

Glen Ridge Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
 1st floor Conference Room, Glen Ridge Library
 December 10, 2025

Public Session

Ms. Clark-Bonnett called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. She referenced the following statement from the agenda: “Adequate notice of the date and time of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act. Notice has been transmitted to the Glen Ridge Paper and the Glen Ridge Voice and has been posted in the Glen Ridge Municipal Building and the Glen Ridge Public Library. A list of meeting dates for the Glen Ridge Free Public Library Board of Trustees is also on file with the Glen Ridge Borough Clerk.”

Roll Call

P	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	P	Matt Doyle
P	Geoffrey Darby	P	Tina Payne
P	Edward Kastenmeier	A	Damein Phoenix
P	Marilyn Law	P	Jeanna Velechko
P	David Lefkovits (late)	P	Tina Doody

Pledge of Allegiance

Correspondence

None

Public Comment

None

Minutes

A motion to approve the November 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes as presented was made by Matt Doyle and seconded by Marilyn Law. The minutes were approved by the Trustees.

Aye	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	Aye	Marilyn Law	Aye	Tina Payne
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	David Lefkovits	—	Damein Phoenix
Aye	Edward Kastenmeier	Aye	Matt Doyle	Aye	Jeanna Velechko

Committee Reports

Finance

Mr. Lefkovits reviewed the Bills list for November. He noted the bills for November totaled \$57,005, of which \$40,766 was for salaries and benefits; \$6,478 for materials, \$2,776 for LCBA grant expenses and \$1,430 for a six month mindfulness class subscription that will begin in January.

After review, a motion to approve the November 2025 Bills List (attached) was made by David Lefkovits and seconded by Edward Kastenmeier. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Aye	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	Aye	Marilyn Law	Aye	Tina Payne
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	David Lefkovits	—	Damein Phoenix
Aye	Edward Kastenmeier	Aye	Matt Doyle	Aye	Jeanna Velechko

Next, Mr. Lefkovits reviewed the Treasurer’s Report. He reported that \$12,569.23 has been collected in dividend income from the NJ Cash Management Fund through the end of November. He noted that actual expenses year-to-date totaled \$835,456.46 or 88.42% of budgeted amounts. Mr. Lefkovits explained that expenses relating to materials, facilities and maintenance and part-time salaries and benefits are the primary reasons for expenses being under budget. Ms. Doody added that the part-time salaries will increase in December due to staff vacations; therefore, this budget item will not be as under budget for the year as currently projected. She then reported on challenges that the Library is experiencing with Ingram, the new book supply vendor, in delivering ordered materials in a timely manner.

Mr. Lefkovits concluded his presentation of the Treasurer’s Report by noting that \$318,360, among the various accounts, is currently invested in the NJ Cash Management Fund.

After no further questions, a motion was made by David Lefkovits to accept the Treasurer’s Report (attached). It was seconded by Tina Payne. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Aye	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	Aye	Marilyn Law	Aye	Tina Payne
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	David Lefkovits	—	Damein Phoenix
Aye	Edward Kastenmeier	Aye	Matt Doyle	Aye	Jeanna Velechko

Ms. Doody explained that materials were ordered in November and December; however ordered materials are not charged by Ingram until such items are shipped, which is accounting for materials being under budget for the year. She then noted that staff has begun using Amazon for book orders, especially for new book releases and high demand materials. A discussion ensued regarding options on how to use amounts remaining in the materials budget for this year given the Library follows cash accounting for expenditures and the Trustees determined pre-paying for future material purchases was

the best course of action to ensure budgeted amounts are utilized in the current year and not carried forward. Ms. Doody confirmed there are no concerns that Ingram will go out of business in the near term.

After discussion, a motion was made by Edward Kastenmeier to approve up to \$10,000, taking into account amounts spent on materials in December and amounts remaining in the materials budget for the year as reflected in the Treasurer’s Report, to pre-pay for future material purchases with the Library’s book supplier, Ingram. Geoffrey Darby seconded the motion, all voted in favor and the motion passed.

