

THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
5 WASHINGTON STREET
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
JANUARY 25, 2023, 5:00 P.M.

BOARD MEMBERS

Lauren Wells	President/Chair
Rosemary Steinbaum	Secretary
Timothy Crist	Treasurer
Anasa Maat	Trustee
Hassan Abdus-Sabur	Trustee
Nicole Johnson	Trustee
Antoinette Richardson	Trustee

STAFF:

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

ABSENT:

Domingo Morel	Vice President
Miguel Rodriguez	Trustee

Minutes prepared by Lorena Araujo 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, L. Wells called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES**

On a motion duly made and carried, it was resolved to approve the Public Session Board of Trustees minutes dated November 16, 2022, as amended to reflect that L. Wells presented the report for the Director Search Committee Report and not A. Maat.

3. **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT**

On a motion made by N. Johnson, it was resolved to approve the nomination of L. Wells as President of the Nominating Committee for 2023, D. Morel as Vice President, R. Steinbaum as Secretary, and T. Crist as Treasurer. Motion carried.

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

L. Wells thanked the staff for their commitment to operating and serving the community. New ideas on how to activate branches were welcomed.

5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Z. Meri provided updates on the year's plans, highlighting each building's cleanliness as a priority. A five-year building repairs plan is in development which will prioritize health and safety. Two outdated vehicles will be replaced with SUVs, possibly Chevrolet Malibu. The lighting will be updated to LED, including the main building, pending approval. The project will commence in April 2023. There were more emergencies than expected in 2022.

The Board praised staff for identifying needs as the buildings are over 100 years old and require repairs.

L. Colson congratulated the Board, thanked them for their support, and presented the Human Resources Final Bridge plan for 2022, which focuses on people. Staff recognition, new HR technology, and new policies are part of the plan, as some of the latter have not been updated for many years. Achievements for 2022 include reinstating the annual recognition event held at the national library, where 59 staff were recognized. The new technology includes an ADP HR module, which will be implemented on January 24, 2023. A work-from-home policy was implemented. The Board requested a list of existing policies to identify gaps.

K. Giardi advised of the development team's achievements. There were two vacancies for most of 2022 and three by year-end. Ambassador recruitment kicked off in August 2022, and there are currently 15 Ambassadors who will develop 2023's programming. Many of the ambassadors are highly invested, attend events, and want to increase support for the library and the group. Regardless of the lack of capacity, the year was successful with events such as meet and greets, Octoberfest featuring local musicians and artists, fireside chats, book release celebrations, summer reading kick-offs, a black history celebration, and the annual gala.

The online store generated \$13,600 in profit, there were \$9,600 generated through rentals from universities and other institutions, and \$143,000 were generated from filming productions including Apple TV+ films, the last season of FBI's Most Wanted, and the pilot for America's Next Great Author. The latter's host, a best-selling author, will host one of the library's events on September 14, 2023. A consultant was retained to advise on strategies to strengthen donor relationships, and a grants management process was approved. A reception will be held for the new director once retained, and a black history celebration event will take place the week of January 30, 2023.

The Board asked for clarification on the difference between programming and development activities. K. Giardi advised that every activity is an opportunity to cultivate donors and that the development team assists during events attended by VIPs and potential donors.

D. Quintero provided an update on the bridge plan, achievements, and current projects. The migration from Microsoft Exchange to Office 365 was completed and staff are well acquainted

with its features, including Microsoft Teams. Wi-Fi dead zones were addressed and the signal extended to 0.5 square miles into surrounding communities. The IT and finance departments collaborated with Public Service to implement the Savannah OrangeBoy Engagement Platform, and all staff were trained. Three locations received new computers. Future projects include AI implementation for cyber security which would scan the network for anomalies. The website will be updated for stability and aesthetics.

6. TREASURER’S REPORT

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

a. Bill Sheet 1330, November 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	
November 11	\$ 238,219.48
November 25	\$ 240,242.16
Disbursement Activity	
Operating Account	\$ 509,533.01
Grant Account	\$ 137,959.61
Endowment Account	\$ 31,073.31
Capital Account	\$ 3,100.00
Total Disbursement for November, 2022	\$1,160,127.57

b. Bill Sheet 1331, December 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	
December 9	\$ 240,039.60
December 23	\$ 325,443.92
Disbursement Activity	
Operating Account	\$ 367,724.82
Grant Account	\$ 18,684.69
Endowment Account	\$ 8,932.13
Capital Account	\$ 43,746.20
Total Disbursement for October, 2022	\$ 1,004,571.36

On a motion made by T. Crist, it was resolved to approve Bill Sheets 1330 and 1331 for November and December 2022, respectively. Motion carried.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. **Development Committee:** R. Steinbaum presented a recap of 2022's development and fundraising activities. The total fundraising for 2022 was \$1,974,850.03.

T. Crist celebrated the development team's work which builds off past successes, such as the \$1,000,000 grant procured to digitize Hispanic and African American materials.

L. Wells requested that the description of the development team be reviewed for clarity and to determine the intersectionality between the program teams.

- b. **Facilities Committee:** T. Crist advised that a \$1.4 million state library construction grant was transferred to the main library project from 34 Commerce Street, citing it as a great example of community and legislative engagement. The Director of Projects, G. Williams, met with the Deputy Mayor who confirmed that the library would receive a percentage of the profit if 34 Commerce Street is sold. A consultant working on the exterior lighting will present lighting options and renderings.

The chimney repair was completed and safety initiatives for the Branch Brook branch are scheduled for February 2023. A site visit for the Clinton branch is scheduled for the week of January 30, 2023. Significant issues were discovered in stack tower floors and 172 glass panels cracked. The stack house is closed until the structural engineers complete an inspection. A capital needs assessment including priorities for the next five years is in process.

