

MEETING OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022

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, JANUARY 25, 2022 AT 6:30 P.M.

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

1. Call to Order

Board President Abernathy called the meeting to order at 6:32 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 27, 2021 meeting of the Library Board and amended on December 21, 2021, and 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 as amended at the outset of the Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) emergency provides the internet and 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	Excused absence.

**Ex officio* under NJ state law.

**Present via remote connection.

Also in attendance were: Library Director Jennie Pu, Recording Secretary Clark Matthews and members of the library staff and public.

---Dr. Abernathy: Proposed excusing the absence of Mr. Thoens; this was added to the consent agenda.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if trustees had any comments or corrections to the minutes of the December 21, 2021 meeting. There being none, acceptance of the minutes was added to the consent agenda.

4. Public Comments

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

---Mr. Katz: He complained about driving long distances with his daughter so she can participate in athletic events; he is a long-time Hoboken resident living on Castle Point Terrace; he started to read a statement about the board president's remarks concerning a city referendum on funding a new high school with wonderful athletic facilities. The president asked the Zoom meeting host to mute Mr. Katz; discussion by trustees about how to proceed.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked Mr. Katz if he had a comment that related to the library or library business.

---Mr. Katz: Felt that constructing a new high school with such athletic facilities was library business and library trustees may not criticize such projects; he wanted to read his statement. The chair declined to allow the statement to be read.

5. Director's Report

---Ms. Pu: Highlighted several items from the Director's Report: The library organization chart has been updated and the new chart is in the board packet; it includes the new position of Community Engagement Manager, which has just been filled by Andrew Luck. She had a good meeting with board members of the Hoboken MakerBar which will hopefully begin a collaboration with these experts on Maker Technology and related library programs. The renovation work continues, with the reproduction tin ceilings now installed and all HVAC equipment located upstairs. Sunday hours are resuming on February 6th at the main library. A new on-boarding Web page has been created for library hires; it contains all necessary forms for new personnel. There were overwhelming numbers of contact-free locker pickup requests recently and Access Services, which was formerly the Circulation Department, was able to pivot from locker pickup to Grab & Go to meet patron demand. For programming, a date was set for the 2022 Library Festival; it will be on Saturday, June 11th. The proposed budget is before the Finance Committee and the board for approval.

---Mr. Freeman: Asked about the sense of the public for resuming in-person services.

---Ms. Pu: The library has done comparatively well in maintaining in-person services; it has been open almost all the time during the pandemic and patrons want to come back. She said a special acknowledgement is due to the

Facilities Team, formerly under Michael Chapka and now under Raul Sanguinetti, for keeping the building open with deep cleaning, etc.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked what the City and City Council were doing about in-person services and events. They are shifting to hybrid meetings but staying ready to change meeting format if needed.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The HVAC components and materials are all in the building now; a crane was used to get them all directly to the third floor. Duct work is proceeding and looks good; it is in the attic and moving down to the second floor and mezzanine. Electric systems are installed on the third floor. The refrigerant lines for the air conditioning-HVAC system are going in. Temporary flooring has been placed on the second floor; the permanent flooring will be installed at the end of the project.

---Mr. Chapka: There are two board action items (BAIs) before the trustees related to this work. The first BAI approves Change Order No. 3 for General Contractor Merrell & Garaguso, Inc., to construct a pipe enclosure framework on the second floor, cost not to exceed \$11,758.00. The second BAI approves Change Order No. 4 to provide additional construction services to build the MakerSpace as part of the third floor renovation, cost not to exceed \$165,742.00.

---Mr. Chapka: There have been weather-related issues. The temporary heating setup is working well, but when the old boiler was removed it is now clear that a major source of heat went with it; the sprinkler system froze during the Martin Luther King holiday and new heating will need to be added for it. The two BAIs were added to the meeting consent agenda.

