The library received a matching donation from a student volunteer who attended and ran a fundraiser at the Saddle River Day School to support the weekly Chess Club. The library plans to host chess tournaments this fall.
- The Children's Dept has launched our Library of Things and has catalogued a Toniesbox along with five Tonies, which can be checked out by Demarest Library cardholders. A Toniebox is a wireless, child-friendly audio device that promises to help kids play and learn independently. The library is grateful to the Friends of the Library for sponsoring these Tonies.

Programming & Outreach

- Some highlights from the July and August programming include Tai Chi, in-person yoga at the gazebo, an Adult Paint Night, a Harry Potter Trivia Party, a Food Book Club, a jazz concert, family crafts, and Adult Crafty Mornings.

- The Director and Youth Services Associate met with both Mr. Mazzini (County Road School and Luther Lee Elementary School Principal) and Mr. Regan (Principal of Demarest Middle School) to discuss ways the library can collaborate with the schools. During the meeting with Mr. Regan and Mr. Murphy (DMS Language Arts Teacher) they discussed planning a library presentation for the 7th Grade class and helping to provide library cards to all 7-th grade students.
- The Director has also reached out to Mr. Joseph Cirillo, the new Superintendent of Demarest schools, to introduce herself and explore ways to collaborate more closely.
- Introducing Audiobooks for the Middle School in addition to a library card sign-up initiative with the schools.
- Methodist Church has requested that future programs at this event incur a donation to rent the space in the future.

Building Repairs

- Furniture has been installed in the upstairs renovated programming and community room. Patrons have provided very positive feedback
- The programming schedule is very busy with significant attendance from the community. The new community room is currently being used to support events held by local community groups such as the Demarest PTO, Demarest Recreation, Girl Scouts and private study groups. P. Desai is exploring an online scheduling platform, offered by BCCLS, for community groups to reserve the community room for group events.
- In September, Whalen & Ives performed annual Heat MSC on all equipment. They cleaned and/or replaced all filters, cleaned flame sensors, and monitored carbon monoxide with negative readings (0ppm). Their effort included observing the complete operation of equipment and all relevant safety components. All systems are operating properly currently; the Heat MSC is complete.
- Our Head of Circulation reached out to Frank DeCarlo of Tree Masters, a licensed arborist whom she knows personally. He has kindly offered to volunteer his services to trim the branches that are falling on our roof. Additionally, he volunteered to cut other dead or leaning branches around the library.

6. Treasurer's Report

- The library received the 2nd Quarter appropriation check for this quarter. The last 3-month treasury bill in our Capital Savings account matured. It is currently sitting in a floating rate fund.
- S. Nankani suggested that P. Desai confirm the schedule for upcoming building maintenance and furniture costs and come back to the board at the next meeting with some recommendations for how to utilize earmarked Capital funds for the remainder of 2025.

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

All present vote YES.

Bill List is approved.

7. President's Report

- S. Nankani recapped the Annual Audit report for the Board.
- P. Desai met with the new TAB President and the TAB group to review their plan for programming and to align on the TAB and Library outreach goals.
- The new programming associate has been leading a very engaging social media strategy that is engaging with the community. The feedback from patrons of all ages has been enthusiastic.
- The staff shared some recent Social Media metrics to illustrate the success of the new focus on Social Media engagement with the community. For reference, an average social post in 2024 garnered approx. 200-300 views a day. Since launching this new initiative in September, the average views per post is approx. 1,000 views.
- S. Nankani received an email from a town resident asking how the Library Appropriation is calculated and used and how it ultimately impacts the community. She has been working with the Director to draft communication that will be posted on the website outlining the Library's Appropriation and the services that this Appropriation supports.

8. Old Business

a) VOIP phone update

- The new phone system has been installed. The staff has been trained and are finding the transition very simple and beneficial.
- Kevin has been very supportive to ease the transition.

b) Children's Room Plumbing update

- The initial issue with the toilet backing up in the Children's Room was inspected by a plumber. However, the drinking fountain is also leaking. P. Desai needs to have another plumber review the issue to confirm if the plumbing for both units is connected.

c) Update on Stelfox Street Entrance Construction

- The Board walked out to inspect the finished paving at the Stelfox entrance.
- D. Marks is going to speak to Jason (DPW) to confirm when the construction on this Stelfox entrance will be finished. The Handicap Door Sensor and the Safety lights are still not replaced or working.

d) Demarest Mayor & Council Mtg

- This presentation has been postponed. P. Desai is still waiting for a new date from the Borough Administrator.

9. New Business

a) Furniture Installation update

- All the furniture has been installed. The staff has received very positive feedback from the patrons.
- The library donated a table and some chairs to the Borough Hall.

b) Demarest library programming update

- Babysitting Night fundraiser is scheduled for next Thursday night (aligned to the LLE Back to School Night).
- Since we no longer have a larger off-site space for our flagship events, the Diwali program will be held on October 11th at the Library. The circulation desk will be closed for the event.
- The Diwali Program will feature food, dancing, music, crafts and a henna station, all throughout the building.

c) State Elevator Inspection

- After 5 years, the State Inspector came to survey the building and the elevator. He will be providing a report in 2 weeks. Once the report has been received, there will be recommendations for repair. Unfortunately, P. Desai is unable to pay the annual state elevator license fee because the library elevator bill is delivered to the Borough and she has not received any notification from the borough.

d) Replacing an OEM Inducer Motor on the upper level heating unit (VOTE)

- The AC/Heating Unit in the book drop room was inspected. The recommendation is to replace the OEM Inducer Motor to ensure that the Heat can be restored through this winter.
- The cost is \$479 plus \$100/hr for labor. Total cost: \$579.

Motion to approve the purchase of the OEM Inducer Motor from Whalen & Ives made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E. Kass.

All Present Vote YES.

Motion is Approved.

10. Meeting open for public comment

Motion to open the meeting to the public made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by L. Carson.

The meeting is open to the public. No public was present.

Motion to close the meeting by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Haydon.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:25 pm.

11. Adjournment – Next Board Meeting Monday, October 6th at 7:00pm.