

MEETING OF TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 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, DECEMBER 17, 2019 AT 6:30 P.M.

----- Meeting Excerpt -----

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 23, 2019 meeting of the Library Board, which notice was provided to the Jersey Journal and the Hudson Reporter, had been 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		
Mr. Stephen Marks, Mayor's Designee*	X		
Mr. Jack Silbert**	X		Joined at 6:34 p.m. via telephone.
Mr. Kurt Thoens	X		

**Ex officio* under NJ state law.

**Present via remote connection.

Also in attendance were: Library Director Lina Podles, Facilities Director Michael Chapka, Recording Secretary Clark Matthews, Mr. Mohammed Atif Shehzad and Mr. Saif Nomani of Atriade Security Consulting and members of the library staff and public.

3. Approval of Minutes

--Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were any questions or corrections to the minutes of the November 26, 2019 board meeting. There being none, the minutes were added to the consent agenda.

---Mr. Silbert: Joined the meeting by phone at 6:34 p.m.

4. Public Comments

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

5. Director's Report

---Mrs. Podles: Highlighted several items from the Director's Report: 2019 was an excellent year for circulation and program attendance and variety. Staff morale is good and they are highly motivated. She has hired a new Literacy Coordinator who will start on January 13; there is also a promising candidate for Children's Librarian; but unfortunately the YA Librarian will be departing to work in his hometown in Newark. The city's new Innovation Center initiative is very exciting and the library will participate with the City of Hoboken, Stevens Institute, and Propelify. She showed the new promotional materials for the library's 130-year anniversary, and these include a stuffed toy of the library's new owl mascot, "Oliver Readalong," as well as new brochures for the Library Anniversary and for Library Fundraising. The Friends of the Library have given their check for the 2020 Saturday Family Fun program. She concluded by introducing Mr. Saif Nomai and Mr. Mohammed Atif Shehzad of Atriade Consulting to present the emergency plan developed for the library and discuss next steps.

---Mr. Shehzad: Thanked the trustees and described Atriade and its draft emergency preparation plan: Atriade is a local security consultancy with offices in Hoboken, and with experience designing emergency plans for other libraries. Atriade specializes in program development; typically for libraries they perform a risk analysis, review present library emergency action plans, and review existing library emergency training. They design a plan that transmits emergency training: a "train the trainer" plan designed for staff training and updates. For Hoboken, Atriade reviewed previous library emergency procedures for, e.g., blackouts, power loss, bomb threat, medical emergency, asset protection, etc., and then identified communications policies related to emergencies and past emergencies. The next steps would involve incorporating feedback from the library and trustees, finalizing the report, and training.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if the contemplated training will involve choosing emergency situations and executing on them; and sometimes choosing multiple emergencies in one training.

---Ms. Murcko: Noted that the present scope of the project is just for an active shooter emergency. Discussion about how there would be combined training around the active shooter component, using existing library procedures and creating and writing "cheat sheets" for these other situations, for example, "Code Adam" drills.

---Mr. Shehzad: An active shooter situation is very high-level, so it encompasses elements of other types of emergencies. Discussion about how to keep the plan "alive" and current, and about training recommendations.

---Mr. Shehzad: Several concepts work well to keep emergency plans current: 1. get executive sponsorship and adoption for the plan and its needs; 2. get "champions" to recruit co-champions throughout the organization; and 3. train-the-trainer organization so there is continuity in the training and it is part of the culture. He added that emergencies happen in different ways, but basic skills and responses apply to many or all of them, i.e., run, hide, or respond in other ways; so preparation is about communication process and championship for training.

---Dr. Abernathy: Thanked Mr. Shehzad and Mr. Nomai for their presentation and study.

6. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: A great many things are going on and in process, and some or many of them will hopefully conclude in the near term. He will report on them in January 2020 at the following trustees' meeting.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: At 258 Fifth Street, excavation and footing is done, the stairs are reinforced, water line shutoff is done, the new slab and pumps are being installed, and the inspection is scheduled; meanwhile finishing and emergency lighting will be done. Expected completion of the work around the middle of January 2020. Bids opened for the Third Floor renovations and the bids ranged from \$5,598,000 to \$5,933,000; O'Hara and Hall submitted the low bid.

---Mrs. Podles: Continued the report: The third-floor bids were much higher than the architect estimated, primarily for two reasons: 1. this is an historic restoration with grant funding, and 2. work was scheduled for weekends, resulting in much higher wage scales.

---Dr. Abernathy: As a result of this, there were discussions with the architect on how to mitigate the cost by matching work with library revenue flow, and to "value engineer" the work.

