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Office of the Mayor, Chatham Township
Office of the Mayor, Chatham Borough

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Chatham, NJ – The Mayors of Chatham Borough and Chatham Township are pleased to announce that the Library of the Chathams has been awarded **\$2.45 million in state funding**, approved on March 23, 2026, by the State Legislature’s Joint Budget Oversight Committee (JBOC), to support a major project to modernize and renovate the library facility.

This important investment will fund critical upgrades and improvements, including a renovated children’s room, new meeting and collaboration spaces, a business center, a dedicated STEM room, and significant enhancements to heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. These improvements will benefit residents of both municipalities and the broader Chatham community.

“The Library of the Chathams is one of our community’s most valued shared assets,” said **Chatham Borough Mayor Carolyn Dempsey**. “This funding will ensure the library continues to serve as a welcoming, modern, and accessible space for residents of all ages.”

“We are proud to support this long-awaited investment in our library,” said **Chatham Township Deputy Mayor Marty McHugh**. “These improvements will strengthen the library’s role as a hub for learning, connection, and community engagement for years to come.”

The Library of the Chathams serves nearly 200,000 visitors annually and hosts more than 800 programs and meetings each year. With portions of the building more than 100 years old, the facility is in urgent need of infrastructure upgrades and reimagined spaces to meet the evolving needs of the community.

“This is a win for all Chatham residents,” said **Karen Brodsky, Director of the Library of the Chathams**. “This project ensures the library remains a vibrant, safe, and accessible ‘Space for Everyone,’ and we are grateful to see this state investment come to fruition.”

This funding for the Library of the Chathams—along with funding released for libraries in Metuchen and Rahway, totaling more than \$5 million—stems from a 2021 bond referendum to support public libraries across New Jersey. When those funds were allocated, the State specified that any unused funds would be directed to a waiting list of additional projects, ultimately leading to the March 23 approval.

The funding for the Chatham library had been earmarked more than a year ago, in January 2025, but was not released. Even before they were sworn in, leadership in both Chatham Borough and Chatham Township spoke with then **Assemblymen-elect Andrew Macurdy and Vincent Kearney** about the need for funding for the Library of the Chathams, and both men started to gather information on JBOC and how to get the funding released. After Assemblyman Andrew Macurdy was sworn into the Legislature on January 13 of this year, his office began actively advocating for the release of the long-awaited funds.

Within two months, those efforts culminated in Monday’s JBOC action, releasing the funding that had been delayed in state processes for over a year.

“I am so happy that the Library of the Chathams will receive these long-awaited funds,” said **Assemblyman Andrew Macurdy**. “The library provides invaluable services and programs to the community, and this \$2.4 million is crucial for its ongoing renovations and improvements. My staff did an impressive job building relationships and advocating in Trenton to move these funds forward after more than a year of delay. Thank you to Mayor Dempsey, Mayor Rowland, and the Library’s Director and Board for their leadership and patience. I am excited about what we can continue to achieve together.”

The funding is the result of a highly competitive, multi-year process under the **2017 New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act**, and reflects the sustained efforts of Library Director Karen Brodsky, the library staff, and the Library Board of Trustees, led by President Andy Hollander.

Additional thanks are extended to **State Librarian Jennifer Nelson**, the New Jersey State Library, the Library Board of Trustees (past and present), The Friends of the Library of the

Chathams, the Chatham Library Foundation, and the many residents and donors who supported the project.

Mayors Dempsey and Rowland wish to formally acknowledge **Assemblyman Macurdy** and **Assemblyman Kearney** for their willingness to assist with this grant. “We are sincerely grateful for their support and appreciate their efforts in helping to advance this important initiative.”

While this funding represents a significant milestone, it is one component of the broader **“Space for Everyone”** initiative. The library will contribute more than \$2 million through existing funds and community donations, and additional philanthropic and municipal support will be needed to fully realize the project’s vision.

“The Library of the Chathams sits at the heart of our shared community,” the Mayors added jointly. “We look forward to seeing this project move ahead and to continuing our support for this essential institution that serves residents of both Chatham Borough and Chatham Township.”

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