Demarest Free Public Library
Board of Library Trustees Meeting Minutes
November 17th, 2025

1. Call to order at 7:05 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; E. Kass; D. Hayden; L. Ma; A. Sandoval, D. Marks (M&C Liaison)

Absent:

3. Approval of the Agenda

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

All present vote YES.
Agenda is approved.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the October 6th, 2025 meeting

Motion to approve the October 6th, 2025 meeting minutes made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by S. Nankani.

All present vote YES.
Minutes are approved.

5. Friends of the Demarest Library presentation by President, Ruthie Nussbaum

- Ruthie Nussbaum, President of the Friends of the Demarest Library, presented an update on group's activities to the board.
- The Friends group has added two additional board members. Membership has brought in about $3K. The book donation program has raised $900 to-date. Other activities included: Merchandise sale and giveaway to raise awareness to the Library. The Children's Room Tile Fundraiser raised $4,600 and was a collaboration with THE ART SCHOOL for supplies and Demarest resident, Andrew Woods, who donated his time and services to install the wall. The Friends are looking to do another phase of this fundraiser in the next two years.
- The funds raised by the Friends have funded an additional MOMA art pass, a refrigerator in the Children's Room, a microphone for programming, a Tonies Box, and will be providing podcast equipment for the staff's new podcast.
- The Group has also sponsored the Summer Reading Ice Cream truck, Diwali program, Staff Appreciation Breakfast and gifts, in addition to an Amazon donation for the Children's Department collection.

- Board inquired about a town-wide yard sale. Also, discussed if it would be possible to revisit installing a donation bin in the town center in 2026.

6. Treasurer's Report

- L. Ma and P. Desai discussed that the Amazon bill was particularly high this month. This is due to the closure of Baker & Taylor. As a result of this vendor closure, this month's collection, in addition to the back-ordered items dating back to July 2025, were ordered this month through Amazon.
- L. Ma summarized the Q3 budget.
- Capital Account Update: The next Treasury Bill will mature by end of November. She advised that we should reinvest the funds in 3mo and 6mo bonds to secure the improved interest rate.

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

All present vote YES.
Bill List is approved.

7. Director's Report
General Updates

- P. Desai thanked the board for their attendance and support at the Mayor and Council meeting on October 27, 2025.
- Next Used Book Donation event is on December 6th, from 9am-12pm in the community room.
- Newly elected NVRHS Board of Education representative, Dr. Andrew Shyong, will be collaborating with P. Desai to host community office hours from 1:30-2pm on one day, every other month. He will be available for questions and feedback from students and parents.

Programming & Outreach

- The Annual Diwali Event had 95 people in attendance. There was very positive feedback from attendees that this event was held within the library. An article highlighting the program has been submitted to *The Neighbor News* magazine for publication in January.
- In October, we offered adult programs such as the Annual Diwali Celebration, family crafting, pumpkin decorating, a cookbook club, Mah Jong, and yoga, Halloween Movie Night, Adult Trivia Mixture. Programs were well-attended and received enthusiastic feedback from the community.
- For November, our monthly artist showcase features Adele Grodstein and her exhibit *"Moving Through Pages."* Patrons have been enjoying the beauty and creativity of her paintings.
- Our YA Associate joined the town's Halloween Parade on October 25 and led a storytime at the Co-op School as part of community outreach.

8. President's Report

- S. Nankani shared that the library has been working with Mayor Bernstein and the Council to further promote the library's services (such as the Notary Service, Museum Passes, etc.). Mayor Bernstein has been very supportive to include these announcements in his weekly email.
- The board will be voting on the Strategic Plan organization. The Strategic Plan Committee is made up of Heather Shimokawa, Ana Sandoval, and Ariella Keysar.
- As P. Desai is doing staff evaluations, she has discussed with the Staffing Committee that some of the staff members have been exceeding the scope of their roles in ways that cannot be recognized by the NJLA salary scale. The board discussed opportunities for staff recognition and could include possible retention or "Spot" bonuses.
- A. Sandoval brought up that in 2026 it would be great to receive a monthly report on performance of both the social media marketing and newsletters.

9. Old Business

a) Update on construction on the Stelfox entrance

- The entrance on Stelfox is still not handicap-accessible.
- Unfortunately, this has negatively impacted some patrons.
- The Borough Administrator was meeting with the Borough Attorney to follow up with the contractor who is responsible for the construction.
- D. Marks inquired about this with the Borough Engineering Firm, Colliers. They are looking to visit the site and to reach out to DLS Contracting to follow up on this issue.
- The outstanding issues include sprinklers that are damaged and need to be replaced and repositioned; the handicap door pole and exterior lighting need to be rewired and re-installed.
- Board advised that a sign be posted in the meantime providing the library phone number for handicap assistance.

10. New Business

a) AWE Learning Computer (VOTE)

- One of the computers in the Teen Room needs to be replaced. The Children's Librarian preferred replacing this with a Learning Computer. We have funds in the Technology budget.

Motion to approve the purchase of the new AWE Learning Computer made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E. Kass.

All present vote YES.
Motion is approved.

b) Strategic Plan Quote (VOTE)

- S. Nankani summarized the 3 quotes for consulting services to support the Library in research and focus group survey development for the Strategic Plan development received by the Library.
- P. Desai has reviewed the proposals, costs and approach of all three and recommended the proposal provided by Creative Capacity.

Motion to approve the Creative Capacity Strategic Plan Consulting proposal for $5,500 made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.

Role Call Vote.
All present vote YES.
Motion is approved.

c) Demarest Library sign lighting quote (VOTE)

- P. Desai reviewed outstanding capital improvement projects needed. The lighting on the exterior building sign and lighting for the pathway is a safety concern.
- Northern Electric $2,186; Northern Valley Electric Co. $1,186 quote to install exterior lighting.

Motion to approve the quote from Northern Valley Electric Co. made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by L. Carson.

All present vote YES.
Motion is approved.

d) End of the Year Newsletter (VOTE)

- P. Desai presented a quote received from Fast Print $850 for the printing & mailing of the upcoming newsletter.
- Library Associate Gio Von Griffin will be designing the upcoming newsletter in-house and delivering a final print project to Fast Print.

Motion to approve the change the printing services vendor from AM Graphics to Fast Print made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by A. Sandoval.

All present vote YES.
Motion is approved.

e) Meeting Room Policy (VOTE)

- UPDATED POLICY LANGUAGE:

The meeting room shall be used only for non-commercial, tax-exempt, non-religious, cultural, civic, professional, educational, or

governmental purposes. Use of the room for political campaigning, partisan events, or activities intended to influence legislation or electoral outcomes — including lobbying or candidate promotion — is prohibited.

Motion to approve the updated Meeting Room Policy made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by A. Sandoval.

All present vote YES.
Motion is approved.

11. Meeting open for public comment

Motion to open the meeting to the public made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E. Kass.
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 8:32pm.

12. Adjournment – Next Board Meeting Monday, December 15th at 7:00pm.