APPROVED MINUTES
CLIFTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
MAY 14, 2025

The monthly meeting of the Trustees of the Clifton Public Library was held on May 14, 2025, at the Main Library, 292 Piaget Avenue, Clifton, NJ. The meeting was called to order at 6:34 P.M. by President Patricia Vasilik. Library Counsel read an announcement which stated that pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of the meeting had been given in the annual meeting notice to the Record, the Herald News, the Clifton Journal, posted on the Clifton Public Library Website and in the Clifton Public Library and filed with the Clifton City Clerk.

ROLL CALL

Present: Thomas Charsky, Rosmunda Kenning, Barbara Polk, Karen Sommers, Tracy Sterni, President Patricia Vasilik, Library Director Justine Tomczak, and Library Counsel Michael A. Cerone, Jr. Vivian Semeraro, Suzanne Sia arrived at 6:41pm during the Director's Report. Absent: Richard Ruggiero.

MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes of the April 16, 2025 meeting. On a motion made by Trustee Charsky and seconded by Trustee Polk, the Board on roll call vote approved the minutes of the April 16, 2025 meeting. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sia.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one addressed the Board. On motion made by Trustee Sommers and seconded by Trustee Charsky, the Board, with all present being in favor, closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director provided an update on the Main HVAC project. Due to the extent of work that needs to be done at the end of the month, the Main Library will be closed May 27-31. The Allwood branch hours will be adjusted. The branch will stay open until 9pm on Thursday, May 29 and will open at 9 am on Saturday, May 31.

The upgrade of Wi-fi access points and network switches, approved at the February board meeting and covered in part by e-rate funding, was conducted May 5-6. It went well. PALS Plus and the contractors took this opportunity to streamline and clean up wiring and connections.

Mardel Electrical came in to look at a problem involving the controlling of lights in the reference section upstairs at Main, diagnosed as a problem with the disconnect switch. It is being repaired.

The library's organizational chart was sent to the HR department at city hall for submission to Civil Service.

Librarian 2 Khusboo Rana started preparing for the teen summer reading program.

Khusboo noted that there have been tons of YA book donations in pristine condition. She has spent time going through the collection and replacing copies that have been damaged or marked as lost or missing. She also attended the Penguin Random House Spring Book and Author Festival on May 8.

Allwood Branch Manager Barbara Altilio reports that the annual Free Comic Book Day took place Saturday, May 3 this year. The Library received our comics from East Side Mags in Montclair as it has for nearly ten years. Raffle tickets are left out from Saturday through Monday allowing more of our patrons to have a chance to win a prize bag filled with graphic novels from the book donations received by Allwood and odds and ends Barbara brought back from the previous year's NYC Comic Con.

Supervising Library Assistant Cheryl Conselyea, Sr. Library Assistant Jennifer Bello and Library Assistant Tess Lazo-Iwachow organized and ran our volunteer appreciation party.

Over the years the decorations in the fairy garden at Allwood have started to deteriorate so Barbara requested money to purchase new items. She was able to get a solar gnome reading a book to a turtle for the kindness rock garden and a small fairy village and gnome village for the fairy garden itself. A regular Allwood patron, Mrs. Kay, decorates seashells and asked if she could put her creations in the kindness rock garden and Barbara gladly accepted.

Last year, Barbara started a binder of recommended fiction reading lists for adults to which she adds more lists on a quarterly basis. As the original binder expanded, she separated the list into three binders for specific genres to make browsing easier. A note indicating ownership in Main, Allwood or PALS Plus helps when requesting holds.

Principal Library Assistant Danielle Sonye-Reising represented the library at a City Green outreach event, handing out seeds from our seed library and highlighting our programs. Sr. Library Assistant Joel Colon continues his regular visits to senior living facility Mira Vie and, during his most recent visit, gave a talk on Guatemala and its history. Supervising Library Assistant Melissa Carrasco reports that staff at Main noticed that books on the hold shelves have been problematic recently. They were having a problem with missing books and realized that items were not being checked out properly. Circulation staff temporarily moved the hold books from the public shelves to behind the desk so they can monitor the situation and explain the process face-to-face with patrons for a few weeks.

The Children's Department began the spring session of story times at the end of April. In the family and 1-2-year-old Storytime, Librarian Kaitlin Koch used a parachute. The parachute was a huge hit, and she will incorporate its use into future programs.

