

MINUTES OF THE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

October 20, 2025

The Board of Trustees of the Millburn Free Public Library held their regular monthly meeting on Monday September 15th, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. Present were Ms. Sherman, who presided, Mrs. Eisner, Mrs. Binder, Mrs. Kelly, Ms. Chenofsky Singer, Mr. Cohen, Ms. Panarelli, and Mr. Banick.

Ms. Sherman opened the meeting and read the Sunshine Law Announcement.

MINUTES:

Ms. Sherman asked the Board to review the minutes.

Ms. Sherman asked for a motion to accept the minutes of September 15th, 2025, as submitted with the corrections made that were emailed to the Board before tonight's meeting. Mrs. Kelly so moved. Mrs. Eisner seconded. All were in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mrs. Eisner and Mr. Banick compared vouchers to proposed expenditures prior to the meeting.

Vouchers #7800 - #7851 and payrolls for October 2025 as directed by the Township amounting to \$674,356.88 and charged to the library's appropriation were approved for payment or ratified for payment.

Ms. Sherman asked for a motion that the Bill Lists for October be approved. Mrs. Kelly made a motion to approve the Bill Lists as submitted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Panarelli. All were in favor.

The Bill Lists were approved as presented.

The Board asked if Erin Ferguson is paid for ESL classes. She is. The Board asked how many classes the payment of \$1,095.00 covered. Is it for one year, one month, one day? Mr. Banick said that he would have to check and report back to the Board. He believes that it is for one semester of classes. Mrs. Kelly asked how the classes are structured. Some are given by volunteers. Mrs. Sherman, who is an ESL volunteer, said that she is directed to materials and has access to the English Language newspaper through Librarian Ian Adams who runs the program. Mrs. Kelly then asked what the paid teachers do differently from the volunteers. Mr. Banick stated that the classes run by

paid teachers have a more structured curriculum and lessons plans. The volunteer sessions can be more conversational in nature. Ms. Sherman said that her students do both structured lessons and conversational sessions. Mrs. Kelly asked what happens if the library cannot fill volunteer openings. Does the library hire to fulfill the demand. Mr. Banick said no that the library has a waitlist. Mrs. Binder asked if the library helps with citizenship tests as well. Mr. Banick said yes it can if needed. Mrs. Kelly asked if the classes are for Millburn residents only. They are for Millburn residents and paid Millburn library card holders.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Sherman asked if there were any Public Comments. Mrs. Kelly reported for the Friends.

The Friends thanked Mrs. Binder for arranging the outreach program at The Upton on Wednesday October 8th. The Friends got some new members and the library some new cardholders. It was a nice collaborative event.

The Fireside Book Club will meet virtually on Monday November 3rd. The book will be "The Emperor of Gladness" by Ocean Vuong. The moderator will be Millburn Librarian Sarah Pardi.

Museum Night Man Ray: An Inventive and Irreverent American in Paris, will be on Tuesday November 11th at 7 p.m. in the First Floor Gallery. Art historian Larissa Bailiff will give the presentation. The Friends hope that everyone can attend.

Stephanie Murphy from Greenwood Gardens will present an adult only program on Thursday December 11th at 2 p.m. Participants will make winter themed decorations.

The Millburn Environmental Commission and the Millburn for Climate Action Group held public service activity days in September. They prepared seed packets and brought them to the Little Free Native Seed Library to replenish the supply. The event was featured in TAPinto Millburn and Vicinity Magazine articles. This publicity brought great attention to the Millburn Library.

The Little Free Libraries have been refilled and are doing great.

Ms. Sherman thanked Mrs. Kelly for her report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Banick reported on the Second Floor Renovation. Don Fiore, architect for the project, is in attendance to give an update on the renovation and answer any questions the Board may have.

