

MEETING OF TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 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, OCTOBER 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 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	Excused absence
Ms. Malani Cademartori, School Superintendent's Designee*	X		
Mr. Jason Freeman, Mayor's Designee*		X	Excused absence
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 Douglas S. Zucker, Esq., Recording Secretary Clark Matthews and members of the library staff and public.

---Dr. Abernathy: Introduced the new library board counsel, Douglas Zucker, Esq., who is a former Hoboken resident. The trustees welcomed Mr. Zucker.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if the trustees had any corrections or comments regarding the minutes of the board meeting of September 27, 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: The survey for the new strategic plan has concluded with over 800 responses, much more than expected; the collated survey data is expected in time for the visioning sessions with library strategic planning consultant M.J. Gómez Associates. The 2022 Library Festival was the most successful yet, with record attendance, and the popular book sale resumed at the event. She was a guest on Counselman Cohen's broadcast with two staffers; also the Library Foundation and Friends' \$50,000 check was presented to the library at a ceremony that showcased the newly renovated children's room. Work continues on the upper floor renovations, with new furniture and signage arriving. The Community Engagement team and Youth Services group continue to be very busy. Library technical director Phil Mendez helped to develop the new BCCLS phone app, which has just launched to very positive reviews. CyberCafé has ended for the year and resumes in spring 2023. The new librarian for the historical collections, James Cox, has already received a compliment from a patron who was doing research. There will be a special presentation by the Community Engagement team later in the meeting.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The 3rd floor and HVAC renovation project continues to wrap up; it is about ready for the final building inspection, but there are still no final completion dates. There was a problem in the MakerSpace with continued water intrusion; the temporary repair to the window sills did not work and it is now uncertain what is needed to fix it; exterior scaffolding may be needed. There was a resignation at the library's architecture firm, Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH), and the transition to a new CCH partner-project manager has not been seamless. The chandeliers are all installed and are getting positive comments. All the new furniture has arrived. The finishing work will mostly involve the lower floors; the Sunday closing went well.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked whether the window sills in the MakerSpace could be removed. Not really, they are copper over the masonry; they need to be angled outward to stop water from pooling and getting inside.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked if the library has a relationship with the Jehovah's Witnesses next door to facilitate putting up the scaffolding. Yes, they've been helpful in the past.

---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. 386-392 totaling \$497,518.66; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 10391-10456 totaling \$140,286.13 and to pay via Paypal \$101.00 to Canva; and 3) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 10457-10464 totaling \$29,940.73. Also before the board is a resolution to void checks no. 10313 and 10378. She asked if there were any questions concerning the bills to be paid or the resolution to void checks; there being none, approval of the BCB and Part A bills and resolution were added to the meeting consent agenda.

---Mrs. Serrano: Moved the board approve payment of the Part B bills for library materials.

---Mr. Silbert: Seconded.

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

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

---Ms. Pu: As part of the Personnel and Policy Committee report, she introduced Community Engagement Manager Andrew Luck and his team to give a presentation on their operations and initiatives.

---Mr. Luck: Thanked the trustees and introduced the members of the Community Engagement Department, which plans and delivers all library adult programming and outreach services to the community of Hoboken. The department consists of himself, Ally Blumenfeld, Outreach Coordinator Librarian, Emily Dalton, Community Service Worker, Laura Mill, Community Library Assistant, and Caroline Frederick, the library's social work intern from New York University.

---Ms. Blumenfeld: Described outreach programs and services, which involve both taking services into the community and providing them at the library; the team goes to the Hoboken Shelter, lunchtime ministry, and other venues and sets up a table with a laptop for library card signups, books, library literature, COVID-19 test kits and hygiene kits, and offers help in obtaining ID and voter registration, as well as services by partners like Northeast New Jersey Legal Services. Since operations started this year there have been more than 60 visits around town and over 700 individual encounters; also, during drop-in hours at the library, the library social worker usually assists 4-6 patrons per day.

---Ms. Dalton: Described social work programs and services, which she runs with the social work intern; they alternate days and set up a table at the Learning Center or the Hoboken shelter, where they reach out to homeless patrons, two of whom have obtained permanent housing this year. Another initiative is Project ID, which helps patrons obtain approved ID; so far 30 patrons have obtained legal IDs through the program, and her goal is to get the NJ mobile DMV to Hoboken in 2023 to facilitate many more.

---Mr. Luck: Continued with a presentation on Adult Literacy programs. Adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and planning is underway for possible weekly High School Equivalency (HSE, formerly GED) classes; the library has also been approved as a GED testing center starting in 2023. American Sign Language (ASL) classes have also started recently; job search help is available by appointment. In-person adult programs have resumed with the reduction in COVID-19, including Art with Liz Cohen classes every Wednesday, New Jersey Hope and Healing, online Mental Health classes, Jazz Greats, legal seminars hosted by Northeast New Jersey Legal Services, and many others, including programs driven by the Access Services and Digital Services departments. In the future, more cultural programming is planned. During summer, there were 10 ESL students for weekly classes; this fall, there are 16, as well as 20 ASL students.

---Ms. Blumenfeld: Continued with a description of the library BookBike's operations around town from June through October: it made appearances at events all over, was recognized everywhere and very popular; she also attended an event on library book bikes and bookmobiles. Almost 4,500 library interactions of all kinds took place with the BookBike. Looking ahead to 2023, Community Outreach programs are being discussed for food equity, health equity and community learning.

---Mr. Luck: Also looking forward to 2023, more cultural programming could include partnerships with AA and increased involvement with Hispanic Heritage Month and similar cultural awareness events. Author readings and appearances and art and musical exhibitions are expected to expand. Discussion about mobile library services and the BookBike; more discussion about patron requests for a bookmobile that could be used in the fall and winter months.

---Mr. Luck: Thanked the trustees for their attention and welcomed any questions.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked about a mobile motor vehicle commission (MVC) presence for ID. Discussion about how that would need to be arranged by the local assemblyman, Raj Mukerjee. Further discussion about how people now must go to Bayonne to get a New Jersey MVC Real ID.

---Ms. Pu: Continued the report of the Personnel and Policy Committee: A revised Request for Reconsideration form has been drafted for library materials; the new form includes a residency question and it must be signed. The revised form was created because previously complaints and objections to library materials usually originated from out-of-town people, not residents.

---Mr. Zucker: Asked if the form is a static PDF. It is. Discussion about how the signed form must be submitted on paper. Further discussion about the objections received so far; only one came from a resident; all the others came from nationwide campaigns, including possibly automated online bots.

7. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: Reminded trustees that the upcoming Strategic Plan Visioning workshop on Saturday is an important part of the plan process; he encouraged all trustees to attend. Also upcoming in December is the Annual Review and planning process; there will be a review of the Director's goals and the planning process will be changing; the end-of-year review will be a busy time for the board.

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

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Library Foundation: The annual book sale at the Library Festival earned \$556. The merger of the Friends and the Foundation continues in its final stages.

---Ms. Murcko: Asked about the \$50,000 check presented to the library jointly by the FOTL and the Library Foundation. It consisted of funds raised over years by the Foundation and Friends.

9. Old Business

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

10. New Business

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

11. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Excuse the absences of Ms. Blaney, Mr. Freeman, and Ms. Mirchandani.
- b. Accept the minutes of the September 27, 2022 board meeting.
- c. Approve payment of BCB Capital Improvement bills.
- d. Approve payment of Part A bills.
- e. Adopt resolution to void checks.

---Ms. Cadematori: Seconded.

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

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Cadematori	X			
Ms. Murcko	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. Serrano: Moved to adjourn.

---Dr. Abernathy: Seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.