APPROVED MINUTES
CLIFTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
JANAURY 21, 2026

The monthly meeting of the Trustees of the Clifton Public Library was held on January 21, 2026, at the Main Library, 292 Piaget Avenue, Clifton, NJ. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 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, Richard Ruggiero, Vivian Semeraro, Suzanne Sia, Karen Sommers, President Patricia Vasilik, Library Director Justine Tomczak, and Library Counsel Michael A. Cerone, Jr. Absent: Tracy Sterni.

MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes of the December 17, 2025 meeting. Trustees offered several corrections. On a motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Polk, the Board on roll call vote approved the minutes of the December 17, 2025 meeting as amended. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sterni.

The Board reviewed the minutes of the December 17, 2025 executive session. Trustees offered several corrections. On a motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Charsky, the Board on roll call vote approved the minutes of the December 17, 2025 executive session. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sia, and Sommers; No: None; Abstain: Polk, Vasilik; Absent: Sterni.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director supplied a written report to the Trustees in advance of the meeting. Updates and highlights of activities since the December board meeting included the following:

Major work on the Main Library's HVAC system has largely concluded on the penthouse floor's mechanical rooms. Trane, the air handler manufacturer, completed startups on January 7 and 13. Air balancing technicians were on-site the weeks of January 5 and 12. Minor tasks remain, but the majority of work is finished. Crane engineers conducted a walkthrough on January 15 and developed a punch list. Deep cleaning of the second floor began January 15 and is expected to continue into the following week, starting with the business office to allow staff to return. The second floor may reopen to the public in early February, pending further information from the engineer and contractor.

Unitemp drained the system in December prior to an anticipated cold spell, while Crane evaluated the use of glycol. Based on Trane's data, Crane advised against using 30% glycol year-round as it would decrease system performance. The system will remain unchanged for this season.

The Main Library opened late (2:00 pm) on December 26 due to a local water main break. On December 27, both buildings opened at 1:00 pm following cleanup from a significant freezing rain and snowstorm.

Mardell Electrical installed new outlets on the Main's second floor on January 12–13 to address Fire Department inspection deficiencies.

A brief power outage on January 7 disrupted the phone system at Main. A TGS technician addressed these issues on January 13 and discussed replacement options with staff.

ModernFold serviced the Main Library's community room folding walls on January 13.

The split unit cooling the PALS Plus server room is failing and will be replaced at PALS Plus's expense, with coordination from library staff.

The Fire Department identified deficiencies at Allwood, requiring alternate storage solutions for gas and gas-powered equipment in the basement.

The Main Library's elevator failed its December 22 inspection. Repairs must be completed by June 20. Jersey Elevator will be contracted to do the work.

Librarian Khusboo Rana is coordinating college planning programs with community partners and exploring additional teen events.

Both Main and Allwood locations saw higher-than-expected activity in the Children's Room during a typically quiet period, with increased demand for computers and reference assistance.

A semi-monthly music program led by a retired music teacher and a monthly art program, run by a retired art teacher are available to patrons.

The Career Carnival for Kids brought over 85 attendees, showcasing various careers.

A Boy Scout is conducting four STEM workshops as his Eagle Project, covering topics like engineering, chemistry, coding, and AI.

4-H and the Passaic County I See For You Puppy Club will host an event for youth and families about fostering seeing eye puppies at month's end.

The Thanksgiving Show was interactive and well-received, and a park ranger program allowed children hands-on learning about owls. Another ranger event is scheduled for February.

Clifton staff are serving on several PALS Plus committees in 2026, including policy, circulation, teen services, and youth services.

The administration is contacting companies for Qualified Purchasing Agent services and expects to present findings at the next meeting.

United Way is planning to use the Main's community room for VITA tax assistance, with a ribbon-cutting event.

United Way thanked the Library for allowing them to use the community room during their Winter Wishes toy and outerwear drive.

St. Peter's Haven thanked the Library for allowing them to place collection boxes for their annual Toy Drive in each building.

The annual State Aid report is due March 16, with changes in submission procedures and future operational impacts expected.

After an extensive search, the library had to part ways with a new hire for Children's Librarian before their start date and is onboarding another candidate.

New Jersey's minimum wage for 2026 increased by $0.43 to $15.92 per hour.

