Demarest Free Public Library
Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
May 18th, 2026

1. Call to order at 7:06 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 notices of requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act for this meeting have been fulfilled.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Approval of the Agenda

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

All present vote YES.
Agenda is approved.

4. Strategic Planning Presentation by Creative Capacity (Virtual)

- Creative Capacity founder, Allison Trimarco (Principal), presented a summary of the Research conducted, both via a community survey and a series of focus groups.
- A. Trimarco shared some of the key findings, engagement numbers and community feedback. Some highlights included:
    - 93% of respondents noted that the library is important to them/their families, and 94% believe staff are helpful and they feel welcome.
    - Community programming and the essential role the library plays in providing a community center was a big callout across age groups.
    - A very high interest, across all age groups, in digital content.
    - DFPL seems to be outpacing other libraries with providing Point of Entry services (i.e. Museum Passes, Culture Seminars, digital services and events for young children) which engage the patrons in the community.
    - An opportunity for programming and engagement growth is with the senior community. This is aligned with the library's strategic plan goals and Director Desai has already initiated a community outreach discussion series (Coffee with the Director) with the senior community.
- An open discussion followed to review recommended action points.

5. Approval of the Minutes of the April 20th, 2026 Monthly Board Meeting

Motion to approve the April 20th, 2026 board meeting minutes made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by D. Hayden.

All present vote YES.
Minutes are approved.

6. Treasurer's Report

- L. Ma summarized the monthly balances.-
- L. Ma also reviewed the medical plans provided to DFPL employees. The new plan (Freedom HD High) is a significantly more expensive plan than what the library had budgeted for 2026. This new plan offering was determined by the Borough. L. Ma and Director Desai will be reviewing this with Julie and the Borough to understand the total costs so that the 2027 Budget can accurately account for staff benefit costs.

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

All present vote YES.
Bill List is approved.

7. Buildings & Grounds update

- E. Kass and P. Desai met with local residents (Steven & Diana) to review sustainability building upgrades.
- Energy efficiency recommendations include changing the water heater to a tankless water heater (will provide both energy and space savings); motion-detecting light switches; and roof replacement.
- Board agreed that a formal inspection of the roof should be conducted.
- In reviewing the roof condition, it was noted that the process will need to consider potential Asbestos abatement (pending formal findings).
- D. Hayden reached out to Birch Landscaping to review a grounds improvement plan. He will be sending a proposal to address the needs. D. Hayden proposed that the board approve a budget allotment for landscaping (beginning at $2,000), pending a phased proposal. The library will need a landscaping plan that might be a monthly. The Buildings & Grounds committee will review incoming proposals and existing contracts to see what can be consolidated to allow for a more comprehensive grounds and landscaping management plan.

8. Director's Report
Programming & Outreach

- In April, the library offered a variety of programs for the community, including Tech Basics: Google Suite; a Take Better Photos with Your Phone lecture; Root17 Take Home Planters (Family); a program with Bracco Farms; Coffee with the Director; Mandala Coasters Craft; Mahjong Open Play; and a Parent Discussion Group.
- Director Desai reminded the board that each library board trustee is required to complete two hours of trustee training in order for the library to receive state aid.

Building Repairs

- On May 5, the air conditioning on the main level was not cooling properly. Bradshaw and Cole were contacted and responded to diagnose the issue. They determined that the system circuit breaker in the disconnect had failed. The circuit breaker was replaced, the compressor contactor was changed, and a start capacitor and relay kit were installed. The unit was restarted, the refrigerant level was checked, and the system is now operating properly. The invoice for this repair is attached to the bill list.
- During the most recent quarterly gutter cleaning, the contractor identified seven areas where the gutters are leaking and require sealing. I was able to negotiate the cost down from $120 to $100 to address all seven locations.

General Updates

- Whalen & Ives (for HVAC maintenance) is no longer servicing commercial buildings. The Director will be looking into alternate vendors and quotes to present at the June board meeting.
- The library will be closed to the public on May 26 and 27 to allow the plumber to complete sewer pipe repairs in the Children's Department. The library will reopen on May 28, once the work is finished and the building has been cleaned and deemed safe for public use.
- The library audit is scheduled for 5/18 and 5/19.
- Owen Fox is no longer employed by DPW, and I am currently working on identifying a local handyman who can assist the library with small maintenance jobs.
- The Quarterly Staff meeting on June 9th will be when the staff reviews and workshops goals for the strategic plan.

9. Old Business

a) Strategic Planning update

- Covered in Allison Trimarco's presentation.
- The library staff is currently reviewing all the reports and drafting their Strategic Plan proposals.

10. New Business

a) Reserve Capital Funds Resolution NO: 2026-8 (VOTE)

- Resolution 2026-8 proposes the transfer of $50,000 from the operating account to the Capital Projects Fund to address ongoing and unforeseen building improvements, including but not limited to:
  - Display shelves and furniture in the children's and adult areas
  - Sewer pipe upgrades in the children's bathroom
  - Energy efficiency inspection and related improvements
  - Roof inspection and related maintenance needs
  - Installation of a tank less water heater
  - Upgrades to the exterior entrance of the library
  - Camera upgrades

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-8 made by H. Shimokawa; 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
D. Marks—Absent
A.Keysar—Absent

Motion is approved.

b) Resolution Authorizing the Award of Contract for Sewer Pipe Replacement in Children's Room Bathroom, NO: 2026-9 (VOTE)

- The Library received and evaluated two competitive proposals to replace the sewer pipe serving the Children's Room Bathroom. The Board has reviewed both proposals and concluded that the quote ($9,000) from ZTM Construction is the most efficient and cost-effective. Resolution 2026-9 proposes to award the contract for sewer pipe replacement in the Children's Room bathroom to ZTM Construction.

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-9 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
D. Markks—Absent
A. Keysar—Absent

Motion is approved.

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c) HVAC update

- Whalen & Ives is no longer serving commercial buildings. P. Desai has sourced contract proposals from 2 vendors. The board reviewed two HVAC maintenance retainer quotes—one from Great White Mechanical for $2,700/yr and one from JBC HVAC for $1,000/yr.
- After the review, the board voted to approve the JBC HVAC maintenance proposal.

  Motion to approve the acceptance of the JBC HVAC maintenance proposal made by H. Shimokawa; Seconded by E. Kass.

  All present vote YES.
  Motion is approved.

11. Board President's Report

- S. Nankani thanked the board for their community outreach and stressed how essential and enriching it is to have residents who are experts in their field to volunteer their services for the library.
- The library will also have a banner presence at this year's Memorial Day Parade. She encouraged the board to attend if available.
- President Nankani reminded the board that there is an online trustee training seminar on Wednesday (5/19) at 7pm.

12. 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 E. Kass.
The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

13. Adjournment – Next Board Meeting Monday, June 15th at 7:00pm.