APPROVED MINUTES
CLIFTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
JULY 15, 2026

The monthly meeting of the Trustees of the Clifton Public Library was held on July 15, 2026, at the Allwood Branch Library, 44 Lyall Road, 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 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, Richard Ruggiero, Barbara Polk, Tracy Sterni, President Patricia Vasilik, Library Director Justine Tomczak, Assistant Library Director Catherine Wolverton and Library Counsel Michael A. Cerone, Jr. Absent: Rosmunda Kenning, Vivian Semeraro, Karen Sommers. Suzanne Sia arrived at 6:35 pm during the Director's report.

MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes of the June 17, 2026 meeting. On a motion made by Trustee Charsky and seconded by Trustee Ruggiero, the Board on roll call vote approved the minutes of the June 17, 2026 meeting. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Ruggiero, Polk, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Kenning, Sia, Semeraro, Sommers.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

In celebration of America's 250th, staff hung an outdoor banner above the Main Library entrance and posted lawn signs at the Allwood Branch. The Woman's Club of Allwood lent Allwood a flag for the community room bulletin board. Main has a second-floor display of historical objects and a brief history in the gallery. The Children's Department is adding history to summer reading activities and displays, and the Adult Department has offered lectures and movie showings over the past two months.

Librarian 2 Vivian Ungerleider reported a packed room of about 50 people for a viewing of the "Hamilton" Broadway show recording on June 30, exceeding our expectations. The Library had cancelled the movie viewing license years ago due to low turnouts and just recently signed up again. The movie "1776" was shown for July 9, and "The Patriot" for July 23. The Children's and Teen departments also have movies scheduled as part of their summer programming.

Vivian reported a nice crowd for a lecture "Remember the Ladies: Women in the time of the American Revolution" on July 1. The speaker, Joel Farkas, was knowledgeable and unexpectedly humorous, keeping the audience engaged.

On June 25, Vivian took a chance (with approval) to book a 17-piece band, Reed Rhythm and All That Brass, and it paid off with around 65 attendees and verbal and written notes of positive feedback and thanks to the library for providing such programming. Maintenance took down all of the community room folding walls to spread the band out along the long side of the room and allow audience seating to extend out to the gallery. The bulk of the songs were from the big band era, but they ended with a bit of patriotism with a God Bless American sing-along.

Vivian hosted local author and leadership coach Stephen Garth on July 7 for a discussion of leadership, identity, and personal transformation, and poet Paul Juszcyk – who has been holding poetry events here for years – returned on June 23 to read from and discuss his new book of poetry. The event included a guest poet and an open reading segment.

Sr. Library Assistant Joel Colon and Library Assistant Matt Agnoli recently conducted outreach at Evergreen Manor on May 27 and Senior Horizons on June 24, following an invitation from Power of One, which hosts Wellness Days for 55+ communities. They brought Chromebooks to renew and issue library cards on site, received positive feedback with Power of One's Kim, and answered many resident questions about digital resources such as Libby and Hoopla.

Librarian 2 Khusboo Rana reports that the Teen Summer Reading Program is under way. Logs and brochures are available at both branches, with 35 logs distributed in the first week. The July 1–31 program includes weekly crafts, STEM and poetry workshops, two teen movies, and passive patriotic activities for small prizes, including a crossword, word search, notable-figures matching, and true-or-false statements. Khusboo created the activities in Canva.

The Summer Reading has started off strong. The Main and Allwood Children's rooms have been decorated with the dino/discovery theme. The kids are super excited about the prizes and the Dinosaur Plushie raffle. Over 365 logs were given out in less than two weeks families are still signing up.
Some recent and upcoming programming highlights include:

- The kick-off show – Jumpin' Jamie offered his show on June 30th. Abou 50 kids and 30 parents attended. Asst. Director Wolverton dressed in an inflatable dinosaur costume, which delighted the kids, and led to picture taking with Ms. Dino.
- Stewie the Duck story time, which was rescheduled from May and had a great turnout. The kids (and staff) loved seeing the Duck mascot. This program is part of the Library's partnership with the Stew Leonard Foundation.

