



BERGENFIELD LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

**Minutes
May 14, 2026**

Present

Thomas Neats, President
Laurie Phipps, Vice President
Jamie Orlando, Treasurer
Sorah Shaffren, Recording Secretary
Marcela Deauna
Natalie Rivas
Allison Ballo, Director
Jennifer Murray, Administrative Assistant

President Neats called the meeting to order at 7:38 pm.

Notification of Public Meeting

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

Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Deauna, seconded by Ms. Shaffren, to accept the April 16, 2026 meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.

Bills

A motion was made by Mr. Orlando, seconded by Ms. Rivas, to approve the May 14, 2026 amended bill list. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Portion

No report

Correspondence

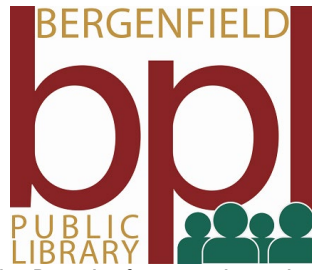
No report

President's Report

President Neats shared he was at a meeting at Borough Hall and the Library, particularly the Director, Allison, were commended for the great work they do for the community. President Neats reported he has attended several toddler story hours over the past few weeks run by different staff members of the Children's Department, as well as an entertaining dance class run by an outside performer. President Neats shared he has attended the strategic planning committee meetings, He also commented on the new meeting room pods and that they always seem to be in use. President Neats shared he had attended the memorial for former Mayor Robert Rivas and the Board shared their condolences with his daughter, Trustee Natalie Rivas.

Committee Reports

BCCLS and Friends



Ms. Ballo previously shared an email with the Board informing them that BCCLS is starting Regional Listening Meetings for Trustees. These meetings count towards state mandated continuing education requirements.

The Friends will be donating approximately \$6,000 towards programs, Summer Reading events and purchasing a monitor with a soundbar for the Children's activity room. President Neats asked how their jewelry sale went. Ms. Ballo shared they raised around \$1,300 and plan to continue with this fundraiser.

Building & Grounds

No report.

Finance Committee

The financial summary was distributed and discussed.

Personnel

No report

Policy

Ms. Ballo shared that in 2023 the Board passed a revision of our Collection Development policy and in 2024 the Board passed a resolution regarding book banning. In 2024 the State of NJ passed The Freedom to Read Act which prevents arbitrary book banning and protects free access to age-appropriate materials in public and school libraries. The state is requiring public libraries to have stronger worded policies by the end of 2026, updated with the required language from The Freedom to Read Act. Drafts of the revised policy will be presented to the Board later this year.

Director's Report

Ms. Ballo shared the results of the Staff Survey from Library Crossroads Consulting. A draft of the final strategic plan will be presented to the Board at the June meeting. Discussion followed.

Trustee Education

President Neats clarified the Trustee credits needed are based on the calendar year, not July to June.

Old Business

No report

New Business

Ms. Ballo presented the 2025 Audit report from Garbarini & Co. P.C. Discussion followed.

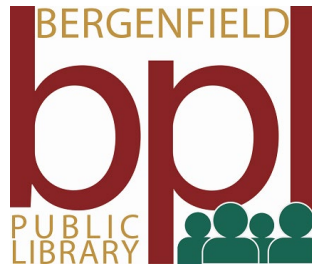
A motion was made by Ms. Phipps, seconded by Ms. Deauna, to approve the 2025 Audit of the Bergenfield Public Library by Garbarini & Co. P.C. All in favor. Motion carried.

President Neats presented the resolution to switch banks. Discussion followed.

A motion was made by Ms. Shaffren, seconded by Mr. Orlando, to approve Resolution 2026-09 Resolution Authorizing Depository for Library Funds. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion to go into closed session made by Ms. Phipps, seconded by Ms. Rivas, to discuss matters related to potential litigation and personnel matters. All in favor. Motion carried.

The Board went into closed session at 8:18 pm.



The Board returned from closed session at 9:27 pm.

At the Director's recommendation, the Board tabled the discussion of personnel matters to the June 11, 2026 meeting.

President Neats discussed upcoming events including the Memorial Day Parade, Family Fun Day and Flag Day.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Ms. Phipps, seconded by Ms. Shaffren, to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sorah Shaffren

Jennifer Murray, Recorder for
Sorah Shaffren, Recording Secretary