

Board of Trustees Minutes – APRIL 15, 2025

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Elizabeth, NJ, was held in person and remotely via Zoom on APRIL 15, 2025. Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, President called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. **A quorum was established by roll call.**
2. **ROLL CALL:** Present: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Chynice Roman, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Mr. Patrick Mahon. Absent: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Ms. Lisa Torres, and Mr. Christian Veliz. Also present were Eleni Glykis, Alexandria Laudisi and Helen Speros. Ms. Lisa Torres arrives 6:40pm.
3. **Announcement of Compliance with The Sunshine Law:** Ms. Julia Krisanits states we are in compliance.
4. **WELCOME TO VISITORS:** Instructions on when to address the Board. Visitor Jeffrey Cupo is present.

PATRICK J. MAHON: On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to welcome Patrick Mahon to the Board. Patrick states he was born and raised in Elizabeth/Hillside. Lived in Massachusetts for 25 years on the Board of Trustees there, He served Little League 10 years, VP Booster Club HS 14 years. He returned and works for Mr. Kennedy now. He has a law degree in PA but not licensed or a practicing attorney in NJ.

JEFF CUPO HEAD OF ADULT SERVICES at EPL: I put in a nomination for NJ NEW BLACK HERITAGE TRAIL for Martha P Johnson childhood home/heritage home who was a critical figure at the Stonewall uprising, gay rights, and feeding homeless. The Historical Commission (THC) has been trying to find a spot for her marker. The library was important to her. The money covering it will not cover it from the site's childhood home but will cover it at the Library. It is 7' tall and 3-4' wide. They want to put the marker in place before end of October. Subject to summary rights, draft as to what marker would say. It may require City approval but Jeff thought he would start with the Board. It has already been designed. We have not found any documentation here at the library for her. THC also wanted us to offer programming along these lines since the marker will be here. Rebecca Williams is very interested in it being at the Library. THC would like approval from the Board. Then sending in a consent form. Work on the language of the marker with THC. Dr. Dorothy McMullen requests a copy of the application. Julia – Jeff can prepare info and include in packet for next month meeting and Board can do a Resolution. Mr. Martin Weingast states Insurance may be needed for vandalism or such. A motion will be needed by May. Markers will be made and installed prior to October. Who is owner of marker, what is the value? Jeff Cupo departs meeting at 6:45pm and Ms. Lisa Torres arrives.

5. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** N/A
6. **READING OF THE MINUTES (MARCH 2025):** It was motioned by Ms. Lorraine Tidd and seconded by Ms. Chynice Roman to accept the March 2025 minutes. AYES: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Chynice Roman, Dr. Dorothy McMullen. Abstain: Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Patrick Mahon. Absent: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Mr. Christian Veliz.
7. **REPORTS OF OFFICERS:**

REPORT OF BOARD PRESIDENT:

- I am pleased to provide this month's President's Report, highlighting key discussions, events, and developments at our library. This month I attended Maker's Day 3/22/25. It was busy and all ages attended; it was great. Thank you to all who were involved. This event is reflective of the library's ongoing commitment to fostering community connection.
- I was honored to accept the Rolling Thunder Chair dedication on behalf and in remembrance of all those who served and sacrifice their lives for our freedom. There is one in the Capitol building as well. The organization is over 30 years old. Thanks to the students at EHS for the music provided. I was proud to be a part of this event.
- I visited LaCorte and spoke with them about their facilities; they expressed their appreciation for the recent visit from Alex and Eleni who recognized them for Library Workers Day with ice cream. They said it was never acknowledged in the past and it meant a lot.
- It has been noticed there are differences on the website and in the newsletter. Communication methods change and we need to acclimate. Thank you to the staff involved.

8. **TREASURER'S REPORT (Action Item):**

Mr. Martin Weingast states there are 2 months remaining and the numbers are on par. Some line items project higher and some lower. We will be ok unless there is an emergency. We have a matching pension due to the City for \$400,000 and additional health re-imbursement due to the City for \$118,000 incorporated in budget for the rest of the year.

It was motioned by Mr. Martin Weingast and seconded by Mr. Patrick Mahon to accept the Treasurer's Report. AYES: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Chynice Roman, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Patrick Mahon. Abstain: N/A Absent: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Mr. Christian Veliz.

9. PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF BILLS (APRIL 2025) (Action Item):

It was motioned by Ms. Chynice Roman and seconded by Mr. Patrick Mahon to accept the Bills Report. AYES: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Chynice Roman, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Patrick Mahon. Abstain: N/A Absent: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Mr. Christian Veliz.

10. REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES:

a. Finance Committee: 2025/2026 Working Budget

Martin Weingast states the Finance Committee met before this meeting. 7/1/25-6/30/26 fiscal year budget was requested from the City by last Friday. Eleni, Alex and Roel worked on the budget. They wanted to meet their deadline and based it on one third million plus an additional \$500,000 preliminary budget. Handout-Request to the city. The budget makes us short by \$500,000 in hopes the city will provide more funding. Julia brings up establishing the Friends of the Library to bring in extra funds. No motion is needed at this time.

11. REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES:

12. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR: Consult your packet for the complete report.

