



BERGENFIELD LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Conducted virtually via Zoom

Minutes
November 13, 2025

Present

Thomas Neats, President
Laurie Phipps, Vice President
Sorah Shaffren, Recording Secretary
Jamie Orlando, Treasurer
Fanny Cruz-Betesh (joined 8:25 pm)
Marcela Deauna
Natalie Rivas
Christopher Langschultz, Alternate for Superintendent of Schools
Allison Ballo, Director
Jennifer Murray, Administrative Assistant

President Neats called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm.

Notification of Public Meeting

President Neats read the report on public notification of this meeting.

Minutes

Motion by Mr. Langschultz to accept the October 9, 2025 meeting minutes.
Mr. Orlando seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Deauna – Yes
Mr. Neats – Yes
Mr. Orlando - Yes
Ms. Phipps – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Rivas – Yes
Ms. Shaffren – Absent at time of vote
Mr. Langschultz - Yes

The motion carried.

Bills

Motion by Ms. Deauna to accept the November 13, 2025 bill list.
Ms. Rivas seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Deauna – Yes
Mr. Neats – Yes



Mr. Orlando - Yes
Ms. Phipps – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Rivas – Yes
Ms. Shaffren – Absent at time of vote
Mr. Langschultz - Yes

The motion carried.

Public Portion

No public comments.

Correspondence

Requests were received from Girl Scout Troops #98304 and #99230 to use the facilities for monthly meetings during the 2025/2026 school year.

Motion by Ms. Deauna to approve the requests of Troops #98304 and #99230.
Ms. Rivas seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Deauna – Yes
Mr. Neats – Yes
Mr. Orlando - Yes
Ms. Phipps – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Rivas – Yes
Ms. Shaffren – Yes
Mr. Langschultz – Yes

The motion carried.

Mr. Ray Gehring submitted a proposal to the Board recommending the Library host a Drag Queen Story Time for 3-8 year olds. Discussion followed.

Motion by Ms. Phipps to move to closed session.
Mr. Langschultz seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Deauna – Yes
Mr. Neats – Yes
Mr. Orlando - Yes
Ms. Phipps – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Rivas – Yes
Ms. Shaffren – Yes
Mr. Langschultz – Yes

The motion carried.

The Board went to closed session at 7:56 pm.



The Board returned to open session at 8:10 pm

The Board thanked Mr. Gehring for his time spent compiling his proposal, but declined to move ahead with a Drag Queen Story Time program.

President's Report

President Neats thanked the staff working at the Borough's Trunk or Treat event on Halloween which was well received and attended. President Neats also shared he has enjoyed attending a few baby story times with his granddaughter and that he observed the new pods installed on the main floor. Lastly, he reminded the Board the Library will be in attendance at Holiday at the Park in December.

Committee Reports

BCCLS and Friends

Ms. Ballo shared that Mr. Langschultz will participate as a panelist on a BCCLS virtual program in December.

Ms. Ballo advised the Friends have agreed to pay \$10,000 of the \$12,000 fee to use Library Crossroads Consulting for the strategic plan as they see the value and need to outsource such an endeavor.

Building & Grounds

No report.

Finance Committee

The financial summary was distributed and discussed.

Personnel

Ms. Ballo emailed the Board the revised copy of the Personnel Manual. She advised the revisions had been reviewed and approved by both our attorney and the Union. The Board will review the changes and discuss next month.

Policy

Ms. Ballo was advised by the State Library that we are required to have an Inventory Policy as part of the CPF grant terms. A draft was shared with the Board for approval.

Motion by Ms. Deauna to approve the Inventory Policy for the Bergenfield Public Library.

Ms. Rivas seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes

Ms. Deauna – Yes

Mr. Neats – Yes

Mr. Orlando - Yes

Ms. Phipps – Yes

Ms. Rivas – Yes

Ms. Shaffren – Yes

Mr. Langschultz - Yes

The motion carried.



Director's Report

The Director's report was circulated by mail earlier this week. Ms. Ballo advised the Board that Baker & Taylor was going out of business so the library is transitioning to alternate vendors. Ms. Ballo reported that there are two days the Library would like to have a delayed opening due to hosting multiple kindergarten class visits at one time. The Board was in agreement the Library should open at 11 am on those dates. Ms. Ballo discussed the approved Holiday list, noting it was brought to her attention that the July 4th holiday was on a Saturday. The Board agreed the holiday should therefore be observed on Friday, July 3rd. Ms. Ballo requested a half day closure on Thursday, December 18th for staff development. Ms. Ballo shared that the staff would like to host an after-hours family karaoke program in February 2026. The Board was in agreement with these schedule modifications as well.

Trustee Education

President Neats discussed the BCCLS panel that Mr. Langschultz will be participating in.

Old Business

The Board of Trustee meetings for 2026 were revisited and discussed.

Motion by Ms. Deauna to approve the scheduled Board of Trustee Meetings for 2026.
Mr. Orlando seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes
Ms. Deauna – Yes
Mr. Neats – Yes
Mr. Orlando - Yes
Ms. Phipps – Yes
Ms. Rivas – Yes
Ms. Shaffren – Yes
Mr. Langschultz – Yes

The motion carried.

President Neats discussed using Library Crossroads Consulting to assist with the Strategic Plan. The company lowered the price quote and the Friends of Library agreed to assist with the cost, resulting in the Library's cost being \$2,000.

Motion by Ms. Rivas to approve working with Library Crossroads Consulting to create the next Strategic Plan.

Ms. Cruz-Betesh seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes
Ms. Deauna – Yes
Mr. Neats – Yes
Mr. Orlando - Yes
Ms. Phipps – Yes
Ms. Rivas – Yes
Ms. Shaffren – Yes
Mr. Langschultz – Yes



The motion carried.

New Business

Parameters for the 2025 Lucille Tandler Community Service Award were reviewed and discussed.

Ms. Ballo discussed the tentative 2026 budget and priorities for the upcoming year with the Board. Discussion followed.

Motion by Ms. Phipps recommending Ms. Ballo submit the proposed 2026 Operating Budget to the Borough.

Ms. Deauna seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Yes

Ms. Deauna – Yes

Mr. Neats – Yes

Mr. Orlando - Yes

Ms. Phipps – Yes

Ms. Rivas – Yes

Ms. Shaffren – Yes

Mr. Langschultz – Yes

The motion carried.

Motion by Ms. Phipps to move to closed session to discuss personnel matters.

Ms. Cruz-Betesh seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Absent at time of vote

Ms. Deauna – Yes

Mr. Neats – Yes

Mr. Orlando - Yes

Ms. Phipps – Absent at time of vote

Ms. Rivas – Yes

Ms. Shaffren – Yes

Mr. Langschultz – Yes

The motion carried.

The Board went to closed session at 8:55 pm.

The Board returned to open session at 9:23 pm

Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Cruz-Betesh to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Rivas seconded the motion.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:



Ms. Cruz-Betesh – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Deauna – Yes
Mr. Neats – Yes
Mr. Orlando - Yes
Ms. Phipps – Absent at time of vote
Ms. Rivas – Yes
Ms. Shaffren – Yes
Mr. Langschultz – Yes

The motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sorah Shaffren

Jennifer Murray, Recorder for
Sorah Shaffren, Recording Secretary