

**MEETING OF TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 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, AUGUST 27, 2019 AT 6:30 P.M.**

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

In Dr. Abernathy's absence, Treasurer Serrano 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 23, 2019 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		Joined via teleconference
Mrs. JoAnn Serrano, Treasurer	X		
Ms. Susan Murcko, Secretary	X		
Ms. Amanda R. Blaney	X		
Ms. Jennifer Evans, School Superintendent's Designee***	X		Via Skype video conference
Mr. Stephen Marks, 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., Mr. Peter Pearson of Library Strategies\*\* and members of the library staff and public.

—Mrs. Serrano: Welcomed Mr. Marks as the Mayor's Designee. The trustees joined in welcoming him.

### 3. Public Comments

—Mrs. Serrano: Invited comments from the public. There were no public comments.

### 4. President's Report

—Dr. Abernathy: As part of the board's focus on fundraising and planning, he reached out to Mr. Peter Pearson of Library Strategies of St. Paul, Minnesota, a recognized expert in library fundraising and advocacy who recently consulted with the Montclair Public Library on its capital planning and fundraising; he introduced Mr. Pearson.

—Mr. Pearson: Thanked Dr. Abernathy and the board and described his background and Library Strategies: He is the former president of the Friends of the St. Paul Public Library System, which is one of the largest and oldest library foundations in the U.S.; for 25 years in that role he facilitated community and donor groups and raised substantial funds for library capital projects and expansion. He is now the lead consultant of Library Strategies, which was organized as a consulting arm of the foundation to share expertise and continue to raise funds for the St. Paul system as well as other libraries on a consulting basis, including the Montclair Library. The Hoboken Library Director became familiar with his work for Montclair, where he created a fundraising plan and will be developing a capital campaign. He proposed several considerations for the Hoboken library and its supporters: He suggested clarifying the roles of the Friends of the Library, the Library Foundation, and the board of trustees, including possibly delegating fundraising to the foundation; after settling their respective roles, these groups should agree on adopting "best practices" for fundraising. Typically the foundation lays out the fundraising plan and the most important factor for successful fundraising would be foundation directors who are prominent in the community; activities are planned on the basis that 75% of philanthropy comes from individuals with personal wealth or access to it; and most libraries with capital campaigns start with annual appeals over a period of several years. After this, he advised doing interviews with donors to organize "quiet fundraising" prior to public fundraising events; "quiet fundraising" can raise up to 90% of capital funds in advance of launching the capital campaign vs. 10% from public contributions.

—Dr. Abernathy: Asked about first steps. Discussion about educating the boards of the Friends, Foundation and Library to coordinate their activities and a “fundraising 101” course.

—Mr. Thoens: Asked about the best timing for a capital campaign. Usually after a period of annual appeals to generate awareness before starting the campaign, but successful campaigns have been launched from scratch.

—Mrs. Serrano: The Library Foundation has run Annual Appeals for almost 10 years ; she asked what the expectation for such fundraising should be. Discussion of present annual appeal fundraising and a goal for future appeals of between \$50,000–75,000. The trustees thanked Mr. Pearson for his presentation.

—Mr. Pearson left the conference at 6:50 p.m.

—Dr. Abernathy: Noted that this presentation is a first step in a board education process on capital fundraising; he thought the topic should also be part of the annual board retreat. Discussion about meeting dates and location for the annual retreat in the fall; further discussion about Mr. Pearson meeting with the board, the Foundation board, and the Friends board.

## **5. Approval of Minutes**

—Mrs. Serrano: Asked if there were any questions or corrections to the minutes of the July 23, 2019 board meeting. There being none, the minutes were added to the consent agenda.

## **6. Director's Report**

—Mrs. Podles: Highlighted several items from the Director's Report: July and August 2019 circulation has been excellent despite the upstairs closures, up 3% over 2018; adult and teen circulation were especially good. The annual board retreat is being scheduled. Staff Development Day will be on September 20<sup>th</sup> with the training and discussion focused on dealing with homeless patrons and patrons with mental health issues; there will be a 3-hour video training by the Director of Homeless Services of the City of Chicago, followed by group discussion and a report; the main library building will be closed for the day for the training but the Grand Street branch will be open for public service. A pre-Kindergarten “Toy-brary” has been created with donated toys, so the children can play after Reading Time. The public hours of the Reading Garden have been scheduled by age group. The library participated in the Hoboken Night Out and will be represented at the Arts and Music Festival with a table with library staff and members of the Friends of the Library; also, Mayor Bhalla has acknowledged the library for LGBTQ awareness.

