

MEETING OF TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 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, AUGUST 25, 2020 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 28, 2020 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	Network problem.
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., Mr. Niall Murray and Ms. Annette Tomarrazo of the Hoboken Community Center, and members of the public and library staff.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if the trustees had any corrections or comments regarding the minutes of the board meeting of July 28, 2020. There being none, approval of the minutes was added to the consent agenda.

4. Public Comments

---Dr. Abernathy: Invited comments from the public. There were none.

5. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: Last month, questions were asked about the status of the renovation of the Hoboken Community Center (HCC), the former YMCA building at Washington and 13th Streets; he introduced Mr. Niall Murray of the HCC and Ms. Toni Tomarazzo of the Hoboken Food Pantry to present and discuss the status of the project and the library's participation in it. The trustees greeted Mr. Murray and Ms. Tomarazzo.

---Mr. Murray: Thanked the board for the opportunity to present about the redevelopment plans for the HCC and update the trustees on the project status:

The HCC building presently contains three community organizations: The Mind-Body-Spirit (MBS) housing center for low-income men; the Hoboken Food Pantry, which feeds hundreds of residents each week; and the unused Athletic and Recreation Center of the old YMCA facility, which includes a swimming pool and ball courts on several floors. The idea behind the redevelopment proposal is to create a "mini-92nd Street Y" for Hoboken; he showed drawings of the proposed renovation of the HCC building, including the Recreation and Athletic Center, with the third floor being the proposed space for an uptown library branch. Above it would be a fourth floor event or banquet space. The intention is to create a public-private partnership between the library, the City of Hoboken, and Hudson County in order to identify and pursue opportunities for significant capital expansion for the project.

---Mr. Freeman: Asked about the status of fundraising. Fundraising is in the planning stage with a feasibility study conducted by a specialist firm in Indianapolis and engaging with the city's grant-writing specialist; the next step will be to identify possible federal grants.

---Ms. Evans: Asked if the timing was dependent on when funding comes in. Discussion about funding pre-development as the first step that will allow realistic choices for the final project. Further discussion about the final cost estimate for the redevelopment of roughly \$20-25 million.

---Mr. Silbert: Added that he was excited by the building's potential when he toured it two years ago but the progress stalled. Discussion about participants coming and going in the interim, including the Board of Education, which is statutorily barred from participating.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked if the library had been allocated the entire third floor and how much space that would be. The plan allocates the entire floor to the library branch; it comprises 9,000 square feet, with approximately 7,000 usable; in addition flex space is available that the library could use.

---Dr. Abernathy: Thanked Mr. Murray and Ms. Tomarazzo for their update and hopes to see more progress as the Covid-19 pandemic wanes.

6. Director's Report

---Mrs. Podles: Highlighted several items from the Director's Report: Circulation continues to increase due to digital lending and the expansion of curbside pickups. The situation is dynamic as the library has just introduced "grab-and-go" pickups from the building lobby, but she does not expect actual browsing in the stacks to return until the virus is contained. The public is very enthusiastic about the outside and locker pickups, and feedback is that it continues to be a positive experience for patrons. Reopening has proceeded very deliberately by reintroducing services, first outside, then inside computer appointments and now grab-and-go and opening for three nights per week. Staff has been directed to wear masks or face shields and gloves.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked if there is a way to compare our circulation data with other libraries around the state. The library receives annual statistics, but the director will ask BCCLS to see what they can share.

---Mrs. Podles: Continued the report: Gloria Martorana, the long-time Children's Librarian and winner of the NJLA Library Service Award, has retired after 25 years, and unfortunately the pandemic limited the possibilities of a retirement party; that will hopefully take place as health conditions improve. The Teen Librarian is very busy and a lot is going on related to the YA Department. A new phone app for scanning book barcodes is available so grab-and-go patrons can check out books by using their phones. New laptops have been ordered so patrons can use them when computer appointments are booked up; computer use is picking up and printing and scanning are being more widely used. Lastly, she participated in the state library directors' meeting with the NJ State Librarian, where she heard the NJ Library Construction Bond Act grants might be awarded in a few months.

