

A. Call to Order:

The September meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library of Monroe Township was called to order by Joan Betterly President at 7:00 p.m. The Board saluted the flag. Present: Joan Betterly, Joyce Samoyan, Jeanne Kirsch, John Valentine, John Pohler, James DeHart, Allison Munch, Suzanne King, Ron Garbowski, Janet Mead, Katrina Hauserman.

B. Ms. Betterly confirmed that tonight's meeting was being held in compliance with Open to the Public Meetings Act.

Public Portion:

Dorothy Sliben of 1165 South Beechum, Williamstown. Ms. Sliben has concerns about the rumors the county may take over the library.

Joy Agheampong of 1674 Bracken Drive, Williamstown. Ms. Agheampong expresses her feelings on the importance of the Township Library.

In light of the comments from the public, Mr. DeHart states there has never been a conversation of closing the Monroe Township Free Public Library. The rumors are false and fabricated. There are plans to put a pole barn for police storage in the back-corner lot.

Astrid DiBartolomeo of Williamstown. Mr. DiBartolomeo heard the rumors via Facebook and understand they are false.

Melissa Sungmaker is a volunteer at the Library. She has concerns for the community events and conference spaces if they go county. She expresses concerns for the staff and their safety.

Rebecca Riether of 3 Lacovara Lane, Williamstown. Ms. Riether has concerns with a possible merge with the county, the hiring freeze, shared services between the township and the library, meeting location/ meeting minutes, and safety for the library staff. Mr. DeHart addresses the meeting location and accessibility. Ms. Hauserman states as of March 1, 2026 they will post board meeting online every month and on bulletin boards. Mr. Dehart says this is a New Jersey law that was just changed.

Kimberly Cooper of 601 North Black Horse Pike, Williamstown. She and her family are big advocates for libraries across the states. Her family loves the library and they go there all the time

Motion passed to close the public portion. Voice Votes; All Ayes. Nays- Zero.

September 17th Library Board Meeting Summary (Mr. DeHart's Report)

Mayor's Proxy

The mayor has been criticized for not attending the library board meetings. I looked at the last three mayors, (I didn't go back further) every mayor appointed a proxy to represent them on the Library Board. NJ Law 40:54-9 authorized the mayor and superintendent to appoint an alternate to act and vote in his/her place.

**FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF MONROE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING**

**September 17, 2025
7:00 p.m.**

(Mr. DeHart's report continued)

Police Department / Library Closure Rumors

No discussions about closing the library. No discussion to move police station to library. No discussion to reallocate library budget to police. County library branch option was just being researched due to the concerns.

Civil Service and HR Issues

Staff allegedly promoted without postings. Some to competitive positions without posting, or notifying civil service which would have generated an external competitive process dictated by civil service. Staff promoted internally without updating civil service for over 3 years. Job postings were requested but never provided. CAMPS system does not match union paperwork provided for contract negotiations hire dates to municipality Access to CAMPS system granted to non-employees. The library was hiring staff without conducting background checks. Social media listed that they have volunteers in there every day? Were background checks done on these volunteers? Our HR has done backgrounds when notified but have no request for backgrounds on volunteers.

Shared Services

Trainings attended recommending shared services with municipality. Payroll services offered by township but resisted by staff. Life insurance canceled due to deduction issues. HR services offered but declined. Examples from Washington Twp. and Deptford presented.

Purchasing & Audit

2024 audit suggests library has a QPA, which it does not. Purchases made outside NJ Public Contract Laws. No RFP/RFQ advertised despite exceeding bid thresholds. Monthly bills show questionable expenses over the bid threshold (IT, cleaning services). Reference to NJ State Library Section 6 on purchasing.

State Budget Document

Disconnect in township financial handling for library bills. State Library Aid application requires itemized fund list. Claimed \$70,000 for maintenance, actual was less than \$50,000.

Staffing Monroe

Library has 6 librarians vs. 3 required. 15 employees = ~13 FTEs vs. 10 required. Salary is \$114,000 more than Deptford even though our budget is only \$56,000 more. Washington Twp. budget is \$1M more than Monroe's but only 5 FT librarians. Social Media post about losing state aid for lack of staff? I showed that we are not at risk for those numbers If we were, why wasn't the board informed by the director explaining staffing presenting risks to our state aid.

Library Law

Library must be open 2500 hours/year with weekend hours. Closed every weekend in July and August, plus Saturdays on Memorial and Labor Day weekends, plus 15 holidays, taking them below the required hours.

Budget

2024: \$1,324,046.78 2025: \$1,443,396.40 (over a 9% increase)

**FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF MONROE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING**

**September 17, 2025
7:00 p.m.**

(Mr. DeHart's report continued)

Transparency

Transparency concerns raised on social media. Library staff not demonstrating transparency in operations by resisting townships assistance even though encouraged by NJ State Library trainings. A letter was sent by an employee pleading to not allow the township to handle payroll for them, even though it was offered at a 1-time cost of purchasing a timeclock, (\$2,000 compared to the two agreements I had as examples, one from 2018 was over \$4600 per year and the other was \$20,000 annually in 2021)

Salary Negotiations & Union Representation

On Social Media, it was publicized that the staff have not joined a union. CWA AFL-CIO recognized as exclusive representative as of Feb 24, 2025 when the filed with PERC. Board cannot negotiate salaries for union-covered employees except through CWA.

