

MEETING OF TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2023

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HOBOKEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY, HELD IN THE LARGE PROGRAM ROOM OF THE HOBOKEN PUBLIC LIBRARY, 500 PARK AVENUE, IN HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY ON TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2023 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. Malani Cademartori, 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 Jennie Pu, Library Attorney Douglas S. Zucker Esq., Recording Secretary Clark Matthews and members of the library staff and public.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if trustees had any corrections or comments to the February 28, 2023 meeting minutes. There were none; acceptance of the minutes were added to the meeting 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 Hoboken City Council recognized library social worker Emily Dalton for her article on the library's Community Engagement team in NASW-NJ FOCUS magazine. Special Collections Manager James Cox received thanks and compliments from a family who requested the history of their home from the library archives and digital services. The 2023 library fundraising goals have been shared with the Hoboken Library Friends & Foundation. This year's staff development outing was a trip to Bowl-Rite Lanes, which was well received. The new awning plans were approved by the Hoboken Historical Commission. In department highlights, the library has applied for a grant acquire vinyl LP records; there has also been a significant increase in borrowing in the past month. Partner Literacy NJ is adding ESL classes and planning expanded services. Digital services are expanding with more staff coverage and computer resources. Emily Dalton has arranged for bus passes for social services clients, which have been much appreciated. The IT department has added several new digital subscriptions and new upgrades for tech lending. The annual report has been posted to the web site and work is continuing on creating a standard set of performance metrics.

---Ms. Blaney: Noted that James Cox had helped her with a historical document and she added her appreciation of the Special Collections department.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The cause of the cracking veneers on the new doors was identified as improper gluing of the veneer on the door; in the process of examining them, it was found that one door also had the wrong core; it is being replaced by the manufacturer. Three or four doors can be fixed every few weeks, so it is hoped that they will all be replaced by the end of April. The new HVAC systems are done and everything is working properly. The certificate of occupancy (CO) is expected to be issued later this week.

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked about the status of the punch list for the project. There are only a few items remaining.

---Ms. Pu: Continued the report: The committee recommends approval of a board action item (BAI) agreeing to the Phase II placemaking signage proposal by Felt Hat, which was accepted by the board last year. The agreement's total cost is not to exceed (NTE) \$27,280 and it is budgeted for 2023 under "branding." Discussion about the original contract for placemaking and when it was approved. The BAI was added to the meeting consent agenda.

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee: There is no committee report this month. 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. 406-408 totaling \$14,566.85; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 10766-10819 totaling \$127,080.68, and to pay via PayPal \$175.00 to Paypro Global Inc. and \$99.00 to Wordpress; and 3.) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 10820-10827 totaling \$40,226.29. She asked if there were any questions concerning the bills to be paid. There being none, approval of the Part A and BCB bills were added to the consent agenda.

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

---Mr. Freeman: Seconded.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 8 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 1 ABSTAIN: 0

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

---Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: The committee met with the Director and Mr. Zucker concerning contract negotiations; the next step is to set up the first meeting. She reminded the trustees to RSVP for the meeting with the New Jersey State Librarian on May 11th.

7. Hoboken Public Library Friends & Foundation Report (HPLFF)

---Ms. Blaney: Reported for the Library Friends & Foundation: the HPLFF received the 2023 fundraising goals and has started work on them.

8. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: In lieu of this month's President's Report, there will be an adjudication hearing concerning a staff grievance.

---Mr. Zucker: The staff union and its counsel had intended to present the grievance but they now prefer to file it on paper; he presented the grievance: At the recent staff pot luck dinner, staff who were working and who attended were paid for the last hour of the day. Two employees who took the day off were not compensated for this time. They feel they are being treated differently from the other staff. There was discussion about whether the two employees want money or one hour of paid time off. Further discussion about whether the board needs to adjudicate this; it does per the contract. Additional discussion about whether this has ever happened before.

---Mr. Zucker: Explained the chronology of events of the grievance process and referred the trustees to the information packet on the matter. The hearing was supposed to take place at last month's trustee's meeting but the city water emergency interfered with trustee attendance. The complaint is that employees who weren't at work were treated differently. The complaint did not refer to the union contract, but the contract provides that full-time employees will be paid for hours lost due to early closing.

---Mr. Zucker: There is also precedent based on past events and past practice can be presented.

9. Executive Session

---Dr. Abernathy: Called for an executive session to discuss the matter.

---Ms. Mirchandani: So moved.

---Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

---Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS: 9 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

The board entered executive session at 7:03 p.m. and returned to the public session at 7:33 p.m.

---Dr. Abernathy: Summarized the session: it concerned a labor matter; no votes or board actions were taken. After considering the facts and applicable clauses of the union contract, the board will provide its decision in writing.

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

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

- a. Accept the minutes of the February 28, 2023 meeting.
- b. Approve payment of Part A bills for library operations.
- c. Approve payment of BCB Capital Improvement bills.
- d. Approve BAI authorizing payment for Felt Hat Phase II placefinding project, NTE \$27,280.

---Mr. Freeman: Seconded.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 9 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Cadematori	X			
Mr. Freeman	X			
Ms. Mirchandani	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			

Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy	X			

13. Trustee Comments

---Dr. Abernathy: Invited any comments by the trustees. There were none.

---Mrs. Serrano: Moved to adjourn.

---Ms. Murcko: Seconded.

---Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS: 9 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.