

MEETING OF TUESDAY, AUGUST 23, 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, AUGUST 23, 2022 AT 6:30 P.M.

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

1. Call to Order

Board President Abernathy called the meeting to order at 6:33 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 26, 2022 meeting of the Library Board and such 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 internet and telephone conference number and access code in advance of the scheduled meetings.

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	Excused absence.
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 Jennie Pu, Library Counsel Michael Cerone, Esq., Recording Secretary Clark Matthews and members of the library staff and public.

---Dr. Abernathy: Ms. Evans informed him that she was unable to attend the meeting due to a conflict. A resolution excusing her absence was added to the meeting consent agenda.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if the trustees had any corrections or comments regarding the minutes of the board meeting of July 26, 2022. 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 no comments.

5. Director's Report

---Ms. Pu: Highlighted several items from the Director's Report: This year's Summer Reading Program was the most successful yet, with 547 participants, greatly surpassing last year's 305. The library now has a Citi Bike membership and the staff is using the bicycles for their travels all over town. The library also signed up as a partner for National Voter Registration Day, so people can come to library branches and other locations on September 20th to learn about voter registration, with voter registration forms available in English and Spanish. There was a lot of activity connected to strategic planning, with trustees participating and seven on-site focus groups consisting of staff, the Hoboken Small Business Alliance, the Friends of the Library (FOTL) and Foundation, and others, along with stakeholder interviews. Strategic planning consultants M.J. Gómez Associates have just delivered a draft community survey, which will be refined for use in September; additional stakeholder interviews and focus groups are planned for that time, too, including the Hoboken Housing Authority (HHA). Third-floor renovations are continuing and the completion date is still expected to be this fall, although it may slip a bit; the restored stained-glass window is back in place and is breathtaking. Community engagement was busy with several initiatives, including Pride Month and ID workshops for those navigating the Real ID process; NJ Assemblyman Raj Mukerjee has committed to a voucher of \$100 per month for bus transportation for patrons lacking housing who need to travel to Motor Vehicle Commission offices to obtain ID. The library BookBike traveled around town over the summer with many successful events for families; Access Services also produced events, including book clubs, cooking and knitting. Planned events for fall include Library Card Signup and Hispanic Heritage Month, both starting in September, and the Library Festival on October 15th. The library book corner at Fox Hill Senior Housing has been refreshed and staff will continue monthly visits to keep the titles fresh. A grant application was submitted to the League of American Cyclists pay for a program on LED bike lighting for safe nighttime riding. There is a national conference on bookmobiles in Nevada, and staffer Ally Blumenfield will attend to assess the possibilities for mobile book lending. The library hosted groups from community lifestyles camp in July and the young people from the camp are continuing to visit the Learning Center and Teen Zone, and new services are planned for homework help for them. The new teen librarian, Jenn Sforza has just started after interning here during college; Stephanie Lodaco is now a full-time Library Assistant in Access Services and Shaleka ("Coco") Smith is now full-time Marketing Assistant. A lot of IT equipment is coming in, including a self-checkout machine for the third floor, when it reopens.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked about circulation statistics and the big gain in library card signups, whereas overall circulation is down for the year. The feeling is that the third floor closure had an impact on circulation, as did the reduced hours at the Grand Street branch.

6. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: Reported that he and the Director met with Hoboken Tax Assessor Sal Bonaccorsi to discuss the decrease in city tax revenues and in anticipated tax revenues, and how they affect statutory library funding in the future; last year library funding decreased by about \$200,000 and the hope is that this year will not be so bad. Revenues are driven by real estate transactions and development; they learned a lot about the factors driving tax revenues: every other municipality in Hudson County experienced revenue gains, but Hoboken did not. There may be one more year of diminished tax receipts and reduced library funding.

7. Board Reorganization – Election of Officers

---Dr. Abernathy: Announced the annual board reorganization and called for nominations for Board Secretary.

---Dr. Abernathy: Nominated Susan Murcko to serve as Board Secretary.

---Mr. Silbert: Seconded.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were any other nominations for Board Secretary. There being none, he called for a vote.

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

Trustee	For Ms. Murcko	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy	X			

---Ms. Blaney: Nominated JoAnn Serrano to serve as Board Treasurer.

---Ms. Murcko: Seconded.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were any other nominations for Board Treasurer. There being none, he called for a vote.