## 7. Committee Reports, including Finance Committee and Payment of Bills

—Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The zoning board has reviewed the change-of-use application for the 258 Fifth St. property and the scope of work has been determined. Bid specifications were requested by 11 contractors interested in the work; 3 contractors attended the pre-bid walkthrough. Bids open on September 17; work is planned to start in the first week of October with completion in January 2020. For the library's third floor, consultants Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH) are waiting for Atlantic Environmental Services to present a plan to remediate hazardous materials there; the work is complex and the plan will not be ready until mid-September. Work on the Emergency Plan is progressing with revisions and he hoped it would be ready for the September trustees' meeting.

—Mr. Marks: Asked about the details of the change of use work at 258 Fifth Street. Description and discussion about work on lighting, alarms, stopping water penetration, fixing the leaning staircase, electrical removal and pipe work, painting, plastering, and removal of one of the kitchens in the property.

—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 3 of the board package): 1.) to pay from the capital improvement construction account at Bayonne Community Bank (BCB) check no. 329 for \$12,379.85; 2.) in Part A, to pay FY 2019 library operating expenses with checks no. 7860-7922 and 7930-7935 totaling \$66,038.24; 3.) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 7923-7929 totaling \$34,551.31; and 4.) to approve a resolution to void check no. 7818.

—Mrs. Serrano: In addition, two resolutions are before the board to reserve excess operating funds for capital improvements (resolutions 3a and 3b in the board package: 1.) the first resolution (3a) reserves \$201,805.00 of FY2018 operating funds and restricts them to capital improvements; 2.) the second resolution (3b) reserves \$300,000.00 of FY2019 operating funds and restricts them to capital improvements.

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

—Ms. Blaney: Moved the board approve paying the Part B bills for library materials.

—Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

—Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 1 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			

Ms. Evans	X			
Mr. Marks	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 introduced the director to present the revised staffing plan.

—Mrs. Podles: Presented the restructuring plan for library staffing: Over the past 10 years, staff has increased from 17 to 42 persons, with many new programs and responsibilities. The plan envisions merging and renaming several departments: 1.) Children’s and Young Adult (YA) will become the Youth Services Department; 2.) Reference and IT Services will become the Information Technology Department; and 3.) Circulation will become the Lending Services Department. This would allow holding staffing to 2017 levels while creating a new Community Engagement Department, whose responsibilities would include working with the Hoboken Housing Authority (HHA).

—Ms. Blaney: Asked about the details of consolidating the Children’s and YA Departments. Discussion about retaining them as entities but consolidating them administratively.

## 8. Library Foundation Report

—Mrs. Serrano: Reported the Library Foundation is starting to work on the 2019 Annual Appeal mailing.

## 9. Friends of the Library (FOTL) Report

—Mrs. Serrano: There is no report from the Friends this month.

## 10. Old Business

—Ms. Blaney: Asked if the trustees will be getting tablets to replace paper board packages. Discussion about using tablets or online PDF distribution.

—Mr. Silbert: Noted that the *Hoboken Reporter* has imploded and been replaced by a single paper for most Hudson County towns; he wondered if it was still suitable for library notices. Discussion about alternatives.

—Ms. Murcko: Asked about providing assistance for patrons during 2020 census. Discussion about census-related issues regarding personally identifiable information (PII); the director will reach out to the New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) for guidance.

**11. New Business**

—Mrs. Serrano: Called for any new business. There was none.

**14. Consent Agenda**

—Mr. Marks: Requested a separate vote for the funding resolutions and acceptance of the July 23 minutes.

—Mrs. Serrano: Moved the board approve the meeting consent agenda as follows:

- a. Approve payment of FY 2019 Part A bills for non-media operating expenses and capital spending.
- b. Approve resolution to void check no. 7818.

—Ms. Blaney: 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. Marks	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

—Mr. Silbert: Moved the board approve the second meeting consent agenda as follows:

- a. Accept minutes of board meeting of July 23, 2019.
- b. Approve resolution reserving \$201,805.00 FY2018 operating funds restricted for capital improvements.
- c. Approve resolution reserving \$300,000.00 FY2019 operating funds restricted for capital improvements.

—Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

—Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 1

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

—Mr. Marks: Moved to adjourn.

—Ms. Murcko: Seconded.

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

The board of trustees adjourned at 7:40 p.m.