

MEETING OF TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 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, MARCH 22, 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	Excused absence
Ms. Raakhee Mirchandani**	X		Joined meeting at 6:51 p.m.
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, Library Counsel Michael Cerone, Esq., Recording Secretary Clark Matthews and members of the library staff and public.

---Dr. Abernathy: Added a resolution excusing the absences of Mr. Freeman and Mr. Thoens to the meeting consent agenda, without objection.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if trustees had any comments or corrections to the minutes of the February 22, 2022 meeting. There being none, acceptance of the minutes was added to the consent agenda.

4. Public Comments

---Dr. Abernathy: Invited comments from the public. There were no public comments.

5. Director's Report

---Ms. Pu: Highlighted several items from the Director's Report: She noted that next month's Trustees' meeting will be in person at the library. The board retreat took place and the feedback she received from it was helpful. She is starting to work with the New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) public policy committee, where she has been elected chair; she met with Hoboken's state representatives, NJ Assemblyman Raj Mukerjee and NJ Senator Annette Chaparro, who had special praise for the library. She is also working on the next round of grant applications under the NJ Library Construction Bond Act; also LibraryLink New Jersey (LLNJ) has committed to funding two new scholarships aimed at increasing diversity in new library professionals. Another self-service kiosk is being added; it will be located at the Hoboken Historical Museum to benefit uptown patrons. The MakerBar team, displaced by the fire at Chambord Place, will be moving into the library space as soon as they can. The proposed 2022 Library Fair date is being pushed back to fall, so the event can be shared with the Green Fair and the renovations of the main branch will be completed for the event. Workshop programs are doing well; the actors workshop has an actor who was cast recently, and a member of the writers workshop was recently published. Applications have begun to arrive for the new Social Worker position.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked about resuming the ESL and literacy classes: where is the space for them and are the Friends of the Library (FOTL) still doing the conversational ESL classes. The downstairs programming space is available as before, however the Friends' ESL volunteers aren't available for the time being due to the pandemic.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked about the Learning Center reopening: the 10-3 hours on Wednesday and Friday were during school and working hours, so they didn't benefit students or working adults. The director responded that staffing was a challenge; she is trying to staff the facility consistently for two days per week and then scale up as people and resources become available.

---Ms. Murcko: Added that she thought it was wonderful the Learning Center was open again.

---Ms. Pu: Concluded her report with a presentation of the Hoboken Public Library 2021 Annual Report; the report will be distributed to board members. Plans for the immediate future include starting the strategic planning process after reviewing proposals from consultants, and conducting a public space audit.

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

---Dr. Abernathy: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: He referred trustees to the written committee report and pointed out the board action item (BAI) accepting the proposal from Open Systems Integration for work to install network and other cable throughout the library, at a cost not to exceed (NTE) \$114,995.00. He asked the IT Director to explain the project.

---Phil Mendez: Described the work that would be performed under the BAI proposal, including installing cable and equipment for network, phones, cameras, alarms, and other connected equipment and services. The BAI was added to the meeting consent agenda.

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported 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) check no. 368 totaling \$294,862.29; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 9889-9824 totaling \$282,497.93 and to pay via Paypal \$175.00 to Faronics and \$175.00 to Wordpress.com; and 3) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 9951-9958 totaling \$21,818.54. Also before the board is a resolution to void checks no. 9737 and 9774.

---Mrs. Serrano: She asked if there were any questions about the bills to be paid or the 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 Part B bills for library materials.

---Ms. Evans: Seconded.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 6 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			
Dr. Abernathy	X			

---Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: The committee has developed a travel consent policy for library staff who travel; it recommends the board adopt the draft policy. The strategic planning consultants under consideration to create the next library Strategic Plan are responding to input from the committee, which is hoping to recommend a consultant soon. The travel consent policy was added to the meeting consent agenda for adoption.

7. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: Discussed Mayor Bhalla's speech and the proposed uptown library branch that was discussed as part of the city's redevelopment project; this has a direct impact on library funding, staffing, and other issues.

---Ms. Murcko: Noted that the proposal is for a 5,000 sq. ft. facility and wondered whether that was enough space. Discussion about present library facilities' floor area and how much more is advisable or desirable.

---Ms. Pu: Discussed uptown proposal details and several elements that could be part of the library, e.g. the proposed recording studio. Discussion about other proposed facilities that could be part of the library. Further discussion about encouraging patrons to take the city's opinion survey on the redevelopment and advocate for library space there.

---Dr. Abernathy: The proposed community program space in the redevelopment will need to be operated and that is a natural for the library. Discussion about other Hudson County library systems that are combining operations with other community facilities, i.e. by co-locating library branches and recreational or community centers so students can both play sports and do homework.

---Dr. Abernathy: The library staff voted last month on union representation and elected to remain with the Municipal Workers' Association (MWA) instead of joining the Communications Workers of America (CWA).

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

---Ms. Blaney: Reported for the Library Foundation: There will be a joint meeting of the Friends' and Foundation's boards tomorrow about the merger. They have hired Peter Pearson of Library Strategies to assist with merging the bylaws of the Friends and the Foundation. Their attorney is ready to start submitting the paperwork.

9. Old Business and New Business

---Dr. Abernathy: Called for any remaining Old Business or New Business. There was none.

10. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Excuse the absences of Mr. Freeman and Mr. Thoen.
- b. Accept the minutes of the January 25, 2022 board meeting.
- c. Approve the BAI accepting the proposal from Network Solutions Integration for network cabling and services, not to exceed \$114,995.

- d. Approve payment of Part A bills.
- e. Approve resolution to void checks.
- f. Accept proposed library travel policy.

---Ms. Murcko: Seconded.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 7 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			
Dr. Abernathy	X			

12. Trustee Comments

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were any trustee comments. There were none.

---Ms. Mirchandani: Moved to adjourn.

---Ms. Blaney: Seconded.

---Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.