---Mrs. Podles: With the 10% contingency and allowing for soft costs, the total estimated cost of the third-floor renovation is \$6,549,000; the committee explored cash flow options and sources to meet this cost, including funds in the New Jersey Historic Trust (NJHT) grant. But the library cannot accept any bids for the work because it cannot certify that it has the funds to complete the project.

---Dr. Abernathy: Added that this is a legal requirement and the library cannot get to the \$6,549,000 minimum number. The committee is continuing discussions with the architect about how to value engineer the project to cut costs; as it stands, the cost needs to be cut by \$1 million before the library can certify funding is available for the work. The plan is: 1. value engineer the project requirements and 2. examine alternative funding sources. Meanwhile, the recommendation is for the library to reject both bids and await guidance.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked how the application for state funding factors into the decision; is the answer to postpone for a year when the capital reserve will be larger? Discussion about how the architects could cut costs versus waiting for more capital funding versus obtaining alternative means of funding.

---Mrs. Podles: Added that if it is possible to identify a project that makes sense, the board could do it.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked if the library will have to reapply for the \$700,000 NJHT grant. No, but the library will have to request an extension from NJHT.

---Mrs. Podles: Also, it may be possible to adopt a reduced scope project that renovates the third floor and installs the new HVAC. Discussion about extending the project timeline, if it really becomes a problem.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked what is the minimum amount of capital reserves that the board is comfortable with. Discussion about drawing down the capital funding account to zero, if necessary.

---Mr. Marks: Moved the board reject both bids received for the third-floor renovation project.

---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. Marks	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

--- Mrs. Podles: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee: Presented the revised 2020 Library Budget for board approval. She noted two minor changes from the draft budget: 1. the library is making retirement contributions for part-time staff, and 2. the property and casualty insurance premium increased because there is more square footage in library facilities.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were further questions about the 2020 budget. There being none, it was added to the consent agenda.

---Mrs. Serrano: Continued the Budget and Finance Committee report: 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) checks no. 337-338 totaling \$75,768.58; 2.) in Part A, to pay FY 2019 library operating expenses with checks no. 8219-8216 and 8225-8230 totaling \$305,036.20; 3) to pay via PayPal \$500.00 to Facebook and \$22.00 to WordPress.com; 4.) to pay to Raul Sanguinetti for 2020 Petty Cash check no. 8231 for \$300.00; and 5.) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 8217-8224 totaling \$32,176.31. Also, a resolution is before the board to void checks 8115 and 8161.

---Mrs. Serrano: Asked if there were questions about the bills to be paid, the resolutions, or other matters.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked about a line item for check no. 8182 for \$32,542.50 to Java Connections LLC. This is a payment for a kiosk system for technology lending of laptops for patron use inside the library to alleviate demand for the library workstations.

---Mrs. Serrano: There being no further questions, the Part A bills to be paid and resolutions to void checks were added to the consent agenda.

---Mrs. Serrano: Moved the board approve payment of Part B bills for library materials.

---Ms. Blaney: 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			

---Mrs. Podles: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: The committee recommends board approval of a resolution to accept a proposal from Mr. Peter Pearson of Library Development Strategies to create a development plan for step up fundraising efforts; the trustees met Mr. Pearson at the board retreat and discussed ideas for development with him then. The resolution was added to the consent agenda.

8. Library Foundation Report

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported that addresses were corrected for the Library Foundation's email blast and postal fundraising. Also, planning is underway for the October 10, 2020 Library Foundation fundraiser gala dinner to be held in the Stevens Institute banquet room to mark the Hoboken Free Public Library's 130th anniversary.

9. Friends of the Library (FOTL) Report

---Mrs. Freiser: Reported for the Friends: Unfortunately Friends' board member Trudy Morely passed away.

The 2019 Novel Night fundraiser, "A Moveable Feast" exceeded planned goals and was enjoyed by all. The Friends' English as a Second Language (ESL) classes continues to get record attendance with students from more countries than ever before; students come from as far as Newark and families are attending.

10. Old Business

---Dr. Abernathy: Called for any old business. There was none. The consent agenda contains an item approving the revised library capital spending plan.

11. New Business

---Dr. Abernathy: Called for any new business. There was none.

12. Consent Agenda

---Ms. Murcko: Moved the board approve the meeting consent agenda, as follows:

- a. Accept the minutes of the meeting of November 26, 2019.
- b. Adopt the proposed FY 2020 library budget.
- c. Approve payment of Part A bills for non-media expenses and capital spending.
- d. Adopt resolution to void checks.
- e. Approve retaining Peter Pearson of Library Development Solutions to develop plan for fundraising program.
- f. Approve revised library capital plan.

---Ms. Evans: 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			

---Ms. Murcko: Moved to adjourn.

---Ms. Evans: Seconded.

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

The board of trustees adjourned at 7:49 p.m.