

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

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE
MAY 25, 2022, 5:00 P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS:

Lauren Wells	President/Chair
Domingo Morel	Vice-President
Anasa Maat	Trustee
Miguel Rodriguez	Trustee
Hassan Abdus-Sabur	Trustee
Timothy Crist	Treasurer
Antoinette Richardson	Trustee

STAFF:

Joslyn Bowling Dixon	Director
Anna Coats	Assistant Director, Public Services
George Williams	Assistant Director, Capital Planning, Facilities & Security
Leslie Colson	Head of Human Resources
Zuhare Meri	Superintendent
Rod Jefferson	Assistant Director, Finance
Ingrid Betancourt	Assistant Director, Special Service
Jacqueline Jones	Security
Diego Quintero	Head of IT
Kirsten Giardi	Assistant Director, Development
Anne Webb	Executive Administrative Assistant to the Director

ABSENT:

Nicole Johnson	Trustee
Rosemary Steinbaum	Secretary

Minutes prepared by Katrina Janeiro from 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, L. Wells called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

On a motion made by M. Rodriguez, seconded by A. Maat, it was resolved to approve the Public Session minutes dated March 30, 2022, as amended. One abstained. Motion carried.

3. **PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

L. Wells provided a brief President’s Report. She thanked the staff for their work on all the events that took place since the last meeting.

4. **DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

J. Dixon noted that May 25, 2022 is the first Newark 360 meeting and staff will be in attendance and will be speaking and have a table with the history of the Clinton branch and provide updates and gather feedback from the community on what they would like to see in the new Clinton branch. Another community meeting will take place in mid-June.

National Library Week in April was a success with staff appreciation events.

J. Dixon participated in advocacy efforts for improved state funding.

J. Dixon reported that all statistics, including circulation and computer usage, are showing improvement over 2021.

J. Dixon outlined several exhibits and events that took place since the last meeting, noting their success.

5. **TREASURER’S REPORT**

T. Crist stated that there were two cash activity reports to review and approve:

Bill Sheet 1322, March 2022

The below invoices for books, binding, incidentals, and payroll, were certified as correct by the Library Director and presented for examination and approval:

Gross Payroll Activity	
March 4	\$ 244,454.91
March 18	\$ 245,634.49
Disbursement Activity	
Operating Account	\$ 492,461.63
Grant Account	\$ 14,187.10
Endowment Account	\$ 40,089.98
Capital Account	\$ 59,500.00
Total Disbursement for November 2021	\$1,096,328.11

Bill Sheet 1323, April 2022

The following invoices for books, binding, incidentals, and payroll, were certified as correct by the Library Director and presented for examination and approval:

Gross Payroll Activity	
April 1	\$ 246,291.33
April 15	\$ 272,326.78
April 29	\$ 263,073.33
Disbursement Activity	
Operating Account	\$ 166,501.98
Grant Account	\$ 12,500.84
Endowment Account	\$ 3,972.76
Capital Account	\$ 0.00
Total Disbursement for December 2021	\$ 964,667.02

On a motion made by T. Crist, seconded by M. Rodriguez, it was resolved to approve Bill Sheets 1322 and 1323 for March and April 2022, respectively. Motion carried unanimously.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Development Committee: The Development Committee met on May 5, 2022 and focused on a grant report. Approval was given for a \$6,000 Toast for the Teachers event in June. This event will re-engage these teachers in the library system and announce the Ambassador’s program.

Senator Booker’s office has given approval for the Library to apply for Congressional Directive Spending Funding and two proposals were submitted: one for \$1,000,000 for HRIC and another for \$180,000 for the digitization of the Newark Evening News.

The information that was requested for the Library Construction Bond Act has been submitted.

J. Dixon outlined a new program that gives the Library the opportunity to work with the schools and students to combat learning from home. The program will suggest books based on the child’s interest, and staff is working with the State Library Staff to create these genres of interest. The State Library is sponsoring the marketing of this program. This program will launch in September 2022.

The grand opening of the maker space will take place at the end of June 2022 and will include speakers.

Two Ambassador Program events were reviewed. Planning for the gala has begun, and suggestions for honorees are welcome. A silent auction and text-to-give program are being considered during the event.

The Unity Brunch event was a success, and other upcoming events were outlined and discussed.

Facilities Committee: T. Crist gave an overview of the Facility Committee's recent activities and updated the Board on the focus group regarding the branch system. Two facility meetings took place since the last Board meeting.

There are plans to convert an electric van to a book-mobile to service the Clinton Branch area until a suitable location is found. The Board discussed exploring a community outreach person being associated with the mobile unit to improve community involvement in the process of the new Clinton Branch.

