

MEETING OF TUESDAY, JULY 25, 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, JULY 25, 2023 AT 6:30 P.M.

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

1. Call to Order

Board President Abernathy called the meeting to order at 6:30 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	Term expired.
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	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 Attorney Douglas S. Zucker Esq.**, Recording Secretary Clark Matthews and members of the library staff and public.

---Dr. Abernathy: Ms. Mirchandani advised in advance that she was unable to attend. Her excused absence was added to the meeting consent agenda.

3. Board Reorganization

---Dr. Abernathy: Announced the annual board reorganization and election of officers for 2023-24. He asked for nominations for the office of Board Secretary.

---Mr. Thoens: Nominated Ms. Murcko for Board Secretary.

---Ms. Blaney: Seconded.

---Dr. Abernathy: There being no additional nominations for Board Secretary, he asked for nominations for Board Treasurer.

---Ms. Murcko: Nominated Mr. Thoens for Board Treasurer.

---Ms. Blaney: Seconded.

---Dr. Abernathy: There being no additional nominations for Board Secretary, he asked for nominations for Board President.

---Mr. Silbert: Nominated Dr. Jerome Abernathy for Board President.

---Ms. Blaney: Seconded.

---Mr. Zucker: Advised that the vote for officers could be combined as a slate since the posts are uncontested.

---The slate of officers was 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			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy	X			

4. Acceptance of Minutes

---Dr. Abernathy: Asked if trustees had any corrections or comments to the June 27, 2023 meeting minutes. There were none; acceptance of the minutes were added to the meeting consent agenda.

5. Public Comments

---Dr. Abernathy: Invited comments from the public. There were no comments.

6. Director's Report

---Ms. Pu: Highlighted several items from the Director's Report: She has started on her two-year term as a member of the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) and attended her first ULC board meeting in Washington, D.C., on July 20-21. The President/CEO of Baker & Taylor visited the library for discussions about new initiatives and ways to promote library services. A single bid was received from AZ Tech Signs & Graphics for fabricating and installing the storytelling signage package in the amount of \$99,500.00; a resolution approving award of the contract is included in the board materials. The library has partnered with the city to be a distribution site for free lunches for young people experiencing food insecurity; the program began on July 5 and runs through August 25. The response to the Hoboken Public Library Friends & Foundation (HPLFF) book donation campaign for the fall Library Fair has been tremendous; donations will probably need to be turned away soon. Also, the HPLFF has organized a donation campaign that works with a discount code at the new ShakeShack restaurant in town; 25% of meal orders on July 26th will be donated to HPLFF by ShakeShack. The Internet Cafè got a late start this summer due to a retirement, but it has restarted and unattended tables and chairs will be outside weekdays between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. The new Social Work Intern from Rutgers, Sealeiah Berry, has joined the staff and hopes to continue here into the fall. Library hours will need to be changed due to the city's water main replacement project on Park Avenue, which involves water shutoffs. Both the mayor and Congressman Menendez are expected to be in attendance at the official third-floor reopening this fall. Staff development day will be on September 8th. The mobile kitchen was well received at the Caribbean Garden Party event. The Revising Out Loud writing workshop combined with a live reading of work by authors and performers. The BookBike is out and all over town; it can be scheduled for visits by request. Citizenship preparatory classes are being added to American Sign Language/English as a Second Language (ASL/ESL) classes. Story Time programs are very active and the Story Time room is in constant use. A Chinese-language book collection is being added; titles are being sourced now. The FY2022 library audit and a set of amended and restated bylaws are up for board approval this month.

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

---Ms. Pu: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: Library architects Clarke Caton Hintz (CCH) are waiting for the final closeout documents for the third-floor renovation project from General Contractor Merrill and Garaguso; also, a misconnected pipe needs to be fixed. Replacement of the last two doors with defective veneers is expected this week. The committee expects to hear from CCH by the end of the week about final approval of the checklist; when it is approved the library can move ahead with getting grant reimbursement.

---Dr. Abernathy: Reported for the Budget and Finance Committee: The FY2022 audit report from Wielkotz & Company is included in the board package for review and board acceptance. He asked if there were any questions concerning the audit; there being none, acceptance of the audit was added to the meeting consent agenda.

---Dr. Abernathy: 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. 421-424 totaling \$122,822.81; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 11031-11082 totaling \$78,859.58; and 3.) in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 11083-11085 totaling \$14,979.06. Also before the trustees is a resolution to void check no. 10888. 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			
Ms. Cademartori	X			
Mr. Freeman	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 NJ Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) election results for union representation were tallied; the non-supervisory library staff chose to be represented by the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and supervisors chose representation by the Hoboken Municipal Employees Association (HMEA).

---Mr. Zucker: Added that he had received an information request from HMEA, but otherwise there had been no communication with either collective bargaining organization.

---Ms. Murcko: Also reported that board bylaws had not been updated since 2016, and that revised and updated bylaws developed with library counsel to reflect best practices are in the board package for adoption.

---Mr. Thoens: Asked whether the revised bylaws would theoretically permit the mayor to replace the board by not appointing new trustees; discussion about a simple majority of the board constituting a quorum; further discussion about staggered terms of appointments preventing such absences.

---Mr. Zucker: Clarified that such absences would mean the rules would revert to the original statute chartering the library, which specifies a quorum of five trustees; if the number of trustees was less than this, no business could be conducted by the board.

---Dr. Abernathy: The revised and updated bylaws were added to the meeting consent agenda for adoption.

8. President's Report

---Dr. Abernathy: Reviewed the major library initiatives that are in process, including the uptown branch, the Grand Street branch at the Multi-Purpose Center, renovations at the Hoboken Housing Authority (HHA), and additional things that will all require staffing. The board's job for the future will be to focus on the need for reliable, recurring revenue to support them all.

---Mr. Freeman: Asked about the library's statutory funding. Discussion about the 1/3-mil statutory funding. Further discussion about the city council supplementing the funding in sustainable ways.

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

---Ms. Blaney: Reported for the Library Friends & Foundation: Reminded trustees that ShakeShack’s discount code will donate 25% of every meal to the HPLFF on Wednesday, July 26.

10. Old Business

There was no old business.

11. New Business

---Dr. Abernathy: Pointed out the revised schedule of 2023-24 Board of Trustees meeting dates was up for adoption.

---Ms. Pu: Noted that the December 2023 meeting was moved up ahead of the holidays. The schedule was added to the meeting consent agenda.

12. Consent Agenda

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

- a. Excuse the absence of Ms. Mirchandani.
- b. Accept the minutes of the June 27, 2023 meeting.
- c. Accept the FY2022 library audit report by Wielkocz & Company.
- d. Approve payment of Part A bills for library operations.
- e. Approve payment of BCB Capital Improvement bills.
- f. Adopt resolution voiding checks.
- g. Adopt schedule of 2023-2024 meeting dates.
- h. Approve resolution adopting amended bylaws.

---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			
Ms. Cademartori	X			
Mr. Freeman	X			
Ms. Murcko	X			
Mrs. Serrano	X			
Mr. Silbert	X			
Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy	X			

---Ms. Cademartori: Moved the board adopt the resolution authorizing award of the contract for fabricating installing storytelling signage to AZ Tech Signs & Graphics, not to exceed \$99,500.00.

---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			

12. Trustee Comments

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

---Dr. Abernathy: Moved to adjourn.

---Mr. Freeman: Seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.