The new roof contractor is doing a faster job. The Elmora roof project is on track for completion by mid-May. We will owe approximately \$94,000. The masonry delays for the roof/building at main has been delayed.

Alex and Eleni made ice-cream for employees at all branches for National Library Week and Library Workers Day to thank staff for their dedication and celebrate the essential role libraries play in our community.

There is a book mark contest at Elmora.

Eleni and Alex reviewed and completed the library's policies and procedures for submission to the Policy review committee.

We are updating monthly board report format. Reports will feature expanded statistics.

We are developing a comprehensive Disaster Preparation Manual to align with PEOSH including emergencies, fire prevention, and safety measures to be completed prior to our Skyline Environmental meeting.

The dedication of the POW/MIA Chair of Honor was a success. Band students from Frank J. Cicarell Academy 89 performed TAPS and National Anthem. The Chair of Honor is permanently displayed on the main floor as a tribute to all POWs and MIAs.

The Library is working towards establishing a Passport Acceptance Facility expanding public services and generate a new source of income. The first 15 applications will cover start-up expenses. Helen and Sonia have done the training. We would start it on an appointment and see how it goes. Picture and process fee is \$50.

Rev250 grant was submitted and rewarded us, in partnership with 313+ Ancestors Speak & Afro-America Historical & Genealogical Society of NJ, \$8,196 titled REV250 Examining the 250 years through a Jersey Lens.

CLP Grant requested for \$500,00 over 2 years to expand our NJ Literacy classes and enhance programs such as Brain-fuse, Pronunciator and staff time.

NJ Department of Labor offers \$1,000,000 in funding to enhance digital literacy programs. The application deadline is May 2, 2025.

FY25/26 Budget has been submitted to the City on 4/11/25.

We met with Groundworks of Elizabeth to discuss strengthening our partnership with the Elmora Community Garden and creating a StoryWalk.

The Citizenship Class grant has ended and led to a fee increase from \$40 to \$160. The students have been informed. We continue our support by welcoming them to have the classes here at the Library.

New lights and Ballasts were installed at LaCort Branch improving visibility throughout the building. Elmora's meeting room glass panel coat has been removed improving visibility and creating a more welcoming space. Better signage at Main branch. Fresh Start on Thursday.

13. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:

Policies procedures review and revision of the Banned Rubric.

Department Head meeting,

Prom dress drive went well - 45 dresses were given out

Maker's Day: we had 280-300 people

Children's Summer Reading with prizes.

Jeff doing GED, Embroidery club, Book club, and Movies

Chynice asks if we accept volunteers: We have a volunteer application student can complete and selected on a first come first serve basis. Certain programs offer volunteer hours such as Ask a Professional; professionals come in and talk to students for 1-hour volunteer credit. Book club get volunteer hours. Jennifer sends flyers go out to the schools. Clifford does an adult ESL class and Annalie has a Children's ESL class.

It was motioned by Ms. Lisa Torres and seconded by Ms. Lorraine Tidd to accept the Director's Report. AYES by Acclamation: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Chynice Roman, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Patrick Mahon. Abstain: N/A Absent: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Mr. Christian Veliz.

14. READING OF THE COMMUNICATIONS: N/A

15. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: N/A

16. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Rev250 grant was submitted and rewarded us, in partnership with 313+ Ancestors Speak & Afro-America Historical & Genealogical Society of NJ, \$8,196 titled REV250 Examining the 250 years through a Jersey Lens for programming expenses. Aimee is planning 1 program per month.

It was motioned by Ms. Lorraine Tidd and seconded by Ms. Lisa Torres to accept this Resolution. AYES: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Chynice Roman, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Patrick Mahon. Abstain: N/A Absent: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Mr. Christian Veliz.

- b. Invoice for Elmora roof- The remaining balance on the total contract is \$94,525. New contract is 394,000.00: \$99,500 completed to date. Retainage of 5%= \$94,525.00 which they are owed currently. Martin Weingast will be ok with paying the 94,525.00. If it is not approved the work will halt.

It was motioned by Mr. Martin Weingast and seconded by Ms. Lorraine Tidd to accept the application and certificate for payment from North East Roof Maintenance in the amount of \$94,525.00. AYES: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Chynice Roman, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Patrick Mahon. Abstain: N/A Absent: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Mr. Christian Veliz.

- 17. CLOSED MEETING:** It was motioned by Dr. Dorothy McMullen and seconded by Mr. Martin Weingast to go into closed session. AYES by Acclamation: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Chynice Roman, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Patrick Mahon. Abstain: N/A Absent: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Mr. Christian Veliz.

- 18. OPEN MEETING:** It was motioned by Ms. Lisa Torres and seconded by Ms. Lorraine Tidd to go out of closed session. AYES by Acclamation: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Chynice Roman, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Patrick Mahon. Abstain: N/A Absent: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Mr. Christian Veliz.

- 19. ADJOURNMENT:** 8:00pm. It was motioned by Mr. Patrick Mahon and seconded by Ms. Chynice Roman to adjourn at 8pm. AYES by Acclamation: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Chynice Roman, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Ms. Lisa Torres, Mr. Patrick Mahon. Abstain: N/A Absent: Ms. Earnestine Smith, Mr. Christian Veliz.