New Business

SSA for payroll service with township starting 2026 (requires \$2,000 timeclock). SSA for HR service to address hiring, promotions, background checks and civil service record issues. Committee to research options for an SSA with Gloucester County Library for 2025-2026 oversight and for the data regarding joining the county library system as a Monroe Branch.

Motion to re-open the public portion by Mr. DeHart, second by Mr. Garbowski. Voice votes; All Ayes. Nays- Zero.

Ms. Sliben works at a different library and wants to know if the previous director did not understand the New Jersey Laws.

Ms. Ageampong asks about the police putting property on the library lot. Mr. DeHart says this will be a place for police to store their vehicles.

Mr. DiBartolomeo asks about the police and their patrolling. The Board discusses how much police activity is currently taking place. Ms. Riether questions the minutes about the time clock. Mr. Pohler states there was a vote and it was denied.

Daniel Miller of 776 Kristin Lane, Williamstown. Mr. Miller is curious why the police need to store their equipment outside the library and not in an empty lot. Mr. DeHart says the township already owns the property and thought this would be a good deterrent for vandalism. Motion to close the public portion by Mr. DeHart, seconded by Mr. Garbowski. Voice votes; All Ayes. Nays-Zero.

D. Financial Reports:

1. Approve Financial Reports

a. June/July/August 2025

Off the record while the board reviewed the financial reports. Back on record. Motion to approve the June/July/ August 2025 financial reports by Mr. Pohler, seconded Mr. Garbowski. Voice vote; All Ayes. Nays- Zero.

- D. Financial Reports (continued):
2. Approve Payment of Vouchers
a. June/July/August 2025
Off the record while the board reviewed the payment of vouchers. Back on record.
Motion to approve the June/July/August 2025 payment of vouchers by Ms. King,
seconded by Ms. Munch. Voice vote; All Ayes. Nays- Zero.
- C. Approve Minutes of June 2025 & September 4, 2025 Board Meeting
Mr. DeHart would like to amend the September 4th minutes. He would like to change the
verbiage from salary to stipend for the acting director's base salary. Ms. Gabbianelli
suggests to add a short extract at the end of the minutes. Motion to approve the June 2025
& amend the September 4, 2025 minutes by Mr. DeHart, seconded by Ms. Samoyan.
Voice votes; All Ayes. Nays- Zero.
- E. Directors Report (written by Ms. Snyder and presented by Ms. Hauserman):

**FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF MONROE TOWNSHIP
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Summer 2025

Technology:

I have added an in-house feature to the Library's local calendars that reflects the meeting room usage by outside vendors and it is something that only the staff can see. I take a little time out of the day mid-month to make sure all of the outside events are properly reflected and I print the final calendar for the 2 service desks.

The Library had been having some terrible issues with the phone lines. In July, the fax lines stopped working so we had the copier company (our fax runs through our photocopiers) out once and Verizon out 3 times before they were able to fix it. Verizon was out again on September 4th to try to fix the alarm phone line as well.

Building:

In the beginning of July, the handicapped door seemed like it was only working every other day. First, I called Buildings and Grounds out to replace the battery and that seemed to appease things for a little while but towards the end of July we realized it was the transmitter. There is a transmitter inside of the pole outside that houses the handicapped button. The transmitter has a battery inside and very closely resembles a car alarm remote. Door check came out and replaced the transmitter, thankfully. Doors for the Reference Desk area were ordered and should be installed the week of September 8th. Honey truck" came out on August 27th to empty the pit out front. We were beginning to back up again.

(Director's Report continued)

Staff:

Myself and several staff members became very sick toward the end of June/beginning of July. Eventually when we all started to recover we had a Safety Committee Meeting on July 15th. The next day we implemented some of our ideas such as ordering mirrors for blind spots in the library, getting up to date first aid kits for the two service desks, a code phrase to let other staff members know we feel as though we are in danger and to call the police, and other measures. We also made sure everyone on staff updated

(Director's Report continued)

their emergency contact information, both their personal information and whom to call for the staff member if anything goes wrong. The notes of this meeting were shared with the entire staff.

We also did a cupcake gender reveal for Kyle, even though we all already knew 200% without a doubt she was having a girl.

Incident Reports:

Not really an incident for the Library because this happened outside before we opened, but early in August a gentleman was very irate and yelling out front of the Library so staff called the police to do a welfare check. The police came and spoke with the man who left the property and we have not seen him since, thankfully. Otherwise, summer was semi-uneventful this year.

Tidbits:

Yoga is back. The first date was Thursday, September 4th.

