HOBOKEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

MEETING OF JULY 28, 2026

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HOBOKEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY, HELD AT 500 PARK AVENUE IN HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY ON TUESDAY, JULY 28, 2026 AT 6:30 PM.

—----------Meeting Excerpt—----------

1. **Call to Order**

Board President Jason Freeman 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 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	☑	☐	
Ms. Susan Murcko, Secretary	☑	☐	
Mr. Kurt Thoens, Treasurer	☑	☐	
Mr. Damian De Benedetto	☐	☑	
Ms. Amanda R. Blaney	☑	☐	
Ms. Kathleen Heaney, Mayor's Representative	☑	☐	
Ms. Jordan Hernandez	☑	☐	
Ms. Raakhee Mirchandani	☑	☐	
Ms. Leslie Norwood, School Superintendent Designee	☑	☐	

Also in attendance were: Library Director Jennie Pu, Recording Secretary Karla Aybar Reyes, 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 June 23, 2026. 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: Highlighted items of note: The Main Library at 500 Park Avenue will be temporarily closed from August 13 through October 4, 2026. The second, third floors and the lower level will reopen on October 5, 2026. Renovation work will continue on the first floor and mezzanine after that date.

—Mr. Freeman: Asked that we remind the community about the closure on social media and thanked staff for their hard work during this time.

—Ms. Pu: Continued her report: Representative Menendez visited the Library yesterday and Ms. Pu gave him a tour.

—Ms. Heaney: Suggested that the Library create a social media reel for the public explaining what is happening at the Library these coming weeks.

—Ms. Murcko: Added that she found the FAQ to be comprehensive and helpful.

—Ms. Pu: Reported that she, Assistant Director James Cox and Marketing Manager Tyler Riley attended ALA's Annual Conference in Chicago, where she participated in two panels: the first session covered the Library's civil engagement series and the other session was about what it means to have librarians on the ballot, focusing on her recent experience running for office. News 12 New Jersey filmed and aired a segment at the library, focusing on its Library of Things. Ms. Pu attended the Urban Library Council board meeting in Seattle, Washington. Before the meeting, she met with the founder of Library Support Network, Jonna Ward and Seattle Public Library trustee Ron Chew. Librarian Dejeunee Depts and Information and Digital Services Manager Aimee Harris were featured in Parade Magazine giving their takes on "popular book series" and the "best Murakami book," respectively. Ms. Pu welcomed the newest member of the Library family, Myka Eleanor Freeman, Board President Freeman's newborn baby. All efforts are focused on moving the collections to three locations: offsite storage, the second floor, and the Annex 1 Basement. Events are being planned or moved to Grand Street and other city locations. The Library wrapped its World Cup viewing parties this month with most of its attendees asking if this program will return for the Women's World Cup. Plans are underway for introductory

coding workshops led by our Teen Advisory Board designed to introduce younger patrons to computer programming through engaging, hands-on activities. Ms. Pu reported that, at the federal level, the Federal Communications Commission introduced a set of questions looking to narrow the scope of e-rates.

—Ms. Murcko: Asked whether, during the panel discussion about librarians on the ballot, Ms. Pu became aware of other librarians running for office.

—Ms. Pu: Answered that one academic librarian ran for Lieutenant Governor in Utah and that another ran for State Representative Office in Ohio while sitting as a public library director.

—Ms. Murcko: Asked about the issues raised during the discussion and if there were any takeaways.

—Ms. Pu: Responded that the panel focused on how library staff are well-positioned to be advocates for their communities.

—Mr. Freeman: Asked if there are any next steps with the grant writing team.

—Ms. Pu: Stated that she had a meeting with two of their associates earlier that day and that they shared a spreadsheet of locally and federally funded grants.

—Ms. Norwood: Asked for clarification regarding the staff onboarding and deactivation noted in the Board of Trustees packet.

—Mr. Mendez: Clarified that it is standard practice when a staff member leaves to deactivate their library accounts.

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

—Ms. Pu: There was no Buildings and Grounds Committee report this month.