- Princess Story and Craft program. Heather dressed up as a princess and many of the kids took pictures with her at the end of the program, wearing the paper flower crowns they made.
- Miss Stephanie, the ShopRite dietitian ran another healthy snack program for us. The program had full attendance and the families were really excited. Staff is talking with her to have her back in the fall.
- A 4-H app challenge and 4-H curious critters.
- A growing Pokémon club; the Library will be introducing Pokémon ambassadors, older kids who help the younger ones learn and play the game.
- A musical theater series run by Visions The Performing Arts Center and sponsored by the FRIENDS.
- A sign and sing class, in which a skilled performer taught some basic sign language through singing, play, and songs.
- A partnership with the Passaic County Department of Parks and Recreation to host an outdoor program at Weasel Brook Park on August 5th. Librarians will read a book about trees and forests, and a park ranger will lead young children on a hike around the park to learn about plants, trees, and their small inhabitants.

The Summer Reading Partner program began on July 6, and the Library is still accepting applications from children and volunteers. At this time, 38 students are served at Main and 9 at Allwood using 27 volunteers at Main and 7 at Allwood.
The United Way continues their support of the Library, now looking to donate up to 100 backpacks with school supplies. Staff is in discussions with them about distributing the backpacks during the Ice Cream party. We must promote this partnership on our social media (Instagram and Facebook) in addition to our regular advertising sources.

Library Assistant Sonia Ramos conducted outreach on June 13 at the Clifton Early Learner Academy (CELA) during Family Day. She reports that it was well attended and estimates about 60 people stopped by the Library table. She kept the kids occupied with coloring pages while she spoke with parents about library programs and resources, as well as the upcoming Summer Reading program.

Technical Services Supervisor Carol Loden met with Asst. Director Catherine Wolverton and Director Tomczak regarding order fulfillment through vendors other than Baker & Taylor over the past several months. Items have been very slow to come in through Brodart, even after we had a meeting with them. The Library is using other vendors more and more, but it comes at a cost of higher prices and/or reduction in vendor processing, putting that work on us in return for faster fulfillment.

Meanwhile, statistics for digital material use continues to climb. PALS Plus used Clifton as a test source for working with Overdrive to establish automatic usage reports to help curate our Advantage collection. Online meetings have allowed staff to understand how combing through the data of checkouts, holds and requests can help guide specific types of digital purchasing.

Asst. Director Wolverton has been looking into options for some sort of ESL classes that the Library can offer, as the demand from the community is high. It is not a simple thing; there are

many considerations and logistics to work out. She and Dir. Tomczak have met a few times with the Plainfield Public Library. They have successful, long-running programs. They have also received grants that allow them to go forth and share their program structure, training, and materials with other libraries.

The Library is hoping to get some sort of very basic/entry level classes going in the fall. Before then, we need to recruit and train volunteers. Plainfield is running training via Zoom next week and staff has put out flyers seeking volunteers. Staff will also be mentioning this opportunity to patrons or volunteers they know who might be interested.

Maintenance Supervisor Nick Alectoridis, Administrative Clerk Christine Althawabta, and Director Tomczak met with architect George Held to discuss restarting our plans for Main's ceiling tile/wallpaper project and to tour the building again as it's been several years since initial planning.

Nick and Sr. Building Maintenance Worker David Vasilik are meeting with contractors to discuss and get quotes for removal and/or pruning of unhealthy trees at Main.

Director meetings of note:
June 18: LibraryLink NJ Spring Membership meeting (virtual)
June 23: Passaic County Tourism forum, 3rd of 4 for the year (Passaic Co. Arts Center at John W. Rea House, Hawthorne) – encouraging collaborations between local organizations and cross-promotion of events
June 25: Unhoused Task Force meeting (city hall)
July 9: PALS Plus Policy Committee (virtual)

On June 19, when the library was closed for Juneteenth, a person in the unhoused community was unfortunately found deceased in the bushes/trees bordering the highway behind the staff parking lot.

