

EAST ORANGE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REGULAR MEETING  
MAIN LIBRARY

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the East Orange Public Library Board of Trustees held at the Main Library, 21 South Arlington Avenue, East Orange, New Jersey on May 8, 2025 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Arts and Crafts Activities Room.

PRESENT: Hon. Jimmy Small  
Hon. Jacquelyn Davis  
Hon. Mumtaz Bari-Brown  
Gloria Holt  
Jada Braime-Butler  
Councilman Sammed Monk

ABSENT: Lynella George  
Duwan Bogert  
Laudaine Simeon (Excused)

STAFF: JP Porcaro  
Pamela V. Holmes  
Nancy Barrantes-Lei

The President, Hon. Jimmy Small, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**1. Sunshine Law**

The President read the Statement re: Public Law 1975, Chapter 231, known as the Sunshine Law at the Opening of the meeting.

**2. Minutes: April 10, 2025**

Motioned by Gloria Holt to accept the Minutes for April 10, 2025 as presented.  
Seconded by Hon. Mumtaz Bari-Brown. Approved by the Board.

## **Minutes of March 13, 2025 (Amendment)**

The Minutes (Under Director's Report) stated that there was an issue when the Mayor decided to close municipal offices the day after Memorial Day. It should have read the day after July 4. Motioned by Gloria Holt to accept the amendment. Seconded by Hon. Mumtaz Bari-Brown. Approved by the Board.

### **3. Financial Report**

Nancy Barrantes-Lei gave the report.

Total Expenses Paid thru April 2025	\$1,019,758
Percentage Spent thru April 2025	27.76%
Total Resources Received thru April 2025	\$1,028,713
Percentage Received thru April 2025	28.00%
(Monies Received less Expenses Paid)	\$ 8,955

- **Approved Payments: April 2025**

Motioned by Gloria Holt to approve the Approved Payments for April 2025. Seconded by Hon. Jacquelyn Davis. Approved by the Board.

- **Proposed Payments: May 2025**

Motioned by Hon. Jacquelyn Davis to approve the Proposed Payments for May 2025. Seconded by Gloria Holt. Approved by the Board.

### **4. Public Participation**

There was no Public Participation

### **5. Director's Report**

The Director gave the report. Full report attached to Minutes.

The Director made a correction to his report. The Friends of the Library will be hosting an Oldies but Goodies Dance fundraiser at the Library on June 6 (not June 15).

## **6. Trustee Concerns/Comments**

At the April 28<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting, the Mayor announced that all departments budgets would be cut. Earlier, the Library submitted a proposed budget for \$4,419,000. However, the budget number presented for the Library was 4,160,330. The Board Members raised concerns regarding the budget cut. There will be consequences. The Library will not be able to fill vacancies and will need to reduce some library services (including hours of operation). Hon. Jacquelyn Davis suggested that the Director breakdown the budget in pieces when he goes before Council Members to justify the increases. The budget hearing for the Library is scheduled for May 14<sup>th</sup>. The Director will continue to advocate for the Library. Councilman Monk indicated that budgets can be modified.

## **7. Committee Reports**

- Hon. Jimmy Small gave the Technology Report

The Library received a USAC Funding Commitment Decision Letter for 2025-2026 e-rate funding. The Library received a 90% discount rate for Internet access and 85% discount rate for a network switch with five-year licensing and five APC/UPS.

The Verizon monthly telecommunication bill has been in compliance with the rate signed in the contract since February 2025. The credit of overcharge has been indicated on the Library's balance account.

The Library renew its online databases of Ancestry Library, Job & Career/Computer Skills and World Book Online.

The Library ordered and made an Early Learning Station available for toddlers. It came with updated learning software.

Ms. Tong worked with Dell to ensure the renewal of the primary support services for one of the servers went through.

The Library has started the Windows 11 upgrade project. About 40 existing PCs are not eligible for Windows 11 upgrade. Ms. Tong worked with the Dell Technologies Account Executive and got a discounted price for 23 computers and 6 monitors.

E-circulation continues to be high. Patrons checked out 631 e-books from eLibraryNJ and borrowed 402 items from Hoopla and Kanopy.

Approximately 900 patrons used the computers at the Library. In addition, many patrons enjoyed the free Wi-Fi and quiet study space at the Library.

**No other Committees reporting at this time.**

## **8. Old Business**

There was no Old Business to discuss.

## **9. New Business**

There was no New Business to discuss.