DONATIONS

Unrestricted:

$	.74	Canister
$	300.00	Power Jet Services

Restricted:

$	160.00	From staff in memory of Darlene Olenkewich for books
$	50.00	From Grace Giunta in memory of Darlene Olenkewich for books
$	50.00	From Carol Loden in memory of Darlene Olenkewich for books
$	25.00	From a trustee in memory of Darlene Olenkewich for books
$	25.00	From Barbara Polk in memory of Irene Gloede for books
$	30.00	From Karen Sommers in memory of Patricia Lavender for books
$	1,000.00	From Adele Piela in honor of library staff and trustees for books

Restricted – DEPARTMENTAL:

$	50.00	From Ruth Dunham for Allwood
$	100.00	From Janette Mendoza for Allwood
$	176.23	Interest earned – EW FUND for Children's programs

CORRESPONDENCE

President Vasilik noted receipt of a letter from the Director addressed to the Board thanking them for their donation to the Library in memory of Darlene Olenkewich.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Trustee Semeraro thanked Khusboo for the work she did on the Library newsletter and for highlighting the 40th Anniversary of the FRIENDS of the Library.

Trustee Semeraro reported that the FRIENDS received a $10,000 check from Vanguard Foundation on behalf of the Batty Family Foundation.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Board reviewed the Encumbrance and Claims Lists. On Motion made by Trustee Charsky and seconded by Trustee Ruggiero, the Board, on roll call vote, approved the Encumbrance List dated January 1, 2026, in the amount of $ 352,122.26, the Claims List (2026 Budget) dated January 21, 2026, in the amount of $ 168,046.93 and the Claims List (2025 Budget) dated January 21, 2026 in the amount of $16,201.32. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sterni.

The Committee presented the budget for CY 2026. On motion made by Trustee Charsky and seconded by Trustee Kenning, the Board on roll call vote adopted the CY 2026 Budget. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sterni.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

On motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Semeraro, the Board, with Trustees Polk and Vasilik abstaining, voted to go into executive session at 6:58 pm to discuss personnel issues.

The Board reconvened at 7:15 pm with the same members present. No action was taken in the executive session.

On Motion made by Trustee Charsky and seconded by Trustee Ruggiero, the Board, on roll call vote, approved hiring of Catherine Wolverton as full time Assistant Director at a salary of $105,000, 3 personal days and 10 vacation days for calendar year 2026 with the ability to carryover 3 days with a start date to be determined after onboarding paperwork and background check

completed. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sia, and Sommers; No: None; Abstain: Polk, Vasilik; Absent: Sterni.

NEW BUSINESS

The Director reported that three firms were contacted to obtain quotes for a qualified purchasing agent. One firm did not want to provide a quote. RMD Associates, LLC quoted $375.00 monthly which would be $4,125.00 for the period February through December 2026. Governance & Fiscal Affairs, LLC $200.00 per hour (minimum 1 hour) or $1,250.00 monthly flat rate. On motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Semeraro, the Board on Roll Call vote adopted the attached resolution authorizing the execution of an agreement with RMD Associates, LLC, to have Robert Dolan of RMD Associates to provide Qualified Purchasing Agent services for February through December 2026 at a cost of $4,125.00. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sterni.

The Director reported that two companies were contacted to get a price for a new Toro riding lawnmower. Complete Saw and Garden equipment could not provide a quote. Northeast Equipment quoted a price of $3,600. On motion made by Trustee Charsky and seconded by Trustee Sia, the Board, on roll call vote, approved purchase of a Toro 34 inch riding lawn mower from Northeast Equipment at a cost of $3,600 in accordance with the 1/14/26 written quotation. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sterni.

The Board reviewed quotes from TruGreen, Lawn Doctor, and Almstead Tree & Shrub care for lawn care at Main & Allwood for 2026 including grub control, lime & core aeration with seed. On motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Charsky, the Board, on roll call vote, approved contracting with Almstead Tree & Shrub for lawn care for 2026 at Main & Allwood at a cost of $2,013.48. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sterni.

On motion made by Trustee Charsky and seconded by Trustee Polk, the Board, on roll call vote, approved The Resolution Authorizing The Award Of A Non-Fair And Open Contract For Purchase Of Books And Other Library Materials regarding WT Cox Information Services. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sia, Sommers, and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sterni.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

Trustee Charsky informed the Board that the Finance Committee will have a financial report in March on the Main Library HVAC project.

On motion made by Trustee Sia and seconded by Trustee Semeraro, the Board, with all present being in favor, adjourned the meeting at 7:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael A. Cerone, Jr.
MICHAEL A. CERONE, JR.
Library Counsel