

# HOBOKEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

*MEETING OF FEBRUARY 24, 2026*

***MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HOBOKEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY, HELD ON ZOOM ON FEBRUARY 24, 2026 AT 6:30 PM.***

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

**1. Call to Order**

Board Secretary Susan Murcko called the meeting to order at 6:33 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ms. Leslie Norwood, School Superintendent Designee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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**

—Ms. Murcko: Asked if the Trustees had any corrections or comments regarding the minutes of the Board meeting of January 27, 2026. There being none, the minutes were added to the consent agenda.

### **4. Public Comments**

—Ms. Murcko: Invited comments from the public. There were none.

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

—Ms. Pu: Highlighted items of note: The Library was awarded the Hudson County History Partnership Program Grant for 2026. The grant will help pay for programming around the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. Ms. Pu attended the Urban Libraries Council Board Retreat in Ft. Lauderdale, FL.. ULC now has representation from over 200 libraries across the country. Ms. Pu attended the NJLA Conference in Atlantic City, NJ. In her capacity as Chair of the ULC Federal Advocacy Taskforce, Jennie presented updates to the NJLA Public Policy Committee. School Outreach Librarian Valerie Coughlin presented on a panel about strengthening school-library partnerships. The New Jersey Monitor recently ran a piece featuring Ms. Pu which focused on a bill introduced last month by Senator Andrew Zwicker that would ensure libraries pay no more than the average consumer rate for eBook licensing. Mr. Pu thanked Mr. Mendez for meeting with Clarke Caton Hintz to discuss incorporating AV specs into the architects' renderings.

—Ms. Murcko: Asked whether it would be helpful for the Board to send a collective letter to legislators to support the legislation on prices of digital materials.

—Ms. Pu: Thanked Ms. Murcko for her offer or support and noted that the bill has been introduced to the Senate Education Committee, that amendments are forthcoming, and that the team is working to coordinate with other states.

—Ms. Murcko: Asked for more information about the Flight Path Grant.

—Mr. Cox: Explained that the Library received a small amount of money from the National Science Foundation to do programming related to bird migration. The Library hosted an author talk and a bird walk with Mr. Train. There will be another bird walk and author talk in the coming weeks.

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

—Ms. Norwood: Reported on behalf of the Buildings and Grounds Committee. There were no updates this month.

—Mr. Thoens: Reported for the Finance Committee: Mr. Thoens described the financial matters before the Board for approval: 1) in Part A, to pay 2026 library operating expenses with checks no. 13215-13266 totaling \$49,797.53; to pay via PayPal \$538.78 to Amaze Holding Company LLC; 2) in Part B, to pay 2026 library operating expenses with check no.13267-13274 totaling \$36,546.46. Also before the Board is a resolution to void check #12925. Mr. Thoens asked if there were any questions concerning the bills to be paid or the resolution. There being no further questions, approval of the Part A 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. DeBenedetto: Seconded.

–Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 7 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. Mirchandani	<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"/>

### **7. Personnel and Policy Committee**

—Ms. Murcko: Reported on behalf of the Personnel and Policy Committee. Ms. Murcko and Ms. Blaney have spoken with all but one Board member about Ms. Pu’s 2025 evaluation. Ms. Pu has shared a draft of her 2026 goals with the committee, which will be presented before the Board for approval at the next Board meeting.

### **8. President’s Report**

—Mr. Freeman: Noted that the Strategic Plan is approaching its expiration date and that a bridge plan will be created focusing on what the Library’s facilities will look like in the near future.

**9. Friends & Foundation**

—Ms. Blaney: Reported on behalf of the Hoboken Public Library Friends & Foundation. Ms. Blaney thanked Ms. Pu, Ms. Aybar Reyes, and staff for their assistance with the Bridgerton event.

**10. Old Business**

—Called for any old business. There was none.

**11. New Business**

—Ms. Murcko: called for any new business.

—Ms. Mirchandani: Thanked Ms. Pu, Ms. Aybar Reyes, and the rest of the library team for hosting Maria Pepe’s book launch next Thursday.

—Mr. Freeman: Noted that the Library is scheduled to have a delayed opening of 1pm on February 25. He asked what the basis is for making those decisions.

—Ms. Pu: Explained that the decision was made to allow staff time to get to work if transportation/schools are delayed.

—Ms. Murcko: Asked about the balance of staff who live out of town versus in town.

—Mr. Cox: Answered that about 25% of Library staff live in Hoboken, many live in Hudson County, and a few commute to work.

**12. Consent Agenda**

- a. Approve the minutes of the January 27, 2026 Board meeting
- b. Approve payment of part A bills
- c. Approve the resolution to void checks

—Ms. Mirchandani: Moved the Board to approve the consent agenda.

—Mr. DeBenedetto: Seconded.

—Adopted by roll call vote as follows: 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. Hernandez	<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. 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

—Ms. Murcko: Invited any comments by the Trustees. There were none.

—Ms. Norwood: Moved to adjourn.

—Mr. Thoens: Seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:54pm