

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

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
SEPTEMBER 28, 2022, 5:00 P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS:

Lauren Wells	President/Chair
Domingo Morel	Vice President
Anasa Maat	Trustee
Hassan Abdus-Sabur	Trustee
Timothy Crist	Treasurer
Antoinette Richardson	Trustee
Nicole Johnson	Trustee
Miguel Rodriguez	Trustee (from 5:09 p.m.)

STAFF:

Ingrid Betancourt	Interim Director
Dale Colston	Special Collections
Anna Coats	Assistant Director, Public Services
George Williams	Assistant Director, Capital Planning, Facilities & Security
Leslie Colson	Head of Human Resources
Zuhare Meri	Superintendent
Jacqueline Jones	Security
Diego Quintero	Head of IT
Kirsten Giardi	Assistant Director, Development
Annecy Webb	Executive Administrative Assistant to the Director

ABSENT:

Rosemary Steinbaum	Secretary
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Minutes prepared by Jolene de Jager 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 5:07 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

On a motion made by T. Crist, seconded by A. Maat, it was resolved to approve the Public Session minutes dated July 27, 2022. Motion carried.

On a motion made by D. Morel, seconded by M. Rodriguez, it was resolved to approve the Special Meeting minutes dated August 4, 2022. Motion carried.

3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

L. Wells provided a brief President's Report. She thanked I. Betancourt for stepping up as Interim Director and L. Colson for the support in the transition.

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

I. Betancourt highlighted JetBlue's Soar with Reading program in Newark, where WABC-TV anchor Sade Baderinwa led a story time event on August 12, 2022. She reported that the official opening of Acquired Taste: Contributions of the African Diaspora to Food Culture in the Americas, held on August 3, 2022, was a great success. Guests, who attended, sampled food from local vendors. I. Betancourt noted that The Newark Public Library (NPL) partnered with the NJ Harm Reduction Coalition, the Newark Community Street Team, and the global public health organization Vital Strategie to launch the first installation of a travelling national Overdose Memorial at the Main Library on August 31, 2022.

I. Betancourt reported that Newark's Ecuadorian community had their 2022 Ecuadorian Heritage Celebration at the library on August 3, 2022. On August 17th, 2022 the grand opening of NPL's Makerspace, Made @NPL, was officially launched. Attendees had the opportunity to make custom laser-printed keychains, sew and decorate reading pillows, take part in a mini-photoshoot, learn how to record audio, and create music.

I. Betancourt highlighted events in the courtyard like Rhythm and Words Poetry and Hello/Hola: Let's Chat/Conversemos. Also, 17 children and five adults joined the bilingual story times in the Main Library Children's Room on August 9, and 23, 2022. She shared the three programs: Arrest to Arraignment, A Community Doula Conversation, and Dust and Dignity, which took place in both hybrid and virtual.

I. Betancourt updated the Board on the 2022 summer reading participation, up 137% from 2021, and that the Philip Roth Personal Library launched its first newsletter, The Pitch, in August, 2022.

I. Betancourt presented the funding update and pointed out that the Municipal Budget Hearings were on September 17, 2022, where an increase of 3.5 % was requested for NPL. She added that NPL offered ESL classes at the Van Buren Branch in partnership with La Casa de Don Pedro.

I. Betancourt shared the NPL's July statistics on the 2021 to 2022 comparisons.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

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

Bill Sheet 1326, July, 2022

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

Gross Payroll Activity	
July 8	\$ 267,605.87
July 22	\$ 253,991.05

Disbursement Activity	
Operating Account	\$ 140,864.09
Grant Account	\$ 24,140.45
Endowment Account	\$ 35,799.76
Capital Account	\$ 0.00
Total Disbursement for July, 2022	\$744,401.22

Bill Sheet 1327, August, 2022

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

Gross Payroll Activity	
August 5	\$ 244,169.27
August 19	\$ 290,114.85
Disbursement Activity	
Operating Account	\$ 352,071.42
Grant Account	\$ 15,322.18
Endowment Account	\$ 6,195.45
Capital Account	\$ 0.00
Total Disbursement for August, 2022	\$ 907,873.17

On a motion made by T. Crist, seconded by A. Maat, it was resolved to approve Bill Sheets 1326 and 1327 for July, and August, 2022, respectively. Motion carried.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Development Committee: The Board noted that R. Steinbaum was absent and would defer the Development Committee’s updates until the meeting in November, 2022.

Facilities Committee:

On a motion made by T. Crist, seconded by D. Morel, it was resolved that the Newark Public Library’s Board of Trustees approved entering into the PSEG Energy Saver Direct program, with Tri-State Light and Energy, Inc. as the selected contractor, with separate contracts for each branch library as presented. Motion carried.

T. Crist presented the report. The Facilities Committee met on September 14, 2022. He highlighted issues, including encouraging the development of the five-year facilities plan and ensuring the funds are available to undertake projects. The State Librarian recommended that the construction bond grant be transferred to the main library project, which will take a few months.