Aye	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	Aye	Marilyn Law	Aye	Tina Payne
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	David Lefkovits	—	Damein Phoenix
Aye	Edward Kastenmeier	Aye	Matt Doyle	Aye	Jeanna Velechko

Ms. Clark-Bonnett then invited Ms. Doody to present the second reading of the 2026 proposed budget, reporting that the budget is tied to the goals set forth in the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, which focuses on staff, communications and programming. Ms. Doody reported that in response to a request at the November meeting a 2025 actual column had been added to the proposed budget for purposes of comparison, and that the proposed 2026 budgeted amounts remain the same as previously presented.

Mr. Lefkovits then provided an update on the Borough’s healthcare bidding process, noting healthcare benefits are now expected to increase approximately 20% instead of the initial 37% as a result of the Borough approving transitioning to a new provider. Ms. Doody added that the Borough needs to provide the State of New Jersey with 90 days’ notice of the provider change, and further added that the new benefits plan is substantially the same as the old plan except for changes to prescription drug coverage and a dedicated customer service team instead of virtual assistants. She reported that the provider is smaller, covering other towns in New Jersey, and that the Borough will have the ability to be more involved in the administration of the plan going forward. Ms. Doody reported that the Borough is targeting a March 1st onboarding to the new healthcare plan. In response to a Trustee’s question, she explained that the Library has only three staffers on the Borough health plan, noting these staffers will pay increased premiums for the first three months of 2026 until the Borough transitions to the new plan. A discussion ensued regarding the possible utilization of the Chapman Fund, which is for the support of Library staff, to offset these increased expenses until the transition to the new plan is complete.

A discussion ensued regarding the budgeted amounts for maintenance and repair as well as how best to utilize funds remaining from this year’s budget. Ms. Doody noted that, with remaining funds, the Library purchased a gimbal, a handheld camera stabilizer, from BCCLS to enhance the quality of videos made by the Library. Ms. Clark-Bonnett thanked Ms. Doody and her staff for their thoughtfulness in the preparation of the 2026 budget.

After no further questions, a motion was made by David Lefkovits to accept the 2026 budget (as attached) as presented and it was seconded by Geoffrey Darby. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Aye	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	Aye	Marilyn Law	Aye	Tina Payne
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	David Lefkovits	—	Damein Phoenix
Aye	Edward Kastenmeier	Aye	Matt Doyle	Aye	Jeanna Velechko

Personnel

Ms. Payne noted that the Committee met on December 3, 2025 to finalize Ms. Doody’s 2025 performance evaluation and compensation, discuss Ms. Doody’s 2026 goals and establish a standing meeting to revise the evaluation forms. Ms. Payne then noted that Ms. Doody had been provided the RICE notice more than two weeks in advance of the meeting, informing Ms. Doody that her 2025 performance evaluation and compensation will be reviewed and discussed during the executive session at this meeting.

Technology

Ms. Doody reported that she received and completed a questionnaire on people counting software and equipment, which begins the process and planning of the implementation and roll out. She noted that she does not yet have an implementation date. Ms. Doody then stated that the Library replaced the uninterruptible power service (UPS) for the security system due to failure of the old UPS.

Building and Grounds

Ms. Doody then provided the Committee report, noting the acoustic panels were installed in the study rooms along with the framing pieces for the plexiglass insert by the business manager’s office. She noted the plexiglass is scheduled to be installed in February and that the roller shades still need to be selected and ordered for the mezzanine level. In response to a Trustee’s question, Ms. Doody confirmed \$11,000 has already been allocated for the roller shades.

Ms. Doody next reported that the Library will be requesting a deadline extension for completion of the work associated with the LCBA grant and reimbursement of approximately \$50,000 for work completed; however, Dan Kopec needs to write a letter on the Library’s behalf to request the extension and reimbursement.

She then stated that the Library received a quote from the electrician to start the retrofitting of current fluorescent lighting to LED in the Young Adult area as recommended in the Building Plan, noting this will be covered under the LCBA grant. Ms. Doody explained that the electrician is currently investigating options for retrofitting the lighting in other areas of the building as they are a different type of fixture. She noted that the LED lighting will last for approximately 8 years and costs \$3,200. A discussion ensued regarding matching the existing brightness to current levels.

There being no further discussion, a motion to approve \$3,200 for retrofitting current fluorescent lighting to LED was made by Geoffrey Darby and seconded by Edward Kastenmeier. The motion passed.

