

MEETING OF TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2020

**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, FEBRUARY 25, 2020 AT 6:30 P.M.**

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

1. Call to Order

Treasurer Serrano called the meeting to order at 6:32 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 and at 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		
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, library counsel Michael Cerone, Esq. and members of the library staff and public.

---Mrs. Serrano: Dr. Abernathy's absence was due to business travel; a resolution excusing his absence was added to the consent agenda without objection.

3. Approval of Minutes

--Mrs. Serrano: Asked if there were any questions or corrections to the minutes of the January 28, 2020 board meeting. Approval was tabled for the March board meeting pending a revision.

4. Public Comments

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

5. Director's Report

---Mrs. Podles: Highlighted several items from the Director's Report: This month, the report statistics are presented with a new metric as discussed at previous meetings: they now include a year-over-year cumulative total for the tracked data for comparison. Because of the decision to suspend work on the 3rd floor, the staff suggested using the 3rd floor space for programming; it will be used for larger events, starting with an event marking the Indian Holi festival on March 8th. MakerSpace will also be moving to the 3rd floor and a second day will be added for coming months; on a related note, News12 New Jersey visited the library and broadcast a story on the Hoboken MakerSpace program, with interviews of Sasha Chavez, Heidi Schwab and the director; the report is available at newjersey.news12.com. New staff has joined: a new Children's Library Associate has started and a new Community Programming Library Assistant, who is a local resident, just accepted an offer to join. There is interest by Prof. Christopher Manzioni at Stevens Institute, who specializes in Augmented Reality (AR) technology and applications, to do something related to the library's 130th anniversary; discussions are ongoing. A new self-checkout kiosk for library materials has been installed; it is very convenient system but the staff is working out some bugs with it.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked which platform is being considered for the AR project. Discussion about possible platforms and phone app-based possibilities.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked if the city could install banners on Washington Street marking the 130th anniversary, as it did for the 125th anniversary. The library will explore having some made and installed.

---Mrs. Podles: Continued the report by presenting the Library's 2019 Annual Report: A printed version of the presentation will be sent to the Mayor, City Council, the trustees, and others. The 2019 metrics were very good: circulation was up 8%, the door count was up 5%, number of programs increased by 35%, program attendance increased by 46%, and new patrons registered increased by 12%. Analyzing these numbers, they seem to be the result of improved outreach: there is a new library learning center location at Harrison Street, and more programs and the book bike go out to senior centers; also, programs appear to lead to higher circulation because they enroll more patrons. Library finances for 2019 comprised a total budget of \$5,876,509, of which \$2,929,457 was for personnel, \$1,748,020 was for operations, and \$563,750 was earmarked for capital expense; also, the library was awarded a 3-phase New Jersey Historic Trust (NJHT) capital improvement grant of \$750,000 per phase, totaling \$2.25 million. 2019 highlights include the new learning center at 401 Harrison Street at the Hoboken Housing Authority (HHA), the very popular "Toybrary" and Teen Zone operating at the Annex at 256 Fifth Street, the Adult Cultural Club with lectures and trips, the Sunday afternoon concert series, the Library Book Bike to transport materials and show the flag at events around town, and fine-free materials lending with a No-Fine Summer. Campaigns included the "Universe of Stories" summer reading program, the June 2019 Library Festival in Church Square Park, the "To Infinity and Beyond" Toy Story 4 theme library cards for young patrons, and the "Oliver Readalot" toy owl premium patterned on the library's stone owl above the main doors. The library has now expanded to three neighborhood service points – the Learning Center, Grand Street Branch and main library – and is partnering with organizations such as Moms Demand Action and Climate Mobilization. The staff used public data and subscriber information to perform a ward-by-ward analysis of library patrons and use, and to identify potential areas for expansion and improvement; the study was delivered to the Mayor and City Council. There were also major technology upgrades: RFID tagging and checkout that works for all library materials, upgraded Makerspace, and the laptop lending kiosk. For library space planning and expansion, the Library Capital Plan was revised and adopted at the end of 2019 and a consultant was retained to conduct fundraising training at the 2019 Board Retreat.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: All the inspections are complete at 258 Fifth Street, which has turned out exceptionally well with excellent results in the basement; if it stays high and dry over the next year, it could possibly be used for classes, etc.; the third floor is being restored for programming use. A delayed library opening is being planned for some time in late March in order to accommodate staff training for emergencies; scenarios include workplace violence and likely emergencies such as Code Adam. Also, the committee is coordinating with the Hoboken Fire Department to schedule fire drills for all library buildings, including annexes, which will be accommodating more staff as they relocate there.