The Branch Brook Library was temporarily closed due to HVAC, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, water filtration, and safety issues related to the stairs. Additional analysis would be required before any decisions were made. Another issue was the cracked chimney at the rear of the main library building.

T. Crist reported that PSEG had a saver direct install program with several elements and that it would apply to all six branches, addressing both HVAC and lighting issues, with no upfront expense by the library. PSEG would cover 74.6% of the total project costs, which would result in monthly savings in energy costs of approximately \$2,500.

The architect for HRIC has been meeting with staff members to discuss design. There is a working group comprised of staff members from each department. The city intended to sell the building at 34 Commerce Street, and NPL applied for the state construction bond for the property.

Finance Committee: D. Morel presented the report. The Finance Committee met on August 17, and 23, 2022, and September 21, 2022. He noted that the Finance Committee would be implementing changes in the future Board meetings on how they present the financial reports to be more transparent to the public and the Board. There were no concerns at this time with the general operating summary, grant reports, or endowment reports.

Personnel and Policy Committee:

On a motion made by M. Rodriguez, seconded by N. Johnson, it was resolved to approve the settlement agreements between Absolute Local 2298 IO IUOE Local 68 applicable to all non-union employees. Motion carried.

On a motion made by D. Morel, seconded by N. Johnson, it was resolved to approve the Newark Public Library Board of Trustees to change the 26.1-week payroll schedule to a 26-week payroll schedule effective October 1, 2022. Motion carried.

T. Richardson presented the report. The Personnel and Policy Committee met on September 8, 2022, and discussed departmental vacancies: IT, HR, Development facilities, public services, and special collections. The current positions were fundraiser, HR, generalist, building, maintenance worker, grant writer, external communication, specialist engineer, plumber, librarian, and library assistant. These job vacancies would be both internal and external recruiting. A communication officer was discussed to maintain the brand image and create content such as publications, website content, press releases, annual reports, and marketing. This position would have other responsibilities like arranging interviews, compiling analytic metrics, and keeping a narrative of media coverage, which required a lot of community engagement.

The payroll schedule will change on October 1, 2022, when employees have a 26-pay schedule.

Search Committee:

On a motion made by N. Johnson, seconded by D. Morel, it was resolved to approve the Newark Public Library Board of Trustees to authorize the Search Committee for the NPL Director to enter into negotiations with Equity Solutions located at 180 N Wabash Avenue, Suite 815, Chicago, Illinois. Motion carried.

T. Richardson presented the new Committee that consisted of herself as Chair, N. Johnson as Trustee, and I. Betancourt as Interim Director for NPL. She noted that seven proposals were received, and three of the firms were interviewed. The search firm that was selected was Equity Solutions, with the technical expertise of running a library, and was a minority-owned firm with a diversity in staff.

7. **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to discuss.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business to discuss.

9. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The public comment statement was read, and the following was asked:

Ernesto Diaz, President of the Board of the Support Group of Friends of Hispanic Research Information Center, inquired about the 34 Commerce Street building trade-off, paperwork submitted to the state, and the bid package. He also asked whether the new Director would be committed to continuing with the city’s construction. The Board replied that the process was to get everything in writing and that the work had to happen at the state level. Applying for a state grant cast resolution at the library level would need to be done. It would need to come from the city level, and go through the process to transfer the use of money to support the project. The Board noted that the 34 Commerce Street building was the decision of the city and the Director of Economic Development. The Board added that everyone on the Board supported the work required for the space to enhance the library to be a destination library.

Myrna Milan noted that the National Organization for all Latino librarians has job postings on their website. They would be happy to post any information from NPL as their interest was diversity.

The Board reminded NPL staff were allowed to comment or ask questions in this section along with the public.

10. **MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

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

Personnel Resolutions

Per the bylaws, Article VII, Section 1, it was recommended that the Board ratify the following appointments and personnel actions:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Base Salary</u>	<u>Date</u>
Garry, Calvin	Building Maintenance Worker	Leave of Absence (FMLA)	\$30,992	8/1/22
Umenyili, Marcus	Building Maintenance Worker	Resignation (Maintenance)	\$30,992	8/10/22

Cruz, Michell	Library Assistant	Resignation (Circulation)	\$30,992	8/22/22
Morale, Edith	Monitor	Resignation (Van Buren Branch)	\$15.92	8/26/22
Colston, Dale	Librarian 4	Salary Increase (Special Collections)	\$129,530	8/29/22
Colson, Leslie	Personnel Officer	Salary Increase (Human Resources)	\$129,530	8/29/22
Giardi, Kirsten	Assistant Director for Libraries	Salary Increase (Development)	\$150,000	8/29/22
Thornton, Sabrina	Monitor	Resignation (Charles Cumming New Jersey Information Center)	\$16.24	9/1/22
Garry, Calvin	Building Maintenance Worker	Return from Leave of Absence (FMLA)	\$30,992	9/20/22

On a motion made by D. Morel, seconded by A. Richardson, it was resolved to approve the Personnel Resolutions for September 28, 2022. Motion carried.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2022.

On a motion made by A. Richardson, seconded by D. Morel, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 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