

MEETING OF TUESDAY, JULY 23 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, JULY 23, 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Susan Murcko, Secretary**	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Kurt Thoens, Treasurer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Amanda R. Blaney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Malani Cademartori, School Superintendent Designee *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Excused
Mr. Damien DeBenedetto	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Jason Freeman, Mayor's Designee*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Raakhee Mirchandani	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Excused
Mr. Jack Silbert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

**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 June 25, 2024. There being none, approval of the minutes was added to the consent agenda.

4. Board Reorganization

—Dr. Abernathy: Announced the annual board reorganization and election of officers for 2024-25. He asked for nominations for the office of Board Treasurer.

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

—All: Seconded.

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

—Mr. Silbert: Nominated Ms. Murcko for Board Secretary.

—All: Seconded.

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

—Ms. Blaney: Nominated Dr. Jerome Abernathy for Board President.

—All: Seconded.

5. Public Comments

—Dr. Abernathy: Invited comments from the public. There were none.

6. Director's Report

—Ms. Pu: Highlighted items of note: The library was allocated a one-time infusion of \$250,000 in additional funding from the governor's signed budget. Assemblyman John Allen joined the library for a special storytime, where he presented the check. The library accepted three national awards at the American Library Association Annual Conference. Ms. Pu was presented with the ALA professional service award Ernest A. DiMattia, Jr. Award for Innovation and Service to

Community and Profession. The library was also awarded two ALA Core PR Xchange Awards for Community Engagement Librarian Natalie Castillo's BookBike redesign and 2023 Black History Month Program Poster. Board member Raahkee Mirchandani signed copies of her book, *Journey to the Stars: Kalpana Chawla Astronaut*, at the American Library Association Annual Conference. Ms. Pu was invited to join the ULC Federal Advocacy Committee. Michael Maziekien from the New Jersey State Library visited the library to learn more about its work as part of their statewide tour of libraries. Ms. Pu was reappointed as co-chair of the NJLA Public Policy Committee and will continue to work with lobbyists and statewide leaders to move the Freedom to Read bill to the senate in the fall. Ms. Pu has started offering 15-minute, one-on-one listening sessions to staff in order to foster better communication and ensure that everyone has a voice at the library. Atriade Security submitted a draft of the updated Emergency Action Plan for the library along with their recommendations for the placement of panic buttons. The library has added Pronunciator, a new language learning service. New signage was added for the Learning Center, Grand Street, and the Community Resource Shelves. Ms. Castillo and Marketing Assistant Shaleka Smith led an intergenerational program in celebration of Juneteenth. Ms. Castillo has been hosting live watch parties for the community, including the European Soccer Tournament Quarter and Semi-Finals, in addition to upcoming Olympic viewing parties. Five teen clubs have been meeting over the summer, including a Pokemon Club, a Crazy 8s Math Club, a Speedcubing Club and two Summer Reading Clubs, for kids and teens. The teens have been joining the clubs for volunteer hours and part of our Teen Advisory Board initiative. They will be meeting to assist in organizing books for the Friends and Foundation's book sale. Staff received training for the Attend module and Reserve module for the new library app, Communico. This year's library festival will include a Maker Tent. The library has been hosting a series of AI Programs in the MakerSpace on weekends to encourage patrons to take advantage of the MakerSpace's expanded hours. New hire Kai Mehu is now assisting with the CCDI award. Collections Manager Nicole Marconi is transitioning from full-time to part-time as of Thursday, July 18.

—Mr. Thoens: Asked what items are being weeded.

—Ms. Pu: Explained that, in order for the collection to remain relevant, the library discards books that haven't been checked out for a long time and are available from other BCCLS libraries.

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

—Ms Pu: The Buildings and Grounds Committee met to discuss the next phase of renovations. They noticed some items that need to be addressed and clarified in Clarke Caton Hintz's proposal. The renovation will be phased and will start with the 2nd floor of the library. There is a leak on the 3rd floor and we are getting quotes for its repair. Future renovations will put an

emphasis on maintainability, in addition to design and preservation of the building’s historic details.

—Mr. Thoens: Reported for the Finance Committee: Mr. Thoens described the financial matters before the Board for approval: 1) in Part A operating budget, to pay library operating expenses with checks no. 11846-11907 totaling \$609,386.52; to pay via PayPal \$243.05 to Apple Inc. and \$14.99 to Tabsynth Design Works LLC; and in Part B, to pay expenses for library materials with checks no.11908-11912 totaling \$15,969.99. Mr. Thoens asked if there were any questions concerning financial matters. There being none, payment of Part A bills was added to the consent agenda.

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

—Mr. Silbert: Seconded.

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

Attendance	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mr. DeBenedetto	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Freeman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Thoens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ms. Murcko	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Silbert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dr. Abernathy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

—Ms. Murcko: Reported for the Personnel and Policy Committee: The first union negotiation session took place. There are no updates. The next session is on July 31. We are expecting to get proposals back from the union at the next meeting. Approval of the August 2024-July 2025 board dates was added to the consent agenda.

8. President’s Report

—Dr. Abernathy: Expressed appreciation for Assemblyman John Allen’s support of the library.

9. Friends & Foundation

—Ms. Blaney: Beth McGrath was appointed as recording secretary for the Friends & Foundation. Former recording secretary Jessica Lisovicz remains on the board. The first Friends & Foundation newsletter launched on July 18. The group is also launching a new book club on September 25 at 7:00pm at East LA. One hundred people signed up.

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. Executive Session

—Ms. Blaney: Called for an executive session.

—Dr. Abernathy: Seconded

—Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0 Recused: 0 Abstain: 0

—Dr. Abernathy: Summarized the session: The session concerned the legal implications of a customer service issue.

13. Consent Agenda

- a. Accept the minutes of the June 25, 2024 Board meeting
- b. Excuse the absences of Ms. Mirchandani and Ms. Cademartori
- c. Approve the payment of Part A bills
- d. Approve the August 2024-July 2025 board meeting dates

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

—Mr. DeBenedetto: Seconded.

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

Attendance	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mr. DeBenedetto	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Thoens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ms. Murcko	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mr. Silbert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dr. Abernathy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Trustee Comments

—Dr. Abernathy: Invited any comments by the Trustees. There were none.

—Mr. DeBenedetto: Moved to adjourn.

—Dr. Abernathy: Seconded.

—Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS:6 NAYS:0 RECUSED: 0 ABSTAIN: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:33pm.