

MEETING OF TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 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, OCTOBER 27, 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 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		
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.

---Dr. Abernathy: Noted that Mr. Freeman was ill and Ms. Mirchandani's absence was due to a scheduling conflict; without objection a motion to excuse their absences was added to the meeting consent agenda.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if the trustees had any corrections or comments regarding the minutes of the board meeting of September 22, 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. Director's Report

---Mrs. Podles: Highlighted several items from the Director's Report: In the interest of time, she referred the trustees to her written report on last month's library operations, and to the 2019 audit provided with the board package. Instead, there will be a special presentation by Phil Mendez, the library's IT Manager, on ways the library is using technology to extend services as part of the library strategic plan and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

---Mr. Mendez: Presented the library's Technology 2020 program based on the library's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan: The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the evaluation and purchase of many of the Strategic Plan's proposed technology initiatives and they have greatly helped to make library services available to patrons via computer and smartphones. Some examples are the laptop lending kiosk; mobile printing; preloaded technology on both Apple and other platforms; multi-language technology; mobile hotspots to make internet access available to the 30% of residents without an internet connection; self-service pickup lockers at the main branch and soon at Grand Street; Zoom meetings; the self-service checkout kiosk; the MeeScan phone app for checking out materials from all BCCLS libraries; catalog computer stations; real-time online chat on the library web site; expanded library Wi-Fi outside the building to cover about half the park with signage to make people aware; many free online media services on the Web site, including eFreeLibraryNJ, eBCCLS, Freegal, Hoopla, Kanopy and many others; remote programming and video recording and production facilities; and signage around town driving patrons to the library web site at hobokenlibrary.org.

---Mr. Mendez: In the future, technologies like Constant Contact and Patron Point will be used for patron communications; chromebooks can be lent to students; an outdoor cyber-cafe can be implemented after the winter; and digital signage will replace static banner ads inside and outside the library and at the learning center at Hoboken Housing Authority (HHA). Technology was also used to celebrate the library's 130th anniversary with Zoom meetings to coordinate the events and with the launch of a historical web site, hobokenlibrary130.omeka.net.

---Mr. Mendez: Concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic forced the acceleration of planned innovations in the library's Strategic Plan, as well as other new practices that emerged from the pandemic shutdown.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if it is possible to click through the web site pages to reach Kanopy or other media services. Yes, it is.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked if people are using the online site and chat to ask questions. Yes, e-mail and live chat are being used.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: Open operations are continuing with patrons being allowed into designated areas; they are tracked by security to check patron usage and where they are in the building. The sanitizing protocol continues and is scheduled with the staff. The Director and her staff are helping to obtain needed equipment and supplies, including UV wands, electrostatic sprayers, wipes, etc. Security is enforcing the occupancy and mask policy; there have been a few cases of patrons refusing to use

masks. The committee continues to explore new guidance on cleaning, procedures, etc. as it becomes available. At the Learning Center at HHA, staff is trying to restore a level of service but it's a small space with fixed windows that restrict air circulation inside the building. Most patron requests at HHA involve printing. To try to meet them, the committee is planning to replace a fixed window with one that opens so allow staff can interact with patrons; it is hoped to have the window installed within a few weeks. There are discussions with library architects Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH) about finishing the basement at Annex 2, 258 Fifth Street, so it can be used as meeting space.

--Dr. Abernathy: Asked if the Annex 2 basement is dry. It has been; no water intrusion since work was done.

--Mr. Mendez: Wanted to extend thanks from the IT staff to Faith Fitzsimmons, because she obtained a UV box to sterilize technology lending items like laptops.

--Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee, there is no formal committee report this month but the FY 2019 audit is before the trustees: 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. 8822-8877 totaling \$688,739.30; 3.) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 8878-8885 totaling \$44,027.53; and 4.) to approve a resolution to void check no. 8431.

--Mrs. Serrano: Noted that Part A included three large checks for \$125,477.01 for Insurance, \$227,922.80 for Health Insurance and \$230,875.68 for Pension (Employer) contributions, all payable through the City of Hoboken. In addition, before the trustees is a resolution to reserve \$557,257.00 of FY 2020 operating funds for capital improvement projects identified in the 2017 Capital Master Plan. She asked if there were any questions about the bills to be paid, the resolution to void the check, or the resolution to transfer funds for capital projects.

--Mr. Silbert: Asked about check no. 8855 to Our Lady of Grace church. It is for rental of storage space at the church.

--Mrs. Serrano: There being no further questions, the Part A bills to be approved for payment, the resolution to void the check and the resolution to transfer operating funds for capital improvement projects were all added to the consent agenda.

--Ms. Blaney: Moved the board approve paying the Part B bills for library materials.

--Mrs. Serrano: 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	
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

---Mrs. Podles: The FY 2019 Library Audit by the new auditors, Wielkocz & Company, is before the board; the audit was excellent; there were no notes from the new auditors. She asked if there were any questions concerning the FY 2019 audit; there being none, acceptance of the audit was added to the consent agenda.

---Dr. Abernathy: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: There is a personnel matter before the committee that will require an executive session.

---Ms. Murcko: Moved the board enter executive session to discuss the personnel matter.

---Ms. Blaney: 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			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

---Dr. Abernathy: Before the executive session, he asked Mrs. Freiser if she would prefer to report for the Friends of the Library and update the board rather than waiting until the conclusion of the executive session.

7. Friends of the Library (FOTL)

---Mrs. Freiser: Reported for the Friends of the Library: Thanked the trustees and was very glad to resume attending board meetings on Zoom to represent the Friends. The Friends' principal activities all had to be shut down due to the pandemic, so book donations, book sales, fundraising, and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes have all been in suspense. She is recruiting new board members and discussing with the Director and Ms. Blaney of the Library Foundation how to join together for joint fundraising.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked if FOTL were resuming ESL classes online with Zoom. Not at the moment; the volunteer teachers and tutors of the Friends are all on Zoom a lot as part of their regular jobs, which has made organizing additional FOTL classes with them impossible; FOTL is staying in touch with the regular ESL students.

8. Executive Session

The board went into Executive Session at 7:15 and returned at 7:26 p.m.

---Dr. Abernathy: Summarized the session: it concerned a personnel matter and no board actions or votes were taken.

---Dr. Abernathy: Before the board is an application for unpaid leave for library staffer Patricia Fischetto from July 1 to December 31, 2020. Without objection, the application was added to the consent agenda.

9. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: There was no report for this meeting.

10. Library Foundation Report

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Library Foundation: The 2020 Annual Appeal of the Foundation is being drafted with plans to mail it before Thanksgiving.

11. Old Business and New Business

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

---Mrs. Podles: After due consideration, she informed the board that she was planning to retire as Director during the year 2021, tentatively on June 1, 2021.

12. Consent Agenda

---Mr. Silbert: Moved the board approve the meeting consent agenda as follows:

- a. Excuse the absences of Jason Freeman due to illness and Rakhee Mirchandani due to a schedule conflict.
- b. Accept minutes of board meeting of September 22, 2020.
- c. Approve payment of Part A bills for non-media operating expenses.
- d. Adopt resolution to void check.
- e. Adopt resolution authorizing transfer of \$\$557,257.00 of FY 2020 operating funds for capital improvement projects.
- f. Accept the FY 2019 Library Audit
- g. Approve unpaid leave for Patricia Fischetto from July 1 to December 31, 2020.

---Mrs. Serrano: 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			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

13. Trustee Comments

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were any comments. There were none.

---Ms. Evans: Moved to adjourn.

---Dr. Abernathy: Seconded.

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

The board of trustees adjourned at 7:32 p.m.