- c. **Finance Committee:** T. Crist reported that the Committee met on January 18 and 23, 2023. The budget will be completed by March 2023, will be zero-based, and will be broken up by department to identify limitations and increase accountability. The 2018 audit will be completed by the end of February and the 2019 by the summer of 2023. Completing the audits is crucial to apply for grants.

Year 2022 ended in an \$800,000 deficit. The 2021 and 2022 expenses were within 1% of each other, but salary-related and facilities expenses resulted in a deficit. The city's allocation has only increased by 2% yearly for the last ten years.

The 2023 goals include streamlining expense reporting processes, improving cash management internal controls, completing all required audits, and moving from a partial to a consolidated operating summary for a comprehensive financial position view. The Committee will continue to meet monthly.

- d. **Personnel and Policy Committee Report:** L. Wells reported that the Committee met on January 18, 2023. The Committee discussed vacancies for December 2022 and January 2023. Postings for a grant writer, library assistant, human resources generalist, and fundraiser, to name a few, were released. The Committee recommended adding hire dates to personnel reports and will revisit the hiring process to ensure best practices.

The City of New Jersey will transition to the Aetna healthcare system. A new online portal for library staff is available, with a Q&A.

The recruitment firm completed candidate mapping for New Jersey and New York states and Detroit and Boston. Three candidates have been identified, two of whom have extensive library leadership experience. An additional one will be interviewed by January 17, 2023. The firm aims

for a candidate slate at least 40% diverse. The Board requested additional information on the diversity measures.

L. Wells requested that all Committee Chairs remain in their roles. R. Steinbaum will continue to act as Chair of the Development Committee, with M. Rodriguez and A. Maat as members. T. Crist will continue to act as Chair of the Facilities Committee, with H. Abdus-Sabur and Toni as members. D. Morel will continue to act as Chair of the Finance Committee and T. Crist will remain a member, with R. Steinbaum also as a member. Toni will continue to act as Chair of the Personnel Committee, with D. Morel and N. Johnson as members.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

9. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

11. RESOLUTION TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

12. APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

On a motion made by T. Crist, seconded by D. Morel, it was resolved to approve the Executive Session minutes held on November 16, 2022. Motion carried.

13. PASSAGE OF RESOLUTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION

Personnel Resolutions

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

Name	Title	Change	Base Salary	Date
Collins, Qiana	Library Assistant	Resignation (Springfield)	\$30,992	11/14/22
Haynes, Alexander	Monitor	Termination of Temporary Employment (Public Services)	\$15.61hr	11/29/22
Manson, Melissa	Monitor	Resignation (Vailsburg)	\$15.92hr	12/1/22
Wilson, Dana	Grant Writer/External	Termination of Temporary Employment	\$80,000	12/5/22

	Communications Specialist	(Development)		
Williams, Rashida	Principal Library Assistant	FMLA Appointment Competitive Provisional (Vailsburg)	\$34,974	12/12/22
Newby, Barry	Building Maintenance Worker	FMLA Appointment Non-Competitive (Facilities)	\$30,992	1/23/23
Montague, Jamisha	Library Associate	(New Hire) Appointment Non-Competitive (Philip Roth Personal Library/Special Collections)	\$48,000	1/30/23
Birbalsingh, Kalina	Library Assistant	(New Hire) Appointment Non-Competitive (Circulation Services)	\$31,611	1/30/23
Garland, Valan	Building Maintenance Worker	(New Hire) Appointment Non-Competitive (Facilities)	\$31,611	1/30/23
Sinho, Abha	Systems Analyst	FMLA Appointment Non-Competitive (Interlibrary Loan)	\$95,376	2/1/23
Rivera, Marilyn	Keyboarding Clerk	(Retirement) Appointment Non-Competitive	\$48,488	2/1/23
Wright, Theresa	Human Resources Generalist	(New Hire) Appointment Competitive (Human Resources)	\$80,000	2/6/23
Kuharets, Olga	Librarian 1	(New Hire) Appointment Competitive (Weequahic)	\$60,213	2/14/23
Duplessis, Fritzbert	Fundraiser	(New Hire) Appointment Competitive (Development)	\$59,032	2/14/23
Nelson, Ashaunte	Monitor	(New Hire) Temporary Appointment (Circulation)	\$16.57	2/14/23

Cropley, Michael	Monitor	(New Hire) Temporary Appointment (Technical Services/Periodicals)	\$16.57	2/14/23
Vega Munoz, Marvin	Monitor	(New Hire) Temporary Appointment (North End)	\$16.57	2/14/23
Wade, Jahmir	Monitor	(New Hire) Temporary Appointment (Vailsburg)	\$16.57	2/14/23
Kirby, Shania	Library Assistant	(New Hire) Appointment Non-Competitive (Circulation Services)	\$31,611	2/14/23
Pena, Milagros	Library Assistant	(New Hire) Appointment Non-Competitive (North End)	\$31,611	2/14/23
Carpio, Sweet	Library Assistant	(New Hire) Appointment Non-Competitive (Springfield)	\$31,611	2/14/23
Alexander, Otis	Librarian 1	(New Hire) Appointment Competitive (Reference)	\$60,213	3/14/23
Vicari, Jackie	Librarian 1	(New Hire) Appointment Competitive (Reference)	\$60,213	3/14/23
Whipple, Nicola	Librarian 1	(New Hire) Appointment Competitive (Reference/Catalog)	\$60,213	3/14/23
Cartigiano, Amanda	Library Associate	(New Hire) Appointment Non-Competitive (ML Children's Room)	\$44,338	3/14/23

14. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by T. Crist, seconded by N. Johnson, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 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