APPROVED MINUTES
CLIFTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
MARCH 18, 2026

The monthly meeting of the Trustees of the Clifton Public Library was held on March 18, 2026, at the Main Library, 292 Piaget Avenue, Clifton, NJ. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 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 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, Karen Sommers, Tracy Sterni, President Patricia Vasilik, Library Director Justine Tomczak, and Library Counsel Michael A. Cerone, Jr. Absent: Suzanne Sia.

Mayor Grabowski was given the privilege of the floor. He thanked the trustees and staff for their work throughout the year.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Counsel temporarily assumed the chair to conduct the election of officers.

Trustee Ruggiero nominated Patricia Vasilik as President. The nomination was seconded by Trustee Semeraro. There were no other nominations. Ms. Vasilik was elected as President on roll call vote as follows: Vasilik - Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni, and Vasilik. Other – None; Abstain – None; Absent Sia.

Trustee Sommers nominated Thomas Charsky as Treasurer. The nomination was seconded by Trustee Sterni. There were no other nominations. Mr. Charsky was elected as Treasurer on roll call vote as follows: Charsky - Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni, and Vasilik. Other – None; Abstain – None; Absent Sia.

Trustee Polk nominated Karen Sommers as Secretary. The nomination was seconded by Trustee Semeraro. There were no other nominations. Ms. Sommers was elected as Secretary on roll call vote as follows: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni, and Vasilik. Other – None; Abstain – None; Absent Sia.

MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes of the January 21, 2026 meeting. On a motion made by Trustee Charsky and seconded by Trustee Polk, the Board on roll call vote approved the minutes of the January 21, 2026 meeting. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sia.

The Board reviewed the minutes of the January 21, 2026 executive session. On a motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Sommers, the Board on roll call vote approved the minutes of the January 21, 2026 executive session. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni; No: None; Abstain: Polk, Vasilik Absent: Sia.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director gave the Board a report on events since the January Board meeting.

Since the last Board meeting, the library has made substantial progress on the Main HVAC project, with final adjustments and staff training ongoing. The second floor reopened to the public on February 9. The library experienced multiple weather-related closures in late January and February due to significant snow and a blizzard, which also prompted increased use of the warming center for the unhoused community.

Routine maintenance and safety checks were conducted, including fire alarm testing and elevator maintenance.

Tax services from AARP and VITA began in February, with VITA marking its start with a ribbon cutting.

The Director attended the Unhoused Task Force Meetings on January 22 and February 26. With all of the bad weather the warming center has been open more than last year. The Passaic County Point-in-Time count of unhoused persons, cancelled in January due to weather, was held on February 4.

Sr. Building Maintenance Worker David Vasilik and Christine attended the annual exposure control plan update meeting at city hall on February 17.

Christine attended a virtual training on procurement. She has also been on top of the changes regarding publication of open public meeting notices and working with Board Counsel Michael Cerone to ensure that we are in compliance.

The Allwood branch faced persistent Wi-Fi and internet connectivity issues, which were ultimately resolved after equipment upgrades and technical support. The Main Library is also addressing ongoing Wi-Fi concerns.

Kylie Davis attended the Summer Reading Workshop at the Livingston Library on March 2, bringing back innovative ideas to share with her colleagues Heather and Gloria for their upcoming summer reading plans.

She also participated in the "Little Hands, Big History" reception at the Clifton Arts Center on March 4, which showcased preschooler artwork themed around America's 250th anniversary. Kylie read picture books about art, discussed future collaborations with CAC Director Roxanne Cammilleri, and engaged with high school art students interested in volunteering at the library. The Clifton Early Learner Academy principal expressed appreciation for the library's involvement in a thank you letter.

All three Children's Librarians conducted school visits to participate in Read Across America week, and a Dr. Seuss program was held in the library in conjunction with the Recreation Department.

The Children's Department organized a Black History Month scavenger hunt in both rooms, highlighting lesser-known African Americans and their achievements. Additionally, they created a display in the Main Library gallery focusing on Black History in New Jersey.

Librarian 2 Khusboo Rana is working with a community partner to schedule a Career Clarity Workshop for teens, and is also planning a poetry book event and a self-care workshop. On March 26, a college funding webinar titled "Cracking the Code: Affordable College Solutions" will be offered for parents of teens, presented by Jodi Bloom, MBA, CCFS of Cornerstone College & Wealth Solutions.