There are plans for Deputy Mayor Ladd and staff and representatives from Invest Newark to showcase several branches so they are made aware of opportunities with the Library.

HRIC is likely to begin this summer. The staff has met with the architect for schedule and cost estimates and updated increased pricing will be reviewed.

The roof of the Weequahic Branch Library is being replaced with shingles. Roof repairs at the Vailsburg Branch have been completed. Re-carpeting of the Children's Room has been completed. Waterproofing is required at the Branch Brook Branch. Repairs to the exterior of the Main Library façade are underway. A preliminary lighting design has been received for the Main Library Branch. Work on the maker's space is underway.

J. Dixon updated the Board on early thoughts regarding the Audible space outside the Children's Room, and staff is working with partners to discuss options. The Board discussed their desire for a door leading to the outdoor area.

Finance Committee: D. Morel presented the update. The Committee found nothing concerning in the financial reports since the previous Board meeting. Inflation will cause spending within the budget increasingly difficult in the future, which underscores the need for more funding from the city. The Finance Committee is striving to provide a summary at the start of the year for planned spending. The 2017 audit has been completed, and the 2018 audit is in progress.

Personnel and Policy Committee: N. Johnson presented the update. The Committee outlined the Homeless Institute Training, which helps staff learn how to positively communicate and navigate challenging patron interactions, which was completed by 95% of employees.

Potential flexible or four-day work week options are being investigated and an update will be given at the next meeting.

Library administration received a grievance regarding salary payments, which will be discussed in the executive session of this meeting.

Departmental overview descriptions have been updated and were provided to the Board for feedback.

Jane Seiden retired on May 1, 2022, after 35 years of service.

The Chief Community Relations Specialist job description is to be revised due to the extensive scope of work.

An application has been submitted for the Newark Summer Youth Employment for students to work at the library throughout the summer.

7. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

Approval of Summer Hours 2022: This year, summer hours will begin on Monday, June 27, 2022, and end on Tuesday, September 6, 2022. As in the past, the late night at the Main Library and Branches will be each Wednesday. The hours will be as follows:

Main Library

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Wednesdays, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Branch Libraries

Mondays, closed
Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Wednesdays, 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

On a motion by D. Morel, seconded by M. Rodriguez, it was resolved to approve the summer 2022 hours as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Review of COVID Protocols Update for Summer 2022: J. Dixon updated the Board on COVID protocols for Summer 2022. On June 6, 2022, sneeze guards will be removed, and masks will be recommended but not mandatory. Large-scale programming masking will remain in place, but outdoor programming will allow recommended masking on a case-by-case basis. A comment period is currently underway. The Library continues to require proof of vaccination or proof of a negative COVID test with identification for programming.

National Gun Violence: The Board discussed producing a statement commenting on recent gun violence. The Board discussed providing programming on how parents can navigate communicating these events with their children.

A moment of silence was observed for the victims of Uvalde.

Hispanic American Foundation: All Board members are welcome to participate in the Hispanic American Foundation event taking place on June 16, 2022. Tickets are available by calling 973-483-4290 or by speaking to M. Rodriguez.

9. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The public comment statement was read. Two comments from Facebook were acknowledged. A promotion policy is in development, and feedback on reopening is welcome.

10. **MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On a motion made by M. Rodriguez, seconded by D. Morel, it was resolved that The Newark Public Library Board of Trustees move into Executive Session. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Personnel Resolutions

Per the By-laws, Article VII, Section 1, J. Dixon recommended ratification of the following appointments and personnel actions:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Base Salary</u>	<u>Date</u>
Meri, Zuhare	Building Superintendent	Salary Increase (Maintenance)	\$129,530	4/25/22
Seiden, Jane	Librarian 4	Retirement (Reference)	\$78,389	5/1/22
Dawson, Tyeshia	Budget Examiner	New Hire (Finance)	\$40,000	5/2/22
Royce, Eric	Data Processing Programmer	Salary Increase (Information & Technology)	\$55,000	5/23/22
Quintero, Diego	Data Processing Programmer	Salary Increase (Information & Technology)	\$75,000	5/23/22

On a motion made by M. Rodriguez, seconded by A. Richardson, it was resolved to approve the Personnel Resolutions for May 25, 2022. Motion carried unanimously.

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 27, 2022.

On a motion made by A. Richardson, seconded by M. Rodriguez, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 6:51 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 of the Board of Trustees. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Lauren Wells, President

Joslyn Bowling Dixon, Director

Date

Date