

**MEETING OF TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2021**

**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 27, 2021 AT 6:30 P.M.**

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

**1. Call to Order**

Board 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: Interim Library Director Rosary VanIngen, Recording Secretary Clark Matthews, Library Counsel Michael Cerone, Esq. and members of the library staff and public.

**3. Acceptance of Minutes**

---Dr. Abernathy: Acceptance of the minutes of the June 25, 2021 meeting was postponed until the August board meeting because they did not reach all of the trustees before the meeting.

#### **4. Public Comments**

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

---Mr. Sacha Chavez: As union chapter president, he is looking forward to working with the new library director. Other staffers concurred.

#### **5. Director's Report**

---Ms. VanIngen: Highlighted items from the Director's Report: The library has been working virtually again for two weeks under the closure for third-floor renovations and asbestos remediation; all lending services and materials processing has been moved to Annex I and things are running well. The Cyber Cafe is doing very well during the closure and she's looking to extend the permits so it can continue until the end of the year. Things are now being pulled together in anticipation of the work being completed on time or early. She thanked the board for the opportunity to take on the interim director role.

#### **6. Committee Reports, Including Finance Committee and Payment of Bills**

---Ms. VanIngen: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The committee and facilities director are cautiously optimistic that construction work will stay ahead of schedule; the hope is that staff will have time to clean up and reshelve materials in advance of opening to the public and Ms. Pu starting as Library Director on August 9<sup>th</sup>. HVAC functioning will be minimal for the rest of the summer so air conditioning units have been purchased for the short term. The Library Festival has been scheduled for October 2<sup>nd</sup> in Church Square Park and the hope is for the festival to be the library's post-pandemic 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration; the Foundation and Friends of the Library will have a table and there will be an author tent for local authors and book readings.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked about the Grand Street branch. The asbestos remediation was completed quickly and only involved small areas under radiators and some tiles; nothing unexpected was found and the facility is on track to reopen.

---Mr. Chapka: Continued the Buildings and Grounds Committee report: Two weeks into the closure, the work is ahead of schedule; he met with the general contractor (GC) and the architect, and abatement is being done on all three floors and the boiler. The hope is that facilities staff can get back into the building early and start setting up for the planned August 9<sup>th</sup> reopening. The most dangerous asbestos was removed from the boiler, which will be disassembled for removal; this is a 2-to-3-day job. The third floor remediation is complete and the original wood floors there were found to be in good condition; there is a possibility of saving them and saving money on the replacement. The second floor remediation is done. Work is ongoing on the first floor: air samples are being sent in and work in the public restrooms involves relocating doors and installing a drop ceiling for the new HVAC mechanicals. He expects to have facilities staff in the building next week.

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee: There is no report this month. She described the financial matters before the board for approval: 1.) in Part A, to pay from the capital improvement Construction Account at Bayonne Community Bank (BCB) checks no. 349 and 350 totaling \$318,570.96; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 9387-9458 totaling \$109,122.65 and to pay via PayPal \$255.77 to Adobe and \$300.00 to Isabella Noble; 3) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 9459-9466 totaling \$13,791.07. Also before the board are a resolution to void checks no. 9328 and 9340, and a resolution to reserve \$119,601.00 of remaining FY 2020 operating funds for capital improvement projects and to move the funds to the BCB Construction Account.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked about checks 9449 and 9450, each in the amount of \$150; are they duplicates? No, they are for two separate children’s programs. Approval of the Part A bills and the resolutions to void the checks and reserve FY 2020 funds for capital improvements were added to the consent agenda.

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

---Ms. Mirchandani: 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. Murcko			X	
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy	X			

---Ms. Murcko: Asked about Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs): the library has a low-income community mission and presence, and is also a designated city cooling center; has it ever qualified for a CDBG? Discussion about Hoboken’s CDBG projects and checking with the city CDBG program director Christopher Brown about availability. Further discussion about how the library actively pursued CDBGs in the past but never got one.

---Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: There is no report for this month.

## 7. Executive Session

---Ms. Murcko: Moved that the board move into executive session.

---Ms. Evans: Seconded.

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

The board of trustees entered executive session at 6:52 p.m. and returned to public session at 7:05 p.m.

---Dr. Abernathy: Summarized the session: it concerned service provider issues, no votes or board actions were taken. Two resolutions will be added to the consent agenda authorizing contracting for legal services by Michael A. Cerone, Esq. as board general counsel and by Mark S. Ruderman, Esq. to provide labor and civil service legal consulting services.

## 8. Board of Trustees Annual Reorganization for 2021-2022

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

---Ms. Evans: Nominated Ms. Murcko to serve as Board Secretary for 2021-2022.

---Mrs. Serrano: 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. Murcko: Nominated Mrs. Serrano to serve as Board Treasurer for 2021-2022.

---Mr. Freeman: 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. Blaney: Nominated Dr. Abernathy to serve as Board President for 2021-2022.

---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			

**9. Adoption of 2021-2022 Board Meeting Schedule**

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were any questions or concerns regarding the proposed 2021-22 schedule of board of trustees meetings.

---Ms. Murcko: Had two questions: 1. the November 16 and December 21 meetings are each moved forward one week, but that creates a very short interval between them followed by a very long interval until January 2021; and 2. the final day of the American Library Association (ALA) convention is June 28, which will conflict with the scheduled board meeting. Discussion about revising dates; legally a meeting date can be revised by the board with 7 days’ notice. Discussion about whether face-to-face meetings or vaccinations can be required legally; the city council has announced in-person meetings starting in September but other boards are meeting remotely through the end of the year; legal opinion is that the board can require masking, vaccinations, or remote meetings.

---Dr. Abernathy: With the new delta variant of the COVID-19 virus, was concerned that events were overtaking us. Discussion about adopting the meeting schedule with virtual meetings through the end of the year. The 2021-22 board meeting schedule was added to the consent agenda but revised to specify virtual meetings from August-December 2021.

**10. President’s Report**

---Dr. Abernathy: Met with new director Jennie Pu, and she has also met with the staff, facilities and circulation directors. There will be much to do in the remainder of the year, including development of the next Strategic Plan, negotiation of the union contract, ongoing construction, and applying for the second round of NJ library capital bond grants.

**11. Library Foundation Report and Friends of the Library (FOTL)**

---Ms. Blaney: Reported for the Library Foundation: The foundation and Friends are in the process of merging; they have hired an attorney to help with the process. Once that is complete, the organization will take further steps, including a newsletter, mailings, etc. Discussion about keeping the foundation’s 501(c)3 or using the Friends’ 501(c)3 instead, changing bank accounts, etc.; the library’s consultant Peter Pearson of Library Strategies Consulting Group is advising on the merger.

**12. Old Business**

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

**13. New Business**

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

#### 14. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Approve payment of Part A bills, including BCB bills for capital improvements.
- b. Approve voiding checks.
- c. Approve resolution to reserve \$119,601.00 of FY 2020 funds for capital improvements.
- d. Approve contract to retain Michael Cerone, Esq. as library general counsel.
- e. Approve contract to retain Mark Ruderman, Esq. as library labor and civil service counsel.
- f. Adopt 2021-22 library board meeting schedule, amended to specify remote meetings through December 2021.

---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. Adjournment

---: Moved the meeting adjourn.

---Mr. Silbert: Seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.