In preparation for reopening the second floor, Khusboo reorganized the YA collection with help from Reference Page Parul Shah. She used top shelving to increase capacity and retained potential circulating titles, weeded the Spanish-language collection, and shifted the world language collection to make room for a growing Polish-language collection. She is considering adding shelving for popular manga series in the YA graphic novel collection.

With support from part-time Librarian Usha Thampi-Lukose, Khusboo inspected all second-floor computer stations and submitted service tickets for any issues found. PALS Plus responded and resolved several technical concerns.

Khusboo attended five financial literacy workshops hosted by the NJ State Library as part of the Money Smart for Life series, covering topics like fraud detection, senior public benefits, and federal and state librarian resources. She also participated in the inaugural PALS Plus Teen Interest Group meeting on February 18.

She attended the webinar "Human-Centered AI for Librarians Serving Latino Communities" organized by REFORMA de Florida, which introduced several AI tools to help librarians better serve Latino communities. One tool enables English-Spanish translation with audio output, aiding in reference responses.

On March 18, Khusboo will attend an idea-sharing workshop with the PALS Plus Teen Services Interest Group and Youth Services Interest Group to discuss plans for the 2026 Summer Reading Program, including performers, craft programs, and displays.

The Director, Gloria, and Heather attended the first NJLA/NJSLA joint conference in Atlantic City February 17-19.

The Director reports that the State Aid report was finalized and submitted, and notes that auditors hired by the city are beginning their work with the Library.

Personnel:
Kylie Davis began as full time Librarian 1 in the Children's Department on February 1. She is starting on Step 1 at a salary of $58,000.

Catherine Wolverton, whose hiring as Assistant Director was approved at the January 2026 Board meeting, began on March 1.

Civil Service changed the Working Test Period for local workers from 3 months to 4 months. We confirmed with the city Benefits Clerk that this means benefits do not begin until after 120 days. This went into effect January 12 and we did not find out about this until February 5, meaning that our two new hires (Children's Librarian and Assistant Director) are affected by a change in what we told them when offering the jobs.

DONATIONS

-FEBRUARY-

Unrestricted:

$	1,000.00	From Michael A. & Jayne Fitzgerald Cerone, Jr
$	97.52	From Nancy Theodorou to commemorate the release of her new book "Royal Caleva: Raul" by Nancy Herkness (PayPal original $100.00)
$	1.11	Patron

Restricted:

$	97.52	From Nathan Harshman to Commemorate Adele Piela and her continued love of the Clifton Library (PayPal original $100.00)

Restricted – DEPARTMENTAL:

$	400.00	From the Woman's Club of Allwood for Allwood
$	10.00	From patron for Allwood
$	176.23	Interest earned – EW FUND for Children's programs

-MARCH-

Unrestricted:

$ .12 Canister

Restricted – DEPARTMENTAL:
$ 159.18 Interest earned – EW FUND for Children's programs

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Trustee Semeraro passed out flyers from the Friends promoting the Gift Gallery at Allwood Branch and upcoming Friends events. She complemented the Library on the homebound program. The Director stated that this program allows staff to drop off and pick up library books to those patrons who are homebound. The Library will work on publicizing this program more.

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 (2025 Budget) dated March 1, 2026, in the amount of $15,254.13, the Encumbrance List (2026 Budget) dated March 1, 2026 in the amount of $41,140.27, the Claims List (2025 Budget) dated March 18, 2026 in the amount of $8,270.52 and the Claims List (2026 Budget) dated March 18, 2026 in the amount of $152,977.73. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sia.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

On motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Kenning, the Board, on roll call vote, approved the provisional promotions from Librarian 1 to Librarian 2 for Heather Nilsen (Full-Time) at a salary of $79,133.50 and for Usha Thampi-Lukose at an hourly rate of $50.41/hr. with a start date of April 1. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, and Sterni; No: None; Abstain: Polk, Vasilik; Absent: Sia.