Personnel:

Part-time Page Cassidy Rubio has resigned. Her last day was July 11.

Luz Posada, part-time Page in the Technical Services department, has added 4 more hours per week to her permanent schedule beginning the week of July 6. These hours are taken from a Page position that has been vacant for a while now. Tech Services needs additional help as we transition to new vendors in the wake of Baker & Taylor's demise and the library has taken on more processing.

The following people have been hired to fill recent part-time Library Assistant vacancies at a rate of $17.98/hour:

Evans Pare, 27 hours over 2 weeks, start date June 29
Dulce Lara, 24 hours over 2 weeks; start date June 29
Nathalie Vidals, 29 hours over 2 weeks, start date June 30

DONATIONS

Unrestricted:

$	.80	Canister
$	24.01	From Linda Chelotti in honor Charlotte Garrigan's 1st Birthday ($25 PayPal)
$	97.52	From Virginia Montemurro ($100 PayPal)

Restricted – DEPARTMENTAL:

$	154.11	Interest earned – EW FUND for Children's programs
$	100.00	Melissa Sherman for Children's Summer Reading programs
$	200.00	United Way for Children's Summer Reading programs
$	1,800.00	FRIENDS for Summer Reading programs

FRIENDS LIASON

In Trustee Semeraro's absence, President Vasilik distributed flyers for upcoming FRIENDS events.

BUILDING AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Trustee Charsky reported that the Steinway finisher came to the Main Library and inspected the piano. He was told that the piano has an alligator finish, a style that was in vogue in the World War 1 era. His recommendation was to leave it exactly as is. There is no need to do anything as the Library keeps the piano covered. To refinish the piano would cost $20,000 and take 4-6 months and there wouldn't be the alligator finish.

Staff have been in contact with the City fire inspector about the Library installing a Tuff Shed at the Allwood Branch for the storage of gasoline powered equipment. They will need to speak to the building inspector about having a light in the shed.

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 (2026 Budget) dated July 1, 2026, in the amount of -$12,164.90, and the Claims List (2026 Budget) dated July 15, 2026 in the amount of $ 102,405.23. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Ruggiero, Polk, Sia, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Kenning, Semeraro, Sommers.

NEW BUSINESS

It was the consensus of the Trustees that the proposed upgrade of the Allwood community room technology be referred to the Technology Committee for review.

The Director presented a revised cash management plan. On motion made by Trustee Charsky and seconded by Trustee Polk, the Board, on roll call vote, approved the revised 2026 Cash

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

The Board reviewed the June 26, 2026 proposal from George Held and Associates for architectural services for the New Ceiling Panels and Wall Coverings Replacement for the Main Library. On motion made by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Sterni the Board, on roll call vote, authorized the Director to contract with George Held and Associates for architectural services for the New Ceiling Panels and Wall Coverings Replacement for the Main Library in accordance with the proposal dated June 26, 2026. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Ruggiero, Polk, Sia, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Kenning, Semeraro, Sommers.

The Director recommended transferring funds from the Citizens Bank Money Market account and Wanda Simone Estate Money Market to Spencer Savings Bank 14-month Certificate of Deposit at 4.25% APY. This transfer will yield a higher interest rate. On motion by Trustee Ruggiero and seconded by Trustee Charsky, the Board, on roll call vote, authorized the transfer of the funds in the Citizen Bank Money Market account and Wanda Simone Estate Money Market to Spencer Savings Bank 14-month Certificate of Deposit at 4.25% APY. Vote: Yes: Charsky, Ruggiero, Polk, Sia, Sterni and Vasilik; No: None; Absent: Kenning, Semeraro, Sommers.

Trustee Comments

Trustee Ruggiero complimented the Garden Club in the appearance of the flower beds at both buildings.

President Vasilik complimented Khusboo and Tess on their work with a hearing challenged patron.

On motion made by Trustee Polk and seconded by Trustee Ruggiero the Board, with all present being in favor, adjourned the meeting at 7:08 pm.

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