

**ENGLEWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES**

November 20, 2023

Call to Order 7:36pm

Roll Call

Trustees	Present	Absent
Nina Nanasi, President	X	
Debra Trachtenberg, Vice President	X	
Devry Pazant, Treasurer	X	
Howard Haughton, Secretary	X	
Courtney Johnson-Suffern	X	
Amy Jones Bulluck, Mayor's Alternate	X	
Flor Ramirez		X
Stacey Rosenzweig	X	
Dr. Marnie Hazelton, School Superintendent		X
Gina Edone, School Superintendent's Alternate		X

Minutes

Mrs. Trachtenberg moved the approval of the Minutes for October 16, 2023, seconded by Mr. Pazant. Mrs. Nanasi abstained. Motion Approved.

Open Public Comment

Members of the public were present and spoke in favor of renaming the Englewood Public Library after Dr. Arnold Brown, a former Englewood Library Trustee, the first African-American Assemblyman to represent the district, and a highly respected and valued member of the Englewood community. They speakers were as follows:

- Junius “Jeff” Carter, Englewood resident, and President of the Bergen County Chapter of the NAACP,
- Mary J. Amoroso, Commissioner, Bergen County Board of County Commissioners
- Alexander McLucas, State President, the New Jersey Association of Alpha Phi Alpha Chapters, and fraternity brother of Dr. Brown
- Dr. David Coleman, Englewood resident, and Associate Professor of African American History at Ramapo College of New Jersey

- Lawrence Suffern, Englewood resident, and City of Englewood Chief of Police (ret.)

Closed Open Public Comment, 7:46pm

Ms. Nanasi advised those in attendance that they did not have to stay as the library board meeting was going to continue with the agenda.

After the meeting room was vacated by the public, Mr. Haughton moved to suspend the meeting agenda, invite the public back to observe the meeting, and to discuss the topic raised by community members in attendance thereby giving them a chance to hear the deliberations on the matter. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pazant. The motion carried with 4 AYES / 3 NAYS.

Discussion continued. Members of the library board who voted against suspending the meeting agenda expressed unreadiness as there was a lack of awareness about the matter. The Library Director expressed the same message of unreadiness. Mr. Haughton conveyed to the Library Director that the topic was a board discussion and not debatable by staff.

Dr. Rosenzweig reminded the board about the work she did to establish naming rights for donations to the library and expressed that this work had been turned into a policy. Mr. Haughton asked the Library Director if all board approved policies were on the library website and with some hesitancy, she responded in the affirmative.

The board ended the discussion on the topic.

Reports

Treasurer's Report

It was noted that a credit was being issued to the library from the city for the fence installed in the upper parking lot.

Dr. Rosenzweig made a motion to combine the acceptance of the Treasurer's Report and approve the Bill List, seconded by Mrs. Jones Bulluck. Unanimously approved.

Directors Report

Ms. Pacheco shared that Susy Rodriguez from Englewood's Health Department organized the second health fair this year. Along with the library, there were medical booths and food vendors present. We had about 25 people stop by the table, and 7 library card sign-ups/renewals.

On October 12, Janis Dismus Middle School held *Noche Latina*. Basheba Mitchell invited us to this event, where about 150 students and parents were present. Ms. Pacheco spoke quickly about the importance of library cards and resources. Ms. Pacheco also left BCCLS pamphlets and bookmarks at each table.

Also on October 27, Grieco School held a Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration. German Cardona invited us to this event with about 250 students and parents present. There were many performances, and 5 students stopped by the table to sign up or renew a library card.

Our sales for this year's book sale totaled \$9,300, shares the Friends' President Dee Helm.

Ms. Pacheco noted that the NJ State Library (NJSL) – Community Center Digital Connect Capital Projects Grants Program FY24 recipient announcement was changed to December 11, 2023.

Committee Report

Buildings and Grounds Committee Report

Dr. Rosenzweig spoke on behalf of the Buildings and Grounds Committee about the new carpeting quotes for the library. It was noted that the quotes were not comparable as each one included or excluded elements that the others did not contain.

In the absence of the written quotes from bidders and the analysis of the bids as requested at the October library board meeting, Mr. Haughton moved to decline the current bids and rebid the project through an RFP that allows for comparison of each bidder to the other after the library receives the outcome of a grant that the library recently applied to secure funds for capital improvement. The motion was seconded by Ms. Nanasi and carried unanimously.

Personnel Committee Report

Mrs. Trachtenberg spoke on behalf of the Personnel committee and made the Board aware that the first meeting of contract negotiations with the Union was held on November 15, 2023.

School (District) Report

Ms. Senedzuk shared the following School District news on behalf of Mrs. Edone; I informed Dr. Hazelton's secretary that the library board would like to develop a committee for programming and connect with our schools and central office. I was informed that the district is hiring a community liaison which could assist with this committee.

