

**MEETING OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025**

**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, JANUARY 28, 2025 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                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                |
| Ms. Susan Murcko, Secretary                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Excused        |
| Mr. Kurt Thoens, Treasurer                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                |
| Ms. Amanda R. Blaney                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                |
| Ms. Leslie Norwood, School Superintendent Designee * | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                |
| Mr. Damien DeBenedetto                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                |
| Mr. Jason Freeman, Mayor's Designee*                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Left at 8:12pm |
| Ms. Raakhee Mirchandani                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                |
| Mr. Jack Silbert                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input 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., 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 December 17, 2024 . There being none, approval of the minutes was added to the consent agenda.

### **4. Public Comments**

—Dr. Abernathy: Invited comments from the public. Rachel Serkin, Hoboken resident and Hoboken Public Library cardholder expressed concern about the lack of Jewish-American books in the Library's collection. Ms. Serkin noted that the 2024 childrens' holiday display contained only a small number of books about Hanukkah and that most of them were in Hebrew, which is not spoken by the majority of Jewish-Americans. She provided Library staff with feedback and resources from a booklist by the Jewish-American Book Council and asked community members to donate books about Jewish traditions. Ms. Serkin asked how books in the Library collection are chosen and what steps will be taken to ensure that Jewish-American history and stories are shared.

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

—Ms. Pu: Highlighted items of note: The Library was recognized with two awards at the American Institute of Architects- New Jersey Chapter's Annual Installation and Awards Gala on January 11. The Library's Third Floor Children's Library Restoration received the Built Historic Preservation Merit Award. Jennie was named AIA-NJ's Resident of the Year for her leadership and contributions to the architecture profession and the community. The Library unveiled its new tern library cards created by Mr. Train and local photographer Juan Melli and designed to celebrate the Tern, Hoboken's city bird. Ms. Pu welcomed new Board of Trustee member Leslie Norwood, who will serve as Superintendent's designee. Dr. Abernathy and Ms. Pu met with Ms. Norwood on Friday, January 24 for a board orientation. The Library hosted its first blood drive with New York Blood Center on Monday, January 13. The blood drive was a significant success with 52 units of blood collected (over a goal set at 36) resulting in 156 lives saved. The Hoboken Public Library Friends & Foundation provided library staff with breakfast on December 20 as a token of appreciation for their hard work. Ms. Pu and Facilities Manager Raul Sanguinetti delivered breakfast to the Hoboken PD and thanked them for all their support. The Library is assessing its security procedures for 2025 in light of data produced in 2024. There will be a de-escalation training for staff on February 26th. The Library is going to begin using PITS (Patron Incident Tracking Software) by Quipu to track incidents more effectively. The social work interns from Montclair State and Rutgers University returned in early January 2025 and several of their efforts have resumed in the new year, including Unemployment Project ID and Unemployment Insurance Assistance. The Library received data from the Communico app build

team. It is beginning to take shape and new test logins are expected by the next Board meeting. The MakerSpace has begun to host a series of Coding and Robots Basics classes held on Sundays. NJ Family published an article about a window display at Word Bookstore in Jersey City, which was created by a local artist using the Makerspace laser cutter. On January 27, James Cox will attend the opening of the Hoboken Historical Museum’s new exhibit on the Hoboken Meadows. Many of the library’s resources were utilized in the creation of the exhibit and a monograph from the Special Collections will be on display. The Library’s 2024 Annual Report has been finalized and added to the website.

—Michael Hanrahan: Reported on behalf of Clarke Caton Hintz: Mr. Hanrahan shared renderings of the first and second floor renovation, including the mezzanine. He answered questions from the Board regarding safety, maximizing use of the space, and the proposed budget.

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

—Mr. Chapka: Reported for the Buildings & Grounds Committee: There were no updates.

—Mr. Thoens: Reported for the Finance Committee: Mr. Thoens described the financial matters before the Board for approval: 1) in Part A, to pay 2024 library operating expenses with checks no.12265-12291 totaling \$34,962.29; to pay via PayPal \$139.99 to Audio-Visual Direct, \$22.00 to Automatic Inc., \$400.50 to Canva US Inc., and \$93.35 to True Leaf LLC.; in Part A, to pay 2025 library operating expenses with checks no.12292-12332 totaling 78,073.80;to pay via PayPal \$9,238.32 to Adobe Inc. and \$129.00 to FitOn Health; and in Part B, to pay library operating expenses with checks no.12333-12336 totaling \$22,298.54. Also before the Trustees is the 2025 budget for their approval. Mr. Thoens asked if there were any questions concerning the bills to be paid or the 2025 budget. There being none, approval of the 2025 budget was added to the consent agenda.

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

—Ms. Mirchandani: Seconded.

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

| Trustee         | 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"/> |

|                 |                                     |                          |                          |                          |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ms. Mirchandani | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ms. Norwood     | <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"/> |
| Mr. Thoens      | <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"/> |

—Mr. Silbert: Reported on behalf of the Personnel and Policy Committee: The Committee met to discuss union negotiations. They requested and received the Library’s 2025 staffing plan from Ms. Pu, which detailed current vacancies that are budgeted to be filled. A revised Code of Conduct policy is included in this month’s board report.

—Ms. Norwood: Asked if the Code of Conduct policy includes ramifications for rule breaking.

—Ms. Pu: Stated that there is a suspension policy for code infractions.

**7. President’s Report**

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

**8. Friends & Foundation**

—Ms. Blaney: Reported on behalf of the Hoboken Public Library Friends & Foundation: The group sponsored a successful release party for the book, *Onyx Storm*. The event sold out and raised \$1,125.

**9. Executive Session**

—Ms. Mirchandani: Called for an executive session.

—Mr. Freeman: Seconded.

—Adopted by voice vote as follows: YEAS: 8 NAYS: 0 Recused: 0 Abstain: 0

The board voted to enter executive session at 7:32pm and returned to the public session at 8:13pm.

—Dr. Abernathy: Summarized the session: The session was called for purposes of discussing union negotiations and personnel 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. Accept the minutes of the December 17, 2024 Board meeting
- b. Excuse the absence of Ms. Murcko
- c. Approve the 2025 budget
- d. Approve the updated Code of Conduct policy

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

—Mr. Silbert: Seconded.

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

| Trustee         | 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"/>            |
| Ms. Mirchandani | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Ms. Norwood     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Mr. Silbert     | <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"/>            |
| Dr. Abernathy   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

**12. Trustee Comments**

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

—The Trustees welcomed Ms. Norwood to the Board and expressed appreciation for Ms. Cademartori’s service on the Board.

—Ms. Mirchandani: Thanked the library team for their help on the book launch and panel discussion held the previous Sunday.

—Ms. Norwood: Moved to adjourn.

—Ms. Mirchandani: Seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:18pm.