

Board of Trustees Minutes – AUGUST 6, 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 AUGUST 6, 2025. Ms. Julia Krisanits called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm. **A quorum was established by roll call.**
2. **ROLL CALL:** Present: Ms. Lisa Torres in person, and Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Earnestine Smith on zoom. Absent: Mr. Christian Veliz, Mr. Patrick Mahon, Ms. Chynice Roman, and Ms. Lorraine Tidd. Also present was Eleni Glykis, Director.
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.
5. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** N/A
6. **READING OF THE MINUTES (JUNE 2025):** It was motioned by Ms. Earnestine Smith and seconded by Ms. Lisa Torres to accept the JUNE 2025 minutes. AYES: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Earnestine Smith, and Ms. Lisa Torres. Abstain: Dr. Dorothy McMullen. Absent: Mr. Patrick Mahon, Mr. Christian Veliz, Ms. Lorraine Tidd and Ms. Chynice Roman.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

7. **REPORT OF BOARD PRESIDENT:** Over the past month I had a pleasure attending events and meetings reflecting ongoing vitality and collaborative spirit of our library system.
 - Elmora and Main Branch Instagram impressive. Board report format changes are noticed and appreciated. The Community Garden is cared for by Groundwork Elizabeth. This effort was recognized with a feature in the New York Times.
 - I attended Ms. Martha's story-time welcoming the Mayor whose presence supports our early literacy program.
 - I participated in a community paint event. This event highlights the library role in making the arts accessible and inclusive for all ages.
 - I visited Elmora where the staff prepared for programs while engaging with children, offering snacks and creating a welcoming environment for all.

8. TREASURER'S REPORT (Action Item):

Mr. Martin Weingast reviewed and discussed with Eleni. Page 5,6: Budget Comparison report shows a deficit of 211,708 to be covered by Capital Funds. Page 7, 8: Budget Comparison 7/1/25-8/5/25 based on 5.515 budget which City is giving \$5,400,000. The shortage to be covered with State Aid, Grants and other. Page 9,10: Revenue report as of June 2025 Roel needs to match budget items to actual then it will be approved. No final budget approved until September meeting. Mr. Weingast cannot vouch for the reports right now. LORRAINE arrives in-person.

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

PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF BILLS (JUNE 2025) (Action Item):

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

9. **REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES:** N/A
10. **REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES:** N/A
11. **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR:** Consult your packet for the complete report.

- The Elmora roof project is complete. Final re-imbursement needs to be submitted to the City of Elizabeth and the State for this grant. Yearly reporting has been completed.
- The work at the Main Library is complete and came in significantly under budget. Payment requests were sent to the City and annual reporting completed. The persistent leak in LHR still needs rectifying.
- The library closed over budget 2024-25 as we had to use our reserve to cover payroll and health benefits which were not properly budgeted for. Our financial forecasting will be more accurate for 2025-2026. The City approved \$5.4 million budget, \$200,000 less than requested. We are offsetting part of this with the Department of Labor Grant. In addition, to stay on track, we capped PT employees at 19 hours/ week, reduce evening hours at Elmora, eliminate underused databases and subscriptions, increase use of STELLA provided tools like Compromise, Explore sponsorships from major local employers for programs. We implemented a Cash-flow tracker. Health Benefits may increase 36.5% which will impact our budget costs. We changed our cash flow to accommodate the large March 2026 payment to the City for Retirement contribution. We are applying for the NJ State Library Digital Literacy Grant which will support the expansion of our Digital Literacy Program.
- Roel Laurel, Principal Accounting Clerk, has announced his retirement effective December 31, 2025. Sonia Montero is being trained in accounts payable processes under Roel's guidance to ensure a smooth transition. A meeting with the Personnel Committee will determine a long term staffing plan for this critical function.
- We are working with Groundwork Elizabeth to develop Food as Pharmacy this fall at Elmora providing residents with fresh produce, pantry staples and health resources. Groundwork Elizabeth maintains the Elmora Library Garden and will provide mulch and sprucing up at the Main Library.
- Make The Road and the Library work together. We will be starting Escuela de Manejo (driver's education) this October and exploring other programs (college financial aid workshop)
- REV 250 & Local history
- GED Testing- We added additional GED testing night due to high demand.
- Career Fair- AIS and Circulation staff plan an EPL Career Fair
- Library Card sign-up month inviting the Mayor and City ID to partake. City ID also functions as a Library card.
- Touch a Truck- 5th annual Touch-A-Truck event and a Fire-prevention month mini event at Elmora in October as a promotional lead-in to this event.
- Pride Resource Fair- Pride Resource Fair celebration June 28, 2025 featured live drag performances, karaoke, and resource tables bringing the LGBTQ community together.
- Summer Lunches- Summer lunches and snacks are being offered to anyone 17 or under. Special thanks to Helen for her dedication and hands-on coordination of this service.
- Paychex-We have transitioned from ADP to Paychex with our first payroll adding Time & Attendance for full deployment by 8/4/2025.
- Canva for Nonprofits - We enrolled in Canva's non-profit program gives us access to design tools saving us \$300 annually.
- Policy Review - Alex created a comparison summary of our policies being reviewed by the Policy Committee.
- STELLA leadership- At the most recent STELLA membership meeting, I was elected Vice President of STELLA's Executive Board. This allows EPL to play a stronger leadership role in shaping the future consortium.
- Civil Service & HR Training- In July Helen and I attended several CS Trainings including Easter seals, CS rules and classifications, and HR best practices. July 31 CS HR Consultants and reps visited as part as our effort to strengthen compliance and staff support.
- NJ Clean Energy Program- we received a \$50,000 incentive check through NJ Clean Energy Plan for performance program. This award recognizes energy-efficient upgrades and will support. We are also waiting on the 2nd payment from Wildan for \$135,000 which will replenish the Reserve account.
- Our transition to Gmail with full migration scheduled for end of August