---Mrs. Podles: Continued the report: Also before the board is a resolution approving application for a new NJHT grant for the revised amount of \$4,614,000 calculated in consultation with the City of Hoboken grants specialist; the application deadline for the grant is April 6th.

---Ms. Blaney: Asked about the time frame for the grant funding. The hope is that it would allow work to start in early 2021, after the required prequalification process for historic restoration grants. Discussion about the funding process concluding by fall 2020; it might be necessary to go to Trenton with the city grant specialist. The resolution approving the application for the new NJHT grant was added to the consent agenda.

---Mrs. Podles: Reported for the Executive Committee: Completed the 2019 Annual Report presentation on metrics and surveys used to evaluate programs and customer feedback. The report is developed based on data from paper surveys; 202 completed 2019 patron surveys were collected and analyzed to identify local media for promotions and qualify program attendance; for example, 2/3 of respondents came to a program at least once a month. Surveys identified adult attendee preferences; now staff are exploring using email survey features of the calendar system to send patrons survey questions.

---Mr. Silbert: Asked about using premiums and incentives to get survey responses. Discussion about things that could be done to encourage survey participation.

---Mrs. Podles: Continued: She attended a meeting on the renovation project for the former Hoboken YMCA (now MBS Center), where she learned that the proposed space for the library was reduced from the previous plans. Also, the proposed rent is higher; the Board of Education has dropped out of the project due to the proposed rent.

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee: She described the financial matters before the board for approval (all in part 3 of the board package): 1.) for FY 2020, to pay from the capital improvement construction account at Bayonne Community Bank (BCB) checks no. 340 and 341 totaling \$9,019.96; 2.) in Part A, to pay FY 2019 library operating expenses with checks no. 8329-8332 totaling \$2,369.97; 3) in Part A, to pay FY 2020 library operating expenses with checks no. 8335-8396 and 8403 totaling \$64,500.74 and to pay via PayPal \$743.60 to Adobe, Inc., \$500.00 to Facebook and \$22.44 to Gengo; 4.) in Part B, to pay FY 2019 expenses for library materials with checks no. 8333-8334 totaling \$2,974.70; and 5.) in Part B, to pay FY 2020 expenses for library materials with checks no. 8397-8402 totaling \$20,321.97. Also, a resolution is before the board to void check 8037.

---Mrs. Serrano: Asked if there were questions about the bills to be paid, the resolution, or other matters. There were no questions; approval to pay the FY 2019 and FY 2020 capital spending, Part A bills, and resolution to void checks were added to the consent agenda.

---Ms. Blaney: Moved the board approve payment of FY 2019 and FY 2020 Part B bills for library materials.

---Ms. Evans: Seconded.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 5 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 1 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Evans	X			
Ms. Murcko			X	
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Mrs. Serrano, Treasurer	X			

---Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: Evaluations of Trustees are complete and the committee will prepare a report.

7. Library Foundation Report

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Library Foundation: Planning continues 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. Discussion about the library fundraising consultant; he will interview foundation members, the board president, and others on May 16th.

8. Friends of the Library (FOTL) Report

---Mrs. Freiser: Reported for the Friends: The Friends are seeking candidates for their board with marketing and financial experience. Also, they are again working with the Hoboken Historical Museum to do "Vanishing Hoboken" chatbooks and interviews, including a planned interview with Dominick of Dom's Bakery. In addition, consideration is being given to doing surveys and offering books as premiums for completing surveys. Discussion about the library's History Librarian also looking to do historical interviews.

9. Old Business

---Mrs. Serrano: Called for any old business. There was none.

10. New Business

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

11. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Excuse the absence of President Abernathy.
- b. Adopt resolution to apply for funds available under the NJ Library Construction Bond Act.
- c. Approve payment of FY 2019 and FY 2020 Part A bills for non-media expenses and capital spending.
- d. Adopt resolution to void check.

---Ms. Evans: Seconded.

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

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Evans	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Mrs. Serrano, Treasurer	X			

12. Trustee Comments

---Ms. Blaney: Asked about progress on moving to a paperless board package. Discussion about using cloud-based services like GoogleDocs or software programs available for running board meetings.

---Ms. Blaney: Asked about devices for paperless preparations. Discussion about suitable tablets or laptops like Chromebooks and acquiring them for the trustees.

---Mrs. Serrano: Moved to adjourn.

---Mr. Silbert: Seconded.

---Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

The board of trustees adjourned at 7:55 p.m.