

Palisades Park Public Library Board of Trustees  
Minutes of Regular Meeting on October 10, 2024

At the Library Meeting Room

Flag Salute: 7:07 PM

Attendance:

Name	Present		Absent
Joseph Ferguson (President)	X	In-person	
Anne Ahne (Treasurer)	X	In-person	
Alice Albanese			X
Fran Beck	X	Virtual	
Richard Giacobone	X	Virtual	
Irene Grala	X	In-person	
Helen Jeon	X	In-person	
Superintendent Joseph Cirillo			X
Councilwoman Youbong Won-Yoon (Christine)	X	In-person	
Stephanie Elstro (Library Director)	X	In-person	

Quorum was established

This meeting is a regular meeting.

Joe Ferguson read the meeting notice by the Open Public Meeting Act

The director emailed the Star Ledger and the Records to post the meeting notice.

Public: about 15 in attendance

**Treasurer's Report:** The bank accounts for the Public Library:

- New Millennium Bank: the current balance as of September 30 is \$1,099,206.65, including \$3,699.23 (4.05%)
- PNC Bank: the current balance as of September 30 is \$64,597.76 (beginning balance - \$64,357.54,+ \$764.66 (deposit) and -\$524.44 (withdrawal))

- Santander Bank: CD will be mature by December 31, 2024.

**President’s Report – No report**

**Resolution 2024-10-1: Approval of the September 2024 meeting minutes**

The motion passed with the following roll calls.

<b>Motion made by</b>	Anne Ahne
<b>Seconded by</b>	Christine Won-Yoon
<b>Yes</b>	Anne, Fran, Richard, Helen, Christine
<b>No</b>	Joe, Irene

**Director’s Report:**

- The cost of implementing Facility Sight as a beta project will be covered by the BCCLS Innovation fund partially, which will save us ~\$1,500.
- We offer an evening storytime, Good Night Friends.
- A volunteer to teach Spanish was hired.
- The children’s section renovation will be finalized by the end of December.
- The follow-up action (meeting between the director and Mr. Park) from the September meeting to resolve Ki Chul Park’s complaint was incomplete.

**Resolution 2024-10-2: Approval of the September bill list.**

The motion passed with the following roll calls.

<b>Motion made by</b>	Irene Grala
<b>Seconded by</b>	Helen Jeon
<b>Yes</b>	Joe, Anne, Fran, Richard, Irene, Helen, Christine
<b>No</b>	

**Donations for the late Carol Ferguson**

Anne wanted to discuss how the donations of \$1,120.0 be used in a closed session. The money is currently in the PNC bank account.

## 2025 Holiday Closures

The new Union and Librarian contracts for 2025 removed Lincoln's Birthday and Columbus Day as fixed holidays. Full-time staff now have options for floating holidays or receiving time and a half to work on those days.

### **Resolution 2024-10-3: Approval of adding Lincoln's Birthday and Columbus Day to the 2025 holiday closures**

The motion passed with the following roll calls.

<b>Motion made by</b>	Anne Ahne
<b>Seconded by</b>	Christine Won-Yoon
<b>Yes</b>	Joe, Irene, Anne, Fran, Richard, Helen, Christine
<b>No</b>	

### **Resolution 2024-10-4: Approval of changing the 2025 Board Meeting dates to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM**

The motion passed with the following roll calls.

<b>Motion made by</b>	Anne Ahne
<b>Seconded by</b>	Helen Jeon
<b>Yes</b>	Irene, Anne, Fran, Richard, Helen, Christine
<b>Abstain</b>	Joe
<b>No</b>	

## Library lawyer

The current lawyer will be retired by the end of December. Starting from January 2025, the Board needs a lawyer.

### **Resolution 2024-10-5: Approval of advertising a position of the legal counsel at the Library website as well as BCCLS website**

The motion passed with the following roll calls.

<b>Motion made by</b>	Christine Won-Yoon
<b>Seconded by</b>	Anne Ahne
<b>Yes</b>	Joe, Irene, Anne, Fran, Richard, Helen, Christine
<b>No</b>	

**Resolution 2024-10-6: Approval of contract renewal with Reiner HVAC maintenance for \$1,752.0**

The motion passed with the following roll calls.

<b>Motion made by</b>	Anne Ahne
<b>Seconded by</b>	Irene Grala
<b>Yes</b>	Joe, Irene, Anne, Fran, Richard, Helen, Christine
<b>No</b>	

**Resolution 2024-10-7: Approval of contract renewal with Digital Strategy Associates to host and maintain the website for \$1,675.0**

The motion passed with the following roll calls.