Aye	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	Aye	Marilyn Law	Aye	Tina Payne
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	David Lefkovits	—	Damein Phoenix
Aye	Edward Kastenmeier	Aye	Matt Doyle	Aye	Jeanna Velechko

Ms. Doody then reported that as a result of repainting study room 3 for the whiteboard installation, she will be requesting Borough employees to repaint study rooms 1 and 2 using the same paint as Room 3. She reported that this will be completed within one to two weeks.

She then explained that the Library’s elevator issues have been resolved, and as part of that process, asked the vendor to provide a quote for modernizing the elevator. Ms. Doody referenced the quote included in the meeting materials, which she shared with Michael Zichelli at the Borough. She noted the quote was \$108,900, stating collaboration with the Borough will be necessary, given the Borough’s usage of the elevator. Ms. Doody confirmed that the elevator is working properly and that the work does not need to be done immediately, but given the age of the existing system, it is something the Library should consider completing in the future. A discussion ensued regarding whether the elevator project could be done in stages, and Ms. Doody confirmed that it could not be.

Ms. Doody then requested approval to replace the treads on the back stairs of the Library, noting the treads are lifting in spots which makes it unsafe for staff and patrons using this egress. She noted the cost is \$1,375 and that the work can be completed before year end. Ms. Doody stated the costs will be covered by the LCBA, and will be completed in one day, allowing the Library to remain open to patrons.

There being no further discussion, a motion to approve \$1,375 for replacing the treads on the back stairs of the Library was made by Jeanna Velechko and seconded by Matt Doyle. The Trustees passed the motion.

Aye	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	Aye	Marilyn Law	Aye	Tina Payne
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	David Lefkovits	—	Damein Phoenix
Aye	Edward Kastenmeier	Aye	Matt Doyle	Aye	Jeanna Velechko

Marketing

Ms. Clark-Bonnett referenced the hard copies of the Strategic Plan distributed by Ms. Doody at the meeting. She discussed posting the Plan on the Library’s website during the week of December 22nd. She noted the Committee will be meeting in the coming

weeks to discuss maximizing communication efforts of the Plan in 2026, including utilizing social media more effectively to reach patrons and boosting video usage. Ms. Doody noted that the Library's communications director will also be attending these Committee meetings. She noted that the jackets approved at the prior meeting will arrive in February and that she placed an order for branded pens, both of which could be used with the Strategic Plan outreach.

Strategic Planning

Ms. Doody noted that there is no report given the Plan was approved by Trustees at the prior meeting.

Director's Report

Ms. Doody referenced the Director's Report, highlighting that the Library will be welcoming a high school intern in January and the results of the November reading challenge.

Ms. Doody then referenced Library Trends & Topics, noting the 2025 wrap display of Spotify's top 10 audiobooks for the year. She noted physical audiobooks circulation has dropped to low levels during 2025; however, digital audiobooks continue to increase. She noted only one non-fiction title was on the list.

Ms. Doody reported that the Library will be relaunching the book club in January with a focus on romantic novels, given tepid patron interest in the Books & Brew book club and costs of renting Fitzgeralds. A discussion ensued regarding how to increase interest given there are a number of other book clubs in town.

Friends of the Library

Mr. Kastenmeier provided an update on the Friends' recent activities. He reported that the Borough tree lighting was successful, although attendance was down this year versus last year. He then confirmed the Jay Cooper book event is scheduled for January 10, 2026, noting the event will be free to the community. Mr. Kastenmeier reported the annual appeal is ongoing and approximately \$9,000 has been raised to date with 69 donors contributing thus far.

Old Business

Trustee Search

Ms. Clark-Bonnett thanked Ms. Law and Mr. Kastenmeier for overseeing the Trustee search to identify the replacement for Mr. Darby, and invited Ms. Law to make the presentation. Ms. Law noted that the committee received 10 applications, which included a cover letter, application and resume. She noted that four candidates were

moved to the interview stage, participating in a five question rubric to benchmark candidates against one another. Ms. Law reported that the questions focused on commitment to the Library’s mission, community representation and involvement, collaboration and strategic thinking. Upon careful consideration, Rohit Tote is being recommended as the candidate to be appointed by the Mayor and Council to the Glen Ridge Library Board of Trustees, which is a five-year term.

