

MEETING OF TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2020

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HOBOKEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY, HELD IN A ZOOM ONLINE VIDEO CONFERENCE IN HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY ON TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2020 AT 6:30 P.M.

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

1. Call to Order

President Abernathy 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, was posted at the Library website 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		Joined meeting at 6:43 p.m.
Ms. Susan Murcko, Secretary**	X		
Ms. Amanda R. Blaney**	X		
Ms. Jennifer Evans, School Superintendent's Designee***	X		
Mr. Jason Freeman, Mayor's Designee***	X		
Ms. Raakhee Mirchandani**	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 public and library staff.

3. Board of Trustees Annual Reorganization for 2020-2021

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

---Mr. Silbert: Nominated Ms. Murcko to serve as Board Secretary for 2020-2021.

---Ms. Blaney: Seconded. There being no additional nominations a roll call vote was taken:

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 9 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

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

---Ms. Evans: Nominated Dr. Abernathy to serve as Board President for 2020-2021.

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

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 9 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

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

---Dr. Abernathy: Nominated Mrs. Serrano to serve as Board Treasurer for 2020-2021.

---Ms. Blaney: Seconded. There being no additional nominations, a roll-call vote was taken.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 9 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

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

Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

---Mrs. Serrano: Joined the Zoom meeting in progress at 6:43 p.m. Nominations for all board officers reflect her participation and votes were recorded after she joined the conference.

---Dr. Abernathy: Thanked the trustees for their continuing confidence and added special thanks to the officers for their time and attention to the library during this critical time for the community.

4. Adoption of 2019-2020 Board Meeting Schedule

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were any questions or concerns regarding the proposed 2020-21 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 23, 2020. There being none, approval of the minutes was added to the consent agenda.

6. Public Comments

---Dr. Abernathy: Invited comments from the public.

---Ms. Laura Knittel, library staff: Thanked the board for continuing the library reopening and asked how to get the board meeting packet online. The board package is available on the library website.

---Mr. Sacha Chavez, staff union president: Added that the staff is working hard and looking forward to a return to regular hours.

7. Director's Report

---Mrs. Podles: Highlighted several items from the Director's Report: The library reopening continues, with computer appointments now available again; the second floor has been reorganized with partitions and additional security has been hired to escort patrons there for computer appointments. So far, there have not been too many appointments but patrons are coming in to print and scan. Circulation is picking up and patrons are using curbside pickup; this service is a very labor-intensive process involving quarantining materials, bagging requests, calling patrons, etc. Circulation numbers for June are back to where they were before the Covid emergency; there is more digital circulation now, but 6,000 physical items also were reserved and delivered. The pickup locker

system has been activated and it is working well and will probably continue after reopening; the director also spoke to the director of the Hoboken Multi-Service Center about installing a smaller pickup locker at the branch there and the idea was well received; Facilities Director Michael Chapka will meet with them about technical requirements. Patrons will soon be able to enter the building and use self checkout and the grab-and-go app. Events for fall are under discussion; live events are not certain until October at the earliest. The director asked the trustees and library supporters like the Friends and the Library Foundation to record a short endorsement of their favorite book, to celebrate the library's 230th anniversary. There were flooding problems with the annex buildings during recent thunderstorms, to be discussed in the Buildings and Grounds Committee report. The 2019 audit has been scheduled for August; most of it can be done online but the auditing firm will need to visit next month. Staff workload remains very heavy, so the circulation workers are being reorganized into three teams, instead of the previous four teams.

---Mr. Freeman: Asked if the library has been able to get needed Covid testing. Yes, the city assisted with staff testing but the results are slow.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked about the meeting next week on the feasibility study that was done for the Hoboken Community Center (HCC, the former MBS Center/YMCA building).

---Dr. Abernathy: The feasibility study focused on services the center could provide to generate revenue; the library part of the plan is still taking shape. The proposed library space is less than was expected, 7,500-8,000 sq. ft. is available but we had been hoping for more. He is trying to get more clarity and hopes to have a report in August. Discussion about the space at the HCC; the original plan involved 9,000-12,000 sq. ft. for a library branch.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: In the main library, plexiglass partitions have been upgraded and complete enclosures have been fabricated; the committee is continuously looking at procedures and methods of operating safely. There have been two water intrusions in Annex 1 and 2 during the two major thunderstorms this month. The floodgates in the main building held up with up to three feet of water against the gates, but both Annexes experienced flooding; Annex 1 got about 3 inches of water in the lower level, which got into the "Toybrary," and Annex 2 had more water intrusion into the lower level. There was no mold after the cleanup, but the donated toys had to be discarded. As a result, there are now discussions about using floodgates in the Annexes.