Limited use of the community rooms at Main has been challenging for the department. Despite programs taking place in the more limited space of the children's room, there have been a successful number of attendees.

Kaitlin and Children's Supervisor Gloria Abero have hosted four school visits so far in April and May. They add different songs, books, and crafts depending on the age groups, and then tour the library. The teacher worked with the library (Gloria and Melissa) on ways to encourage library card signups, and several new cards resulted from this effort. Visits to some schools are now being scheduled for June.

Work on summer reading scheduling and promotion continues. The librarians are working with the schools on updated K-8 reading lists to send by mid-May.

Librarian Heather Nilsen and Kaitlin ran a Star Wars Party in collaboration with the Recreation Department. It went very well and the kids had a great time and love the inflatable lightsabers.

Heather had been weeding the Nonfiction books at Allwood, and she and Gloria are working to reorganize how we catalog nonfiction books about Native/Indigenous North Americans.

Heather made connections with performers at The Morris Arts Showcase she attended in April and is working to negotiate agreements for future programs. She, like Kaitlin, reports growing attendance at baby story times (ages birth to 12 months). In the past, attendance numbers for this program vary wildly and tend to be on the low side so this is promising. The parents who attend regularly are also bonding and sharing parenting info which is great to see.

DONATIONS

Unrestricted:
$ 2.10 Canister

Restricted:
$ 100.00 From Cynthia Chamberlin for books in honor of Ann Imperato's 100th Birthday

Restricted – DEPARTMENTAL:
$ 178.77 Interest earned on EW Fund for juvenile programs

FRIENDS REPORT

Trustee Semeraro reported on the April 30 semi-annual meeting of the FRIENDS. The next meeting will be on June 12, 2025.

BUILDING AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The Director requested Board approval of Change Order #1 for the contract with Unitemp for the HVAC Main Library project. The Director noted that Crane, the Library's project engineer, had reviewed the change order and found it to be reasonable and necessary. On Motion made by Trustee Sommers and seconded by Trustee Kenning, the Board, on roll call vote, approved Change Order PC001 with Unitemp for Expansion Tank, Reducing Valve and Relief Valve Replacement at a coat of $5920.81. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None. Absent: Ruggiero.

PLANNING AND POLICY COMMITTEE

The Committee proposed revision to the Special Use Room Policy to allow use of the Library Study Room by those individuals needing private space to conduct virtual meetings and appointments, and to ban use of the room by those engaging in paid tutoring sessions. On Motion made by Trustee Sterni and seconded by Trustee Sia, the Board, on roll call vote, approved the revised Special Use Room Policy attached to these minutes. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None. Absent: Ruggiero.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Board reviewed the Encumbrance and Claims Lists. On Motion made by Trustee Charsky and seconded by Trustee Polk, the Board, on roll call vote, approved the Encumbrance List (2025 Budget) dated May 1, 2025 in the amount of $178,952.55 and the Claims List (2025 Budget) dated May 14, 2025 in the amount of $137,300.79. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None. Absent: Ruggiero.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

On motion made by Trustee Sterni and seconded by Trustee Sommers, the Board, on roll call vote approved promotion of Grace Giunta to Sr. Library Assistant with a start date June 1 at Step 4 ($42,517.62) of the Sr. Library Assistant scale. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, and Sterni; No: None. Absent: Ruggiero; Abstain: Polk and Vasilik.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

The Director presented quotes from two landscapers for Spring Cleanup of the grounds as Main Library and Allwood Branch. The Board determined that the quote from Leon Brothers was the most advantageous to the Library, as it provided for the power raking of the lawns at both facilities which City Wide did not offer. In addition, Leon Brothers will hand trim small flowering bushes and trees. On Motion made by Trustee Charsky and seconded by Trustee Polk, the Board, on roll

call vote, authorized the Director to contract with Leon Brothers Landscaping LLC for Spring Cleanup at Main Library and Allwood Branch for a total cost of $3,350 in accordance with their cost estimates dated May 5, 2025. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None. Absent: Ruggiero.

The Director informed the Board that City inspectors informed the Library that the State now requires backflow preventers on incoming water lines. The Library is working to obtain quotes for this project which needs to be done at each building.

