HOBOKEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

MEETING OF AUGUST 25, 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, AUGUST 25, 2026 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 28, 2026 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, Assistant Library Director James Cox, Recording Secretary Karla Aybar Reyes, Douglas S. Zucker, Esq., and members of the Library staff.

3. Board Reorganization

—Mr. Freeman: Announced the annual board reorganization and election of officers for 2026-2027. He asked for nominations for Board President.

—Ms. Murcko: Nominated Mr. Freeman for Board President.

—Ms. Blaney: Seconded

—Mr. Freeman: Asked if there were any additional nominations for Board President. There being none, he called for a vote.

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

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

—-Mr. Freeman: Nominated Ms. Murcko for Board Secretary.

—-Ms. Blaney: Seconded.

—Mr. Freeman: Asked if there were any additional nominations for Board Secretary. There being none, he called for a vote.

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

Trustee	Yes	No	Recused	Abstain

Ms. Blaney	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. DeBenedetto	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Freeman	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Hernandez	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Heaney	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Murcko	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Norwood	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Thoens	☑	☐	☐	☐

—Mr. Freeman: Nominated Mr. Thoens for Board Treasurer.

—-Ms. Blaney: Seconded.

—Mr. Freeman: Asked if there were any additional nominations for Board Treasurer. There being none, he called for a vote.

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

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

4. **Acceptance of Minutes**

—Mr. Freeman: Asked if the Trustees had any corrections or comments regarding the minutes of the Board meeting of June 28, 2026. There being none, the minutes were added to the consent agenda.

5. **Public Comments**

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

6. **Director's Report**

—Mr. Cox: Reported on behalf of Director Pu and highlighted items of note: The Library's Information and Digital Services team will be based at the Learning Center at 401 Harrison Street during the Library's temporary closure. The space will serve as an adult computer lab. The Grand Street Branch hours have been extended until 6pm from Monday-Thursday for the rest of August and until 8pm Monday-Thursday for the month of September. The Internet Cafe will be open for computer lending across the street from the Main Library. Children's programming will continue at Grand Street and throughout the city.

—Ms. Murcko: Asked whether "The Bullet" at the Main Library is from the original USS Maine.

—Mr. Cox: Stated that he is unable to determine that, but that it was donated by a congressman in 1912 and that the U.S. Navy would have more information.

—Ms. Murcko: Asked what the research request was from Trieste, Italy.

—Mr. Cox: Stated that it was a request for ancestry information.

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

—Mr. Chapka: Reported on behalf of the Buildings and Grounds Committee: The renovation contract has been finalized and the preliminary schedule has been determined. Remediation will begin on September 9. There was a meeting with the subcontractors, who are getting familiar with the Main building, which will be closed until October 5. During that time, the abatement will be completed and part of the mezzanine will be demolished. All of the necessary permits have been acquired. Mr. Chapka added that the gym at the Multi-Service Center is being resurfaced and that there will be some noise disturbance the Saturday of Labor Day weekend. There may be complaints about the noise and fumes, but the City is not planning on closing the building during that time. Facilities Manager Raul Sanguinetti and the rest of the facilities team have been preparing the furniture and clearing spaces in the Main building in preparation for the renovation.

—Mr. Cox: Added that we will be moving the entire collection over the next two days and will work on moving media after that.

—Mr. Freeman: Asked how the feedback has been at Grand Street so far.

—Mr. Cox: Stated that the foot traffic has increased at Grand Street and that we have been seeing an increase in customers at Grand who normally frequent Main. There has been no negative feedback.

—Mr. Chapka: Mentioned that the majority of the sanding at the Multi-Service Center should be done on Saturday and is not expected to go past Monday. However, fumes may linger from Tuesday onward.

—Ms. Murcko: Asked if high volume, high intensity fans will be present.

—Mr. Chapka: Answered that there will be industrial fans for air circulation and that the air conditioner will be running. The balcony and emergency exit doors will also be open.

—Ms. Norwood: Asked if there has been any discussion about adding additional lockers at the new plaza at the Path station and noted that the ResilienCity Park common room would also be a great location for new lockers.

—Mr. Cox: Responded that he does not know about those additional lockers, but that new locker banks were added at the Grand Street branch.

—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.13629-13693 totaling $118,703.09; 2) in Part B, to pay 2026 library operating expenses with checks no.13694-13699 totaling $21,683.46; 3) and to pay $3,677.98 from the Capital Reserve Budget. Mr. Thoens asked if there were any questions concerning the bills to be paid. There being none, approval of Part A bills and BCB bills was added to the consent agenda.

—Ms. Murcko: 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	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. DeBenedetto	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Freeman	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Hernandez	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Heaney	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Murcko	☐	☐	☑	☐
Ms. Norwood	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Thoens	☑	☐	☐	☐

—Mr. Thoens stated that there is also a resolution approving the contract with Joseph A. Natoli Construction Corporation for general contracting services and rehabilitation of the first and second floors, and the renovation of the first floor Bathroom of the Hoboken Public Library.

8. Personnel and Policy Committee

—Ms. Murcko: Reported on behalf of the Personnel and Policy Committee: Ms. Pu updated the Committee on staff tasks as they prepare for the closure of the Main Library. Ms. Pu expressed gratitude for how Mr. Cox has been leading staff through this process. She also reported that earlier this year, we hired a consultant to provide senior management with leadership training and management skills and that the training is ongoing, likely until the end of the year.

9. President's Report

—Mr. Freeman: Encouraged the Board to let him know if they have any ideas they would like to bring to the table and that if there are things people would like to discuss outside of standing committees, to please meet with him.

10. Friends & Foundation

—Ms. Blaney: Reported on behalf of the Friends & Foundation: There was no report this month, as the organization did not meet in August.

—Mr. Freeman: Noted that it was great to see the museum pass usage report and that he will forward the report to the full board.

11. Old Business

—Called for any old business. There was none.

12. New Business

—Called for any new business. There was none.

13. Consent Agenda

a. Excuse the absence of Ms. Mirchandani
b. Approve the minutes of the July 28, 2026 Board of Trustees Meeting
c. Approve payment of part A bills
d. Approve payment of BCB bills

—Ms. Murcko: 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	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. DeBenedetto	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Freeman	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Hernandez	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Heaney	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Murcko	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Norwood	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Thoens	☑	☐	☐	☐

12. Resolutions

—Ms. Norwood: Moved the Board to approve Resolution 2026-16 Approving Contract with Joseph A. Natoli Construction Corporation for General Contracting Services Rehabilitation of the First and Second Floors and Renovation of the First Floor Bathroom of the Hoboken Public Library..

—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. DeBenedetto	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Freeman	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Hernandez	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Heaney	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Murcko	☑	☐	☐	☐
Ms. Norwood	☑	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Thoens	☑	☐	☐	☐

13. Trustee Comments

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

—Ms. Norwood: Moved to adjourn.

—Ms. Murcko: Seconded.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:04pm.