

MEETING OF TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 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, MARCH 26, 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, and Recording Secretary Karla Aybar Reyes.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

—Dr. Abernathy: Asked if the Trustees had any corrections or comments regarding the minutes of the Board meeting of February 27, 2024. 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 none.

5. Director's Report

—Ms. Pu: Highlighted items of note: Ms. Pu has been conducting staff tours of the library's new lenticular displays. The lenticulars can be found on the second and third floors of the library and in the elevator lobby. On the invitation of our new sister library, Paris-Bourbon County Library, Ms. Pu attended the Kentucky Public Library Association Conference. She participated in a panel titled "Fighting for the First Amendment." She was also a guest at Louisville Public Library, where she toured the main library and their two branches. On behalf of the Public Policy Committee, Ms. Pu presented at the NJLA Advocacy Forum about the library becoming a book sanctuary and on updates on Senate Bill S2421, the Freedom to Read Act. Senator Angela McKnight was a featured judge at the library's Black History Month oratory contest, which was hosted in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club. In partnership with little city books, the library held a sold out book launch for library trustee Raakhee Mirchandani's newest book, *Journey to the Stars*. Over 100 community members attended. Mayor Bhalla noted the work of Library Social Worker Emily Dalton in his State of the City Address. The library received a great deal of publicity this past month. The PR firm Rosica has netted a number of interviews capitalizing on the launch of our Library of Things and wider publicity about the book sanctuary movement. The 2023 State Aid Report was submitted. Programming Assistant Natalie Castillo spearheaded a Black History Month Celebration at the Senior Community Room at the Multi-Service Center; Hoboken Councilmembers were in attendance. Ms. Dalton was a guest speaker at the University of Illinois "Library Social Work" class, where she spoke about her experience as a library social worker. Community Engagement Manager Ally Blumenfeld collaborated with Jenn Manzetti of the Hoboken Community Center to plan a partnered Food Drive during the first week of April. The library ordered a new BookBike and repaired the old BookBike. The BookBike returns on Thursday, April 11 and the following week, regular visits resume through October. The library celebrated NJ Makers Day with various activities and over 200 attendees. In partnership with MakerBar, 50 kits were built and distributed with the funds from winning the Makers Day mini-grant. The Book Sanctuary Page has been updated to include more information and FAQs; it also lists book sanctuaries nationwide and will be updated regularly as new sanctuaries are added. Ms. Pu submitted her 2024 director's goals.

—Mr. Murcko: Requested a copy of the winning speech from the Oratory Contest.

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

—Mr. Chapka: There are no Buildings and Grounds Committee updates this month.

—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 446 and 447 totaling \$57,901.90; 2.) in Part A operating budget, to pay library operating expenses with checks no.11547-11618 totaling \$153,148.54; to pay via PayPal \$169.22 to Avis and \$175.00 to Faronics ; and in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no. 11619-11622 totaling \$22,337.40. Also before the Trustees is a resolution to reserve funds for capital improvements and a resolution authorizing the award of a non-fair and open contract for public relations services. Mr. Thoens asked if there were any questions concerning the resolutions.

—Ms. Murcko: Asked if Ms. Pu sees the Rosica contract continuing and whether there is a dedicated person on their staff assisting the library.

—Ms. Pu: There are three Rosica employees on our team and they are working on positioning the library on a national level.

—Ms. Murcko: Noted that hiring Rosica is more economical than hiring a full-time Marketing Manager.

—Mr. Douglas: Pointed out some minor typos in the resolution.

The resolutions were added to the consent agenda.

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

—Ms. Cademartori: Seconded.

—Adopted by roll call vote as follow: YEAS: 8 NAYS:0 RECUSED: 1 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	X			
Ms. Cademartori	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: Ms. Pu’s 2024 director’s goals have been submitted. The goals focus on addressing and furthering items in the strategic plan, including building the library’s relationship with the schools and business community. Ms. Pu and School Outreach Librarian Valerie Coughlin will update the Board on the work being done at the schools at the April board meeting.

7. President’s Report

—Dr. Abernathy: Reminded the Board of the Board Retreat taking place on April 13. The focus of the retreat will be to learn about libraries and advocacy. Dr. Abernathy thanked Mr. Silbert and Ms. Murcko for their hard work planning the annual review process.

8. Friends & Foundation

—Ms. Blaney: Reported that the Hoboken Public Library Friend’s & Foundation hosted a sold-out Sip & Tell event. They also held a book sale on Makers Day.

1. Old Business

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

2. New Business

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

3. Consent Agenda

- a. Accept the minutes of the February 27 2024 Board meeting
- b. Approve payment of Part A bills
- c. Approve payment of BCB bills
- d. Approve resolution to reserve funds
- e. Approve the amended resolution authorizing the award of a non-fair and open contract for public relations

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

—Mr.Silbert: Seconded.

—Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 8 NAYS: 0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 1

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

*Ms. Cademartori abstained from voting on the minutes.

12. Trustee Comments

—Dr. Abernathy: Invited any comments by the Trustees.

—Ms. Mirchandani: Thanked the library staff members who assisted with her book launch at the library.

—Ms. Cademartori: Moved to adjourn.

—Ms. Mirchandani: Seconded.

—Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS:9 NAYS:0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:17pm.