

HOBOKEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

MEETING OF NOVEMBER 25, 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, NOVEMBER 25, 2025 AT 6:30 PM.

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

1. Call to Order

Board President Jason Freeman 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 22, 2025 meeting of the Library Board and such notice was provided in the Star Ledger and Bergen Record, was posted to the Library website, and filed with the Hoboken City Clerk.

2. Roll Call

Attendance	Present	Absent	Notes
Mr. Jason Freeman, President	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ms. Susan Murcko, Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mr. Kurt Thoens, Treasurer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mr. Damian De Benedetto**	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ms. Amanda R. Blaney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ms. Jordan Hernandez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ms. Raakhee Mirchandani	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Excused
Ms. Leslie Norwood, School Superintendent Designee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ms. Christine Stoll *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Excused

**Ex officio* under NJ state law

**Present via remote connection

Also in attendance were: Library Director Jennie Pu, Interim Assistant Library Director James Cox, Recording Secretary Karla Aybar Reyes, Library Council Douglas S. Zucker, Esq., and members of the Library staff.

3. Acceptance of Minutes

—Mr. Freeman: Asked if the Trustees had any corrections or comments regarding the minutes of the Board meeting of October 28, 2025. There being none, the minutes were added to the consent agenda.

4. Public Comments

—Mr. Freeman: Invited comments from the public. There were none.

5. Director's Report

—Ms. Pu: Announced that as part of the Trustees' annual training, Children's Outreach Librarian Val Coughlin and Assistant Library Director James Cox will be sharing presentations with the Board regarding a MisInformation initiative and collection development, respectively.

—Ms. Coughlin: Shared a presentation on her fellowship with the University of Washington's Center for an Informed Public. She is one of two librarians in the country to be accepted into the program. The Center for an Informed Public is a multidisciplinary research center at the University of Washington with a mission to resist strategic misinformation, promote an informed society, and strengthen democratic discourse. One of their largest programs is MisInfo Day in Washington State. MisInfo Day aims to teach students about the complex information environment they are navigating through a day of programming, lessons, and activities. Ms. Coughlin assisted in running a MisInfo Day at the Hudson School in December 2024. Her activity, "Young Adults and Misinformation Literacy" is currently being piloted in Washington State to be a part of a national MisInfo Day packaging for teachers and librarians. Her project goal is to adapt MisInfo Day programming and resources - which are intended for high school teachers - for the public library. She hopes to expand media literacy programming in the Library's Youth Services Department and to develop class visits the Library can offer schools in Hoboken. Ms. Coughlin shared some upcoming events and visits, including a few Misinformation Escape Rooms for kids, teens, and families and a Media Mentorship Night at the Library.

—Ms. Murcko: Asked how the Board can support her.

—Ms. Coughlin: Stated that if anyone has relationships with the Hoboken schools, it would be helpful to connect with them. The goal is to reach all of the schools in Hoboken.

—Mr. DeBenedetto and Ms. Norwood: Said that they will connect with Ms. Coughlin, as they are both affiliated with the Hoboken schools.

—Ms. Coughlin: Shared that she is applying to present at the New Jersey Library Association Annual Conference.

—Mr. Zucker: Stated that he will be presenting at NJLA and is open to collaborating on a presentation with Ms. Coughlin.

—Mr. Cox: Shared a presentation on Collection Development at the Library focusing on the selection, acquisition, and processing of books. He explained that prior to 2025, the Library purchased books through Baker & Taylor. This year, however, the 200-year old book supplier announced its closure. As a result, the Library is now pursuing other options, including Bookazine, Barnes & Noble, Follett, and Ingram. It is likely that the Library will use a number of different vendors moving forward, depending on its needs. Both Follett and Ingram offer full processing, but Bookazine and Barnes & Noble do not. Mr. Cox explained that the benefit of full processing is that the books get to the shelves for distribution more quickly. The Library has submitted the necessary paperwork to get started with Follett. Ingram, however, can't commit to processing materials until the spring of 2026. In the meantime, the Library can order books from Bookazine, which is located in Bayonne and from Barnes & Noble, which has a warehouse in New Jersey.

—Mr. Freeman: Asked why there hasn't been a cooperative across the state that allows for efficiency and better processing.