The Director reported that the Library learned that when the Main Library Daiken Chiller (compressor and coils) was inspected in the fall a problem was discovered that was not reported to the Library until two weeks ago. The Chiller is out of warranty but was only installed in 2016. The Director recommended that the Chiller be inspected and evaluated to determine the extent of the problem and the work which needs to be done to correct it. If the Chiller needs to be replaced that will likely need to be put out to bid. Trustees Charsky and Sia were upset to learn that this is the second time a Daiken Chiller has had serious issues before the end of its useful life. They asked the Director to write to Daiken, inform them of the issue, ask them to come to the Library to see the issue firsthand and ask them if they are willing to compensate the Library.

The Board reviewed quotes from Garden State Mechanical and Trane to inspect and evaluate the issues with the Main Library Daiken Chiller. The Board determined that the quote from Garden State Mechanical was most advantageous as Garden State is familiar with the Library's HVAC system having been the company servicing it for many years. In addition, the quote from Garden State has a fixed price of $1900 while Trane quoted a price of up to $2800. On motion made by Trustee Kenning and seconded by Trustee Semeraro, the Board, on roll call vote, authorized the Director to contract with Garden State Mechanical to inspect the Main Library Daiken Chiller and provide a complete report of their findings for a cost of $1900 in accordance with the quote dated May 7, 2025. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None. Absent: Ruggiero.

President Vasilik reported that Trustee Ruggiero has informed her that he is no longer able to serve as the Library's representative on the Clifton Arts Center Advisory Board of Trustees. Trustee Charsky offered to serve as the Library's representative to that board.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

There were no Trustee comments. On motion made by Trustee Kenning and seconded by Trustee Sia the Board, with all present being in favor, adjourned the meeting at 7:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Cerone, Jr.

MICHAEL A. CERONE, JR.
Library Counsel

POLICY ON SPECIAL USE ROOMS

LOCAL HISTORY ROOM

The Clifton Local History Room will collect, preserve, organize and make available on a limited basis, suitable materials of historical, genealogical, geographical or cultural relevance to the City of Clifton for the purpose of research and preservation. Materials will be collected through purchase and donation according to procedures and guidelines outlined by the Library. The Local History room welcomes and encourages research while at the same time acknowledging the limitations of the collection and staff. As an archive the collection is not appropriate for use as a browsing collection. Finding tools will be created as need arises and staffing allows. The Reference Staff, in conjunction with the Library Archivist and volunteers, will attempt to provide materials or answers to specific questions in a timely fashion. Use of materials may be restricted by special procedures due to the nature of the collection.

LIBRARY STUDY ROOMS

Library Study Rooms are intended for traditional study and meeting purposes and for use by informal small groups and those needing private space to conduct virtual meetings and appointments. They are not available for commercial purposes, including, but not limited to, the offering or solicitation of goods, services, memberships, or for paid tutoring sessions. Rooms are available on a walk-in, first come, first served basis. No advance reservations will be taken. Sign up for Study Room 2 on the second floor is at the Reference Desk. Sign up for a station for Study Room 1 on the first floor is at the Circulation Desk. The person signing up will leave a library card or ID, and will be responsible for the condition of the room or area. This person must be age 14 or older. Use of the Study Rooms is limited to one hour if others are waiting. Occupancy of the Study Rooms is 1 to 6 persons. Additional furniture may not be moved into the room. Study Room 1 has 3 stations appropriate for 2 persons each. For those individuals desiring a quiet study area, study carrels and the Quiet Study Room are available.

Food or cell phone use is not permitted in the Study Rooms. The rooms will remain unlocked during use and may not be used for storage. If the room or station is unattended for 15 minutes, it will be made available for a waiting group and any materials left removed to lost and found. The library assumes no liability for use of the rooms. In consideration of other patrons, no noticeable noise should be heard outside the room.

The rooms must be vacated 15 minutes before Library closing. The Library reserves the right to allocate a Study Room for a Library sponsored program or meeting. Failure to abide by Library rules and policies may result in termination of Study Room privileges. Priority for use of the room may be given to Clifton card holders.

QUIET STUDY ROOM

The Quiet Study Room is open to all members of the public who wish a completely silent area in which to ready study or use for other normal library functions. It is available all hours that the Library is open. The Quiet Study Room may not be reserved or used for group meetings, tutorials or classes.

CONFERENCE ROOM

The Conference Room is not open to the general public. Its intended use is for library meetings such as staff meetings, Board committee meetings or library committee meetings which include a staff member on the committee.

7/8/92, rev. 4/1/95, rev. 9/95, rev. 11/16/2011, rev. 5/14/2025.