

MEETING OF TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 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, JUNE 22, 2021 AT 6:30 P.M.

----- 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., Ms. Jennie Pu of Hudson County Community College and members of the library staff and public.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if trustees had any comments or corrections to the minutes of the May 25, 2021 meeting. There being none, the minutes were added to the consent agenda.

4. Public Comments

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

---Ms. Laura Knittel: Wished well to the board and everyone on the call.

5. Director's Report

---Ms. VanIngen: The staff is focused on the transition to the summer closure for third-floor renovations and asbestos remediation; the closure is on track to begin on July 12th and operations will shift to virtual mode at that time for the duration of the closure. There were discussions with Ryan Sharp at the Hoboken Transportation and Parking Authority regarding designating a loading zone for the library; a team from the authority will be surveying the library parking situation. Also, the library is eligible for a grant from the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) to pay for wireless hotspots, laptops, and other technology lending to the public; the application must be submitted in July for a grant from July 2021-June 2022; there is also a retroactive reimbursement provision of ECF grant funding that can cover equipment purchased previously from July 2020 to June 2021.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if the ECF grant funding was part of the of the American Recovery Act. It is.

---Mr. Freeman: Added that the proposed loading zone was discussed at the city parking and transportation subcommittee meeting earlier today, and the proposal was well received.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The third floor is now closed off and the flooring is removed for the abatement work; the second floor Sinatra Room has been set up to support the work and partitions are being installed to contain the area. Demolition has started and it uncovered a set of original pocket doors inside the walls of the old Manual School; discussions are ongoing about what to do with them.

--Ms. Murcko: Asked if the doors can be saved. Discussion about the doors: they were cut in the middle and possibly at the top when the walls were installed; they are being evaluated but are damaged; Mr. Chapka will send pictures when they're fully exposed; Ms. VanIngen recalled the doors from the Hudson School.

---Mr. Chapka: Continued the report: He is working with security to make sure the smoke alarms function throughout the renovations without false alarms. Scaffolding and outdoor toilets are in place. The large program room is being used for operations and the small programming room may be used for meetings. He meets with the general contractor's foreman daily; the project is on track to close the library on July 12th and to reopen on August 6th.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked for the Buildings and Grounds Committee to be included on the next call with the architects.

---Mrs. Serrano: Asked about preserving the pocket doors and other items uncovered during the work. Discussions about assorted fixtures, nameplates and other items from the original library and school dating from 1896 that have been uncovered, and about reaching out to the Hoboken Historical Museum.

---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) check no. 348 for \$72,964.92; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 9323-9376 totaling \$63,183.25; 3) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 9377-9384 totaling \$11,283.08. Also before the board is a resolution to void check no. 9245 for \$125.00. Approval of the Part A bills and resolution to void the check were added to the consent agenda.

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

---Mrs. Serrano: 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 | X | | | |

---Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: An executive session has been scheduled for the personnel matters under discussion by the committee.

8. Executive Session

---Mrs. Serrano: Moved that the board move into executive session.

---Mr. Freeman: Seconded.

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

The board of trustees entered executive session at 6:52 p.m. and returned to public session at 7:37 p.m.

---Dr. Abernathy: Summarized the session: it concerned personnel matters, no votes or board actions were taken.

---Dr. Abernathy: Introduced a board resolution as follows:

The board of trustees approves Ms. Jennie Pu's employment agreement with the library and further agrees to pay the employee contribution of Ms. Pu's COBRA coverage from her start date until October 31, 2021.

Without objection, the resolution was added to the consent agenda for approval.

9. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: There is no report this month.

10. Library Foundation Report and Friends of the Library (FOTL)

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Library Foundation: The foundation board met for discussions about a merger with the Friends of the Library.

---Ms. Blaney: Reported that she had received an e-mail from the Friends of the Library to the effect that their board has voted unanimously to approve a merger with the Library Foundation; the merger process is expected to begin in July with hiring an attorney, changing organization names, etc.

10. Old Business

---Dr. Abernathy: Raised two items of old business related to expiring library policies adopted earlier this year: 1) the library's fine-free policy for local materials will need to be extended for 90 days if it is to be retained during the summer; and 2) the mandatory mask policy for library patrons will also need to be extended if it is to be retained.

---Mr. Freeman: Asked if there is a policy regarding proof of vaccination. Discussion about current library best practices regarding demanding proof of Covid-19 vaccination – it is not a requirement – and the consideration that children are deemed a “reservoir” for the virus because they are generally not vaccinated. Further discussion about the reopening of city hall on July 6th with a mandate to wear masks inside unless proof of vaccination is produced at the building entrance; as of Friday, June 18, Hoboken had a 51% rate of fully vaccinated people. Recommendation that the mask mandate be extended for sixty (60) days, until the August trustees' meeting.

---Dr. Abernathy: Board approval of a 60-day extension of the library mandatory mask policy and a 90-day extension of the library fine-free policy for local materials was added to the meeting consent agenda.

11. New Business

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

12. Consent Agenda

---Dr. Abernathy: Moved the board approve the meeting consent agenda as follows:

- a. Accept the minutes of the May 25, 2021 board meeting.
- b. Approve payment of Part A bills, including BCB bills for capital improvements.
- c. Approve resolution to void check.
- d. Adopt resolution to approve the employment agreement of Ms. Jennie Pu, with a further agreement to pay Ms. Pu's COBRA coverage through October 31, 2021.
- e. Extend library fine-free policy for local materials for 90 days.
- f. Extend library mandatory mask policy for 60 days.

---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 | X | | | |

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m. by unanimous consent of the trustees.