Demarest Free Public Library
Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
February 9th, 2026

1. Call to order at 7:01 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 have been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, filed with the Borough Clerk and posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board and the Library's website. All notice of requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act for this meeting have been fulfilled.

2. Roll Call

Present: P. Desai; S. Nankani, H. Shimokawa; L. Carson; D. Hayden; L. Ma; A. Sandoval; E. Kass
Absent: D. Marks (M&C Liaison), A. Keysar

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 January 12th, 2026 Reorganization meeting with the corrections made via email.

Motion to approve the January 12th, 2026 Reorganization meeting minutes made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by S. Nankani.

All present vote YES.
Minutes are approved.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the January 12th, 2026 Regular Board meeting

Motion to approve the January 12th, 2026 regular board meeting minutes made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E Kass.

All present vote YES.
Minutes are approved.

5. Treasurer's Report

- L. Ma presented the summary and reconciliation of the 2025 Budget.
- L. Ma also presented the 2026 Budget Projections in relation to the 2026 Appropriation.
- The treasurer also recommended that the library begin conducting annual building inspections so the Board can plan more proactively to address building updates, sustainability adherence, etc.

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

All present vote YES.
Bill List is approved.

6. Director's Report

General Updates

- Library received the Q4 2025 appropriation check on February 3rd, 2026.
- P. Desai will be reaching out to two Demarest residents to make recommendations on next steps for a building inspection in 2026.
- The Strategic Planning Committee met with Allison Trimarco of Creative Capacity, our strategic planning consultant, on January 8th to review the timeline and content for the survey and focus groups.
- The draft of the survey and the Community Outreach Postcard are currently being reviewed by the committee.

Programming & Outreach

- In January, the library offered a variety of programs for the community, including Journaling into the New Year**,** Yoga Nidra**,** Rebecca Wolf Author Talk**,** Patricia Stark Author Talk**,** College Admissions Zoom, and Mindful Eating and Nutrition. In addition, we hosted an Oud Performance to celebrate Muslim Heritage Month, providing a unique cultural experience for our patrons.
- The first three episodes of Stack Chats, our library podcast, have been released on Spotify and Apple Podcasts, and we have received a great deal of positive feedback.
- In 2026, the library is hosting two months of local artist art displays. For January and February, we featured the work of Rakefet Krochmal, a Demarest resident and returning artist. Her exhibit, titled *Quiet in Imperfection*, was displayed in the library. As part of her exhibition, she held a reception that included an art class for attendees, allowing the community to engage directly with her work.
- I met with Yahli Cop, our Chess volunteer and member of the Teen Advisory Board, to discuss ValueBoox, his student-run, community-based marketplace for buying and selling used books locally. To support his app, the library will collaborate with him and feature it as a Friends of the Library collaboration on our library website, helping to raise awareness and promote access to affordable, reusable books. All proceeds from books purchased on the app will go to the Friends of the Library.

7. President's Report

- President Nankani shared the Personnel Committee's meeting progress from January in addition to the Budget Committee summaries.
- The board reviewed the building maintenance needs and the service providers available to the library.

8. Old Business

a) Strategic Planning Meeting update

- The Strategic Planning Committee submitted feedback on the survey draft provided by Allison Trimarco of Creative Capacity. P. Desai will review with Alison on Feb 11.
- Survey postcard will be mailed community-wide with a QR code for sign-up and some incentives for participation.

b) Stelfox Entrance update

- The Borough Contractor came to review the remaining work (exterior lighting, handicap entrance, the sprinklers, etc.) at the Stelfox entrance. This work will

be completed in the Spring. The estimated timing for the work to begin is in April.

c) Resolution 2026-04 Authorizing a one-time staff bonus approval

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-4 to approve a one-time bonus for the Demarest Library Staff made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.

Roll Call Vote.

S. Nankani—Yes
H. Shimokawa—Yes
L. Carson—Yes
D. Hayden—Yes
L. Ma—Yes
A. Sandoval—Yes
E. Kass—Yes

Resolution 2026-04 is approved

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9. New Business

a) Approval of FastPrints to print and mail the community survey postcards / VOTE

Motion to approve FastPrints to print and mail the community survey postcards made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E. Kass.

All present vote YES.
Motion is approved

b) AWE Learning computer for Children's Room (VOTE)

- The 2nd computer in the Children's Room also needs to be replaced. P. Desai was able to secure a discount on the purchase of this unit. The community has requested that the library replace shared computers with a learning computer which does not provide internet access.

Motion to approve the purchase of the AWE Learning Computer for the Children's Room made by E. Kass; Seconded by L. Carson.

Roll Call Vote.

S. Nankani—Yes
H. Shimokawa—Yes
L. Carson—Yes
D. Hayden—Yes
L. Ma—Yes
A. Sandoval—Yes
E. Kass—Yes

Motion is approved.

c) 2026 Budget Review (VOTE)

Motion to approve the proposed 2026 Demarest Public Library Budget made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by L. Ma.

Roll Call Vote.
S. Nankani—Yes
H. Shimokawa—Yes
L. Carson—Yes
D. Hayden—Yes
L. Ma—Yes
A. Sandoval—Yes
E. Kass—Yes

Motion is approved.

d) Approve the hiring of Bentley Zee as Chess Club Coordinator for $15/hr (VOTE)

- P. Desai proposed re-instating the part-time position to support the Chess Club now that the engagement is so high. She recommended hiring Bentley Zee for 2 hours, twice a month.

Moved to Closed Session.

Motion to approve the part-time Chess Club coordinator position made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.

Roll Call Vote.
S. Nankani—Yes
H. Shimokawa—Yes
L. Carson—Yes
D. Hayden—Yes
L. Ma—Yes
A. Sandoval—Yes
E. Kass—Yes
Motion is approved.

10. CLOSED SESSION to review Personnel Salaries

Motion to adopt the Resolution 2026-06 to enter closed session made by D. Hayden; Seconded by E. Kass.

Roll Call Vote.
S. Nankani—Yes
H. Shimokawa—Yes
L. Carson—Yes
D. Hayden—Yes
L. Ma—Yes
A. Sandoval—Yes
E. Kass—Yes
Motion is approved.

Resolution 2026-06 is approved and Closed Session begins.

Motion to re-open the library board meeting made by D. Hayden; seconded by H. Shimokawa.

Roll Call Vote.
S. Nankani—Yes
H. Shimokawa—Yes
L. Carson—Yes
D. Hayden—Yes
L. Ma—Yes
A. Sandoval—Yes
E. Kass—Yes
Motion is approved.

Regular session resumes.

11. Resolution 2026-05 Authorizing a one-time bonus for the Library Director

Motion to approve the 2026 Library Staff Salaries as proposed by L Dir P. Desai and the Personnel Committee made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E. Kass.

Roll Call Vote.
S. Nankani—Yes
H. Shimokawa—Yes
L. Carson—Yes
D. Hayden—Yes
L. Ma—Yes
A. Sandoval—Yes
E. Kass—Yes
Motion is approved.

12. Meeting open for public comment

Motion to open the meeting to the public made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden. The meeting is open to the public. No public was present.

Motion to close the meeting by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.
The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 pm.

13. Adjournment – Next Board Meeting Monday, March 16th at 7:00pm.