

## MINUTES

### GARFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Wednesday,

April 30, 2025

The Regular meeting of April 30, 2025 was called to order at 7:04 PM by Vice President, Thomas Derr.

1. Vice President, Thomas Derr asked for the Roll Call:

Present:

Vice President, Thomas Derr

Secretary, Michael Kupec, Jr.

Treasurer / Mayor Everett E. Garnto's Alternate, Kathy Grzywnowicz-Muniz (via Zoom)

Trustee, Paola Lebowitz

Alternate for Superintendent Richard Tomko, Marie Marx (via Zoom)

Interim Director, Keith McCoy

Absent:

President, Suny Mellawa

Trustee, Berti Shenderasi

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Richard Tomko

Mayor, Everett E. Garnto

2. Vice President, Thomas Derr read the following statement:

Pursuant to the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, Laws of 1976, adequate written notice of this meeting, together with the agenda of this meeting is to be: permanently posted on the Board's officially designated public bulletin board, located in the Garfield Public Library lobby, 500 Midland Avenue, in the City of Garfield delivered to the Passaic Herald News, and the Community News, newspapers circulating in the City of Garfield, filed with the City Clerk of the City of Garfield; and mailed to all persons, if any, who have requested said notice, pursuant Section 14 of Chapter 231, Laws of 1976.

Vice President, Thomas Derr further introduced new guidelines regarding comments from the public. Guests must state their name and address before speaking. They may speak for up to 5 minutes on any topic related to the library during the public portion of the meeting. Individuals will be allowed to speak only once. (Further comments by an individual is at the discretion of the President.) If the President opens the floor at any other time, guests will be allowed to speak on a topic for only 3 minutes. If you ask questions during your speaking time, the Director or another

representative of the library will respond to you after the meeting. The Board reserves the right not to respond to questions or engage in dialogue during the meeting.

### **3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice President, Thomas Derr asked that all rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **4. GUESTS WERE WELCOMED**

Robert Lerch, CPA of Lerch, Vinci & Bliss, LLP  
Alan Focarino, President, Garfield Board of Education  
Debbie Lisovsky  
Donna Miller  
Nikola Shurteski  
Sal Lagatutta

### **5. SPECIAL AUDIT PRESENTATION**

Robert Lerch, CPA, Lerch, Vinci & Bliss, LLP presented the Report of Audit for the years ended December 31, 2023 and 2022. (Robert walked the Board through the Report of Audit.)

### **6. MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS**

Thomas asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the March 26, 2025, April 5, 2025 and April 15, 2025 meetings.

Motion made by Marie to accept the minutes of the March 26, 2025, April 5, 2025 and April 15, 2025 meeting seconded by Kathy. Motion passed.

### **7. APRIL 2025 BILL LIST**

Thomas asked for a motion to approve the April 2025 bill list.

Motion made by Marie to approve the April 2025 bill list and it was seconded by Paola. Motion passed.

### **8. FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Interim Director, Keith McCoy presented the board with a March financials.

A question was asked about the cost of 2 flags being \$431.

Motion made by Marie to accept the March financials and it was seconded by Paola. Motion passed.

## **9. REPORT OF INTERIM DIRECTOR**

### **Board**

- 1) The draft Library Ordinance, reviewed our attorney, is ready for the Board to approve and recommend to the Mayor and Council for adoption.
- 2) Tom Derr will be going to the ALA exhibits on June 28 for the library.
- 3) NJLA's annual conference will be Wednesday to Friday May 28-30. Registration can be found at [www.njla.org](http://www.njla.org). Let me know if you want to go.
  - a. Related to that, the new director is also president on NJLA this year, and will need to be at the conference on May 28, which is also the May board meeting. You should consider changing the date so he can be here. \*\*\*\*
  - b. Further, there is a 3 month gap between the June and September board meetings. This year, you may want to have a mid-summer meeting to facilitate any changes the new director wants to make.
- 4) A BCCLS workshop for trustees: The First Amendment, Libraries, and Library Trustees will be held at the Maywood Public Library on Wednesday May 7, 7 – 8:30 pm; there will also be a virtual link. Topics discussed will be: what is the First Amendment; how does it apply to libraries; What is a First Amendment Audit; how can you support staff? Reserve your seat at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-first-amendment-libraries-library-trustees-5725-tickets-1281750132149?aff=oddttdtcreator>.
- 5) You were sent a notice on April 1 about the annual NJ State Financial Disclosure forms. These must be returned electronically by April 30, or you will face a fine.

\*\*\*\*Since our new Director, Jeff Cupo will need to attend the NJLA meeting in his capacity as NJLA President, Vice President, Thomas Derr asked for a motion to move the date of our May Regular Monthly from the last Wednesday of the month to Thursday, June 5, 2025. Motion made by Marie to move the May meeting to Thursday, June 5, 2025 and it was seconded by Paola. Motion passed.

### **Building**

- 1) We have been cleared by the Fire Inspector for another year. All violations reported in February have been remediated.
- 2) We are waiting for an estimate to hang the fourth Centennial quilt, and rearrange other things (we've reached out twice). The wall where the quilts are going may need to be painted.
- 3) On April 14, the staff reported that, on the previous Saturday, they found the American flag soaked and in a heap in front of our main door. Further investigation indicates that the flag pole rope and cleats had deteriorated and broken. We asked DPW for new ropes and cleats to be installed, which they did. We also bought 4 new flags. I checked with the local American Legion for the 5 old flags to be properly disposed of, but they have not responded. Related to that, there is a memorial flag in the Director's Office,

which we inquired about, but no one knows who it is in memory of. However, Mac Nickels donated \$150 for the repair of the flag pole as a result of that inquiry.