Mr. Fiore stated that he is looking at occupancy for the second floor at the end of October. However, this does not mean completion of the renovation. There are items that the contractor is still waiting for. A few examples are as follows:

- The template for the countertops in Room A
- Under the AV system – the camera
- The mechanical room divider for Room A
- Lighting for the first floor and garden
- Building Signage
- Flooring (this was contracted out separately)

Mrs. Binder asked if it is the case that the library has two contracts since the flooring was awarded under a State Contract separate from the bid process. Mr. Fiore said “yes.”

Mr. Fiore said that inspections are beginning to wrap up. Building and electrical inspections were carried out last week. Fire is still needed. The Board asked when occupancy can occur. Mr. Fiore said that fire-related doors and glass are still being delivered and need to be installed. A certificate for occupancy will not be issued until these things are completed and inspected. It is a public safety issue.

Mrs. Kelly asked what counter tops? What kind and where? A counter has been installed at the rear of Room A. The counter tops are for it. Mrs. Kelly stated that she did not recall discussing the purchase and installation of those items.

Mrs. Kelly asked about the stage in Room A. The old floor is still on the stage. Is it scheduled to be refinished? Mr. Fiore said “yes, it is.” The same flooring on the second floor will be installed on the stage.

Mrs. Kelly asked if the Board had discussed the type of flooring that would be installed in Room A. Carpet vs. vinyl tile. Mr. Banick said that it was decided on bid opening day to go with the vinyl tile. He stated that it was a maintenance driven decision.

Mrs. Kelly asked what kind of storage will be installed in the former custodian's office area. Will there be cabinets, shelving, or a combination of both. Mr. Fiore said that it will be mostly shelving with just a few cabinets. This will allow space for chair and table storage. He went on to say that the contractor is waiting for the storage items to be delivered.

Mrs. Kelly asked if there would be a refrigerator again in Room B. Mr. Banick said “yes.”

Mrs. Kelly said that when the renovation was in the planning stages the Board discussed Room B being a sensory space for patrons who need this accommodation. Is this still happening? If so, what is being done to create a sensory-friendly environment. Mr. Banick said that the room would be painted in soft colors with adjustable lighting and LVT flooring. Mrs. Kelly reminded him to also look at control of the noise levels. The sound must be muffled and the space friendly.

Mrs. Kelly asked if the chandelier grow light is still being installed for the Friends garden under the spiral staircase. Mr. Fiore said “yes” but that he did not yet have a date for installation. Mrs. Kelly asked what it looked like. It has a series of asymmetric rings in varying diameters. The rings reduce in scale and have a cascade effect that follows the stairs. The light will be in the center at the base. This will allow the grow light to be as low as it can so that it is shielded from getting damaged.

Mrs. Binder asked when can Room A be used? Mr. Fiore said that on Saturday November 1st the room will be turned over for use. He stated that everything was down to the last bit of work and final inspections. Once the inspections are completed and the library passes them the Township will issue a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy.

Mrs. Kelly asked when the soffits outside will be finished so that the rear entrance can be reopened. Mr. Fiore said the work will be completed this week.

Mr. Cohen asked on what date the meeting room space on the second floor can be open for use given the elevator issues. Mr. Banick did not give a date for the room’s operation but said that the elevator may be done before the renovation work is complete.

Mrs. Kelly asked if the timeline for Room B being available to host chess lessons is the same as everything else. Mr. Banick said “yes.”

Mr. Cohen stated that in the previous months’ minutes the end date for the renovation was always Labor Day. It is now two months later.

Mr. Cohen asked if Mr. Banick has extended the services with the contract attorney per the Board’s request. The agreement lapsed on September 16th. Mr. Banick has extended the attorney’s services.

The Board then held a discussion on holding the contractor to the completion date schedule and imposing penalties per the construction awarded contract. Some of the cons of doing this included:

- Timeline for completion of the project. It is weeks away from completion not months
- Many of the delays were caused by the library
- The library added changes along the way to the original contract
- Legal costs to the library

In closing the Board feels that pursuing penalties against the contractor would be unwise. The contractor has been very cooperative with all the changes that library administration has made. He could have said no, these issues are not my problem. If the library were to put in a claim against the contractor, the work would stop while the lawyers worked it out. It makes no sense with the current completion schedule or money wise. The Board feels it is a bad fight.