—Ms. Pu: Explained that New Jersey has a strong reliance on home rule.

—Mr. Cox: Stated that the Library has been working with Amazon, which is scaling up their services for libraries. They are not yet outfitted for processing, but they are working on getting the books.

—Mr. Thoens: Asked approximately how many books we receive monthly?

—Mx. Sanden: Replied that we used to get about 300-500 books monthly through Baker & Taylor, but that that number has decreased since Baker and Taylor's closure.

—Mr. Cox: Added that we are adding more eBooks in the meantime.

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

—Ms. Norwood: Reported on behalf of the Buildings and Grounds Committee. The Committee met last night and Ms. Pu presented a slide deck bringing new Board members up to speed about the history of the Library’s buildings and grounds from 2007 to the present. This included the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, the purchasing of the administrative buildings, renovations, next phases, and future plans. Ms. Pu informed the Committee that the Library will get reimbursed by the Historic Trust in \$750,000 installments for each phase of the project. We are currently short about \$3-4 million. The group looks forward to our renovations and uptown expansion.

—Mr. Thoens: Reported for the Finance Committee: Mr. Thoens described the financial matters before the Board for approval: 1) in Part A, to pay 2025 library operating expenses with checks no.13001-13061 totaling \$62,226.50; to pay via PayPal and ACH \$346.80 to Chobani Parent LLC and \$129.00 to FitOn Health; 2) in Part B, to pay 2025 library operating expenses with check no.13062-13067 totaling \$31,732.87; and to pay from the Capital Improvement Construction Account at Bayonne Community Bank (BCB) check number 459 totaling \$3,522.37. Also before the Board is a resolution to void check #458 and resolutions 2025-10 and 2025-11 to reserve funds for capital improvements . Mr. Thoens asked if there were any questions concerning the bills to be paid. There being none, approval of the Part A bills, approval of the BCB bills, and the resolution to void checks were added to the consent agenda.

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

—Mr. Freeman: Seconded.

–Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 6 NAYS:0 RECUSED: 1 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. Hernandez	<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"/>
Ms. Norwood	<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. Norwood: Moved the Board to approve Resolution 2025-10 to Reserve Funds for Capital Improvements.

—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	<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. Hernandez	<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"/>
Ms. Norwood	<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. Norwood: Moved the Board to approve Resolution 2025-11 to Reserve Funds for Capital Improvements.

—Ms. Murcko: 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"/>
Mr. Freeman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ms. Hernandez	<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"/>

Ms. Norwood	<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"/>

7. Personnel & Policy Committee

—Ms. Murcko: Reported on behalf of the Personnel & Policy Committee: The Personnel & Policy Committee met and Mr. Pu brought the Committee up to date on the search to hire a part-time social worker. The Committee is following up with Ms. Pu about her self-evaluation. They are wrapping up that process and should have an update at the next Board meeting. Ms. Murcko reminded the group that the December Board meeting is scheduled early because of the holidays.

8. President’s Report

—There was no President’s report.

9. Friends & Foundation

—There was no Friends & Foundation update.

10. Old Business

—Called for any old business. There was none.

11. New Business

—Mr. Freeman: Called for any new business. There was none.

12. Executive Session

—Ms. Murcko: Motioned to move to executive session for purposes related to attorney-client privilege.

—Ms. Blaney: Seconded.

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

The Board voted to enter executive session at 7:35pm and returned to the public session at 8:10pm.

—Mr. Freeman: Summarized the session: The session was called for purposes related to attorney-client privilege. No votes or Board actions were taken.

13. Consent Agenda

- a. Excuse the absence of Mr. Mirchandani and Ms. Stoll.
- b. Approve the minutes of the October 28, 2025 Board meeting
- c. Approve payment of part A bills
- d. Approve payment of the BCB bills
- e. Approve the resolution to void checks

—Mr. Freeman: Moved the Board to approve the consent agenda.

—Ms. Norwood: 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"/>
Mr. Freeman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ms. Hernandez	<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. Norwood	<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"/>

12. Trustee Comments

—Mr. Freeman: Invited any comments by the Trustees. There were none.

—Mr. Freeman: Moved to adjourn.

—Ms. Murcko: Seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:12pm