---Ms. Murcko: Thanked Mr. Chapka for staying on top of the flooding situation.

---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: 1.) this month there were no payments from the capital improvement construction account at Bayonne Community Bank (BCB); 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 8647-8700 totaling \$313,561.05; and 3.) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 8642-8646 totaling \$28,578.28.

---Mrs. Serrano: Noted that there were several large checks among this month's bills, including a payment for staff health insurance and another to Hudson Awning for an awning to protect the patron lock box and curbsite pickup area. She asked if there were questions about the bills to be paid or other matters. There was discussion about the second quarter health insurance bill; the director plans to wait on paying it until the city provides back funds to cover the payment. The Part A bills to be approved for payment 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: 8 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 1 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Evans	X			
Mr. Freeman	X			
Ms. Mirchandani	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 called the trustees' attention to the proposed policy on wearing masks in the library, which is needed to comply with the governor's executive order. People who refuse to wear masks will be excluded from the library. Discussion about solutions for patrons who do not or cannot wear masks; chromebooks will be available for checkout and the library Wireless signal will be boosted to cover part of Church Square Park.

---Mrs. Serrano: Asked if there is a plan for people who refuse to wear a mask and try to make an issue of it. Extra security has been hired and the police will be called if necessary.

9. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: Once again, thanked the trustees for their confidence and for his reappointment as president by the board. Over the past month he has become very concerned that there will be major impacts from the Covid virus, for example permanent retail and restaurant closures; many of these impacting workers earning between \$10-20 per hour who now have no continuing emergency financial support, access to personal protective equipment, etc. There is now the prospect of permanent damage being done to the community and the people here. He asked board to think about what additional services the library can provide to help in this situation.

---Mrs. Podles: The library mission includes many services that apply to the crisis; the Literacy Specialist is organizing to help both young people and older workers who need help with resumes and learning the job search process. Discussion about reaching out to the Hoboken Housing Authority (HHA) and other community institutions to hear about community needs and trends in the present emergency situation.

10. Library Foundation Report

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Library Foundation: They expect to meet with the library fundraising consultant, Mr. Peter Pearson of Library Strategies, to do strategic planning and capital planning in August.

11. Friends of the Library (FOTL) Report

---Dr. Abernathy: There is no report from the Friends this month.

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 was discussion about Mr. Cerone’s tenure as counsel – now 8 years – and Mr. Shao’s role in providing services such as onboarding, background checks and civil service considerations.

---Mr. Freeman: Proposed a separate voice or roll call vote for the library counsel’s contract.

---Ms. Blaney: Had to leave the conference but authorized “yes” votes for all three contracts and for the consent agenda. She left the conference at 7:44 p.m.

---Ms. Murcko: Moved the board approve renewing Mr. Cerone’s contract for 2020-2021.

---Ms. Evans: Seconded.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 2

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			

Ms. Evans	X			
Mr. Freeman				X
Ms. Mirchandani				X
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

---Ms. Serrano: Moved the board approve renewing the contracts for Ruderman Roth LLC and for Mr. Michael Shao as HR consultant for 2020-2021.

---Mr. Silbert: Seconded.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 2

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

14. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Adopt schedule of board meeting dates for 2020-2021.
- b. Accept minutes of board meeting of June 23, 2020.
- c. Approve payment of Part A bills for non-media operating expenses.
- d. Adopt the proposed Hoboken Library Policy on Patron Mask Use.

---Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 9 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Evans	X			

Mr. Freeman	X			
Ms. Mirchandani	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

15. Trustee Comments

---Mr. Silbert: Pointed out that the city’s web site lists the dates for the Board of Trustees meetings, but the meeting dates listed are for 2016-2017; he asked if it was up to the library to maintain it. Discussion about the city’s new webmaster posting the correct meeting dates immediately.

---Mr. Thoens: Moved to adjourn.

---Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

---Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS: 9 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

The board of trustees adjourned at 7:53 p.m.