---Mr. Cerone: It is possible the state legislature will approve the grant funds in September, so grant letters can go out in October. Discussion about the possible time frame of the grant awards.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: It has been very busy, with people lining up 15 minutes before their appointments and saying they are glad to have the main library; the staff is very busy as a result and his primary activity is maintaining the sanitization and ensuring people are not allowed in without a mask or face shield; they are supplied with a mask if they need one. The computers are distanced and a security guard has been hired to escort patrons to computer appointments upstairs and to monitor and admit patrons two-by-two. Elevator use is very limited, distancing markers are on the floors, and restrooms remain off-limits. Because of the new extended hours, it is now a very long day for the staff and he will be bringing in outside help for sanitizing and cleaning on the three nights the library is open until 8 p.m. At the Grand Street branch, materials pickup lockers are being installed; he and staffer Phil Mendez set up the site with the city's electrician for electric power and a network connection.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked if the committee had any discussions about replacing the HVAC system to maximize air flow, because being indoors for long time periods increases Covid risk. Discussion about the first floor now

having portable HEPA filters to change the air; the upper floors do not. If the pandemic continues next year, he will discuss with library architects Clarke Caton Hintz to make sure the issue is addressed in the new HVAC system.

---Mrs. Podles: Added that HVAC replacement has to be addressed and air circulation is a consideration; in the interim, portable HEPA filters can be added to all the floors.

---Dr. Abernathy: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee in Mrs. Serrano's absence: The committee has included the draft 2021 budget in the board package for the trustees' convenience prior to the budget being introduced later in the year. He 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. 8705-8744 totaling \$76,484.17 and to pay via Paypal \$719.76 to Adobe, \$1,522.50 to Constant Contact, \$139.95 to Grammarly and \$52.26 to Skype Communications; 3.) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 8745-8752 totaling \$28,663.93; and 4.) to void check no. 8550 for \$1,900.00.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were any questions about the bills to be paid or voided check. There being none, the Part A bills to be approved for payment and check to be voided were added to the consent agenda.

---Mr. Freeman: Moved the board approve paying the Part B bills for library materials.

---Ms. Murcko: 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. Freeman	X			
Ms. Mirchandani	X			
Ms. Murcko			X	
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

8. Library Foundation Report

---Ms. Blaney: Reported for the Library Foundation: There is no report for this month due to the cancellation of the foundation's anniversary fundraiser event and difficulties organizing meetings in the summer in the quarantine. Foundation meetings will hopefully resume next month.

9. Friends of the Library (FOTL) Report

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

10. Old Business

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

11. New Business

---Dr. Abernathy: Advised the trustees that he will be reaching out to them about forming committees and their structure.

12. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Accept minutes of board meeting of July 28, 2020.
- b. Approve payment of Part A bills for non-media operating expenses.

---Ms. Murcko: 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. Freeman	X			
Ms. Mirchandani	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

13. Trustee Comments

---Mr. Freeman: Has been reviewing library programming and thought it looked great; however, it seems that adult programming is drawing more viewers than children's and YA programs. He wondered what was the cause in the increased attendance and the discrepancy.

---Mrs. Podles: Thought the real message might be that the real product was the recording, not the live program, because viewership only increases afterward. Discussion about how the epidemic is permanently changing how business is being done, including events. Further discussion about how views of recorded events might not be reflected in the statistics, for example, Mr. Silbert's program on disability; in fact there could be millions of viewers.

---Ms. Murcko: Noted that digitizing content is part of the new Strategic Plan, so one outcome of the pandemic is that the goal is being achieved.

---Ms. Mirchandani: Moved to adjourn.

---Dr. Abernathy: Seconded.

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

The board of trustees adjourned at 7:45 p.m.