

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

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
JULY 26, 2023, 5:00 P.M.**

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Lauren Wells	President/Chair
Domingo Morel	Vice President
Rosemary Steinbaum	Secretary
Anasa Maat	Trustee (from 5:11 p.m.)
Hassan Abdus-Sabur	Trustee
Jason Ballard	Trustee (from 5:42 p.m.)
Antoinette Richardson	Trustee
Miguel Rodriguez	Trustee

**STAFF:**

Christian Zabriskie	Director
Anna Coats	Asst, Director - Public Services
George Williams	Asst. Director – Capital Planning
Zuhare Meri	Asst. Director - Facilities
Jacqueline Jones	Head of Security
Leslie Colson	Asst. Director Human Resources

**ABSENT:**

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

**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 5:02 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES**

**On a motion made by D. Morel, seconded by H. Abdus-Sabur, it was resolved to approve the Public Session Board of Trustees minutes dated May 24, 2023; and the Special Board Meeting minutes dated May 30, 2023, and June 29, 2023. Motion carried.**

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

L. Wells welcomed the new Director, C. Zabriskie, who joined the library on July 5, 2023, and noted that the Board and library are excited about C. Zabriskie’s extensive experience. She also welcomed J. Ballard, to the Board, who has extensive financial knowledge and public-school experience that will be beneficial to the library.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

C. Zabriskie thanked the Board and thanked the staff for their work. He has been contacting other libraries in the area for more information and gaining information on how the library works. He is interested in the security of the library. Additionally, he wants to address the finances and, at this point, is signing all checks as hard copies to ensure he knows the details. He noted wanting to go through the policies to make things easier for staff and himself. He would like to create a capital plan, making future planning much easier.

There was discussion about including reports from department heads at Board meetings going forward.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

**On a motion made by D. Morel, seconded by R. Steinbaum, it was resolved to approve bill sheets 1336 and 1337. Motion carried.**

D. Morel explained that T. Crist stepped down from the Board and there is currently no Treasurer. The finances were reviewed and only one issue was found. The total account balance for sheet 1337 is \$1.4 million, which is lower than expected because it does not reflect the funds that came in from the city.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a. **Development Committee:** R. Steinbaum noted that the Committee met, and the focus was largely dedicated to the gala, which will be on December 6, 2023. The Gala will take place at Nanina's in The Park, where it has been before, and the theme is bringing communities together. Karen Dinkins, a consultant, is working on this project as well. Willie Cole will attend to be honored.

It was suggested to highlight youth talent, like a high school jazz band, which could be a good experience for students and lower costs. There is significant creative space to show local talent.

- b. **Facilities Committee:** C. Zabriskie noted that the HRIC remodel is in progress. Some of the furniture is on order, and the ceiling installation is in process. The Clinton Branch needs significant work and individuals with experience in redevelopment law need to be talked to. There is a lead on a preliminary grant for the Springfield branch renovation.
- c. **Finance Committee:** The Finance Committee has met twice since the last meeting and D. Morel noted that the city of Newark appropriation came in late. The Library was represented at the City budget hearing at the end of June 2023 and requested an increase from the city of \$370,000, instead of the level funding. Level funding is not accurate because of increased expenses. There is an additional revenue of \$180,000 from two films renting the library. The library audit is on track and the 2019 audit is 95% complete.
- d. **Personnel and Policy Committee Report:** A. Richardson noted that the Committee reviewed the organizational chart and created strategies to fill vacant positions. Under the Amazon investigation, the rice notice was discussed. This will be addressed in the Executive Session. Policies are being addressed, including how to conduct workplace investigations and how to interact with the public.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Treasurer Role:**

**On a motion duly made by R. Steinbaum, seconded by A. Richardson, it was resolved to appoint J. Ballard as Treasurer. Motion carried.**

**b. Committee Reports:** The Board discussed having Committee Reports for Board meetings. It was noted that this will not always be possible but would be ideal.

**c. ART Grant:** This grant is for space activation in Newark and Atlantic City. The focus is to utilize the library exterior, such as with beehives on library roofs, tiny concerts, coworking spaces, etc.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The floor was opened to public comments. Beth Zack Cohen, a librarian speaking on behalf of Local 2298 staff union, welcomed C. Zabriskie as Director.

## **RESOLUTION TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**On a motion made by A. Maat, seconded by R. Steinbaum, it was resolved that the Newark Public Library Board of Trustees move into the Executive Session. Motion carried.**

**10. RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

**On a motion made by D. Morel, seconded by A. Maat, it was resolved that the Newark Public Library Board of Trustees reconvene in Public Session. Motion carried.**

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

**On a motion made by A. Maat, second by D. Morel, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 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

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Christian Zabriskie, Director

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Date

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Date