

**THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
5 WASHINGTON STREET
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY**

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
MAY 24, 2023, 5:00 P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Lauren Wells | President/Chair |
| Domingo Morel | Vice President |
| Timothy Crist | Treasurer |
| Rosemary Steinbaum | Secretary |
| Anasa Maat | Trustee |
| Nicole Johnson | Trustee |
| Miguel Rodriguez | Trustee |
| Antoinette Richardson | Trustee |
| Hassan Abdus-Sabur | Trustee |

STAFF:

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Ingrid Betancourt | Interim Director |
| Anna Coats | Assistant Director, Public Services |
| Zuhare Meri | Assistant Director, Facilities |
| Leslie Colson | Assistant Director, Human Resources |
| Scharone Little | Assistant Director, Finance |
| George Williams | Assistant Director, Capital Planning |
| Dale Colston | Interim Director, Special Collections |
| Jacqueline Jones | Head of Security |

Minutes prepared by Mary-Margaret Scrimger of Minutes Solutions Inc. from an audio recording.

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, and the Trustees having been given adequate and proper notice of the meeting, The meeting was called to order at 5:08 p.m.

2. IN-CAMERA SESSION

On a motion made by A. Maat, seconded by R. Steinbaum, it was resolved to move into an off-camera session. Motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

On a motion made by T. Crist, seconded by M. Rodriguez, it was resolved to approve the Public Session Board of Trustees minutes dated March 22, 2023. Motion carried.

There was discussion regarding errors in the Facilities Committee section, which required amendments.

4. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

L. Wells noted that there is a final candidate for the library director role, and thanked the search committee for their work. It was noted that this is the last meeting for two Board members: T. Crist and N. Johnson, and L. Wells read a letter from the mayor's office for T. Crist's, acknowledging 19 years of service at the Library. The Board acknowledged all of T. Crist's hard work and recognized him as a valuable person on the Board.

It was noted that there would be a letter for N. Johnson at the next meeting. N. Johnson is retiring from the Newark Board of Education, which means she will no longer have her seat on the Board. The Board thanked her for her service and insights and noted that she was invaluable for the last four years.

5. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

I. Betancourt noted that NPL had its first Wellness Day on March 24, 2023, and the libraries were closed so staff could participate. Overall, the staff survey responses indicated Wellness Day was excellent. The Public Service Department presented 288 programs for all ages during the months of March 2023 and April 2023. There were also 50 outreach programs in the same time period.

An Underground Railroad exhibit is available for review at this time, which includes an interactive map. The stack remediation work has had delays, which is typical of construction projects, and should be completed in early June 2023.

A. Coats, assistant director of Public Services, noted that the Maker Space is coming up to its first-year anniversary. It allows people access to in-demand equipment, technology, and software at no cost. There is a website to make it easier for the public to find and data has been collected regarding the maker space, specifically for some of the grant KPIs.

6. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

On a motion made by T. Crist, seconded by D. Morel, it was resolved to move one million dollars to build security by April 1, 2023, as per LC 1334 35. Motion carried.

T. Crist presented the treasurer's report.

7. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a. **Development Committee:** R. Steinbaum noted that the Committee met on May 9, 2023 and discussed the effectiveness of social media. Karen Dinkins has been hired to manage major events, such as the annual gala. The Phillip Roth lecture will occur on November 2, 2023; the speaker, Dr. John Johnson, will focus on local history and the impact of memory.
- b. **Facilities Committee:** T. Crist noted that the Facilities Committee met on May 10, 2023. The Clinton branch continues to be a focus. There was discussion regarding the ownership of the lots around the Clinton branch. George Williams noted that there is an evolving joint partnership for the development of the lot. Nothing has been formalized and negotiations are in process. It was asked why the Library is not the lead developer for the partnership.
- c. **Finance Committee:**

On a motion duly made D. Morel and seconded by A. Maat, it was resolved that whereas the Newark Public Library received the Paycheck Protection Program loan in April 2021 in the amount of two million dollars and whereas the Small Business Administration deemed loan forgiveness in the amount of zero as of March 2023, it was approved that the Board of Trustees of the Newark Public Library approve the monthly loan repayments to TD Bank in fiscal years 2023 through 2028 at an interest rate of 1% to fully satisfy the outstanding loan balance of two million dollars. Motion carried.

The Finance Committee met with the interim controller on three occasions. The first quarter financials show a funding gap of approximately \$700,000. The main driver for this is the Library's current PPP payment obligation, which is highlighted in the capital expense line.