Mrs. Binder asked about the AV equipment. The Board would like to know more about it. Did Mr. Banick consult with an industry expert on the purchase of the system. Mr. Banick said "yes" he did get a professional proposal. Some of the amenities in the new system are as follows:

- Rack to house the equipment
- Wireless microphones
- Blue ray DVD player
- Retractable projector screen
- Laser hi-definition projector
- Built-in camera
- Recording capabilities
- Built-in speakers and sub woofers in the ceiling
- Integrated with lights and motorized shades
- All managed by programmed touchscreen hub

Mrs. Kelly asked if there is a special service contract for technical support. Will the vendor the library purchased the system from service the unit. Mr. Banick said "yes."

Mrs. Binder asked if the wiring would be concealed so that any audiences do not see a tangled mess. Mr. Banick said "yes."

Mrs. Kelly asked what the brand name of the system is. Mr. Banick and Mr. Fiore did not know they would get that information to the Board.

The Board thanked Mr. Fiore for answering their questions.

The Board then moved to the New Business to accommodate guest, Jackie Benjamin Lieberberg, lead of Public Art for the Millburn Township 250th Anniversary Committee and chair of The Cultural Engagement Diversity and Arts Committee (CEDA). She is here to discuss the mural for the event. The project will involve thirty to thirty-four community non-profit groups designing six to eight 6x6 tiles for inclusion in the mural. Some of the groups are:

- Various Civic Associations
- Local Houses of Wordship
- Cora Hartshorne Arboretum
- The Friends of the Millburn Public Library
- Greenwood Gardens
- Paper Mill Palyhouse

- Newcomers Group
- Senior Citizens Group
- Local Boy Scout Troops

Themes for the tiles are:

- Unity
- Community
- Freedom
- Art
- Culture
- Love
- Patriotism
- Kindness
- Nature
- History

The Committee has set out to cast a wide net on purpose. The mosaic will reflect the 250th Celebration and the Township's non-profit organizations, both old and new.

The Mall at Short Hills has very generously given a grant of \$5,000.00 to support the project. Therefore, their logo will appear at the bottom of the mural. The Township of Millburn will fund whatever else is needed to finish the project.

The finished work will be displayed on-site at a municipal property. The first being the Millburn Free Public Library. The Township will hang the finished project. Because they own the property any damage that may occur to the mural is easily addressed and fixed.

Ms. Lieberberg said that artist Michael Cooper whose sculpture "All Together Now" is in Taylor Park, will oversee the project.

The mural will also be movable. The library will have the work first and then it will move to other Township locations.

The mural measures 11x13.

The completion date is scheduled for March 2026.

Mrs. Kelly asked if the library could participate. Ms. Lieberberg said, "yes if you want too."

There will be an unveiling ceremony and Ms. Lieberberg said that she will be happy to keep the Board informed of the murals progress.

Mrs. Binder said that the Board needed to vote on the library accepting the mural as its first stop for display on the front exterior wall at the Glen Avenue entrance of the library

with the provision that the Board has the right to revisit how long the installation stays at the library.

Ms. Sherman asked for a motion to accept the mural with the above-mentioned provision. Mrs. Eisner so moved. Ms. Chenofsky Singer seconded. All were in favor.

The Board went back to The Director's Report.

Mr. Banick reported on the elevator. The jack lift system is complete. Mr. Cohen asked if the voting will still be held downstairs. Mr. Banick said "yes."

Mr. Banick reported on Finance. The library received the State Aid check in the amount of \$11,756.00. The 1/3 MIL will increase in 2026 by \$524,000.00. The library operating budget for 2026 will be 4.7 million dollars.

Mr. Banick reported on Personnel. Part-time Library Assistant Hadley Groft began work on Monday October 6th, 2025. Librarian Mary Moore is on maternity leave. Library Assistant Linda Kitchen is using leave time and will retire effective January 1st, 2026.

