

MEETING OF TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2020

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HOBOKEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY, HELD IN A TELEPHONE CONFERENCE CALL IN HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY ON TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2020 AT 6:30 P.M.

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

1. Call to Order

President Abernathy called the meeting to order at 6:31 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. The meeting notice was amended at the outset of the Coronavirus-19 (Covid-19) emergency to provide the telephone conference number and access code in advance of the scheduled meeting.

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		
Mayor's Designee*			
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, and members of the library staff.

3. Approval of Minutes

--Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were any questions or corrections to the minutes of the January 28, 2020 board meeting or the revised minutes of the February 25, 2020 board meeting. There being none, the minutes were added to the consent agenda.

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: She reviewed the Covid-19 virus public health emergency shutdown and actions leading up to it: As it progressed, first large programs were canceled, then all programs were canceled; when she was informed of the school closing and the Mayor's closing of City Hall, it was decided to close the library at the same time as the schools. Staff were directed to work at home; acquisitions were focused on online and e-book materials to support patrons at home. After speaking with the Children's Department, it was decided to do "YouTube Storytime" and move Storytime to the Web; there is also a good selection of online classes and programs available. In the library building, there are only maintenance and security personnel because certain tasks need to be done, i.e., processing periodicals, cleaning, marketing, etc.; social distancing is being practiced; staff meetings are continuing but are virtual and departments are conducting weekly meetings as well using online conferencing like Go2Meeting and Google. The library's social media following has increased dramatically in the crisis: there were 160 new requests for library cards and staff accommodated these requests by creating a "digital library card" so the patrons can access materials online. The Web site has not been as active but traffic has increased; some classes that were recorded will be put online there.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked if the staff could create a "cheat sheet" guide to online services, including the new services, for patrons. Also, is there a way of tracking usage of the new online services and offerings.

---Mrs. Podles: Digital checkouts can be tracked and analyzed; it's possible to do some tracking and analysis.

6. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: Thought that the assumptions and strategic planning for 2020 will all need to be reassessed due to the emergency. Regarding new grant funding, the legislative deadline for New Jersey state library construction bond act granting has been pushed back to the end of the year or possibly later. On the positive side, there are also opportunities to provide new services; the library's fundraising consultant from St. Paul, Minnesota, noted a huge increase in online demand: in one case, a seminar that drew 20 children in real space had 5,600 attendees online. In that vein, he wondered what library programming and services can be provided to unemployed workers. He thought the library should quickly assess what can be done because the Johns Hopkins web site shows how the virus "curve" is climbing rapidly; the library can expect very large demands and should consider what services can be provided to the community in this situation.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked whether the library staff can get word of the library services that are available to the community, to Mayor Bhalla, and to each city council member, so they can share the information in their own communications with constituents.

---Mrs. Podles: The staff is already sharing information with the mayor and a press release is in the works for the mayor; she will also see that it goes to the council members.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: Before the building closure, maintenance was wiping down and disinfecting all frequently touched surfaces. Since the closure, cleaning has continued together with some painting where needed, starting on the third floor and working down; the cleaning has now reached the lower level. Chairs, tables, fixtures, shelves, and book covers are being cleaned and disinfected. The circulation desk and restrooms were stripped and disinfected, and carpets are being deep cleaned. "Deep fogging"

is available for disinfection, but it is expensive and the American Library Association (ALA) advises it may not be necessary and findings indicate it does not last very long. For now, cleaning continues using Chlorox disinfectant.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked if the maintenance staff has enough gloves, masks, cleaning and paper products, and other supplies. Yes, the Director and her Assistant Faith Fitzsimmons located and purchased a large supply early when there was good availability. Discussion about the library being exceptionally clean at this point, but continuous disinfection is necessary because there is a continuous inflow of periodicals, mail and materials and all of them have to be disinfected.

---Mr. Chapka: Continued the report: The committee report contains a recommendation for the vehicle purchase that has been under discussion as part of the budget: It is a 2019 Ford Transit minivan/cargo van that is suitable for book and material deliveries, errands, staff transport, programming, and other identified needs; the dealership is pre-approved by the Educational Service Commission of New Jersey so competitive bidding would not be required. Lastly, work in the 258 Fifth Street property has been completed and staff has been moved in with computers, phones, and other systems; unfortunately, before staff moved into the building, there was a break-in in the basement, apparently by a vagrant who broke a window, slept there, and ate food. As a result, additional security cameras have been installed inside and outside, and they now cover the sidewalk from 258 Fifth Street to the Main Library Building; he is also investigating a security alarm for the building.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked about motor vehicle insurance for the van. It would come under the library's umbrella policy; the recommended amount has not been determined yet.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked about planned coverage and particularly if there was a high deductible. Discussion about when the coverage amounts will be known – they are not known now – and about limiting the number of drivers.

