

MEETING OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 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, JANUARY 26,
2021 AT 6:30 P.M.**

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

1. Call to Order

President Abernathy called the meeting to order at 6:34 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 library staff and public.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if the trustees had any corrections or comments regarding the minutes of the board meeting of December 15, 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: Last year's library circulation statistic of more than 230,000 was very good, considering the closure and pandemic; in contrast to other libraries, the public here knows the library is available and has always been using it, so they haven't forgotten us.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked why she thought the public kept the library in mind. The thinking is that organizing online programming so it continued immediately after the library closing kept us in the public mind even with the building closed; the staff did more programs after the closing than previously; also the building sanitizing and cleaning measures have given people confidence.

---Mrs. Podles: Continued her report: Much has happened concerning the renovation in the past 6 months and she met with the library architects to re-evaluate planned Phase 2 construction to keep it separate from the public and to meet the pandemic work requirements of the various building trades (e.g., electricians cannot work with plumbers, carpenters, etc.). There have also been meetings on grants with consultants, grant writers and architects about construction project management, especially moving the maximum square footage into Phase 2 of the renovations. There was a COVID case among the staff in December and the entire team concerned had to quarantine; this stretched staffing but everyone is back now and all right. The board package includes a new, draft policy on unattended youth; this policy hasn't been updated in a while and deals with recent issues like unattended children still in the building at closing time. Also up for board approval is an extension of the Fine-Free Policy for local materials, but only up to July 2021; the next library director may have a different opinion about the policy. The library is considering joining with volunteer community organizations with initiatives that support our own programs, notably a group that renews computers for people who need them; there is high demand for computers as families both work and study at home and the computer renewal program will complement library technology lending. The library has received its January 2021 appropriation from the city.

---Dr. Abernathy: The proposed unattended youth policy and extension of the fine-free policy were added to the consent agenda.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The committee has been in talks about the Phase 2 renovation plans and bid schedule created by library architects Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH); the tentative schedule calls for bid packets going out on March 6th, with bids due back around April 8th, for work commencing in May. The third floor remains mostly closed and full of stored furniture; he is getting it cleared out and preparing to move the YA Department to the second floor when the project is closer to starting. COVID precautions have been stepped up after a staffer became ill in December; fogging has been increased to five days

per week. At the Hoboken Housing Authority (HHA), the new sliding window has been installed at the library Learning Center building so staff can safely deliver materials and interact with the patrons from inside the space there; he is going to HHA to discuss with the management.

---Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: She updated the board on the Library Director search; the committee is getting ready to begin interviews for candidates. Two search firms responded to the committee's RFP with proposals and the committee agrees that one firm is clearly preferable; their full proposal is before the board. Bradbury Miller is a national search firm for librarians that has worked in this region, and the committee interviewed two candidates they have placed regionally as well as the hiring libraries, who were all very happy with the firm. The firm works on a flat-fee basis, unlike the other search firm reviewed, so they do not get commission on the salary of the hiree. After discussion, the proposal to award the contract to the Bradbury Miller firm for the search for Library Director candidates was added to the consent agenda.

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee; there will be a committee report this month on the proposed retention of a new library auditor. 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 FY2020 library operating expenses with checks no. 8998-9034 totaling \$321,828.57; 3) in Part A, to pay FY2021 library operating expenses with checks no. 9042-9064 totaling \$33,809.66, and to pay via PayPal \$4,221.03 to Adobe and \$500.00 to Facebook; and 4.) in Part B, to pay FY2020 expenses for library materials with checks no. 9035-9041 totaling \$37,187.26.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked about check no. 9016 to Intersection Media for \$11,950.00. It is for street signage and other advertising materials and placements.

---Mrs. Podles: Continued the Budget and Finance Committee report: There is a board action item approving hiring a new library auditor, Wielkotz & Company LLC; the bookkeeper has recommended performing the FY2020 audit early and in contrast to the present auditors, Wielkotz is a larger firm that can do the audit shortly after the FY2020 books close in April. The approval of the new auditor was added to the consent agenda.

---Mrs. Serrano: Asked if there were any questions about the bills to be paid. There being none, the FY2020 and FY2021 Part A bills to be approved for payment were added to the consent agenda.

---Mrs. Serrano: Moved the board approve paying the FY2020 Part B bills for library materials.

---Mr. Silbert: 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			
Ms. Mirchandani	X			
Ms. Murcko			X	
Mrs. Serrano	X			

Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy, President	X			

7. President’s Report

---Dr. Abernathy: He is proceeding with city councilpeople as a working group for community improvement; the young man with the laptop computer refurbishment program described by the Director is one example of possibilities that can be developed. The working group is looking for ways to create similar ways the city can work with and help the library.

---Mrs. Podles: Added that there is a city master plan that is being developed and in its present draft, it includes an uptown branch of the library. Discussion about ways that the library can take the initiative to make important things like that happen.

8. Friends of the Library (FOTL)

---Dr. Abernathy: There is no report from the Friends but discussions about working jointly with the Library Foundation and fundraising consultant have begun.

9. Library Foundation Report

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Library Foundation: The foundation has signed up for this year’s “Hudson Gives.” The foundation is in discussions with the Friends and the library fundraising consultant Peter Peterson of Library Development Solutions, who has agreed to stay on to help with the combination of the Library Foundation and the Friends. There has been a meeting with the Friends board and another meeting is expected soon.

10. Old Business

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

11. New Business

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

12. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Accept minutes of the board meeting of December 15, 2020.
- b. Adopt the proposed Unattended Child Policy.
- c. Extend the Fine-Free Policy to July 2021.
- d. Adopt resolution to retain Bradbury Miller for the Library Director search.
- e. Approve payment of FY2020 and FY2021 Part A bills for non-media operating expenses.
- f. Approve hiring Wielkotz & Company as FY2020 library auditor.

---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			
Ms. Mirchandani	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 trustee comments. There were none.

---Ms. Murcko: Moved to adjourn.

---Dr. Abernathy: Seconded.

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

The board of trustees adjourned at 7:25 p.m.