

MEETING OF TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 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, SEPTEMBER
22, 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		
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: Ms. Mirchandani's absence was due to a scheduling conflict; without objection a motion to excuse it 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 August 25, 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: Circulation continues to increase, but the bulk of lending is e-books and digital lending, with physical materials circulation far below pre-pandemic levels and recovering very slowly. Reopening has proceeded and, as of yesterday, September 21, the upper floors of the library are open; she informed the mayor's office and a NIXLE advisory message about the opening was sent to all Hoboken residents. There are strict limits on the numbers of patrons admitted and the time allowed in various locations in the building: three simultaneous visitors are allowed into the first floor and mezzanine stacks for up to 30 minutes each; on the second and third floors, visitors can stay for 60 minutes. On the third floor, new partitions have been installed to facilitate distancing. The additional security personnel monitor patrons' locations and visiting times in the different areas, using sign-in sheets to track time in and out, and disinfection procedures are aggressive because people are touching things. Numerous disinfection technologies are being used, including cleaning, fogging, ultraviolet (UV) lights, and ventilation. The library's 130th Anniversary has arrived and October 3rd is planned to be a celebration that will feature events, an author talk, and recordings by trustees, staff and patrons describing their favorite books. Lastly, there will be a revised fine-free policy introduced by the Personnel and Policy Committee for discussion.

---Ms. Murcko: Wondered whether the low materials circulation is due to the slowdown in BCCLS; her family requested four items over the past month and so far has received only one of them. Discussion about BCCLS playing catch-up; it was only making three deliveries per week and is now back to five deliveries, and the protocol for BCCLS materials is extremely labor-intensive.

---Dr. Abernathy: Noted that e-book lending has increased 95% at the same time as the BCCLS slowdown.

---Mr. Silbert: Was back in the library media room today and it felt like coming home; he suggested copying the practice of the Tunes music store in town and putting out hand sanitizer and gloves for patrons handling media. Discussion about supplementing library pandemic measures with gloves and sanitizer for patrons.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: As reported earlier, the main library building is now open and 26 patrons at a time are being allowed in to use designated areas; they are monitored by security doing sign-in and -out to check patron times and locations. Elevator use is limited and monitored so patrons who leave by elevator are accounted for. There is hourly disinfection of all touched surfaces, including computers. The Grand Street branch is also open now and the same measures are being taken there; also, doors at

Grand Street were re-installed and staff relocated to keep a safe distance. Seven patrons at a time are allowed in all areas of the Grand Street branch.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked what are the rules for elevator access in the main building. Patrons have to ask the security guard to use it; the ground-level alley entrance is closed, so elevator access is controlled by security.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked about the status of the Learning Center at Hoboken Housing Authority (HHA).

---Mrs. Podles: The Learning Center has to remain closed unfortunately because it's so small; safe Covid-19 distancing isn't possible in the confined space. Instead, library staff are setting up tables outside the Learning Center twice a week and distributing information about the other places in town where patrons can get materials and services at this time. She is also exploring the idea of installing a service window in the front of the Learning Center so people can check out materials there.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked if there had been any problems with patrons who won't observe the rules about wearing masks, etc. At this point, there have been no problems; there is a high degree of compliance in Hoboken generally and at the library so far.

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee, there is no formal 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. 8755-8812 totaling \$84,220.10 and to pay via Paypal \$4,221.03 to Adobe Systems; 3.) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 8813-8819 totaling \$13,068.82; and 4.) to approve a resolution to void checks no. 8536, 8687 and 8715.

---Mrs. Serrano: Noted that there was a large check for \$16,903.00 for Workers' Comp. Insurance in this month's bills. Asked if there were any questions about the bills to be paid or the voided checks in the resolution. There being none, the Part A bills to be approved for payment and the resolution to void checks were added to the consent agenda.

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

---Mr. Freeman: 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. Murcko			X	
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			

Dr. Abernathy, President	X			
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---Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: An extended no-fine policy is before the board for adoption which will extend the summer 2020 no-fines policy through the end of the year. No-fine policies are a trend in libraries and the Hoboken library started experimenting with a no-fine policy during the past two summers; the new policy can be re-visited at year-end or later. In Hoboken, library fines amounted to about \$18,000 in revenue in the previous year.

---Mrs. Podles: Explained the idea of the policy: The purpose of fines is to incentivize patrons to bring materials back, but it tends to hit young adult “Teens and ‘Tweens” and those are groups that the library does not want to discourage; materials can become overdue during summer vacations or for other reasons, and the fines discourage young people from bringing them back or asking parents for the money. Under this policy the borrowers will still get notices to bring materials back, and payment is still required for lost materials; fine forgiveness is also available.

7. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: Thanked the trustees for their help in setting up committees for the 2020-21 term; charters for the board committees were distributed before the meeting. He expects there will be much to do in the coming year, including tracking the library construction bond act grant application. A new committee will be the Ad Hoc Library Coordinating Committee, to be chaired by Ms. Blaney, which will coordinate board activities with library supporters in the community such as the Friends of the Library, the Library Foundation, and others.

8. Library Foundation Report

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Library Foundation: There was no activity this month due to the Covid pandemic and challenges facing donors and businesses. The foundation did however receive contributions, including \$251 from Hudson Gives stemming from the Hudson Gives donation day last summer.

9. Friends of the Library (FOTL) Report

---Dr. Abernathy: He and the Director joined the Friends of the Library’s online board meeting this month, and discussed Friends’ events and fundraising activities this fall and after the Covid pandemic.

10. Old Business and New Business

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

11. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Excuse the absence of Rakhee Mirchandani due to a schedule conflict.
- b. Accept minutes of board meeting of August 25, 2020.
- c. Approve payment of Part A bills for non-media operating expenses.
- d. Adopt resolution to void checks.
- e. Adopt resolution authorizing the Director to continue the fine-free policy for overdue library materials until December 31, 2020.

---Mrs. Serrano: 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. 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.

---Mr. Freeman: Moved to adjourn.

---Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

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

The board of trustees adjourned at 7:40 p.m.