—Mr. Thoens: Reported for the Finance Committee: Mr. Thoens thanked the finance department for catching an error in this month's Check Detail. Last May, the bank caught fraudulent activity on our account and 8 checks needed to be canceled. As Check Detail A utilized those check numbers, those checks needed to be pulled and reissued with new numbers. Mr. Thoens also described the financial matters before the Board for approval: 1) in Part A, to pay 2026 library operating expenses with checks no.13544-13612 totaling $495,210.93; to pay via PayPal $124.50 to Gourmet Gift Baskets.com and $481.75 to DigiKey Corporation; 2) in Part B, to pay 2026 library operating expenses with checks no.13613-13618 totaling $28,330.76; Also before

the Board is Resolution 2026-15 to void check number #13455. Mr. Thoens asked if there were any questions concerning the bills to be paid or the resolution.

—Ms. Murcko: Asked what the BCCLS payment covers and how often we make those payments.

—Ms. Pu: Answered that we pay them either quarterly or yearly and that it covers the delivery of books from different counties in the BCCLS system. It also covers shared technology, the computers used and supplied by BCCLS, and wireless printing.

—Mr. Thoens: Asked if the fee is determined by population or by usage.

—Mr. Mendez: Replied that it is determined by population.

—Mr. Thoens: Asked if there were any further questions. There being none, approval of Part A bills was added to the consent agenda.

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

—Ms. Murcko: Seconded.

–Adopted by roll call vote as follows: YEAS: 7 NAYS:0 RECUSED: 1 ABSTAIN: 0

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Freeman	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Hernandez	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Heaney	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Mirchandani	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Murcko	☐	☐	☑	☐
Ms. Norwood	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Thoens	☑	☐	☐	☐

7. Personnel and Policy Committee

—Ms. Murcko: Reported on behalf of the Personnel and Policy Committee: At the July meeting, Ms. Pu went over second quarter staffing and attrition. Two full-time staff members and one part-time staff member left the Library. In the same quarter, we hired a part-time social worker, a part-time library assistant, and a part-time security/maintenance worker, bringing the total number of employees to 43.

8. President's Report

—Mr. Freeman: States that we are creating more user-friendly spaces and that the renovation is a win for the community. He added that we reshared the Development Director position description with the Friends & Foundation leadership and are waiting to hear back from them. We hope to fill the position by the end of the summer.

9. Friends & Foundation

—Ms. Blaney: Reported on behalf of the Friends & Foundation: There was no report this month.

—Ms. Pu: Thanked the organization for clearing the Annex 1 basement of books.

10. Old Business

—Called for any old business. There was none.

11. New Business

—Called for any new business. Mr. Freeman informed the group that next year's Board of Trustees meeting dates are included in this month's board packet. The meeting dates were added to the consent agenda.

—Mr. Freeman: Asked Ms. Norwood if there will be a Hoboken Board of Education candidate debate and if so, whether the debate should be held at the Library.

—Ms. Norwood: Responded that, as there are only four candidates, there might not be a debate, but that if one is planned, it would be good to hold it at the Library.

12. Consent Agenda

a. Excuse the absence of Mr. DeBenedetto
b. Approve payment of part A bills
c. Approve the resolution to void checks
d. Approve the August 2026-July 2027 Board of Trustees meeting dates

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

—Mr. Freeman: Seconded.

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

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Freeman	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Hernandez	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Heaney	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Mirchandani	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Murcko	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Norwood	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Thoens	☑	☐	☐	☐

12. Resolutions

—Mr. Freeman: Moved the Board to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2026 Board of Trustees meeting.

—Ms. Norwood: Seconded.

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

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain
Ms. Blaney	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Freeman	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Hernandez	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Heaney	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Mirchandani	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Murcko	☑	☐	☐	☐

Ms. Norwood	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Thoens	☑	☐	☐	☐

13. Trustee Comments

—Mr. Freeman: Invited any comments by the Trustees.

—Ms. Mirchandani: Noted that the work the Library is doing has touched many people in our community and that it has been heartening to see the many ways in which people use our spaces.

—Ms. Norwood: Moved to adjourn.

—Ms. Hernandez: Seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:11pm