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

Trustee	Mrs. Serrano	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy	X			

---Mr. Silbert: Nominated Jerome Abernathy to serve as Board President.

---Mr. Thoens: Seconded.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if there were any other nominations for Board Secretary. There being none, he called for a vote.

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

Trustee	Dr. Abernathy	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy	X			

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The non-standard fittings used in the new HVAC system are being replaced with correct ones by the contractor and testing of the system will be done after addressing a few remaining mechanical issues. Third floor refinishing is being done except for the MakerSpace; the new wood flooring is being installed but a closure may be needed for the polyurethane finish to dry. A board action item (BAI) is before the trustees authorizing contractor Merrill & Garaguso to do additional work needed to close off office workspace in the second-floor Sinatra room for two staff members, cost not to exceed (NTE) \$15,919.27.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked when is the final walkthrough and punch list for the third floor. It is now anticipated at the end of September; the punch list is being organized now. The BAI authorizing funds for Merrill & Garaguso for second-floor office space was added to the consent agenda.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked about the building placemaking signage and design work by Felt Hat.

---Ms. Pu: Phase II of the placemaking design project is ready and a BAI is before the board to award the contract for fabrication and specifications of wayfinding signage and deliverables to Felt Hat, authorized cost not to exceed (NTE) \$131,320.00.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked if the design will impact structural elements of the building, for example, the vine on the stairway handrail. No, there will be no impact to the building. Discussion about the design concept and restrictions applying to the building. The BAI authorizing Phase II placemaking was added to the consent agenda.

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee: She described the financial matters before the board for approval: 1.) to pay from the Capital Improvement Construction Account at Bayonne Community Bank (BCB) checks no. 379-382 totaling \$520,448.99; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 10239-10310 totaling \$396,379.67 and to pay via Paypal \$1,638.00 to Constant Contact, \$599.60 to Zoom, and \$1,000.00 to Meta Platforms (Facebook); and 3) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 10232-10238 totaling \$33,157.32.

---Ms. Blaney: Moved the board approve payment of the Part B bills for library materials.

---Ms. Murcko: Seconded.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 5 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 1 ABSTAIN: 0

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

---Dr. Abernathy: Also before the board from the Finance Committee is a resolution to reserve for capital improvements a \$50,000 donation from the Hoboken Public Library Foundation in support of the Children’s Department and the renovation of the third floor and HVAC system; the resolution transfers the \$50,000.00 donation into the BCB Capital Improvements account. He asked if there were any questions about the bills to be paid or the resolution to transfer the donated Library Foundation funds. There being none, the payment of Part A bills and resolution to transfer the donated funds were added to the meeting consent agenda.

---Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: Reminded the trustees to sign up for the New Jersey Library Virtual Trustee Institute training sessions, which be held online on Saturday, October 8th; the meeting will include a presentation by our library counsel Michael Cerone.

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

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Library Foundation: The merger of the Friends and the Foundation is in the final stages; they are hoping for finalization by September.

11. Old Business

---Dr. Abernathy: Called for any remaining old business. There was none.

12. New Business

---Dr. Abernathy: Called for any new business.

---Ms. Pu: The renewal of the non-fair and open contract retaining library labor counsel Ruderman & Roth, LLC through July 2023 is before the board for approval, as discussed last month. It was added to the consent agenda.

---Dr. Abernathy: Also before the board is a BAI to accept the proposal by library architects Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH) for design and construction administration services for the renovation of the library’s first and second floors, at a cost NTE \$240,300.00. After discussion the BAI was added to the consent agenda.

12. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Excuse the absence of Ms. Evans.
- b. Accept the minutes of the July 26, 2022 board meeting.
- c. Approve BAI to pay \$15,919.27 to Merrill & Garaguso.
- d. Approve BAI for Phase II of design to Felt Hat, NTE \$140,000.
- e. Approve payment of BCB Capital Improvement bills.
- f. Approve payment of Part A bills.
- g. Approve resolution to transfer and reserve \$50,000 of funds donated by the Library Foundation to BCB Capital Improvement account.
- h. Approve resolution to approve non-fair and open contract retaining Ruderman & Roth LLC as labor counsel through July 2023.
- i. Approve BAI authorizing Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH) to design first and second floor renovation, NTE \$240,300.

---Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 5 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Present	Abstain
Ms. Blaney			X	
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy	X			

13. Trustee Comments

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

---Dr. Abernathy: Moved to adjourn.

---Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

---Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS: 5 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.