Current date shows \$550,000 of expenses that will likely not be reimbursed by the city or the library construction bond. Currently, aggregated expenses are on budget for April 2023 but there is the assumption that this will change in May 2023 due to the PPP loan repayment, catch-up payments for Verizon, and data connectivity services.

The audit status is a priority for the Finance Committee, as grants are contingent on the audit status. The 2018 audit was received recently and the 2019 audit is 95% complete. The Board requested that the full audit report and summary be provided to the Board and that each audit is presented to the Board. There was discussion on whether this should be done in the public session. It was concluded that it should be in the executive session. It was decided to defer approving the financial audits until they can be reviewed more thoroughly.

It was noted that the Library is ahead on audits.

In January 2023, the application for forgiveness for the two-million-dollar PPP loan was denied. When the grant was reviewed, it was found that there were errors in the application. An appeal was filed in February 2023, but it was not hopeful. In March 2023, the appeal was denied as expected. The appeal was to delay payments. The next step is to meet with TD Bank to negotiate the terms. Currently, the payment would be \$60,000. Many of the application errors were due to TD Bank's oversight.

- d. Personnel and Policy Committee Report:** A. Richardson noted that the Personnel and Policy Committee met on May 11, 2023. Minutes from the March 14, 2023, meeting were approved. There was discussion regarding vacancies in the Development Office, librarian recruitment, and the consultants that have been hired. It was noted that a grievance was filed, and it was successfully resolved. Policies for criminal activity and workplace investigations are being reviewed.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Summer Hours 2023:

On a motion duly made by M. Rodriguez, seconded by R. Steinbaum, it was resolved to approve the 2023 summer hours as presented. Motion carried.

Summer hours will be the same as 2023; they will start June 26, 2023, and end September 5, 2023.

The main branch hours will be:

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m.
- Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. until 8:30 p.m.
- And Saturdays 9:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.
- for the branches, the hours will be:
 - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m.
 - Wednesdays 1:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.
 - And Saturdays 9:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

b. Juneteenth:

On a motion made by N. Johnson, seconded by T. Crist, it was resolved to amend the holiday schedule and replace June 16, 2023 with June 19, 2023, in honor of Juneteenth. Motion carried.

The Board discussed changing the Juneteenth holiday. Staff have already been notified.

c. July Meeting:

On a motion duly made, it was resolved to approve the July 2023 Board meeting to be virtual. Motion carried.

The Board discussed holding the July 2023 meeting virtually due to Board member conflicts.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

A member of the community thanked T. Crist for his service. Leslie Colson, a staff member from the HR department, thanked Dr. Wells for speaking on behalf of the library; thanked the search committee for their work; thanked N. Johnson for her work; and T. Crist for his service.

10. RESOLUTION TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion made by N. Johnson, seconded by M. Rodriguez, it was resolved that the Newark Public Library Board of Trustees move into the Executive Session. Motion carried.

On a motion duly made, it was resolved to return to public session. Motion carried unanimously.

11. **PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS DISCUSSED DURING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

PERSONNEL RESOLUTIONS: BOARD MEETING MAY 24, 2023
NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

In accordance with the by-laws Art.Sec.1 the Director recommends ratification of the following appointments and personnel actions:

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Action</u> | <u>Base Salary</u> | <u>Hire Date</u> | <u>Effective Date</u> |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|---|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>NEW HIRE</u> | | | | | | |
| Morris, MiaLisa | Clerk 1 | Facilities | New Hire Appointment Non-Competitive | \$40,000 | 5/30/23 | 5/30/23 |
| Jackson, Hunter | Monitor | Teen Room | New Hire Appointment Non-Competitive | \$16.57hr. | 5/30/23 | 5/30/23 |
| <u>RESIGNATIONS</u> | | | | | | |
| Alexander, Otis | Librarian 1 | Reference | Resignation | \$60,213 | 3/13/23 | 3/27/23 |
| Pena, Milagros | Library Assistant | North End | Resignation | \$31,611 | 2/14/23 | 3/30/23 |
| <u>TITLE CHANGE & SALARY INCREASE</u> | | | | | | |
| Evaristo, Samantha | Librarian 1 | Van Buren | Salary Increase Promotion | \$60,213 | 9/20/21 | 5/29/23 |

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly made, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Lauren Wells, President

Ingrid Betancourt, Interim Director

Date

Date