Hon. Mumtaz Bari-Brown motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Gloria Holt. The public portion of the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

## **10. Executive Session**

There were no personnel issues to address. The Board did not go into Executive Session.

## **EOPL Director's Report for May 2025's Meeting:**

I attended the April 14th City Council meeting on Zoom and the April 28th City Council meeting in person. The Mayor presented the 2025 budget at the April 28th meeting. The budget number presented for EOPL was \$4,160,330, while the number I proposed was \$4,419,000. Our "budget sheet" (the numbers East Orange finance department works off of) for 2022, 2023, and 2024 was \$4,289,000, which was significantly lower than the 2021 number of \$4,396,920. I don't know what happened in East Orange that the number significantly dropped from 2021 to 2022, but the number is dropping this year for every department. I will continue to advocate for my original number - without it, we will not be able to make any new hires, and *might* have to make some cuts to library services. Next in the process of adopting the budgets are: first, a mock hearing with the Mayor's office and the Business Administrator's office on Wednesday May 7th, and then the budget hearings with City Council which are scheduled for the next three Wednesdays in May. I am approaching this with tact and without an adversarial approach. EOPL's hearing date and time is not scheduled yet.

Ms. Holmes and I attended the Mayor's department head meeting about the budget / budget hearings on May 5th. At this meeting, it was repeated that all departments are being cut. They are keeping the municipal tax rate flat (they only have control over the municipal tax number, not the county or school district number, so I assume taxes will still go up because of those *other* numbers). If we do sustain a cut to keep the municipal tax rate flat, I completely understand that approach.

On April 23rd I attended the NJ State Library's "Library Directors Training Series - Advocacy and You: Perfect Together" webinar. It didn't present too much information valuable to our municipality, but it is good for me to continue to be part of statewide library events and trainings.

I attended the May 1st CWA contract negotiations. The municipal Law Department is taking the lead in the negotiations but keeping EOPL (and our counsel) as well as the Water Commission (and their counsel, who happens to be from the same law firm as ours, Weiner Law Group) directly involved in negotiations. I attended without our counsel, as it was just a very preliminary meeting.

EOPL continues to be very busy with programs. Tonight, our board meeting was moved to the smaller room because many community groups need space for their events, programs, and meetings. I met with Mark Cheetam from the Planning Department on April 30th regarding our progress opening the EOPL Small Business Center, which is how his event tonight in the CIT lab came about - they are hosting a Small Business Week NJEDA "Show Me The Resources" Webinar. Librarian Nancy Tinney has been managing our event planning calendar with great success, and she has some good events planned coming up, including events for MOET, the Girl Scouts, Assemblywoman Morales, and Congresswoman Iclver. Librarian Rebcca Magnan will

be organizing our Community Garden again this year with community partners from 4H and NJ Master Gardeners, who secured and are managing some small grants for the garden which will allow for the planting of raspberry bushes and apple trees. While these may not be permanent because the park will undergo renovation at some point, the park renovation has been talked about since long before I started, so I didn't want that to stifle their progress on the garden - I let them know this may be a short-term garden. She will also be hosting an Eagle Scout project "Seed Library" inside the building, which has been popular in public libraries for at least the last 15 years.

Librarian Jenny Tong has been moving forward on upgrading much of our old server infrastructure as well as updating many of the public computers which do not have the specifications to run Windows 11. Windows 10 is losing support very soon and these upgrades have been very tedious and time-consuming for her. I am very happy with the progress on these upgrades; we'll continue to be on the very front of providing good technology to our EOPL patrons.

I have requested a meeting with EOPL, the Health and Human Services department (who have a full time Homeless Prevention Social Worker), and the Mayor's Office (since they sometimes field complaints about unhoused patrons at EOPL). I would like to have a plan on the books for dealing with this issue that works for *all* of these departments. This is the top complaint I get from patrons about our library.

Regarding our HVAC installation, Public Works said "Please note that the original lead time for the chiller was 50 weeks, with approximately 25 weeks remaining as of today. In the interim, two (2) 100-ton rental units will be utilized to provide cooling throughout the upcoming season. The new chiller is scheduled for delivery and installation by the end of 2025; however, the system will not be commissioned until the spring of 2026 to ensure full functionality and proper operation." The installation for the rental units "is scheduled for June, though the exact date is still pending as we are awaiting approval from our QPA."

The Friends of the Library will be holding another Oldies but Goodies Dance fundraiser at the library on the evening of June 15th.

*Submitted for the May 8th, 2025 meeting.*

*JP Porcaro, Director*