

**Belmar Public Library  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
March 11, 2024  
Minutes**

Present: Jimmy Alvarez, Bruce Blattner, Mayor Jerry Buccafusco, Kathleen Casserly, Darleen Havens, Pat Hutchinson, Johanna Roper-Robinson, Sharon Russell-Fowler, Michael Schappert

Absent: Danielle Arnold, Maria Rondinaro

Also present: David Hallman and Luis Pulido

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Ms. Russell-Fowler read the notice of the meeting. Attendees pledged allegiance to the flag.

Ms. Russell-Fowler took the roll. Mr. Blattner motioned to accept the January 8 minutes. Ms. Roper-Robinson seconded, and the board voted unanimously to accept the minutes.

Mr. Hallman announced that going forward, there will be “updates” from himself; Debra Graham on Library Reorganization/Collection Development; and Leslie Naughton on the Strategic Plan, as well as Luis Pulido on programming.

From the Director

- Mr. Hallman announced that the windows will be delivered to the installation company during the first week of April and installation will begin the first week of May. Board members will be notified so that they can come and see the process.
- Mr. Hallman is concerned that we will not be able to reach all Belmar and Lake Como residents for input for the Strategic Plan. Discussion followed of ways to get the questionnaire to the greatest number of stakeholders. Trustees generally agreed that a postcard mailing (estimated \$3000) with a projected return rate of 1% to 5% was not cost effective. No other town entity is planning a mailing in the near future, so a shared mailing is not possible. Mayor Buccafusco suggested distributing door-hangers. The board felt that the door hangers and distributing questionnaires at library and town events held the most potential for success. Prominent posting of a QR code to make response fast and easy also seems worthwhile. Some strategies for reaching computer-averse patrons were also discussed. Mr. Hallman reminded the board that a 1%-5% return is typical, and considering the return of 50 cards the first week, it is probably doable.

From Ms. Graham

- We currently have about 9,000 titles. Our goal is 10,000, a reasonable number for a library this size.
- We are developing our Spanish Language/Bilingual collection, with an additional 300+ titles.
- We are developing our College/Career/Test Prep collections for teens and young adults.
- Locally significant older books which can't be safely archived at our library have been sent to the Belmar Historical Society. Some may be housed and preserved through the Rutgers University archives.
- Several rare/valuable books have been identified. Some are very fragile and need special handling, and we are still attempting to determine how best to preserve or liquidate them.
- Additionally, classes from Belmar Elementary School have been touring the library. Intern Gisele Rodriguez from Academy Charter School is proving very helpful. She and Joyce Lis will lead a bilingual Storytime for toddlers.

From Mr. Pulido

- Mr. Pulido sent all board members a list of upcoming events for 2024 (see attached). A few highlights follow:
- Living history presentations have been well-attended, with the media center full (40 people) for each event. With this level of popularity, these events may need to move to Taylor Pavilion next year.
- The soda bread contest is this Thursday. White bread category is full; there are still a few spots in the brown bread section. Entertainment will be provided by the D'Arcy School of Irish Dance.
- We have many authors scheduled for Author Talks, mostly as a result of the April Book Fair for local/shore authors. The Book Fair will feature 30 regional writers. As a sample, Zac Levy, a senior at High Technology High School in Lincroft, studied homelessness and its causes. He produced a book and gives talks covering his findings.
- Mr. Pulido shared demographic data about the relative popularity of various library activities for the past year.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Havens delivered the financial reports for December, 2023 and January, 2024. This information was unavailable during January, and the February meeting was cancelled.

December, 2023

|               |              |  |
|---------------|--------------|--|
| Budget Amount | \$786,808.20 |  |
| Spent to date | \$493,258.15 |  |

|                       |              |     |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----|
| Waiting to pay vendor | 32,101.61    |     |
| STD & Waiting         | \$525,359.76 |     |
| Balance of Budget     | \$261,448.44 |     |
|                       |              |     |
|                       |              |     |
| Budget Amount         | \$786,808.20 |     |
| Amount Spent          | \$525,359.76 |     |
| Balance               | \$261,448.44 |     |
| % remaining to date   |              | 67% |

January, 2024

|                       |              |     |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----|
| Budget Amount         | \$482,250.00 |     |
| Spent to date         | \$37,769.45  |     |
| Waiting to pay vendor | \$13,956.70  |     |
| STD & Waiting         | \$51,726.15  |     |
| Balance of Budget     | \$430,523.85 |     |
|                       |              |     |
|                       |              |     |
| Budget Amount         | \$482,250.00 |     |
| Amount Spent          | \$51,726.15  |     |
| Balance               | \$430,523.85 |     |
| % remaining to date   |              | 11% |

President's Report

- Ms. Russell-Fowler spoke to Natalie Gallagher, who has still not finished the

wording for the plaque for the dedication of the lilac tree. Mr. Pulido will find out the limit on characters per line for the plaque.

- The recent high winds shattered the plexiglass pane of one of the media room windows. Ms. Russell-Fowler requested that a schedule of upcoming outdoor activities be given to DPW so that they can gear their maintenance activities to times when there are not crowds on the property (concerts, etc.)
- Ms. Russell-Fowler suggested that we provide feedback cards so patrons can evaluate/comment on each library event. Mr. Pulido will address this once all the feedback for the Strategic Plan has been collected.

### New Business:

Mr. Hallman announced that Borough staff will be receiving a 2% increase in pay for the new year. He requested that library staff receive the same increase. After some explanation, Ms. Russell-Fowler moved that the staff receive this increase in coordination with the Borough. Ms. Havens seconded the motion.

A vote was taken and the board unanimously passed the 2% increase in staff salaries, based on the Borough employees' increase.

Following the vote, Ms. Roper Robinson asked if the staff had received performance reviews, and Mr. Hallman said that they had not. Ms. Roper-Robinson and Mr. Schappert expressed their feeling that reviews would be beneficial to the staff. Mr. Hallman agreed that this would be valuable and agreed to research local library staff review protocols with the intention of instituting reviews for our employees.

Several board members will not be able to attend the April 8 meeting, so the board agreed to change the next meeting date to April 15 at 6 pm. Mr. Hallman will make sure that this is publicized.

Mr. Blattner motioned to adjourn. Ms. Casserly seconded. The board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 pm.

Submitted by Pat Hutchinson, 3/12/24