

**MEETING OF TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 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, OCTOBER 24, 2023 AT 6:30 PM.**

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

**1. Call to Order**

Board President Abernathy called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and certified that pursuant to the Open Public Meeting Act, notice of the meeting had been given in the annual meeting notice, which was adopted at the September 26, 2023 meeting of the Library Board and such notice was provided in the Jersey Journal and was posted to the Library website and at the Hoboken City Hall, and filed with the Hoboken City Clerk. The meeting notice was amended at the outset of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency to provide the internet and telephone conference number and access code in advance of the scheduled meetings.

**2. Roll Call**

Attendance	Present	Absent	Notes
Dr. Jerome Abernathy, President	X		
Ms. Susan Murcko, Secretary	X		
Mr. Kurt Thoens, Treasurer	X		
Ms. Amanda R. Blaney		X	Excused absence
Ms. Malani Cademartori, School Superintendent Designee *	X		
Mr. Damien DeBenedetto**	X		
Mr. Jason Freeman, Mayor's Designee**	X		
Ms. Raakhee Mirchandani		X	Excused absence
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 Karla Aybar Reyes, and members of the library staff and public.

### **3. Acceptance of Minutes**

—Dr. Abernathy: Asked if the trustees had any corrections or comments regarding the minutes of the board meeting of September 26, 2023. 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: Ms. Pu highlights items of note: The library celebrated a successful ribbon cutting ceremony for the 3rd floor historic renovation on October 14. There were about 70 people in attendance. Community Engagement Assistant Natalie Castillo was the recipient of the BCCLS Robert White Memorial Scholarship. She was selected as the keynote speaker at the BCCLS Friends Scholarship Luncheon. Ms. Pu and Community Engagement Manager Ally Blumenfeld attended the “Let Freedom Read” panel discussion at Stevens Institute. They talked about the library’s journey from reading banned books to becoming the state's first book sanctuary city. Since the library became a book sanctuary, there are now 6 more book sanctuaries in the state of New Jersey, with other NJ library systems expressing interest in becoming one and crediting us for leading the way. Ms. Pu attended the Hoboken Business Alliance focus group and is a member of their steering committee for their strategic plan. She was also invited to the Stevens Institute Artificial Intelligence relaunch event, where she spoke about the role public libraries play in new technology. The NJLA Public Policy Committee, of which Ms. Pu is the co-chair, met with NJ State Librarian Jen Nelson and Senator Zwicker to discuss the legislation he is sponsoring that would ban book bans in the state, Bill S3907. The October 14 Library Festival was moved indoors due to the weather. About 1,500 people attended. The library was closed on October 9 due to a scheduled water main replacement project on Park Avenue. Department heads met with Ms. Pu, the Assistant Director, and the Business Manager to finalize their proposals for the 2024 budget. The finance committee will meet in November and the final budget will be presented to the board at the December BOT meeting. The Community Engagement team attended the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services Conference and presented “Have Wagon, Will Travel: How Social Work Outreach Changes Lives” to over 150 attendees. The library has partnered with NAMI Hudson County to provide a biweekly free mental health support group at the library beginning November 1. The library has also partnered with Computers4People to provide weekly free computer classes at the library. School Outreach Librarian Valerie Coughlin hosted Hebrew Story Time at the library. Special Collections applied for the Library of Congress grant, Of the People: Widening the Path. The library should know

the outcome of the grant by the end of the year. Special Collections Manager James Cox presented a talk at the Hoboken Historical Museum on Sunday, October 15, 2023.

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

—Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings and Grounds Committee: Merrell & Garaguso provided the final closeout documents to Clark Caton Hintz (CCH). If the documents are sufficient, the project can be closed out and the library can submit for reimbursement from the Historic Trust. There are a couple of warranty items pending: There was a water intrusion from the roof in the Makerspace when we had heavy rain a couple of weeks ago, and there are also issues with the chandeliers on the third floor. Merrell & Garaguso are working with the distributor to determine which parts need to be replaced.

—Mr. Thoens: Reported for the Finance Committee: 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. 434-437 totaling \$68,520.75; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 11201-11263 totaling \$68,520.75, and to pay via PayPal \$65.00 to BCCLS, \$47.28 to Namecheap, Inc., \$298.90 to Patch Plaques, and \$300 to Tania Realpe; and in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 11264-11269 totaling \$16,133.85. Also before the trustees is a resolution to void check no. 11186. 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.

—Dr. Abernathy: Moved the board to approve payment of the Part B bills for library materials.

—Mr. Silbert: Seconded.

–Adopted by roll call vote as follow: YEAS: 6 NAYS:0 RECUSED: 1 ABSTAIN: 0

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

Dr.Abernathy	X			
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—Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: Ms. Pu has revised the job description for the Marketing Manager position. She would like to fill the position with someone who is more familiar with the digital tools in use today. Ms. Pu had her first labor management meeting with the CWA union representatives. Three of the four stewards have been appointed. There were no policy items this month.

**7. President’s Report**

—Dr. Abernathy: Reported that building relationships with stakeholders in our community aligns with our strategic plan goals. He has received emails from other public officials expressing gratitude toward being included in the library’s growth.

**8. Hoboken Public Library Friends & Foundation Report**

—Ms. Pu reminded the board that the Friends & Foundation “Books & Brew” fundraiser is taking place Thursday, November 2 from 5:30pm to 8:00pm.

**9. Old Business**

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

**10. New Business**

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

**11. Consent Agenda**

- a. Excuse the absence of Ms. Blaney and Ms. Mirchandani.
- b. Accept the minutes of the September 26, 2023 meeting.
- c. Approve payment of Part A bills for library expenses.
- d. Approve payment of BCB Capital Improvement Bills.
- e. Approve resolution to void checks.

—Ms. Murcko: Moved the board to approve the meeting consent agenda.

—Ms. Cademartori: Seconded.

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

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Cademartori	X			
Mr. DeBenedetto	X			
Mr. Freeman	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.

—Ms Murcko: Seconded.

—Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS:7 NAYS:0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.