

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

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
SEPTEMBER 27, 2023, 5:00 P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS

Lauren Wells	President/Chair
Domingo Morel	Vice President
Anasa Maat	Trustee
Jason Ballard	Treasurer
Aisha Cooper	Trustee
Antoinette Richardson	Trustee
Miguel Rodriguez	Trustee
Havier Nazario	Trustee

STAFF:

Christian Zabriskie	Director
Anna Coats	Asst. Director Public Services
Leslie Colson	Asst. Director HR
Dale Colston	Asst. Director Special Collection
George Williams	Asst. Director Capital Planning
Zuhare Meri	Building Superintendent/Facilities and Maintenance
Jacqueline Jones	Security
Jorge Rodriguez	IT
Scharon Little	Finance

ABSENT:

Rosemary Steinbaum	Secretary
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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.

2. APPROVAL OF PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

On a motion made by D. Morel, seconded by J. Ballard, it was resolved to approve the Public Session Board of Trustees minutes dated July 26, 2023. Roll call was done. Motion carried.

There was discussion on ensuring that Committee minutes are included in formal records.

3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

L. Wells welcomed the new Board members. A. Cooper noted that her first job was working at a library, and the library is one of her favorite places; Javier Nazario noted that he loves the library.

L. Wells noted that events create stronger connections for the library.

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

C. Zabriskie informed new Board members that he has been with the Library for 100 days, and presented a 100-day report.

C. Zabriskie noted that the stacks, vestibules, and parking lots have been relit, and the construction of HRC will begin soon. He noted that libraries have been incubators for small businesses and not-for-profits, and would like to look into making the Springfield Library a family incubator. This would address health, education, employment, food scarcity, etc.

C. Zabriskie noted that the Newark Public Library is a 21st-century library, but requires updates to technology and programming. It was requested that the 100-day report be accessible to the library community.

The Board discussed the New Community Corporation, which provides support for a grant the Library is applying for; the Health Department is also providing support. Programming was discussed as well as ensuring that programming is aligned with what the library patrons want, via consultations.

There was discussion regarding DEI and ensuring policy is developed appropriately.

The Board discussed the status of the Clinton Branch. C. Zabriskie has met with the architects and developers and noted the need for fundraising. The Board discussed if the structural engineers have determined that the Clinton Library needs to be torn down. It was confirmed that the walls are unsafe, as is the second floor - due to termites. It was noted that it is not viable to repair this building.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

On a motion made by M. Rodriguez, seconded by A. Maat, it was resolved to approve bill sheets 1338 and 1339. Motion carried.

J. Ballard confirmed that the Finance Committee met last week. Grant funding needs to be applied for due to various upcoming projects. The bill sheets are in order, and the library is financially sound.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Development Committee:** C. Zabriskie noted that the gala is being planned, and a list of people are being contacted for support. The Committee has requested that the ticket prices be increased from \$150 to \$250, with exceptions for friends of the library who would receive a \$50 discount.

There is a challenge to ensure that the gala is accessible to more people, but there is also the need for an increase in funds. There was discussion on the after-party cost.

The Board discussed ensuring that the Newark community is included in the gala. It was suggested that if Corporations buy tables, any leftover seats could be donated to the community. The Board discussed increasing corporate sponsorship, such as the airport.

b. Facilities Committee:

On a motion made by D. Morel, seconded by J. Ballard, it was resolved to approve KLK Contractors as the selected contractor for the HRC, VTC, and TTC renovations for \$2.4 million. One abstention. Motion carried.

C. Zabriskie noted that they would like to enter into a contract with KLK Contractors for the upcoming HRC contract for \$2.4 million. The Board discussed L. Wells as the Committee Chairperson for the purpose of the resolution.

c. Finance Committee: The Finance Committee met in August 2023 and September 2023. The aim is to have two million in the account, however, this was not possible due to payroll requirements and a Horizon payment.

Expenses are slightly above budget due to employees receiving an increase because they passed the civil service exam. The City of Newark has agreed to give the library an increase in the budget, but it needs to be approved; it is an increase of 3.5%.

The audit is under way, and, historically, external audits have taken approximately a year. The team has been working to reduce this to five or six months. The Committee noted that they will need a new auditor, as the auditing demands have increased, and a change in auditors will help with the increased timelines. It was noted that it is important to get the audits completed as quickly as possible.

There have been issues with a lack of historical knowledge in the library when the audits were being carried out, however, this will not be the case for the more recent audits. Additionally, there are systems being put in place to ensure this lack of knowledge does not occur again. It is expected that audits will be much more expensive than in the past, approximately \$40,000 or above.

d. Personnel and Policy Committee Report: A. Richardson noted that there will be a health fair for the city, which will include Library employees. She invited everyone to join the staff on October 13, 2023, to wear pink to support breast cancer awareness. There is also a breast cancer fundraising walk. There are many policies that are being addressed and will be presented to the Board in the future.

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. Demographics and Circulation: There was an increase in library visits in July 2023, by 23%. It was asked that this percentage be compared to other libraries. C. Zabriskie noted that there is significant circulation data, which be used in various ways. He noted that Newark is a unique city, and comparisons need to be selected carefully.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Committee Placements:** It was suggested that A. Cooper join the Facilities Committee and that H. Nazario join the Policy and Personnel Committee. The Facilities Committee is short of one member and H. Nazario asked to join the Facilities Committee to fill this gap.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The floor was opened to public comments. D. Lopez, representing the local union, thanked the Board for allowing the union to participate in the director search.

