

MINUTES

Warren County Library Commission

SEPTEMBER 23, 2025

The Warren County Library Commission met in Regular Session at the Richard D. Gardner Branch, 2 Shotwell Drive, Belvidere, New Jersey on September 23, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Thomas and upon roll call, the following members were present: Chairperson Liza Thomas, Vice Chairperson Cathleen Gerhardt, Deborah Paquarelli, and Tammy Koop. Also attending were Warren County Library Commission Attorney, Joseph Bell IV, Library Director Jill Butcher, and Assistant Library Director Matthew Rothfuss. There were approximately 25 members of the public in attendance, and 9 attendees via Zoom.

After leading the flag salute, Ms. Thomas confirmed that notice of this meeting was in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

APPROVAL of MINUTES

On motion by Ms. Koop, seconded by Ms. Pasquarelli, the minutes of Regular Session of June 24, 2025, were approved.

Recorded Vote: Ms. Gerhardt, Yes; Ms. Kanyuck ____; Ms. Koop, Yes;
Ms. Pasquarelli, Yes; Ms. Thomas, Yes.

FINANCIAL RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION 2025-F-08

On motion by Ms. Pasquarelli, seconded by Ms. Koop, the Resolution to pay bills in the amount of \$287,511.16 was approved.

Recorded Vote: Ms. Gerhardt, Yes; Ms. Kanyuck ____; Ms. Koop, Yes;
Ms. Pasquarelli, Yes; Ms. Thomas, Yes.

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COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMISSION

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Agenda Items Only)

- a. Kelley Nemeckay – White Twp. – Requested that correspondence from the public be included with meeting minutes, and the Library Commission By-Laws include that a summary of correspondence from the public will be read at meetings.
- b. Teresa Esposito Jackson – Washington Twp. – Expressed her concerns about paying an attorney for consultations and to attend meetings.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. Regarding the status of Library Commission By-Laws, the subcommittee members stated they had a working draft and were reviewing the draft with the Library Commission Attorney after this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

RESOLUTIONS

None.

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

See attached Library Director's Report submitted by Jill Butcher.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None.

CLOSING PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a. Sara Hare – Hope Twp. – Detailed her experiences attending meetings of the Hunterdon County and Somerset County Library Commissions. Spoke about the presence of an attorney at their meetings, budget transparency, correspondence, and public attendance and comments.
- b. Sue Nordell – White Twp. – Spoke of her concerns regarding the attorney's expenses and a conflict of interest with the Library Commission and County Commission being represented by the same law firm.
- c. Mary Ann Boyd- Knowlton Twp. – Stated that all children are different, and there's a need to respect others even if you disagree with them.
- d. Paul Eskola- Allamuchy Twp. – Complimented the staff, programs, and Wowbrary, the weekly email listing new materials. Suggested the Commission volunteer information instead of requiring the public to go through the OPRA process.
- e. Guy Citron- Califon Borough – Stated some local citizens are concerned that certain review sites are being considered as authoritative when others view them as hate based.
- f. Kelley Nemeckay – White Twp. – Read from a letter she submitted to the Commission regarding censorship, how correspondence from the public is handled, and her personal interactions with Commission members.
- g. Sandy Roberts – Blirstown Twp. – Asked the Commission to consider all holidays when scheduling future meetings. Spoke of the Commission rebuilding trust with the public.
- h. Teresa Esposito Jackson – Washington Twp. – Expressed her views on the Commission being vague and unresponsive to the public, and her concern that the Commission meeting was scheduled on Rosh Hashanah.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

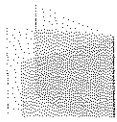
I hereby certify the above to be a true copy of the Warren County Library Commission minutes of the date above mentioned.

Deborah A. Pasquarelli

10/28/25

Deborah Pasquarelli
Recording Secretary

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WARREN COUNTY LIBRARY

Director's Report September 2025

I want to congratulate our staff for such a successful summer reading program. Their creativity and hard work contributed greatly to our fantastic numbers. Staff distributed over 1800 reading logs to participants of all ages, who read over 23,000 days this summer. We offered 186 programs with over 4200 people attending. These numbers represent increases over last year's statistics. This was no easy feat for our staff as we had 5 unexpected leaves this summer and had to train several new staff members. I also want to thank the Friends of the Library and CDH Trustees for sponsoring the summer reading program prizes.

It has been almost five months since we switched to Koha for our integrated library system. Feedback from patrons has been mostly positive as they like being able to borrow materials from MAIN's other 54 libraries. The staff continues to adjust to this new system. Up until today, we had to manually edit holds slips for items, which increased the amount of time it took to process incoming items. The new holds slips can be printed out and attached directly to items. The MAIN staff plans to tackle reports in Koha next. They have released a few basic reports, but now need to delve further into more advanced reports that are being requested by us as well as the other MAIN libraries.

Since moving to Koha, we have experienced a 24% increase in our circulation compared to last year. Now that there are additional items in the catalog, our patrons are placing more holds than ever. While great for our patrons, this has resulted in more work for staff because we have to wrap the outgoing items we are lending and the items we have borrowed. Staff have to devote hours a day to this process. Later this week, an update to Koha is being released and we are hopeful this will partially reduce the amount of time staff spend processing items.

In July, MAIN was appropriated a \$150,000 grant by the State of New Jersey. These funds are being used to help offset some of the one-time startup costs associated with migrating to Koha, which is good news for us. In other MAIN news, our patrons now have remote online access to the Wall Street Journal. This has been a good addition as the physical copy of the newspaper is no longer delivered daily in this area. We are also working with MAIN to switch our ebook vendor from CloudLibrary to Libby, which is MAIN's ebook vendor. We anticipate this switch will be made before our CloudLibrary contract ends in March 2026.

Patrons are continuing to discover that the Catherine Dickson Hofman Branch has reopened. Their door counts continue to increase each month. Many of the outstanding physical and information technology issues at CDH have been resolved. The projector in the meeting room and a fire suppression system in the book drop closet still need to be installed, and staff continue to monitor the areas where roof leaks were discovered. The Northeast branch received a much-needed coat of paint on the exterior this summer, and their parking lot will be repaved on October 9 and 10. That branch will be closed to the public those days.

Since May, we have experimented with not circulating the newest issues of magazines, in response to Ms. Pasquarelli's inquiry. I asked each branch manager to gather feedback from patrons and to observe if the public is now reading magazines while in the library. The overwhelming majority of feedback was negative. Most patrons said they would not take the time to read a magazine in the library, which corresponds to what staff observed. Very few people sat down to read magazines. If the Library Commission still wants to hold back the newest magazine issues, my recommendation is to compromise and not circulate new issues for half of their frequency pattern. For example, a monthly issue would not circulate for the first two weeks. A quarterly issue would not circulate for the first two months. The exception to this would be weekly magazines. I recommend letting all of those issues circulate to reduce the staff's workload.

Respectfully submitted,
Jill E. Butcher
Director