NEW BUSINESS

The Director presented resolutions from the qualified purchasing agent which change the bid and quote threshold for the library and authorize the QPA to receive certain bids in accordance with the regulations. On a motion made by Trustee Charsky and seconded by Trustee Semearo, the Board, on roll call vote, adopted the following resolutions:

1. Resolution establishing the bid threshold to $53,000.00, quote threshold to $7,950.00, and threshold to require submission of Russia-Belarus certification to $7,950.00 for cy2026.
2. Resolution authorizing the qualified purchasing agent to Receive certain bids in accordance with N.J.A.C.5:34-5.1, eprocurement

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

The Board reviewed the quotes from Garden State Mechanical and Unitemp for preventative maintenance of the HVAC equipment at the Main Library. On Motion made by Trustee Ruggiero

and seconded by Trustee Sommers, the Board, on roll call vote, awarded the contract for preventative maintenance of the HVAC equipment at the Main Library to Garden State Mechanical on the terms presented in the correspondence from Garden State Mechanical dated February 3, 2026. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sia.

The Board reviewed the BMS Controls Service Proposal from Unitemp. On Motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Kenning, the Board, on roll call vote, awarded the contract for BMS Controls Service to Unitemp on the terms presented in the proposal from Unitemp dated February 6, 2026. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sia.

The Director presented Pay-to-Play resolution for Brodart Co. one of the Library's book vendors. On a motion made by Trustee Polk and seconded by Trustee Ruggiero, the Board, on roll call vote, adopted the Resolution Authorizing the Award of Non-Fair and Open Contracts to Brodart Co. for the purchase of Books and Other Library Materials. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sia.

The Director presented a revised PALS Plus voting representative resolution. This resolution makes Catherine Wolverton, the Assistant Director, the alternate voting representative when the Director is not present. On a motion made by Trustee Sterni and seconded by Trustee Semeraro, the Board, on roll call vote, adopted the revised PALS Plus voting representative resolution. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sia.

The Director presented a proposal from Ryan Thomas for archive space implementation for the Local History collection. On motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Polk, the Board, on roll call vote, referred the matter to the Technology Committee. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sia.

The Director recommended the purchase of seven computers from Dell pursuant to the quotes from Dell dated February 10 and February 12, 2026. On motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Semeraro, the Board authorized the purchase of seven Dell Computers in accordance with the terms set forth in the Dell Pricing Quotes dated February 10, 2026 and February 12, 2026. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sia.

The Director presented a request from Dana's Daycare LLC that the Main Library serve as an evacuation site for their preschoolers and staff in the event of an emergency. Counsel opined that the agreement presented would be acceptable provided it is revised to require that Dana's Daycare produce a Certificate of Insurance naming the Clifton Public Library and the City of Clifton as additional insureds. On motion made by Trustee Kenning and seconded by Trustee Ruggiero, the Board approved an agreement with Dana's Daycare LLC allowing the Main Library to serve as an

emergency evacuation site for Dana's Daycare on the condition that Dana's Daycare provides a certificate of insurance naming the Clifton Public Library and the City of Clifton as additional insureds, the Library is notified as to the number of children and the hours of operation. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sia.

The Director requested approval of a $1600 budget for volunteer luncheon, employee recognition luncheon and purchase of patron giveaways for the celebration of National Library Week. On a motion made by Trustee Sommers and seconded by Trustee Polk, the Board, on roll call vote, approved a budget of $1600 for celebration of. National Library Week and National Volunteer Week. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sia.

The Director presented the annual meeting schedule for the period April 2026 through February 2027 - April 15, May 20 June 17, July 15, August 19, September 16, October 21, November 18, December 16, January 20, February 17 (Reorganization meeting) with all meetings starting at 6:30 pm and held at the Main Library except the July meeting to be held at the Allwood Branch Library. On motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Polk, the Board, on roll call vote, adopted the annual meeting schedule as presented. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Kenning, Polk, Ruggiero, Semeraro, Sommers, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Sia.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

President Vasilik notified the trustees that the State Library has changed the trustee education requirement. The new regulation requires that each trustee receive two (2) hours of library related education.

The Trustees congratulated Trustee Semeraro for receiving an award from Mayor Grabowski for Women's History Month.

The Trustees were reminded that they will need to complete their Financial Disclosure Statement by April 30.

Trustee Ruggiero asked who was in charge of fixing potholes at the Library. The Director stated that DPW fixes the potholes and that she has sent an email to the head of DPW about the potholes.

On motion made by Trustee Kenning and seconded by Trustee Charsky the Board, with all present being in favor, adjourned the meeting at 7:52 pm.

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