---Ms. Pu: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee: The committee recommends approval of the 2022 library operating budget, which is before the board for adoption. She highlighted several areas concerning the 2022 budget: 1.) Appropriations decreased for 2022 so cuts had to be made; 2.) Some new positions have been added, including a Community Engagement Manager, just filled, and a MakerSpace Manager and a Grant Writer, to be hired in the third quarter; 3.) The budget now includes the staff at the Grand Street Branch, who are all permanent employees; and 4.) By the end of 2022 the anticipated capital spending balance will be \$1.7 million, possibly more.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked why workers' compensation insurance costs decreased. In 2021, workers' comp costs ended up being only about one-half of the budgeted amount, so the appropriation was cut for this year.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked about the cuts to technology purchases: are they short-changing the public? As with insurance, there was unspent money in 2021 for technology purchases, thus the cut.

---Ms. Pu: Also, a BAI is before the trustees to retain auditors Wielkotz & Company LLC to perform the audit of 2021 financial statements. The proposed 2022 Library Budget and BAI to retain Wielkotz & Company were added to the meeting consent agenda.

---Mrs. Serrano: Continued the report for the Budget and Finance Committee: 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. 363-365 totaling \$393,671.91; 2.) in Part A, to pay FY2021 library operating expenses with checks no. 9755-9787 totaling \$103,315.95; 3.) in Part A, to pay FY2022 library operating expenses with checks no. 9796-9818 totaling \$47,789.73 and to pay via PayPal \$5,040.00 to Adobe; and 4) in Part B, to pay FY2021 expenses for library materials with checks no. 9788-9795 totaling \$12,752.26. Also before the board is a resolution to void check no. 9733.

---Mrs. Serrano: She asked if there were any questions about the bills or resolution. There being none, approval of the Part A bills and the resolution was added to the consent agenda.

---Mrs. Serrano: Moved to pay the FY2021 Part B bills for library materials.

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

---Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: The committee has a list of five strategic planning consultants being considered to assist with the next library Strategic Plan; they are being booked for interviews, starting tomorrow, and proposals will be solicited from consultants approved by the committee. The proposed board retreat was postponed to February 26th and is hoped to be in person, but will be virtual if circumstances require. Lastly, an executive session is needed for a committee matter.

7. Executive Session

---Ms. Murcko: Moved the board enter executive session.

---Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

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

The trustees entered executive session at 7:04 p.m. and returned to open session at 7:27 p.m.

---Dr. Abernathy: Summarized the executive session: A personnel matter was discussed; no board votes or actions were taken.

8. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: Had no report for this month.

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

---Ms. Blaney: Reported for the Library Foundation: The merger of the Foundation and Friends is ongoing; their attorney is very busy and the state of New Jersey may need extra time to handle things like incorporation, etc. The Foundation's 2021 Annual Appeal did well; so far \$6,000 was collected via PayPal and about \$9,000 was received in checks.

10. Old Business and New Business

---Dr. Abernathy: There was no remaining Old or New Business.

11. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Excuse the absence of Mr. Thoens.
- b. Accept the minutes of the December 21, 2021 board meeting.
- c. Approve BAI to pay Change Order #3 for \$11,758.00.
- d. Approve BAI to pay Change Order #4 for \$165,742.00.
- e. Approve FY2022 library operating budget.
- f. Retain Wielkocz and Company LLC as library auditors for FY2021 financials.
- g. Approve payment of FY2021 Part A bills.
- h. Approve payment of FY2022 Part A bills.
- i. Approve payment of FY2022 BCB bills for capital improvements.
- j. Approve resolution to void check.

---Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

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

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
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Ms. Blaney	X
Ms. Evans	X
Mr. Freeman	X
Ms. Mirchandani	X
Ms. Murcko	X
Mrs. Serrano	X
Mr. Silbert	X
Dr. Abernathy	X

12. Trustee Comments

---Mr. Freeman: Thought that the public speaker should have been allowed to speak regardless of the content of his remarks; he felt the trustees should try to reflect the non-partisan mission of the library even when they become subject to partisan or personal criticism.

---Ms. Mirchandani: Moved to adjourn.

---Mr. Silbert: Seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.