

**MEETING OF TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2024**

**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, FEBRUARY 27, 2024 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 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		
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 January 23, 2024. There being none, approval of the minutes was added to the consent agenda.

### **4. Public Comments**

—Dr. Abernathy: Invited comments from the public.

### **5. Director's Report**

—Ms. Pu: Highlighted items of note: Congressman Rob Menendez presented the library with a check for \$69,449.39 in honor of its Library of Congress award for the project “The Puerto Rican Experience in Hoboken and America.” News of this CCDI Award made the front page of the Library of Congress staff newsletter, *Gazette*, and was featured in other local media. The library was featured in the March/April 2024 edition of *Poets & Writers Magazine* about the growing book sanctuary movement in America. The library partnered with Local Thread to open an online store for new library-branded sweaters. The store is open until March 5. As co-chair of the NJLA Public Policy Committee, Ms. Pu was part of the committee that hired lobbyists to advocate on behalf of New Jersey libraries for Senate Bill S427. The first hearing is on March 14. Councilwoman Giattino and BOT president Jerome Abernathy visited the library and were the first to see the new Library of Things collection on the second floor. The Library of Things received media coverage from ABC7 News and News 12 New Jersey. Paris-Bourbon County Library (Kentucky) Board of Trustees approved a resolution recognizing our library as a sister library for our respective commitments to ensure the freedom to read for our communities. HR Manager Faith Fitzsimmons was elected Board of Trustees president for Saddlebrook Public Library. Library leadership is working on the 2023 State Aid Report, which the State Library uses for regulations. The library's role as a dropoff spot for the Computers4People computer donation program has begun. The library supported the Hudson County Division of Housing & Community Development to serve as a host site for the statewide Point-in-Time Homeless Count. Twenty-seven patrons experiencing housing insecurity were counted. The MLK Day of Service event was popular among patrons. Forty-five service project kits were distributed. The library held a Drag Queen Beyonce Bingo night hosted by Harmoni Sunbeam, in honor of Black History Month. The Lunar New Year Celebration included a Lion Dance, dumpling making, and sugar painting. The Youth Services Teen Advisory Board continues to grow. The new “Kid Librarian” initiative has been implemented and highlighted on social media. BCCLS has installed a permanent network switch at the Historical Museum lockers. The lockers can be wrapped once the weather improves. The Library newsletter domain has been changed to

[hello@hobokenlibrary.org](mailto:hello@hobokenlibrary.org). A donation page has been added for library friend and supporter Dinah Stevenson. Another 49 volumes were taken to the Internet Archive at the Princeton Theological Seminary. Archivist Stephanie Diorio has resigned.

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

—Ms. Pu: Reported on behalf of the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The library has submitted all of the paperwork for the first phase of reimbursement from the Historic Trust. Ms. Pu will schedule a meeting with Clarke Caton Hintz to go over next steps for renovation.

—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 444 and 445 totaling \$32,977.21; 2.) in Part A 2024 operating budget, to pay library operating expenses with checks no.11487-11537 totaling \$71,462.10; in Part A 2023 operating budget, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 11481-11486 totaling \$47,411.57; and in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 11538-11543 totaling \$20,676.11. Also before the Trustees is a resolution to void check number 11274. Mr. Thoens 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 to approve payment of the Part B bills for library materials.

—Dr. Abernathy: Seconded.

–Adopted by roll call vote as follow: 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			

—Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: Before the Board is a resolution establishing a sister relationship with Paris-Bourbon County Library in Kentucky. Ms. Pu is in communication with CWA; negotiations have not been open. Ms. Pu’s Director’s evaluations will be discussed during an executive session at today’s meeting.

### **7. President’s Report**

—Dr. Abernathy: There was no president’s report this month.

### **8. Friends & Foundation**

—Ms. Blaney: Reported that the Hoboken Public Library Friend’s & Foundation held a sold-out Sip & Tell event on Friday, March 1. The group signed up for Hudson Gives on May 9. They hope the library can assist by joining the Hudson County Chamber of Commerce, which helps with fundraising.

### **9. Executive Session**

—Dr. Abernathy: Called for an executive session.

—Mr. Silbert: Seconded

—Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS: 9 NAYS: 0 Recused: 0 Abstain: 0

The board entered executive session at 6:55pm and returned to the public session at 7:50pm.

—Dr. Abernathy: Summarized the session: it concerned personnel and HR matters. No votes or board actions were taken.

### **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**

- a. Excuse the absence of Ms. Cademartori
- b. Accept the minutes of the January 23, 2024 Board meeting
- c. Approve payment of Part A bills
- d. Approve payment of BCB bills
- e. Approve resolution to void checks
- f. Approve resolution establishing a Sister Library Relationship between the Hoboken Public Library and the Paris-Bourbon County Public Library

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

—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			
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.

—Ms. Mirchandani: Moved to adjourn.

—Ms. Murcko: Seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:52pm.