

## MEETING OF TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2022

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HOBOKEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY, HELD IN THE LARGE PROGRAM ROOM OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AT 500 PARK AVENUE IN HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY ON TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2022 AT 6:30 P.M.

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

#### 1. Call to Order

Board President Abernathy called the meeting to order at 6:32 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	Excused absence
Ms. Amanda R. Blaney**		X	Excused absence
Ms. Jennifer Evans, School Superintendent's Designee****	X		
Mr. Jason Freeman, Mayor's Designee****	X		
Ms. Raakhee Mirchandani**		X	Excused absence
Mr. Jack Silbert**	X		
Mr. Kurt Thoens**	X		

\**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 Ms. Murcko, Ms. Blaney and Ms. Mirchandani 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 March 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: The library was represented at two sessions on the proposed uptown municipal center. She and Rosary Van Ingen attended the Public Library Association (PLA) conference in Portland, Oregon; they plan to attend the New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) conference in June and the American Library Association (ALA) conference later this year; also the director joined a contingent from the ALA at NASDAQ to ring out the close of National Library Week on April 8<sup>th</sup>. The Maker Day showcase on March 26<sup>th</sup> was successful and included members of the Hoboken MakerBar, which has moved their equipment to Annex 2; CyberCafe has resumed, too. Period care hygiene packs are now available at all branches for anyone who needs them. There are Board Action Items (BAIs) for ceiling work, furniture, policy on staff leaves of absence, and the proposed strategic planning consultant to be discussed during the committee reports. The infant CPR class for new parents sponsored by Hoboken Councilwoman Emily Jabbour was very popular and more sessions have been scheduled. Summer Reading will start in June and marketing has begun; post-Covid utilization of the other library branches is picking up. The director is working with LiteracyNJ on engagement and ESL classes and with Laura Knittel at the mayor's office of Constituent Services, and Youth Services are very busy all the time now. There are three new staff hires, and a full schedule of programs and events for Asia/Pacific Islander Month will be ready for May. Lastly, the IT Department is busy and is getting new equipment.

Mr. Freeman: Was glad to hear of the success with Infant CPR classes and offered to help with connections to the National Diaper Network.

Mr. Thoens: Asked what year the planned uptown Municipal Center is expected to open. The date is not certain; discussion about whether there will be a lease agreement for library space there. Counsel advised there will be no lease agreement for the library.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: There were some additional discoveries during third-floor renovations, notably a sagging original wood beam under the cupola and its support wall: before the board is a BAI for \$91,255.79 to cover work by general contractor Merrell & Garaguso for repairs to the cupola wall and to replace the beam. Also, the committee is studying water penetration in the new MakerSpace room and the windows will need to be removed to correct it; a BAI will be coming to cover the cost of that work. The new HVAC system is being tested for planned activation in early May; the wainscoting is being restored and looks good. The BAI for remediation work to the cupola wall and support beam was added to the meeting consent agenda.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked how the expected work and the new furniture purchase will affect readiness to reopen the renovated spaces in August. The new seating and furniture should all be installed in ample time.

---Ms. Pu: Described the BAI for the furniture contracts proposed by Allstate Office Interiors Furniture Contractors based on renderings and designs submitted by Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH) architects, totaling \$381,916.33. Discussion about the furniture and contractors; CCH are the library architects and Allstate Office Interiors is a New Jersey state-approved contractor. 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) checks no. 368 and 369 totaling \$300,236.91; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 9959-10020 totaling \$177,508.79 and to pay via Paypal \$500.00 to Facebook and \$149.00 to Zoom; and 3) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 10021-10030 totaling \$26,526.97. Also before the board is a resolution to void checks no. 9951 and 9895. She asked if there were any questions about the bills to be paid or the resolution.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked about wayfinding signage and branding. These are non-mandatory signs for the library that are being designed for locations like the elevator. Approval of the Part A and Part B bills and the resolution to void checks were all added to the consent agenda.

---Dr. Abernathy: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: The committee has been searching for a consultant to develop and draft the next library strategic plan; 7 were invited to propose and of those 5 received RFPs. After reviews and interviews, the committee recommends contracting with M.J. Gomez Associates of Santa Cruz, California, to develop the next strategic plan. A BAI authorizing this is at a cost not to exceed (NTE) \$60,000 is before the board.

---Ms. Pu: Described M.J. Gomez: it has played roles at large library systems, including Chicago and Brooklyn. The committee was impressed by the fact that M.J. Gomez was the only candidate that understood the role of local government in library operations and planning.

---Mr. Freeman: Asked what role M.J. Gomez Associates would play in developing a strategic plan.

---Dr. Abernathy: They will discuss and evaluate issues to be considered, including growing population and the evolving relationship with the city, and designing and conducting surveys to guide the plan; M.J. Gomez brought up the issue of governance unprompted, and they were the only consultancy to do so. There was a wide range of proposals, some of which involved surveys and some which did not.

---Mr. Silbert: Added that M.J. Gomez proposed to deliver actionable advice, based on surveys, staff interviews, board experience and opportunities.

---Mr. Freeman: Asked how much actionable advice was accomplished from the last strategic plan, even though it was aspirational.

---Dr. Abernathy: A lot of the prior recommendations were achieved and they brought value to the community, including IT upgrades and technology services, among others. Also, it will be useful to have a relationship with M.J. Gomez because they are highly regarded library planners. The BAI accepting the proposal from M.J. Gomez Associates for strategic planning services, NTE \$60,000, was added to the meeting consent agenda.

---Dr. Abernathy: Continued the Personnel and Policy Committee report: The committee seeks board approval for a BAI authorizing the Library Director to approve unpaid staff leaves of absence; formerly, the policy had been that the board had to approve staff requests for such leaves. The BAI was added to the consent agenda.

## 7. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: Reported that he expects to attend the Atlantic City conference of the NJLA along with the Director in early June.

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

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Library Foundation: Both the Friends and the Foundation signed up for Hudson Gives; they had to sign up separately due to the ongoing merger. She encouraged trustees and public to support both groups.

## 9. Old Business and New Business

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

## 10. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Excuse the absences of Ms. Blaney, Ms. Murcko and Ms. Mirchandani.
- b. Accept the minutes of the March 22, 2022 board meeting.
- c. Approve the BAI authorizing repair of cupola wall and deteriorated joist/beam, NTE \$91,255.79.
- d. Approve the BAI authorizing purchase of furniture, NTE \$381,916.33.
- e. Approve payment of Part A and Part B bills.
- f. Approve resolution to void checks.
- g. Approve the BAI authorizing contract with M.J. Gomez Associates for strategic planning services, NTE \$60,000.00.
- h. Approve the BAI enabling Library Director to approve staff unpaid leaves of absence.

---Ms. Evans: Seconded.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Evans	X			
Mr. Freeman	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	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.