F. Committee Reports:

1. Garden Committee: No Report
2. Personnel Committee: No Report
3. Policy/By-Laws Committee: No Report
4. Buildings & Grounds: Mr. Pohler states there is a leak inside the building. Ms. Hauserman says due to rain the foyer's ceiling is leaking. She left a message for buildings and grounds.
5. Friends: Ms. King announces the book sale on October 11, 2025. Early bird between 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. They will close 2/2:30 p.m. She contacted the school for the students to set up on Friday at 3 p.m.

G. Old Business:

1. Policy Revision-rewrite trespass notice: Ms. Betterly would like to set up a meeting with the Policy Committee to work on the revision.

F. Old Business (continued):

2. Negotiations & Update: Mr. DeHart states the last meeting was postponed. Next meeting is scheduled for September 30th.
3. Status of Meeting Room C Floor: Ms. Hauserman spoke to Billy and there was an issue with the tiles. Mr. DeHart explains they had several floor companies out there and it might be difficult to fix. Ms. Mead asks how they are keeping the area closed from the public. Ms. Hauserman states she uses tables to block it off.
4. Status of Rock/Refresh project: Mr. DeHart will follow up with Billy.
5. Audit Status: Mr. DeHart spoke with the Township Auditor and more information to come.
6. Janet Mead Reinstatement: Ms. Mead met with the Township Clerk. Her one-year term is expiring December 1st, 2025 and her oath is up to date. She will meet with the superintendent to see if she is requested to sit on the board again. The decision will be made in December or the first of January.

H. New Business:

1. Hirings(s)

Ms. Betterly states in 2021 Ms. Hauserman was appointed Deputy Director. The Board stated she would be receiving \$1000.00 stipend for the position. Ms. Betterly was told she received it the first year but was misinformed. Ms. Betterly wanted the Board to be aware of the situation.

i. Posting for Interim Director: Ms. Hauserman states Karen is the only person who has access to the civil service account. Mr. DeHart says our human resource does not have access to the account. He asks the board to consider the shared service agreement again, especially for the human resource aspect. He would like to see the payroll services and human resource. Mr. Valentine says the library would save money and Mr. DeHart says it would save work. If both were done, there would be a \$2,000.00 one-time cost (for the time clock). The board further discusses. Mr. DeHart would like to draft this agreement with the Township Solicitor and the Board President and present it to the board next month. Motion for President Joan Betterly to proceed with the research necessary to bring to the next board meeting for shared services payroll and human resources by Ms. Samoyan, seconded by Ms. Kirsch. Ayes- Ms. Samoyan, Ms. Kirsch, Ms. Betterly, Mr. DeHart, Ms. Munch, Mr. Garbowski, Ms. Mead. Nays- Mr. Pohler, Ms. King.

ii. Children's Librarian

iii. Part-Timer (Rebecca's position)

Karen will be in charge of hiring. Ms. Hauserman states the children's librarian would have to be a temporary position unless she applies for the director's positions. She is very concerned about the library being short staffed. She needs the approval from the board to be able to hire. They discuss the hiring issues and the process. Mr. DeHart states there was not a hiring freeze and they clarify the minutes. He would like to increase hours for part-time staff to help during the interim. Mr. DeHart request the positions be labeled part-time and full-time. Ms. Hauserman states Brittney, an employee is requesting a meeting of all board members, trustees, staff, and the mayor. They suggest a representative to be present on behalf of the board because of the Sunshine Law. Ms. Hauserman

H. New Business (continued):

will contact the Mayor's office to set up the meeting. Motion to allow the acting director to hire through the civil service part-time and full-time positions by Mr. Pohler, seconded by Ms. Kirsch. Voice vote; Mr. Pohler, Ms. Kirsch, Ms. Betterly, Ms. Samoyan, Mr. DeHart, Mr. Garbowski, Ms. Munch. Nays- Zero. Abstains- Ms. Mead.

2. Appoint Deputy Director

i. Stipend- Chris DiFazio is stepping in as interim acting Deputy Director. The board suggest a stipend of \$1,200 a year. Motion to approve Mr. DiFazio as interim acting Deputy Director at \$1,200 stipend effectively immediately by Ms. King, seconded by Mr. Garbowski. Voice votes; All Ayes. Nays- Zero.

3. Policy Revision

i. Resignation of Director- Ms. Betterly states the Policy Committee will take care of this.

ii. Appointment of Acting Director- this was previously addressed at the emergency meeting.

Mr. Valentine addresses police patrol at the library. Mr. DeHart request to review the bills prior to the meeting. Ms. Hauserman suggest she can email them along with the Director's Report. Ms. Betterly would like the minutes ahead of time as well. Motion to receive the financial reports and meeting minutes one week prior to the meeting by Ms. Samoyan, seconded by Ms. Kirsch. Voice votes; All Ayes. Nays- Zero. Mr. Dehart suggest the President to appoint a committee from the board to be a part of research options with the county.

I. Adjournment:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Pohler, seconded by Mr. Garbowski. Voice votes; All Ayes. Nays- Zero.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 15th 2025 @ 7:00pm

These minutes are an extract from the meeting that was held on the above date and are not a verbatim account or to be construed as an official transcript of the proceedings.

Respectfully submitted by: Scottie Gabbianelli, Clerk Transcriber.