<b>Motion made by</b>	Joe Ferguson
<b>Seconded by</b>	Richard Giacobone
<b>Yes</b>	Joe, Irene, Anne, Fran, Richard, Helen, Christine
<b>No</b>	

**Adult Book Club trip to MET in New York City**

**Resolution 2024-10-8: Approval of the Book Club members to sign to release the Public Library from all liabilities for the trip**

The motion passed with the following roll calls.

<b>Motion made by</b>	Irene Grala
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<b>Seconded by</b>	Joe Ferguson
<b>Yes</b>	Joe, Irene, Anne, Fran, Richard, Helen, Christine
<b>No</b>	

**New Business**

**Annual performance evaluation of Director and Library staff**

The current evaluation process was discussed. The president stated that he had evaluated himself as the president for the last 25 years and he would continue for this year. Christine mentioned that the annual performance evaluation of the director is the Board’s responsibility according to the Bylaws (section 1.11). Helen stated that she would find out the evaluation process of the BOE staff.

**<follow-up action>** Helen will report the current BOE evaluation process.

**President made a motion to open a public participation session at 8:07 PM. All in favor.**

**Public Participation**

(A) Andrew Meehan at 185 Prospect Ave. #17C, Hackensack, NJ

Mr. Meehan would like to share some follow-up actions he would do regarding the employee’s complaint made at the September 2024 meeting. Note that he was working on the employee’s case. The Board’s President stated that the Board could not comment on the employee’s concerns at this meeting because no RICE notice was given to the employee before this meeting.

Mr. Meehan agreed and informed the Board of the following actions:

- (1) Mr. Meehan and his client decided to file an unfair practice of discrimination on promotion with the NJ Public Employment Relations Commission.
- (2) They also considered filing a wage dispute option because his client never received any documentation on the overpayment of her wage. He claimed it would result in an audit of all Library employees’ wages.
- (3) Mr Meehan also stated that the Board acts as one body according to the Public Library Regulation (2014). The President of the Library Board could not evaluate the director as one person.
- (4) Mr. Meehan stated that he would also file a complaint to the State Ethics Board.

(B) Ki Chul Park at 272 Glen Ave., Palisades Park, NJ

Mr. Casey Kim interpreted Mr. Park's statements at the meeting.

Mr. Park stated that his daughter could not attend because she was afraid to face the Library staff. Mr. Park submitted SNS text messages as evidence that his daughter and her friends were kicked out of the Library. However, the copy of the SNS texting among them had no date on it. Mr. Park did not come to the Library to discuss the case with the director. The Board asked Mr. Park to submit a written statement of his daughter on the incident. The Board pointed out that it would be crucial that the father meet and communicate with the director. Mr. Park mentioned that he could not speak English well. The Board stated that he could come with his interpreter, or the director could arrange an interpreter (the Library has staff speaking English and Korean).

(C) In Sook Kang, 333 Grand Ave, Palisades Park, NJ

Mrs. Kang stated that her daughter (11 years old then) was also kicked out of the Library building 2 years ago. She complained to the director that the library staff could have allowed her to stay inside the building to be safer. She claimed the director had told her that the Library was not safe either. The current director was the director two years ago when Mrs. Kang complained, although she was not the director when the incident occurred. Mrs. Kang stated that the Library staff did not seem to care for children's safety. The director mentioned that an apology was made, and the process was modified to keep children inside the Library.

(D) Donghi (Tony) Kim at Bradley Dr., Edison, NJ

Mr. Kim was surprised that similar incidents occurred repeatedly. Mr. Kim stated that all Korean books were rearranged, and it was hard to locate them, inconveniencing patrons. The Library needed a system to find Korean books more easily.

(E) Kimberlee Benjamin (Library staff)

Ms. Benjamin sympathized with how Mr. Donghi Kim felt and appreciated his feedback. Putting Korean collections in a corner was not ideal. The Library did not intend to hide Korean books and would try fixing it in 2025.

(F) Casey Kim

Mr. Kim stated that the six recommendations for improvement were proposed at the September meeting. He also pointed out that the following results would occur unless the proposals were accepted:

- 80% of the patrons were dissatisfied with the Library operation
- Inefficiency of the Library management would continue
- Legal litigations

He proposed that the Library, taking the recommendations, would resolve the issue peacefully.

**The public session ended, and the Board meeting resumed.**

**<follow-up action>**

Joe stated that an allegation had been made, and the personnel committee would discuss investigating the employee's complaint. Joe, Anne, Irene, and Stephanie will meet to determine what the Board wants to handle the investigation. Christine pointed out that Stephanie should not be a part of the personnel committee because Stephanie is not a Board member. Helen and Christine suggested hiring a lawyer to investigate. Joe stated that the personnel committee should meet first. The RICE notice will be given to the employee(s) for the next meeting.

**Joe made a motion to enter into a closed session. Richard seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

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