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

1. Call to order at 7:00 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: A. Keysar

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 November 17th, 2025 meeting

Motion to approve the November 17th, 2025 meeting minutes made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.

All present vote YES.
Minutes are approved.

5. Treasurer's Report

- L. Ma presented the 2025 budget. The library operations fell within the 2025 budget allocation.
- L. Ma also highlighted that the utilities are coming in higher than expected and recommended that the 2026 budget for utilities be increased in anticipation.
- The 2026 Budget will be presented to the board at the January Board Meeting.

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

All present vote YES.
Bill List is approved.

6. Director's Report

General Updates

- D. Marks will be looking to confirm if the DPW will be unable to provide support services for the next few months while the current support staff assigned to the library is out on medical leave. Once confirmed, P. Desai will make arrangements for part-time help.
- Beginning next year, P. Desai will be chairing the Personnel Committee for the BCCLS Executive Committee. She will also be hosting the Executive Committee here for a breakfast meeting at the Demarest Library on May 21st.

- Amy Mazer and her family would like to thank the Demarest Library staff for their service to the community by providing a holiday lunch, scheduled for December 22nd.

Programming & Outreach

- The Library will be launching the Stack Chats Podcast in January.
- Our Youth Associate and Information Services Associate recently visited Demarest Middle School to showcase the library website and highlight the many resources available to students. The session was a great success—by the end, we had 50 new library sign-ups! The students were enthusiastic and appreciative of all the helpful information they received, and it was wonderful to see their excitement about using the library.
- In November, we offered a variety of family and adult programs for our community, including a Mahjong class, family pottery sessions, a "Wicked" watch party, and a traditional tea ceremony. These programs provided engaging and diverse opportunities for community members of all ages to connect, learn, and enjoy cultural and recreational activities at the library.
- The virtual yoga program will conclude in December due to declining attendance and the significant staff time required to manage weekly sessions. Community interest has also shifted toward in-person wellness programs, which we will explore for the upcoming year.

Building Repairs:

- A staff member (Head of Circulation) came up with a temporary solution for the ADA Compliance issue on the Stelfox entrance door. The ADA-compliant door opener has been temporarily mounted on the wall next to the Stelfox door entrance. This is a temporary solution until the Demarest Borough develops a plan to properly install the pole, add the lights, and repair the sprinklers–outstanding items from the paving project on Stelfox in summer of 2025. The temporary installation was necessary because the Stelfox entrance had been difficult for BCCLS deliveries and older patrons to access.
- Camera Repair: Camera 7 in the building was not working, and a few other cameras needed adjustments. Merchants Alarm came in, replaced Camera 7, and adjusted the remaining cameras on both floors of the building.

7. President's Report

- S. Nankani shared that the lighting on the exterior building sign has been installed and it will be illuminated after dark.
- P. Desai and L. Ma will be working on the 2026 budget and plan to present it to the board in the January meeting.
- A survey to support annual Director Review from the Personnel Committee was sent out to the board and The Friends and the Head of TAB, as well as Staff.
- A. Sandoval's term ends this year. S. Nankani reached out to Mayor Bernstein to request that A. Sandoval be reappointed to her position.
- The Holiday Cello concert will take place at the library this Thursday, 12/18 at 5:30pm.

8. Old Business

a) Update on construction on the Stelfox entrance

- No Update as of now.
- E. Kass reached out to the Borough Administrator for a status update on the pending issues (Exterior Lighting, Handicap Access Door and Sprinkler Repairs).

- The current state of the entrance poses safety issues for staff and patrons. This has been an incomplete project for the past 4 months.
- The Board asked D. Marks if the library can hire a contractor to address these issues and submit a receipt for reimbursement.

9. New Business

a) NJ Public Notice Law Compliance Guide

- D. Hayden shared a summary of the new NJ Law which addresses how legal notices are published. All notices must be published digitally.
- NY Secretary of State will also be aggregated on a government-sponsored webpage.
- This will greatly improve public access to all library notices and information.

b) 2026 Board Meeting Dates (VOTE)

Motion to approve the 2026 Demarest Library Board Meeting Schedule made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by S. Nankani.

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

c) Strategic Plan Next Steps Update

- The contract with Creative Capacity LLC has been signed and shared with the Strategic Planning Committee. The retainer payment check of $1,250 will be sent out. The preliminary call with Allison is scheduled for December 17th to begin the planning process and discuss next steps.
- Focus Groups will be held on a Sunday- targeting March/April
  --3 groups (10-15 ppl each)

10. 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. Hayden.
Meeting is adjourned at 7:49 pm.

11. Adjournment – Next Board Meeting Monday, January 12th at 7:00pm.