

**MEETING OF TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2019**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HOBOKEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY, HELD IN THE SMALL PROGRAM ROOM IN THE LOWER LEVEL OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY, 500 PARK AVENUE, HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY ON TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2019 AT 6:30 P.M.**

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----- Meeting Excerpt -----  
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**1. Call to Order**

President Abernathy called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and certified that pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of the meeting had been given in the annual meeting notice, which was adopted at the July 24, 2018 meeting of the Library Board, which notice was provided to the Jersey Journal and the Hoboken Reporter, had been posted at the Library, Hoboken City Hall and filed with the Hoboken City Clerk. Notice of the changed meeting date was posted at the Library, Hoboken City Hall, and filed with the Hoboken City Clerk.

**2. Roll Call**

Roll call was taken:

Attendance	Present	Absent	Notes
Dr. Jerome Abernathy, President	X		
Mrs. JoAnn Serrano, Treasurer	X		
Ms. Susan Murcko, Secretary	X		
Ms. Amanda R. Blaney	X		
Ms. Jennifer Evans, School Superintendent's Designee***	X		Joined via teleconference
Mr. Jason Freeman, Mayor's Designee*	X		
Mr. Jack Silbert	X		
Mr. Kurt Thoens	X		

\**Ex officio* under NJ state law.

\*\*Present via remote connection.

Also in attendance were: Library Director Lina Podles, Recording Secretary Clark Matthews, Library Counsel Michael Cerone Esq. and members of the library staff and public.

—Dr. Abernathy: Welcomed the new trustees in attendance, Mr. Freeman as the Mayor's Designee for this meeting, in the absence of Mr. Wiest, and Mr. Thoens. The trustees greeted the new trustees, who introduced themselves.

**3. Board of Trustees Annual Reorganization for 2019-2020**

—Dr. Abernathy: Requested nominations for the board offices for the coming year.

—Ms. Blaney: Nominated Ms. Murcko to serve as Board Secretary for 2018-2019.

—Mrs. Serrano: Seconded. There being no additional nominations a roll call vote was taken:

—Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 8 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Evans	X			
Mr. Freeman	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

—Ms. Blaney: Nominated Mrs. Serrano to serve as Board Treasurer for 2019-2020.

—Dr. Abernathy: Seconded. There being no additional nominations, a roll call vote was taken.

—Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 8 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Evans	X			
Mr. Freeman	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			

Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

—Mrs. Serrano: Nominated Dr. Abernathy to serve as Board President for 2019–2020.

—Mr. Silbert: Seconded. There being no additional nominations, a roll-call vote was taken.

—Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 8 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Evans	X			
Mr. Freeman	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

—Dr. Abernathy: Thanked the trustees for their confidence and added special thanks to the officers for their time and attention to the library and its important role in the community.

#### 4. Adoption of 2019–2020 Board Meeting Schedule

—Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were any questions or concerns regarding the proposed 2019–20 schedule of board of trustees meetings. There being none, the meeting schedule was added to the consent agenda.

#### 5. Acceptance of Minutes

—Dr. Abernathy: Asked if the trustees had any corrections or comments regarding the minutes of the board meeting of June 20, 2019. There being none, approval of the minutes was added to the consent agenda.

#### 6. Public Comments

---Dr. Abernathy: Invited comments from the public. There were no public comments.

## 7. Director's Report

---Mrs. Podles: Highlighted several items from the Director's Report: The FY 2018 audit went well and is complete with no notes; audits are becoming more complex due to the accounting required for grants and other obligations and she thanked library bookkeeper Carolyn Hartwick for the clean FY 2018 audit. The new Employee Handbook is ready for board adoption after 1-1/2 years of work; library HR consultant Michael Shao will present it separately in the Personnel and Policy Committee report. Signups for the Summer Literacy Program are excellent, with over 200 children registered, including 40 teens, some of whom are helping with the children's programs. Due to space constraints caused by the renovations of the second and third floors, the playtime for kids has been moved to the basement of the library annex at 256 Fifth St. with a "toy-brary" of donated toys; "Teen Zone" has also moved there. In response to popular demand, the new Learning Center at the Hoboken Housing Authority (HHA) is now open for adult hours in the mornings and there is great demand for resume help and job applications; the director is exploring offering ESL classes and GED preparation for adult patrons. Preparations for work on the third floor continue and efforts are being made to preserve the present fixtures and furniture. There are concerns that costs for the third floor restoration and HVAC are increasing, and there is now an asbestos issue; the HVAC work will apparently involve cutting into other floors.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were change orders related to this work. Not yet, but there are soft costs.