Mr. Banick reported on Statistics. The year 2025 is strong, all things considered.

Mr. Banick reported on BCCLS. Mr. Banick and members of the Friends will attend the Annual BCCLS Scholarship Breakfast.

Mr. Banick informed the Board that he will be out of the office on vacation from October 30th to November 10th. Returning to work on November 11th.

The Board asked who will represent Mr. Banick with decisions that need to be made regarding the renovation while he is out of the office on vacation. Mr. Banick said that architect Mr. Fiore would represent him. Mr. Cohen asked since Mr. Banick said the rooms will be ready on Saturday November 1st who will make the decision on programs moving back upstairs. Mr. Banick said that those will be staff decisions during his absence.

Mr. Banick reported that the library received a very generous donation of books from the Indian Consulate in New York City. They will be looked over and catalogued for the collection.

The Board asked if they don't circulate will they fall into the library's policy for removal. Mr. Banick said, "yes they will." The Board asked how long non circulating books remain before removal. Mr. Banick said, "one year." Ms. Panarelli remarked that the Millburn schools give two to three years before removal.

Ms. Sherman thanked Mr. Banick for his report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no Committee Reports.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution 2025-1001 Authorizing the Renewal of a Contract for Special Construction Counsel to Maraziti Falcon, LLP is before the Board for approval. Mrs. Binder asked what the cost of the contract is. The contract cost is not to exceed \$2,000.00. Ms. Sherman asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2025-1001. Mrs. Eisner so moved. Mrs. Kelly seconded. All were in favor. Ms. Sherman asked for a voice vote.

- Mrs. Binder – Yes
- Ms. Chenofsky Singer – Yes
- Mr. Cohen – Yes
- Mrs. Eisner – Yes
- Mrs. Kelly – Yes
- Ms. Panarelli – Yes
- Ms. Sherman - Yes

The Board then held a discussion on a request to reconsider library materials from a patron. The patron requested that certain materials be relocated out of the children's department. The Board stated that the Library of Congress classified the material as juvenile. They also feel that the request is too broad in nature. The Board and library are not responsible for banning certain materials because of a topic. This responsibility is with the parents. Mr. Cohen asked if children could take out young adult or adult books. Mr. Banick said, "yes we've never stopped anyone." In closing the Board concluded that the library back in 2023 declared itself as a book sanctuary. The material will stay in its current location, the children's department. Ms. Sherman asked for a motion to uphold the current Book Sanctuary policy of the Millburn Free Public Library adopted in 2023. Ms. Chenofsky Singer so moved. Mrs. Kelly seconded. All were in favor.

The Board instructed Mr. Banick to inform the patron of their decision.

Ms. Chenofsky Singer left the meeting, it is now 9:20 p.m.

The Board was asked to consider issuing library cards to non-resident volunteers of the Millburn Library. Ms. Sherman recused herself from the discussion. She personally knows the individual. The volunteer used to live in town and currently resides in Montclair. Although Montclair is in the BCCLS system the individual likes some of the museum pass offerings at Millburn. The patron has approached the Director, Mr. Banick,

twice with the request and is upset with his decision. Mr. Banick felt he would ask the Trustees. The Board feels that the Millburn Library is funded by Millburn taxpayers and Millburn residents should enjoy what they are funding. The Museum Passes are funded very generously by the Friends of The Millburn Library. The Board decided to reaffirm the current policy as it stands. Mrs. Binder asked for a motion to reaffirm the current library card policy as it stands. Mrs. Binder so moved. Mr. Choen seconded. All were in favor. Ms. Sherman, who recused herself, recorded abstained, Ms. Chenofsky Singer recorded absent.

There was no Executive Session.

Ms. Sherman asked if there was any further business before the Board before adjournment.

Seeing none, Ms. Sherman requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Eisner "so moved." Mrs. Binder seconded. All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Giambattista