A motion to approve the recommendation of Rohit Tote as Glen Ridge Library Board Trustee candidate for approval by the Mayor and Council was made by Marilyn Law and seconded by Edward Kastenmeier. All Trustees in attendance voted in favor and the motion was approved.

Aye	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	Aye	Marilyn Law	Aye	Tina Payne
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	David Lefkovits	—	Damein Phoenix
Aye	Edward Kastenmeier	Aye	Matt Doyle	Aye	Jeanna Velechko

Ms. Law noted the candidates who were not interviewed had been notified they were not selected to move forward; however, communications still need to be made to the four candidates interviewed, one of whom is Mr. Tote. Ms. Law confirmed she will contact the candidates, including Mr. Tote, and Ms. Clark-Bonnett reported she will inform the Mayor to add Mr. Tote’s appointment to the Council’s meeting agenda for January.

A discussion ensued regarding encouraging candidates not selected to become involved in Library committees as an ad hoc adviser as well as the Friends of the Glen Ridge Library. Ms. Clark-Bonnett noted Mr. Tote’s involvement with the strategic planning committee and being a parent to young children as reasons for his selection. She then noted that the trustee selection process has been documented, with copies of communications and schedule, being saved for future reference and use.

New Business:

Trustee Recognition - Geoffrey Darby

President Bernice Clark-Bonnett read a proclamation recognizing and celebrating Geoffrey Darby’s years of service. She then presented Mr. Darby with a token gift of the Library’s appreciation of his service.

Nominating Committee - 2026 Board Officers

Ms. Clark-Bonnett then reported that Ms. Velechko and Mr. Doyle agreed to serve on the Nominating Committee to select and recommend for appointment officers and Committee chairs for 2026, which will be presented for consideration at the January meeting.

Ms. Clark-Bonnett moved that Jeanna Velechko and Matt Doyle serve on the Nominating Committee to select and recommend the appointment of officers and Committee chairs for 2026. Ms. Payne seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Aye	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	Aye	Marilyn Law	Aye	Tina Payne
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	David Lefkovits	—	Damein Phoenix
Aye	Edward Kastenmeier	Aye	Matt Doyle	Aye	Jeanna Velechko

2026 Meeting Dates

Ms. Doody then presented the 2026 meeting dates, confirming it follows the same schedule as this year with the only changes being the January and December Trustees meetings will begin at 6:00 pm.

There being no further discussion, a motion to approve the 2026 Board meeting dates was made by Edward Kastenmeier and seconded by Marilyn Law. The motion passed.

Aye	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	Aye	Marilyn Law	Aye	Tina Payne
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	David Lefkovits	—	Damein Phoenix
Aye	Edward Kastenmeier	Aye	Matt Doyle	Aye	Jeanna Velechko

Public Comment

None

Executive Session

A motion was made by Bernice Bonnett, and seconded by Edward Kastenmeier, to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:46 pm. All voted Aye and the motion was passed.

A motion to exit Executive Session was made by David Lefkovits, and seconded by Edward Kastenmeier, at 8:52 pm. All voted Aye and the motion passed.

2025 Director Performance Evaluation

As recognition for Ms. Doody’s performance as Library Director during 2025, the Trustees determined to pay Ms. Doody a discretionary amount of \$1,000 out of the Trustees Operating account, which is in addition to Ms. Doody’s annual salary.

Ms. Clark-Bonnett moved that a discretionary amount of \$1,000 be paid out of the Trustees Operating account to Tina Marie Doody in recognition of Ms. Doody’s performance as Library Director during 2025. Edward Kastenmeier seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Aye	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	Aye	Marilyn Law	Aye	Tina Payne
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	David Lefkovits	—	Damein Phoenix

Aye	Edward Kastenmeier	Aye	Matt Doyle	Aye	Jeanna Velechko
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Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Geoffrey Darby and seconded by Jeanna Velechko at 8:56 pm. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Aye	Bernice Clark-Bonnett	Aye	Marilyn Law	Aye	Tina Payne
Aye	Geoffrey Darby	Aye	David Lefkovits	—	Damein Phoenix
Aye	Edward Kastenmeier	Aye	Matt Doyle	Aye	Jeanna Velechko

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Tina Payne
Secretary

Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the 1st floor Library conference room.