

MEETING OF TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, 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, AUGUST 22, 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 27, 2023 meeting of the Library Board and such notice was provided to the Jersey Journal and the Newark Star-Ledger, 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		
Mr. Kurt Thoens, Treasurer	X		
Ms. Susan Murcko, Secretary	X		
Ms. Amanda R. Blaney	X		
Ms. Malani Cademartori, School Superintendent's Designee*		X	Excused absence.
Mr. Damien DeBenedetto	X		
Mr. Jason Freeman, Mayor's Designee*	X		
Ms. Raakhee Mirchandani**	X		Joined at 6:34 p.m.
Mr. Jack Silbert	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.

---Dr. Abernathy: On behalf of the trustees, he welcomed new trustee Mr. DeBenedetto to the board. Ms. Cademartori advised in advance that she was unable to attend. Her excused absence was added to the meeting consent agenda without objection.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if trustees had any corrections or comments to the July 25, 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 is officially rebranded and all the social media platforms are updated to meet the new brand guidelines. The Friends & Foundation Room on the first floor has been opened to the public. The board package contains a proposed resolution to adopt the ALA's Freedom to Read policy and declaring the library as a book sanctuary. Councilwoman Emily Jabbour sent a recognition of library Social Worker Emily Dalton, who intervened in an emergency situation at the Hoboken Housing Authority (HHA) and possibly saved someone's life. National Night Out in Church Square Park had a library table where staff and members of the Friends & Foundation promoted library services and issued library cards. September 8th will be Staff Development Day; the library will be closed to the public all day for the event. The library will be coordinating with the Hoboken Historical Museum (HHM), which received a project grant to produce a joint exhibit at the library and HHM, along with a manuscript. On August 14th, an event with Computers4People offered help and enrollment in free or low-cost internet plans for qualified patrons under the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP); more of these ACP events are planned for the future. Rutgers Newark has been very pleased with the experience of their social work intern at the library, who is returning this fall; Rutgers is also providing a second part-time social work intern who will help with drop-ins, programming, and unemployment assistance. Lastly, Stevens Institute has reapplied to the National Science Foundation (NSF) for another Math Circle grant for children in grades 4 and 5, with the library hosting the classes in the story time room.

6. Presentation by Youth Services Team

---Ms. Pu: Introduced Youth Services Manager Vanessa Soto and Valerie Coughlin and Jenn Sforza of the Youth Services (YS) team for a presentation on current YS programs, activities and plans.

---Ms. Soto: Described the YS team and its 10 staffers; Valerie Coughlin is the Children's Librarian and Jenn Sforza is the Young Adult/Teen Librarian.

---Ms. Coughlin: Reviewed the programs offered at all the library locations, including bi-weekly after-school programs at the HHA. Story times for different age groups are scheduled all day, in library facilities as well as at community partner organizations and schools, and with the BookBike.

---Ms. Sforza: Presented on Teen Programs, which include cooking programs and a Teen IG Page with videos. She continued with a sample of class and camp visits, including weekly summer camps.

---Ms. Soto: Presented the Pop-up Libraries school program that engages with the Brandt, Connors, Wallace and Hoboken Charter Schools on a rotating basis. Pop-up Libraries issue library cards and circulate as much as 900

items monthly; they also provide a way to engage with parents who are not library users. So far this year, 5,784 students have been served with school or camp visits; 19,119 patrons have been served through programs, and there is a large increase in circulation statistics for 2023 over 2022.

---Ms. Coughlin: Looking ahead, Pop-up Library visits will continue into next year and hopefully expand to other schools. The YS Team is looking to expand partnerships to include other types of visits, including historical resources and teen book clubs, and to partner with the Stevens Institute Math Circles Program for early STEM classes and to connect with homeschooling families.

---Ms. Soto: Thanked the trustees for their attention and invited questions.

---Mr. Freeman: While the trustees get updates every month, he wondered how the board could help the YS Team with resources or family services. Discussion about additional funding, as well as arrangements for food or other things that would help children focus without distractions or stress. Further discussion about offering more programs that use the mobile kitchen.

---Mr. DeBenedetto: Asked if there was any need for mentors or volunteers. Discussion about how the YS Team can always use them to get kids involved; also older children can help the younger ones. Further discussion about high school seniors possibly getting extra credit for such roles.

---Ms. Pu: Thanked Ms. Soto and her team for their presentation.

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

---Mr. Thoens: 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. 425-430 totaling \$27,419.12; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 11087-11134 totaling \$69,855.07, and to pay via TD Bank \$45.62 to Amazon and to pay via PayPal \$500.00 to Bitstream, Inc.; and 3.) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 11135-11138 totaling \$20,339.10. Also before the trustees is a resolution to reserve up to \$77,414 of FY2022 operating funds for the completion of capital projects, and to transfer the funds to the BCB Construction Account. He 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.

---Mr. Freeman: Moved the board approve payment of the Part B bills for library materials.

---Dr. Abernathy: Seconded.

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

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Mr. DeBenedetto	X			
Mr. Freeman	X			
Ms. Mirchandani	X			
Ms. Murcko			X	
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			

Dr. Abernathy	X			
---------------	---	--	--	--

---Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: Regarding the 3rd floor renovation, there have been issues with the new air conditioning on the 2nd floor as well as plumbing issues, which were addressed under warranty. He is still waiting for the closeout documents to be submitted, including warranty documentation, which will allow the project to be formally closed out with library architects Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH). There will be a request for additional funding to replace the basement HVAC compressor; the compressor failed and it is out of warranty; the estimated cost is over \$9,500 for parts and labor. Also, there have been problems with the lower-level pumps; it was necessary to replace one ejector pump and to use a waste removal truck to pump out the waste pit because the pumps' impellers can't chop up waste that is clogging them; the waste truck service cost \$3,000. The source of these problems is items that should not be flushed down the toilets; there are very limited options to deal with this problem. The committee will be seeking budget funds to handle this problem in-house as much as possible, rather than calling Roto-rooter; they will need to use things like cameras to check the pipes eventually to head off these problems.

---Ms. Blaney: Asked about implementing key access to the bathrooms. Discussion about such a policy; it was tried in the past but it only takes one item to cause a blockage; wipes and plastic are the main culprit.

---Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: Following the library's Banned Book event, the committee decided to propose the library adopt a non-ban resolution. Before the board is a resolution adopting the American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statment and declaring the Hoboken Public Library as a book sanctuary.

---Mr. Freeman: Thought the trustees should share that the library has adopted the policy; hopefully the city will adopt it too. Discussion about interested members of the city council.

---Dr. Abernathy: Moved the board adopt the proposed resolution 23-05 and declare the library to be a book sanctuary.

---Ms. Murcko: Seconded.

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

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

8. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: There was no president's report this month.

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

---Ms. Blaney: There was no reported for the Library Friends & Foundation this month.

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

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

- a. Excuse the absence of Ms. Cademartori.
- b. Accept the minutes of the July 25, 2023 meeting.
- c. Approve payment of Part A bills for library operations.
- d. Approve payment of BCB Capital Improvement bills.
- e. Adopt resolution reserving up to \$77,414.00 of FY2022 operating funds for capital improvements.

---Ms. Murcko: Seconded.

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

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

12. Trustee Comments

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

---Mr. Freeman: Moved to adjourn.

---Dr. Abernathy: Seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.