

Metuchen Downtown Alliance Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Friday, April 10, 2026, 8:30 am
Senior Center, 15 Center Street

Board in attendance: Joanne Cruz, Daniel Cea, Ian Fawcett, Laura Fiebert, Sean Massey, Jace C. McColley, Linda Koskoski, Eric Berger, Jason Delia, Jason Muldoon, Jennifer Zhu
Not attending: Luisania Moronta, Angie Quinonez, Frank Assuncao, Amar Singh, Sean Yan

Guests: Linda Koskoski, Jay Muldoon

Staff: Dawn Mackey

Welcome:

Meeting called to order at 8:38 by ED Mackey

Chairperson Report - Joanne Cruz

A new social media manager has been hired and is now onboard. She will lead the social rollout for the upcoming wellness event.

Secretary's Report

Meeting minutes for March were circulated before the meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Jay Muldoon, seconded Dan Cea

Executive Director's Report - Dawn Mackey

Budget Presentation:

The budget presentation took place on April 20. An open public comment period will be included as part of the budget process.

Business Openings & Closures:

Rose & Root is closing, and the space has already been filled.

A ribbon cutting for Greenhouse Music is scheduled for the 24th at 5 PM.

Rutgers Visit:

A group of 24 master's students from Rutgers University visited as part of a placemaking course. It provided a valuable opportunity to view the district from an outside perspective. The professor plans to include Metuchen in future rotations. Students shared feedback and questions about opportunities for further engagement.

Transformation Grant Update:

The grant application opened on Tuesday, with \$750K available, approximately half of last year's funding. Proposed uses for funding include a water feature in Peterson Park, music management initiatives, enhancements to the storefront restoration program, and addressing areas in town in need of improvement.

Borough Update: Jason Delia

Master Plan Survey:

The Master Plan survey remained open through May 3 and received close to 1,000 responses.

Bike Lanes:

There has been increased attendance at recent council meetings from residents opposing bike lanes. Efforts are underway to encourage community members to attend the next council meeting in support. A demonstration project is being planned, with parking identified as a primary concern.

Promotion Team / Organization Team: Bobbie Theivakumaran

Plans are underway to highlight businesses that do not typically receive regular promotion, to position Metuchen as a wellness destination.

“Shakespeare on the Plaza” has been added for August 7. Planning and execution are currently in progress.

The FIFA grant portal opened yesterday and will remain open for seven days. It is a matching grant program. While funding is currently limited, there may be opportunities to secure in kind sponsorships to support participation.

Organization Team: Bobbie Theivakumaran

Angie and Amar have both resigned from their seats on the board. As a result, there are now board vacancies to fill. All MDA members will be notified of the openings and given a 10 day period to submit nominations. Following the nomination period, the board will vote on candidates. Per requirements, nominees must be district business representatives.

Economic Vitality: Jason Muldoon

The Spark program is fully booked through January, with several participants already identified for next year.

Gift Card Program Update:

Plans are in progress to launch a district-wide physical gift card program. The proposed investment is approximately \$20,000. The program would be facilitated through a Visa based platform. Feedback has been largely positive, though some businesses, including Lore and Yestercades, have opted out. Implementation will require additional time and coordination. Possible promotional model of offering a \$50 gift card for \$30.

Member Workshop:

A member workshop has been proposed in partnership with Storefront Mastery. The two hour session will emphasize enhancing customer experience and creating memorable interactions. The workshop is tentatively scheduled for May 1 as a breakfast event.

Communications Team: Joanne Cruz

Discussed bringing in additional support for social media, with interviews currently underway. Also planning for the MDA 10th anniversary campaign. Content will be submitted for 08840 Magazine, and Dan will be supporting with video production.

Design Team- Laura Fiebert

Floral garlands have been ordered to decorate the Metuchen “M” and enhance select benches throughout the district. The bench refurbishment project is currently underway, with approximately half of the benches sent out for restoration. Once completed, they will be strategically placed throughout town.

Treasurer's Report: Ian Fawcett

Discussion included the March budget, along with a deposit made to secure the band for the Juneteenth celebration.

9:26 Adjourn

The next Board meeting will be held on Friday, May 8, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. at the Metuchen Senior Center, 15 Center Street.

Submitted by Laura Fiebert