- 4) There is an application for use of the library to be considered. The Albanian Alliance of NJ would like the use of the main floor for 3 hours on either Saturday May 17 or May 24. The Friends have their book sale scheduled for the 17<sup>th</sup>, and the library has a multi-generational program scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - a. Please note that the application the library uses is for the Community Room only. Permission to use the entire building on an off day should require a separate application, as well as a fee for staffing and use of utilities.

### Finances

- 1) Robert Lerch, from our auditors Lerch Vinci & Bliss, will be at the meeting to discuss the F23 audit (emailed to you on February 19) and answer other audit related questions. This will be the first order of business on the agenda. The F23 audit was emailed to you on February 19, and needs to be accepted, under Old Business.
  - a. The F24 audit will begin soon: we have sent LVB the basic financial data, and a site visit is being scheduled.
- 2) The board needs to designate by resolution the authorized check signers (often the president, vp, secretary, treasurer), and all need to go to the same Spencer Savings Bank branch with a copy of the resolution to re/authorize their signatures.

NOTE: Since Kathy is stepping down as Treasurer, Paola has generously volunteered to fill that office sometime in June 2025.

- 3) The PSE&G bill always comes in around the time of the board meeting, sometimes too late to include on the bill list. We attempted to change the date, but that was not possible. I have drafted a Procurement Card Policy and an Electronic Fund Transfer policies, which would cover utility bills, software purchases, and other non-standard items. These need to be reviewed by the library attorney before approval.
- 4) It appears that the Library underspent the 2024 budget by about \$485,000. This is mainly due to staff vacancies, and lack of direction to accomplish any projects or spending (e.g. materials, programs). That money needs to be dedicated by resolution for future capital projects.
- 5) A reminder that that \$80,000 Capital Account is in a non-interest bearing account.

At this point Vice President, Thomas Derr asked for a motion to dedicate \$485,000 to a Capital Plan. Motion made by Paola to dedicate \$485,000 to a Capital Plan and it was seconded by Michael. Motion passed.

## Programs

- 1) On March 14, President Trump signed an executive order proposing to eliminate the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). NJ Attorney General Matthew Plotkin has joined a multistate suit seeking to overturn that decision.
- 2) I have not provided a Circulation report so far, mainly for lack of access to that part of BCCLS. I have developed a 1 page report for future reporting. For a benchmark, typically a library circulates between 5 and 6 items per capita; that is a nationwide and NJ statistic. For Garfield, that would mean annual circulation about 160000 to 190,000. Last year we did 40,000. I think this is mainly due to lack of new materials and lack of effective publicity.

## Personnel

- 1) Tuesday April 8 was National Library Workers Day, and the Friends donated oranges and water bottles that day. Not to compete with them, the library brought in lunch on Wednesday April 16. The cost was \$137.29.
- 2) Amanda Trott was promoted to PT Library Assistant on April 14.
- 3) The library should schedule a staff training day, when the library would be closed for workshops and team building. Thursdays are best in terms of staff scheduling, and the date should be done during the slower times for circulation. The new director can arrange for the program. Please approve closing the library for staff training on Thursday December 11.
- 4) Other Personnel items are in a separate report, for discussion in Closed Session.

Vice President, Thomas Derr asked for a motion to close the library on Thursday, December 11, 2025 for staff training. Motion made by Michael to close the library on Thursday, December 11, for staff training workshop and it was seconded by Marie. Motion passed.

## Other

- 1) The annual State Aid report was due on March 17. I requested an extension (automatic, to May 2), and we are awaiting the CFO report before filing.
- 2) BCCLS will be replacing 7 of our computers on May 28-29.
- 3) There are a variety of policies in different stages of development, in addition to the ones mentioned above: Gift and Donations; Materials Reconsideration; Community Room Use. All of them should be reviewed by our attorney before board approval.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **10. FRIENDS REPORT**

Michael reported that the next event would be the annual Tea Party on Sunday, May 4, 2025. Donation is \$45. We expect it to be an awesome time...so come on down!

## **11. STRATEGIC PLANNING**

It would be wise to hold off on the Strategic Plan until a new director is place.

## **12. CAPITAL PLANNING**

Committee will evaluate proposals received and begin the work when new director starts.

## **13. OLD BUSINESS**

Thomas asked for a motion to approve the 2023 Audit Report.

Motion made by Michael to approve the 2023 Audit Report, seconded by Kathy. Motion passed.

## **14. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Comments of new director – Jeff Cupo
- b. Building use application
- c. Change date of May meeting to Thursday, June 5, 2025 (Jeff Cupo needs to attend a NJLA Annual Conference in his capacity as NJLA President.)

Thomas asked for a motion to go move to Closed Session.

Motion made by Marie and seconded by Kathy to go into Closed Session. Motion passed.

## **15. CLOSED SESSION - PERSONNEL**

## **16. CLOSE CLOSED SESSION**

Thomas asked for motion to Close Closed Session.

Motion made by Paola and seconded by Kathy to Close Closed Session. Motion passed.

## **17. CUSTODIAN'S COMPENSATION**

Vice President, Thomas Derr asked for a motion to increase the hourly rate of custodian from \$19.06/hour to \$19.66/hour immediately.

Motion made by Michael to increase the hourly rate of the custodian from \$19.06/hour to \$19.66/hour immediately and seconded by Thomas. Motion passed.

## **18. ADJOURNMENT**

Vice President, Thomas Derr asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn at 8:34PM made by Michael and seconded by Paola. Motion unanimously passed.  
Meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael Kupec, Jr.  
Trustee / Secretary