Old Business

None.

New Business

- **Wage Increases:** The Library Director expressed a desire to raise staff hourly wages to meet NJ's Minimum Wage requirements for 2024. In the absence of a written proposal and supporting data, the discussion was tabled by motion, with a proper second, and without reservation, until the December library board meeting, at which time a written proposal and supporting documentation by the Library Director shall be presented for consideration.
- **Early Closing on 12/8/23:** The Library Director expressed a desire to host a staff holiday party on 12/8/23 starting at 3PM. She asked the board to approve closing at 3PM. After providing answers to a number of questions posed by different board members, Mr. Pazant moved to close the library at 4:00pm on December 8, 2023 for the staff holiday party. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Nansi and passed unanimously.
- **Resolution Honoring Dr. Arnold E. Brown and Renaming the Englewood Public Library to the Dr. Arnold E. Brown Public Library:** Ms. Bullock distributed, introduced,

and moved, and Ms. Johnson-Suffern seconded the following resolution:

CITY OF ENGLEWOOD

RESOLUTION

**HONORING DR. ARNOLD E. BROWN AND RENAMING THE ENGLEWOOD PUBLIC
LIBRARY TO THE DR ARNOLD E. BROWN PUBLIC LIBRARY**

WHEREAS, Dr. Arnold E. Brown was born April 12, 1932, in Englewood, NJ and attended the Englewood Public School District; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Arnold E. Brown was the first African American to serve as an Assemblyman from Bergen County; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Arnold E. Brown served as President of the Bergen County Chapter of the NAACP and Urban League of Bergen County; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Arnold E. Brown served on the Board of Directors of Rutgers University and the boards of the Bergen County Girl Scouts, the Salvation Army, and the New Jersey Law Enforcement Planning Agency; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Arnold E. Brown established the Dubois Book Center, where he has done important work in recovering the history of African Americans in Bergen County and locating slave burial sites in the state, including the recovery and mapping of the African American burial grounds of Gethsemane Cemetery in Little Ferry; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Arnold E. Brown served as a trustee on the Board of the Englewood Public Library for numerous years, and continuously made numerous contributions to the community through his service as Chair of the Bergen County Juneteenth Celebration Committee, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the First Baptist Church of Teaneck, a member of the Bergen County Human Relations Committee, a member of the Bergen County Historic Preservation Advisory Board, and has remained active in the Kappa Theta Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, The American Library Association identifies their core values as: access, confidentiality/privacy, democracy, diversity, education and lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, preservation, the public good, professionalism, service, social responsibility, and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the Englewood Library Board of Trustees' believes their values to be aligned with the American Library Association; and

WHEREAS, the Englewood Public Library Board of Trustees believes that Dr. Arnold E. Brown has lived a life that exemplifies the core values of The American Library Association and the City of Englewood; and

WHEREAS, the Englewood Public Library Board of Trustees wishes to recognize the extraordinary contributions and historic influence that Dr. Arnold E. Brown has made to

the City of Englewood, Bergen County, New Jersey, and African American communities; and

WHEREAS, the Englewood Public Library Board of Trustees believes it is proper and fitting to honor Dr. Arnold E. Brown as a historian, civil rights activist, Assemblyman, and civic leader whose contributions have impacted the lives of millions; and

WHEREAS, the Englewood Public Library Board of Trustees wishes to honor the many important contributions and influence of Dr. Arnold E. Brown: and

WHEREAS, the Englewood Public Library formation and operation is regulated by N.J.S.A. 40:54-1 and more than 50 New Jersey libraries operate with names different than the respective municipality as allowed by state statute;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Englewood Public Library Board of Trustees do hereby rename the Englewood Public Library the Dr. Arnold E. Brown Public Library in honor of his extraordinary contributions, historic influence, and his love for and dedication to the Englewood, Bergen County, New Jersey, and African-American Communities.

- Discussion on the motion occurred. Dr. Rosenzweig reminded the board again about the work she did to establish naming rights for donations to the library and expressed that this work had been turned into a policy. Mr. Haughton noted that such a policy was not finalized as it does not appear on the library board's website as stated earlier in the meeting by the Library Director, and it was not in the minutes of prior meetings as having been approved.

Ms. Nanasi stated that the library should not be named after anyone. Members discussed the naming of other libraries (e.g. Johnson Public Library) and how they were done.

Ms. Trachtenburg moved to table the resolution and refer it to the policy committee to be discussed and presented at the February 2024 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Haughton. Ms. Nanasi appointed Ms. Suffern-Johnson to the Policy Committee as the fourth member.

Adjournment

At 9:33pm, Mr. Pazant made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Bullock. Unanimously approved.

Next Meeting: Monday, December 18, 2023, 7:30pm, Directors Office