9. RESOLUTION TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion made by D. Morel, seconded by J. Ballard, 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 J. Ballard, seconded by M. Rodriguez it was resolved that the Newark Public Library Board of Trustees reconvene in Public Session. Motion carried.

11. HR RESOLUTION

PERSONNEL RESOLUTIONS: BOARD MEETING September 27, 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>						
Gabriel, Leona	Library Assistant	Springfield	New Hire Appointment Non-Competitive	\$31,611	10/02/23	10/02//23
Ryder, Thomas	Monitor	CCNJIC	New Hire Part time	\$16.57/hr.	10/02/23	10/02/23
Trapnell, Erin P.	Monitor	CCNJIC	New Hire Part time	\$16.57/hr.	10/03/23	10/02/23
<u>RESIGNATIONS</u>						

Evaristo, Samantha	Librarian 1	Van Buren	Resignation	\$60,213	09/20/21	09/20/23
Vega Munoz, Marvin	Monitor	North End	Resignation	\$16.57/hr.	03/13/23	06/17/23
<u>Status Change</u>						
Green, Derrick	Bldg. Maintenance Worker	From Vailsburg -to Main	From Full time - To Part time	\$31,612	02/23/16	09/11/23
<u>FMLA</u>						
Mechiet, Mohend	System Analyst	Finance	Leave FMLA	\$81,600	01/03/22	08/31/23
Sinho, Abha	System Analyst	Main	Leave FMLA	97,284	07/05/11	06/10/23
Sinho, Abha	System Analyst	Main	Return FMLA	97,284	07/05/11	07/12/23
Sinho, Abha	System Analyst	Main	Leave FMLA	97,284	07/05/11	10/05/23
<u>SALARY INCREASE</u>				New Base Salary		
Blanding, Reginald	Librarian 1	JBAAR	Retro Hourly rate salary increase	\$62,970	04/29/19	09/11/23
<u>CIVIL SERVICE PROMOTIONS AND/OR SALARY INCREASE</u>						
Dawson, Tyeshia	Budget Examiner	Finance	Salary Increase Appointment Permanent	\$41,616	05/02/22	09/11/23
Little, Scharron	Analyst Grant Application	Development	Appointment Permanent	Interim Current salary \$132,121	01/03/22	10/09/23

Meri, Zuhare	Building Supervisor	Facilities	Appointment Permanent	\$132,121	03/15/21	10/09/23
Rivas, Susana	Principal Library Assistant	VTC	Salary Increase Appointment Permanent	\$36,386	10/02/00	10/09/23
Williams, Rashida	Principal Library Assistant	Vailsburg	Salary Increase Appointment permanent	\$36,387	10/02/00	10/09/23
Blackwell, Maxine	From Sr. Library Assistant to Principal Library Assistant	Weequahic	Salary Increase Promotional Appointment	\$35,478	06/23/03	10/09/23
Duncan, Onolee	From Library Assistant to Sr. Library Assistant	Children/Teen Room	Salary Increase Promotional Appointment	\$32,244	08/19/19	10/09/23
Harris, Nonique	From Library Assistant to Sr. Library Assistant	Catalog	Salary Increase Promotional Appointment	\$32,244	04/03/17	10/09/23
Harrison, Jacqueline	From Sr. Library Assistant to Principal Library Assistant	Springfield	Salary Increase Promotional Appointment	\$40,587	04/01/92	10/09/23
Hernandez, Luis Angel	From Sr. Library Assistant to Principal Library Assistant	Springfield	Salary Increase Promotional Appointment	\$43,043	05/16/86	10/09/23
Montanez, Iris	From Sr. Library Assistant to	North end	Salary Increase	\$36,031	04/26/99	10/09/23

	Principal Library Assistant		Promotional Appointment			
Ovalle, Julissa	From Library Assistant to Sr. Library Assistant	Branch Brook	Salary Increase Promotional Appointment	\$32,244	09/19/05	10/09/23
Oyola, Jorge	From Sr. Library Assistant to Principal Library Assistant	Catalog	Salary Increase Promotional Appointment	\$33,213	10/22/07	10/09/23
Ramos, Elizabeth	From Sr. Library Assistant to Principal Library Assistant	Van Buren	Salary Increase Promotional Appointment	\$43,074	03/14/90	10/09/23
Reyes, Emma	From Sr. Library Assistant to Principal Library Assistant	La Sala	Salary Increase Promotional Appointment	\$35,224	01/01/01	10/09/23
Smith, John	From Library Assistant to Sr. Library Assistant	Weequahic	Salary Increase Promotional Appointment	\$32,244	10/02/06	10/09/23
Waller, Kathleen	From Library Assistant to Sr. Library Assistant	VTC	Salary Increase Promotional Appointment	\$32,244	02/12/19	10/09/23

On a motion made by M. Rodriguez, seconded by A. Cooper, it was resolved to approve the personnel resolutions for the Newark Public Library September 27, 2023, Board meeting. Motion carried.

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion made by D. Morel, second by J. Ballard, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 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

Christian Zabriskie, Director

Date

Date