

MEETING OF TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 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, JUNE 27, 2023 AT 6:30 P.M.

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

1. Call to Order

Board President Abernathy called the meeting to order at 6:31 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	Excused absence

**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.

---Dr. Abernathy: Mr. Thoens advised in advance that he was unable to attend. His excused absence was added to the meeting consent agenda.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if trustees had any corrections or comments to the May 23, 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 library has received a \$50,000 CARE grant from the New Jersey Department of Labor (DOL) to support community initiatives on unemployment, training and education. Staffer Natalie Castillo has won two scholarships from BCCLS and the New Jersey Library Association (NJLA) for library school. The Director was elected to a 2-year term on the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) board of directors. With the buildings and grounds committee, she met with library architects Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH) about the next phase of renovations to the main and second floors; the board packet includes a board action item (BAI) to approve a resolution authorizing asbestos remediation and environmental services by J.J. Held LLC of Hoboken. The new awning design was approved by the Hoboken Historical Preservation Commission; the new fire and safety signage is mostly installed. At the recent NJLA conference we were well represented, with a total of five presentations. The Banned Books Read-a-Thon on June 24th was very successful, with readings all day by Mayor Bhalla, congressman Menendez, city council members, trustees, members of the Hoboken Public Library Friends & Foundation (HPLFF), Mile Square Theatre and others; there was great support and participation by the community and no disruptions; backlash against it was limited to social media. The NJLA has made it much easier for staff to join the NJLA. Patron response to the renovated third floor is excellent and circulation is increasing there; the third floor circulation desk now allows wheelchair use. The 2023 Library Festival date is confirmed for Saturday, October 14th. New ESL classes will begin in July.

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

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The replacement of the defective doors is ongoing; there are only two remaining doors to install and the work should be done within two weeks. Closeout documents for the third-floor renovation project are still outstanding and need to be completed; there is also a payment to be approved. The basement pumps were serviced; maintenance was performed on the ejector pump and the impeller was fixed so it properly chops up debris; everything is functioning correctly now.

---Mrs. Serrano: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee: The FY2022 audit report from Wielkotz & Company was included in the board package for review and board acceptance next 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. 417-420 totaling \$75,421.95; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 10965-11025 totaling \$388,401.57, and to pay via TD Bank processing \$213.98 to Amazon and \$1,099.00 to Intuit QuickBooks; and 3.) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 11026-11030 totaling \$12,249.04. Also before the trustees is a resolution to void checks no. 10929 and 10869. She asked if there were any questions concerning the bills to be paid or the resolution. There being none, approval of the Part A and BCB bills and the resolution were added to the consent agenda.

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

---Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

---Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 1 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Cademartori	X			
Mr. Freeman	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 union negotiations were postponed due to a group of employees approaching the NJ Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) about union representation; PERC sent ballots to the employees to elect which union representation they prefer, if any; the ballots are due back by mail by tomorrow. She expects to have an update on these matters by the next meeting. Also she reminded the trustees that the July trustees meeting is the annual board reorganization to elect officers and approve a schedule of board meeting dates for the coming year.

---Mr. Zucker: Clarified the background concerning the PERC-supervised union election: the library discovered that both supervisory and non-supervisory employees were represented by the same union, but these different categories of employees are legally required to have separate representation; when the employees were informed of this they agreed to the PERC election for both categories of employees.

7. President’s Report

---Dr. Abernathy: On behalf of the trustees, he thanked Mrs. Serrano for her 25 years of service on the board and as board treasurer. He read the proclamation issued by Mayor Bhalla honoring her for her service and contribution to the library’s renovation and expansion.

---Dr. Abernathy: Added that the community owes a debt of gratitude to Mrs. Serrano and he looks forward to continuing to work with her through the Hoboken Library Friends & Foundation. The trustees joined in these wishes.

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

---Ms. Blaney: Reported for the Library Friends & Foundation: The HPLFF will help to fund the library Project ID initiative and the Yo La Tengo collection. Also, it is collecting gently used book donations for the fall 2023 Library Fair; children’s books are especially needed.

9. Old Business

There was no old business.

10. New Business

---Mr. Zucker: Advised that board approval of the resolution awarding the contract to J.S. Held LLC for asbestos abatement and environmental services, not to exceed \$45,000, required a separate vote from the meeting consent agenda.

11. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Excuse the absence of Mr. Thoens.
- b. Accept the minutes of the May 23, 2023 meeting.
- c. Approve payment of Part A bills for library operations.
- d. Approve payment of BCB Capital Improvement bills.
- e. Adopt resolution voiding checks.

---Mr. Freeman: Seconded.

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

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

---Mr. Silbert: Moved the board approve the resolution to accept the proposal of J.S. Held LLC, not to exceed \$45,000, for asbestos abatement services.

---Mrs. Serrano: Seconded.

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

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

Dr. Abernathy	X			
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12. Trustee Comments

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

---Mr. Freeman: Moved to adjourn.

---Ms. Cadematori: Seconded.

---Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS: 8 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.