

**Belmar Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
May 11, 2026 Minutes**

Present: Bruce Blattner, Mayor Jerry Buccafusco, Mark Furey,
Darleen Havens, Pat Hutchinson, Johanna Roper-Robinson,
Sharon Russell-Fowler, Michael Schappert

Absent: Jimmy Alvarez, Danielle Arnold
Also present: David Hallman, Luis Pulido, Maria Rondinaro

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Ms. Russell-Fowler read the notice of the meeting posted on Belmar.com and Belmar Public Library web sites.

Attendees pledged allegiance to the flag. Ms. Hutchinson called the roll.

Mr. Blattner moved to accept the March, 2026 minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hutchinson and the board voted unanimously to accept the March minutes.

Director's Report

Mr. Hallman announced that the America 250 celebration on May 7 was a great success. About 520 people attended. The Ocean Avenue Stompers and Pat Roddy were terrific. We ran out of hot dogs (250 ordered). The Coney Waffles and Ice Cream Co. were very gracious and supplied ice cream for about 500, although our budget only allowed for 250. We need to promote them whenever possible. Mr. Hallman will look into pizza for the Pat Roddy event.

Ms. Russell-Fowler noted that the cleanup was very easy. Ms. Hutchinson and Mr. Buccafusco commented on the noise level, which apparently depended on where you were located.

Mr. Hallman reported that the engineering company for the exterior repairs was doing a good job and was very responsive to problems that arose with subcontractors. Painting is done except for semicircle above the door, which was not adequately prepped and is being redone. Chimney looks good. Mr. Hallman suggested a little social gathering after the July meeting to celebrate another year of progress at the library.

Mr. Pulido's Report

Mr. Pulido gave an update on recent and coming events:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
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Mar 19	Irish celebration and soda bread contest	124
Apr 2	Molly Pitcher (Living History series)	42
Apr 18	Langston Hughes (Living History series)	34
Apr 30	Poetry Jam Night	60
May 17	America 250; The Belmar Party	520+

Upcoming

Summer '26	Summer Concert Series (see attached) w/James Ellerbe
June 18	Juneteenth Celebration/Concert; 6 pm Taylor Pavilion
TBA	Book Fair; Native American & Latin American events

Treasurer's Report

November 2025

Budget Amount	\$403,225.01		
Spent to date	\$150,628.40		
Waiting to pay vendor	\$218,247.77		
STD & Waiting	\$368,876.17		
Balance of Budget	\$34,348.84		
Budget Amount	\$403,225.01		
Amount Spent	\$368,876.17		
Balance	\$34,348.84	91%	

December 2025

Budget Amount	\$406,515.50		
Spent to date	\$194,468.14		
Waiting to pay vendor	\$219,798.62		
STD & Waiting	\$414,266.76		

Balance of Budget	\$7,754.26		
Budget Amount	\$406,515.50		
Amount Spent	\$414,266.76		
Balance	\$7,754.26	102%	

President's Report

Five board members have done their professional development hours. The new rule is that each trustee must do 2 hours per year.

Toddler story time is very popular. We'd like to find staff to make this a four-day-a-week offering.

We want to acknowledge the fine job Bernie is doing taking care of the grounds. Marshall has updated the computers. Mrs. Ghosh provided the new furniture upstairs as well as the reading nook downstairs. Flowers have been planted by Mr. Ghosh's bench, and a plaque is in progress.

Susan is researching grants for other acquisitions, such as new lighting upstairs.

Old Business

Mr. Hallman opened discussions about hiring a social worker for part time employ at the library. There is concern about recent incidents involving community members in need coming to the library in search of help. Both staff and trustees want the library to be a place of safety and answers for community members, but there is concern that our staff might have to take on problems for which they are just not prepared.

Mr. Hallman distributed a job description from Long Branch (attached), where a full-time social worker serves as a liaison between library patrons and local, county and state resources.

Ms. Rondinaro had been approached about a very limited job—one hour per week—for a person with training to help in this capacity. A great deal of discussion ensued, and it became clear that the need for help with social services is dire. Belmar used to employ a social services officer to help people in need of these services, but the towns have eliminated this position. Yet clearly, there is a need. Ms. Rondinaro spoke about the realities of social services. Mr. Schappert felt that this should not be a function of the library, since staff are not trained for these kinds of problems. The mayor and others floated ideas about how the li-

brary might be part of a larger resource to tackle the needs of citizens in crisis. Mr. Hallman will research some other approaches to helping residents in need, including a possible presentation on county services. Ms. Russell-Fowler will order more of the directories of social services that she had previously provided to the library and which are all gone.

There was also discussion of a “library of things.” Some libraries collect equipment and tools that people might need only occasionally and lend them to patrons, e.g. dishes and silverware for a large function; garden or yard tools—a chain saw, power washer or collapsible tent. Some libraries accept these items as gifts from community members who no longer need them and then offer them on loan. Mr. Pulido will research this kind of service and report back.

Ms. Havens and Ms. Roper-Robinson expressed their opinion that we should return to monthly meetings, since so much is happening at the library. Ms. Russell-Fowler offered a resolution that the board meet on the following dates for 2026:

June 8
July 13
August 10
September 14
October 19
November 9
December 14

Board members voted on the motion, and the resolution was passed unanimously.

Also under old business, Mr. Schappert reported from the Facilities Committee on the progress of efforts to modernize the facility. The exterior of the building has been tightened, painted and waterproofed. Repairs are needed to the air-conditioning and heating systems and hot water. An engineering study is needed to look at mechanical, electrical and HVAC systems in order to prepare a laundry list of problems to address. One goal may be to move services (lighting, generator, etc.) to the east rather than south of the building to allow for future expansion.

There being no new business to discuss or comments from the public, Mr. Bucafusco moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Roper-Robinson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Submitted by Pat Hutchinson, 05/13/2026