

MEETING OF TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 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, DECEMBER 19, 2023 AT 6:30 PM.

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

1. Call to Order

Board President Abernathy called the meeting to order at 6:31 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 July 25, 2023 meeting of the Library Board and such notice was provided in the Jersey Journal and Star Ledger, 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		Joined at 6:34
Mr. Kurt Thoens, Treasurer	X		
Ms. Amanda R. Blaney**	X		
Ms. Malani Cademartori, School Superintendent Designee *		X	
Mr. Damien DeBenedetto		X	
Mr. Jason Freeman, Mayor's Designee*	X		
Ms. Raakhee Mirchandani**	X		
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., Assistant Library Director Andrew Luck, Recording Secretary Karla Aybar Reyes, and members of the public.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

—Dr. Abernathy: Asked if the Trustees had any corrections or comments regarding the minutes of the Board meeting of November 28, 2023. There being none, approval of the minutes was added to the consent agenda.

4. Public Comments

—Dr. Abernathy: Invited comments from the public. A member of the public wished everyone a happy holiday.

5. Director's Report

—Ms. Pu: Ms. Pu highlights items of note: She informed the group that the December 19th amended board packet includes the 2023 annual report, the 2024 proposed library closures, and a draft of the 2024 proposed budget. The Director of Paris-Bourbon County Library in Kentucky invited Ms. Pu as part of his panel titled Fighting for the First Amendment to speak about their respective journeys of becoming the first book sanctuaries in their states. Ms. Pu continues to work with state library leaders and legislatures to revise Senate Bill S3907, which would be the state's first Freedom to Read bill. Ms. Pu was invited to join ALA Policy Core, United Against Book Bans. Library staff had a holiday party to celebrate the year. Community Social Worker Emily Dalton worked with a mother and daughter who are refugees from Kenya obtaining their US citizenship. In late November, both women were sworn in as US Citizens. Librarian Valerie Coughlin referred the women to Ms. Dalton for social work assistance. Five thousand pages of material were couriered to the Internet Archive (Princeton Theological Seminary) for digitization. The Collection Development department made a permanent Book Sanctuary display for the 2nd floor in the Information and Digital Services department. The library's vinyl collection will be implemented later in the month of December in coordination with the Special Collections and Youth Services departments. Programs in the Makerspace have been popular and the library has seen an increase in community use. The library was registered as a hosting site for New Jersey Makers Day 2024, which will be celebrated in March. The uptown lockers are being used for returns. They should be fully functional in January.

—Ms. Murcko: Commended Ms. Coughlin and Ms. Dalton for their work assisting the mother and daughter refugees. She noted an incorrect spelling of Yo La Tengo in the annual report and requested that it be changed.

—Ms. Mirchandani: Asked if the library has media plans around becoming a book sanctuary.

—Ms. Pu: Spoke with a PR firm but hasn't signed any contracts with them yet.

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

—Mr. Chapka: Reported on behalf of the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The second compressor for the basement HVAC system has malfunctioned. The compressors are seven years old and the warranty is good for five years. Mr. Chapka is waiting to see if the replacement warranty is for one year or five years. The committee requested more funding to replace the compressor; the quote is for about \$12,000. The library received the final closeout documents from Clarke Caton Hintz. Once the 3rd floor chandelier lights are repaired, there will be no more outstanding items. Ms. Pu is waiting on the lead certifications before submitting for reimbursement from the Historic Trust.

—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 440 and 441 totaling \$5,462.78.71; 2.) in Part A, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 11343-11406 totaling \$298,658.93, to pay via PayPal \$200.00 to Canva and \$22.00 to Wordpress.com; and in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 11407-11411 totaling \$15,712.36. Also before the Trustees is a resolution to void check number 11292. Mr. Thoens asked if there were any questions concerning the bills to be paid or the resolution. He reported that the 2024 proposed budget is included in the board packet for the board to review before next month's meeting. He asked if there were any questions regarding the proposed budget. Approval of the Part A and BCB bills and the resolution were added to the consent agenda.

—Mr. Freeman: Moved the Board to approve payment of the Part B bills for library materials.

—Dr. Abernathy: Seconded.

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

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

Mr. Thoens	X			
Dr. Abernathy	X			

—Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: There were no new policy issues this month. The bargaining committee for the employee’s union has begun to strategize, but there has been no information regarding when the negotiations will start. Personnel and Policy Committee members will be in touch with the Board in January to begin the annual Director’s evaluation.

7. President’s Report

—Dr. Abernathy: Reported that this was the last meeting of the year and thanked everyone for volunteering their time and for the efforts they have made to the City of Hoboken.

8. Friends & Foundation

—Ms. Blaney: Thanked everyone for their support for the 2023 Annual Appeal. The Friends & Foundation will have training in January. The book sale continues in the Friends & Foundation room.

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. Cademartori and Mr. DeBenedetto.
- b. Accept the minutes of the November 28 board 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.
- f. Approve the 2024 library holiday closings.

—Dr. Abernathy: Moved the Board to approve the meeting consent agenda.

—Mr. Freeman: Seconded.

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

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	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.

—Dr. Abernathy: Moved to adjourn.

—All: Seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.