- We reached out to State Pension & Benefits office to discuss the Prescription Plan.
- Door count 8,135. Circulation 9,234 items. Programs 139/ 1641 attended. New Library cards 618. Comp/Print 564 patrons.
- Reviews Departments and Stats.

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

12. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:

- Staffing & Scheduling Departments work collaboratively using shared Google docs. Continued one on one meetings.
- Program Support for Children and Teens. Participated in homeless focus group with Layla to discuss community needs.
- Assisted Eleni with Staff Development Day with guests from our Union rep and EAP.
- Attended Paychex transition / information meetings.
- Collab with Eleni / Layla revamp lockers and relocate Britanie's office.
- Assisted with the Budget
- Children's Visitor 1,907. 32 Programs/357 attendees. 973 items. 151 holds filled. 93 calls. 4 school visits/143 students.
- Top Achievements:
 - Summer Reading Kickoff party 4 tickets to Nickelodeon Studios At American Dream; turnout 120. Décor done on time. Proud of paint splotches and our large paint brush rainbow.
 - Loteria and Bingo
- Top Programs:
 - Stitch Club 18 attended, Kids finished their crochet mini octopi and had a fun celebration!!
 - Summer Reading 109 Attended. E-port had an amazing turn out.
 - Loteria 25 attended; Spanish speaking families appreciated this program and had a great time with Annalie.
- Teens Dept Served 1536. 13 programs/ 110. 1 event/15. 211 Circ items. 155 holds released. 7 teens volunteered 46 hours. Summer Reading.
- IAS: Served 1061. 22 programs 323 attended. 219 participated in Outreach event. Pride Research Fair Layla and Britanie did amazing job 100 patrons and 15 vendors attended. Rebecca Williams attended. Family Baby Shower 50 attended.
- Groundworks will mulch Elmora and Main Branch Grounds.

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

13. READING OF THE COMMUNICATIONS: Aimee requests re-imbursement MLS Degree \$1500/semester. She has a 4.0 GPA.

It was motioned by Mr. Martin Weingast and seconded by Dr. Dorothy McMullen to accept Aimee's request to reimburse as stated in the contract \$1500/semester. AYES: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Earnestine Smith, Dr. Dorothy McMahon, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, Ms. Lisa Torres. Abstain: n/a Absent: Mr. Patrick Mahon, Mr. Christian Veliz, Ms. Chynice Roman.

14. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: FOL: Mr. Martin Weingast discussed FOL at the last meeting and approved it. An attorney is establishing the corporation for the Elizabeth Public library. Start meeting some people to be on the Board. Once a Corporation is established, an application to be submitted for the 501-3C federal non-profit designation.

15. NEW BUSINESS: N/A

16. CLOSED MEETING: N/A

17. OPEN MEETING: N/A

ADJOURNMENT: 6:30pm. It was motioned by Dr. Dorothy McMullen and seconded by Ms. Lisa Torres to adjourn at 6:30pm. AYES by acclamation: Ms. Julia Krisanits-Lehman, Mr. Martin Weingast, Ms. Earnestine Smith, Dr. Dorothy McMahan, Ms. Lorraine Tidd, and Ms. Lisa Torres. Abstain: n/a Absent: Mr. Patrick Mahon, Mr. Christian Veliz, and Ms. Chynice Roman.

Minutes by Helen Speros 8/18/2025.