---Mrs. Podles: Continued: The library has applied for this year's New Jersey Historic Trust (NJHT) grant cycle, which will offset these additional costs, if granted. There are also discussions about requirements for a possible bond as well as discussions and meetings about development planning; Montclair is doing this successfully.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked about the renaming of the former pop-up branch as the "Grand Street Branch" and whether it is possible to hire full-time staff for it. Full time staffing is not possible because there is no permanent contract so it is still not a permanent library facility; it was initially called "pop-up" because it served as emergency space for the Phase I downstairs renovations but is no longer a temporary space. Further discussion about the Grand Street Branch now having its own constituency in the Senior Center and the downtown neighborhood.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked if the director could make a presentation sometime in the future to the board on what a Literacy Specialist does; also asked what were the highlights from the National American Library Association (ALA) conference.

—Mrs. Podles: From the ALA, technology trends include SIM and Augmented Reality being used to teach history. There is also a trend toward hiring social workers to deal with the homeless and social problems that increasingly impact libraries; this was tried previously at Hoboken with an intern from Rutgers' social work school and is the subject of ongoing conversations with other libraries; the consensus recommendation is to use experienced social workers or graduate students for the work.

—Ms. Murcko: Thought that training on library services for the homeless could be useful on Staff Development Day. Discussion about such a course, which has been identified by HR consultant Michael Shao.

## **8. Committee Reports, including Finance Committee and Payment of Bills**

—Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The third floor was closed and the Young Adult department has been relocated to the second floor; fixtures are being stored. The basement of the Library Annex turned out well and uses leftover fixtures and a TV. Library capital planners Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH) went before the zoning board for the courtesy review of the change-of-use application for the 258 Fifth St. property and the scope of work is being determined so the project can go to bid in August; the among other things, work will involve installing a fire alarm system and emergency lighting, fixing and reinforcing the stairwell, electrical work in the basement, waterproofing to stop water intrusion in the basement, and retaining one of the kitchens for the staff room. For the library's third floor, the layout and asbestos removal are being finalized; there will be multiple phases of asbestos removal for floor tiles, mastic, walls, etc. and this is where the cost is increasing. In connection with this asbestos remediation, a board action item (BAI) is before the trustees authorizing the director to hire Atlantic Environmental Solutions, Inc., for asbestos abatement-related services at a cost range of \$32,200-\$47,900, not to exceed (NTE) \$47,900, depending on the services required.

—Mrs. Podles: Added that it may be necessary to do multiple tests after the asbestos remediation. After discussion, the Atlantic Environmental Solutions BAI was added to the consent agenda.

—Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee: There is no committee report this month. She described the financial matters before the board for approval (all in part 4 of the board package): 1.) to pay from the capital improvement construction account at Bayonne Community Bank (BCB) check no. 328 for \$6,465.73; 2.) in Part A, to pay FY 2019 library operating expenses with checks no. 7778-7844 and 7850-7857 totaling \$123,782.29; and 3.) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 7845-7849 totaling \$18,234.04.

—Mrs. Serrano: Asked if there were questions about the bills to be paid or other matters. There were no questions. The Part A bills to be paid were added to the consent agenda.

—Mrs. Serrano: Moved the board approve paying the Part B bills for library materials.

—Ms. Blaney: Seconded.

—Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 1 ABSTAIN: 1

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain'
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Evans	X			
Mr. Freeman	X			
Ms. Murcko			X	
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens				X
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

—Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: She noted the draft Employee Handbook that was distributed to the trustees and explained the need for a new employee handbook, which originated with the state Fiscal Monitor that was appointed over Hoboken and whose reforms separated the library from the city, thereby necessitating library employee policies and procedures. The new Employee Handbook is the product of 1-1/2 years of study, analysis, legal consultation and other work, and is a major accomplishment; the committee recommends board adoption of the manual. She introduced the library's HR consultant, Michael Shao, to present the manual.

—Mr. Shao: The manual is the product of several consultations with library counsel and outside counsel, and is a comprehensive update to all previous policies and procedures and is implemented in digital form. It is in compliance with all federal and state employment guidelines, including some that were enacted during the development and drafting of the handbook. Also, it is designed to be a "living document" which can be easily revised, updated and promulgated as laws and policies change over time. After discussion, the draft Employee Handbook was added to the consent agenda for adoption.

## 9. President's Report

—Dr. Abernathy: Raising money is job one and it is the focus of much of his work. The ALA guidelines for communities the size of Hoboken call for 50,000 sq. ft. of library space; the library presently has 25,000 sq. ft. with 19,000 usable. This has driven expansion and data analytics are now being used to identify the city's underserved areas and wards to guide such expansion; he has sought advice on locating space from former local officials and developers and is also meeting with fundraising experts, including Suela

Thomas of Stevens Institute. Also, fundraising is just as important when using other sources of funds; for example, the prospective NJHT grant is a matching award, so up to \$5,000,000 of fundraising and cash-flow management are needed to benefit from the actual grant award itself, assuming the library receives it. There followed discussion about local experts who could be used in evaluating properties in underserved areas.

—Mr. Thoens: Asked if all of the capital funds had to be available in order to get the grant, or is it possible to start with partial available funding of the \$3,500,000 total; also, could the library borrow if necessary? Discussion about funding and budget.

—Dr. Abernathy: Libraries are barred from borrowing by statute, but the city could bond on its behalf.

## **10. Library Foundation Report**

—Mrs. Serrano: Reported the Library Foundation board would be meeting in August.

## **11. Friends of the Library (FOTL) Report**

—Mrs. Freiser: Reported for the Friends: The FOTL met with BCCLS Literacy Coordinator Lance Krubner and library staff about plans for ESL services at the library; based on the discussion, the Friends will expand its ESL program and coordinate with the library and BCCLS. These courses have proven tremendously popular and some students keep coming back, even from great distances. There will be a new version of the Friends' Novel Night fundraiser, to be named "A Moveable Feast." The Friends are recruiting hosts for the event. FOTL member data is being ported to the CharityProud CRM system to automate member communications and outreach.

## **12. Old Business**

—Dr. Abernathy: Called for any old business; there was none.

## **13. New Business**

—Dr. Abernathy: Several contracts and retainers are up for renewal and he asked for any comments or questions concerning the annual contracts for: Library Counsel Michael Cerone, Esq., Labor Counsel Ruderman, Roth LLC, and HR Consultant Michael Shao. There were no comments or questions from the trustees and the contracts were added to the consent agenda.

## **14. Consent Agenda**

—Ms. Blaney: Moved the board approve the meeting consent agenda as follows:

- a. Adopt schedule of board meeting dates for 2019–2020.
- b. Accept minutes of board meeting of June 20, 2019.
- c. Authorize BAI authorizing the director to contract with Atlantic Environmental Solutions for asbestos remediation services, total not to exceed \$47,900.
- d. Approve payment of FY 2019 Part A bills for non-media operating expenses and capital spending.
- e. Accept the FY 2019 Audit Report.
- f. Adopt the draft Hoboken Library Employee Handbook.
- g. Renew the contract of library counsel Michael A. Cerone, Jr., Esq.
- h. Renew the contract of library labor counsel Ruderman, Roth LLC.
- i. Renew the contract of library Human Resources consultant Mr. Michael Shao.

—Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

—Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 8 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Evans	X			
Mr. Freeman	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

—Mr. Freeman: Moved to adjourn.

—Dr. Abernathy: Seconded.

—Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS: 8 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

The board of trustees adjourned at 7:50 p.m.