---Mrs. Podles: Added the library insurance policy will be looked at again; it does cover vehicles; the deductible will be examined before purchase of any vehicle.

---Mrs. Serrano: Noted the insurance premium would increase if the van is transporting people. Discussion about coverage for municipal employee transport; the van's main purpose will be transporting materials.

---Ms. Blaney: Asked where it would be parked. It would have a city parking permit sticker for street parking; also it should be parkable in a monthly spot at a municipal garage, but it is not known whether the fee will be waived for the library.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked about the break-in: were the police notified and a report filed? Yes, a report was filed and the facilities director met with two detectives; besides the broken window, McDonalds french fries containers were found inside but there was no vandalism or apparent theft.

---Mrs. Serrano: Asked about changing the outside doors at 258 Fifth Street and whether the existing doors are secure. Discussion about the doors: they are standard wooden exterior doors but the preference is to replace them with metal doors and to install better windows.

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee: After five years with the previous library auditor, best practices for financial management require retaining a new auditor, so before the board is a resolution to retain the auditing firm of Wielkotz & Company LLC to audit the library's FY 2019 financial statements. Wielkotz was previously a library auditor, but was replaced because the firm at that time also audited the city's finances; they are well qualified public auditors. She described the financial matters before the board for approval: 1.) to pay from the capital improvement construction account at Bayonne Community Bank (BCB) check no. 342 totaling \$1,053.24; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 8406-8468 and

8477-8479 totaling \$121,560.66 and to pay via PayPal \$99.00 to WordPress; 3.) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 8469-8476 totaling \$29,541.50; and 4.) to void check no. 8171.

---Mrs. Serrano: Asked if there were questions about the resolution to retain a new auditor for FY 2019, about the bills to be paid, the check to be voided or other matters. There were no questions; approval to retain Wielkottz & Company LLC as auditor, to pay the capital spending, Part A bills, and to void the check was added to the consent agenda.

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

---Ms. Evans: Seconded.

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

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

---Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: Evaluations of Trustees are complete and she will meet with them to finalize goals for 2020; she hopes to have the report for the April board meeting.

8. Library Foundation Report

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Library Foundation: The Covid-19 virus emergency has forced the postponement of the October 10, 2020 Library Foundation fundraiser gala dinner until further notice. The foundation is working with the library’s fundraising consultant in the meantime. The “Hudson Gives” 2020 1-day online charity fundraiser will be on May 14th and donations are encouraged in that way.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked if the gala dinner could be postponed until 2021. It could be, depending on the course of the emergency.

---Ms. Blaney: Added that many of the gala dinner sponsors are local restaurants and businesses, which will be in serious financial straits for the foreseeable future.

9. Friends of the Library (FOTL) Report

---Dr. Abernathy: In the absence of an officer of the Friends, there will be no report.

10. Old Business

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

11. New Business

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

11. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Accept minutes of meetings of January 28, 2020 and February 24, 2020.
- b. Adopt resolution to hire as Wielkotz & Company LLC as auditors for FY 2019 financials.
- c. Approve payment of FY 2020 Part A bills for non-media expenses and capital spending.
- d. Adopt resolution to void check.

---Ms. Murcko: Seconded.

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

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

12. Trustee Comments

---Mrs. Podles: Thanked the trustees and everyone else connected to the library for continuing to see to the business of the library during the emergency; many other libraries have suspended everything. Also, she relayed the thanks of the staff for enabling them to work at home, and the appreciation of the Mayor for supporting continuing remote board meetings that adhere to the emergency guidelines, to keep the library operating.

---Dr. Abernathy: Added that with the schools closed, most workers at home, and adults in town under stress, this is the time for the library to step up to meet the needs of the community in every possible way.

---Dr. Abernathy: Moved to adjourn.

---Adopted by without objection by voice vote as follows: YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

The board of trustees adjourned at 7:35 p.m.