

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

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
NOVEMBER 15, 2023, 5:00 P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS

Lauren Wells	President/Chair
Anasa Maat	Trustee
Antoinette Richardson	Trustee
Havier Nazario	Trustee
Rosemary Steinbaum	Secretary

STAFF:

Christian Zabriskie	Director
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ABSENT:

Jason Ballard	Trustee
Aisha Cooper	Trustee
Domingo Morel	Vice President
Miguel Rodriguez	Trustee

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 Anasa Maat seconded by H. Nazario, it was resolved to approve the Public Session Board of Trustees minutes dated September 27, 2023. Motion carried.

3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

L. Wells thanked the staff for their work.

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

C. Zabriskie noted that circulation is slightly below expectations. It was also noted that significant work is underway in preparation for Hispanic Heritage Month. A new program allows children to read at the library for half an hour to decrease their lost book fees by a dollar. Children do not have fluid access to money to pay for their lost books, and this will engage them in the library. This program has been used for children and adults at other libraries. C. Zabriskie noted that the initiative will be connected to the literacy program.

C. Zabriskie provided information regarding NPL 21C, which is a program of conversations with people regarding what a 21st-century Newark Public Library would look like. This will not replace any current programs. It was noted that Newark Public Library is known as an innovative library and there needs to be an effort to stay innovative and continue engagement with the community. Policies, community engagement, physical changes to spaces, and new funding streams, are all items to be addressed.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

On a motion duly made, it was resolved to approve bill sheets 1340 for September 2023 in the amount of \$855,528.71 and 1341 for October 2023 in the amount of \$987,608.68. Motion carried.

There are two cash activities that need approval, which reflect banking activities. There are usually three payroll cycles in September, but there were only two in September 2023 due to shifting to pay before the holiday.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. **Development Committee:** The Development Committee met on October 31, 2023. A successful event, Bike for Branches raised \$2,370 for the library with 11 cyclists and will become an annual program. The bike shop sponsor would like to expand the program. The Library Gala will be on December 6, 2023, and \$105,250 has been raised as of today. This is half the amount that is anticipated and Board members were encouraged to buy tickets and sell tickets.
- b. **Facilities Committee:** C. Zabriskie explained that HRIC VTC is moving forward. Project management is being addressed to ensure access while this project is occurring. The contractor has submitted permit approvals for phase one. There is an MOU regarding this project and grants are being applied for regarding construction. The Roseville Branch has a half lot in the back that will be addressed, and the second-floor load capacity will be investigated.

The stack tower is still closed; the floor was problematic but fixed, the lighting was updated, and there was a leak that caused additional delays. There will be a soft opening in December 2023. The basement is having an environmental assessment to ensure it is appropriate for storage, which could decrease offsite storage needs.

The library is working with a local muralist for the retaining wall. C. Zabriskie provided information regarding the Clinton Branch Library, which has a Community Action plan.

- c. **Finance Committee:** The combined account balances are consistent and holding at \$1.6 million. Highlight expenses from September 2023 and October 2023 include \$125,000 related to the renovation of the New Jersey Information Center; \$40,000 related to improving lighting in the main branch; and \$25,000 related to safety hazards. It is anticipated that the year will end with \$13.45

million in expenses, which is slightly higher than budgeted but will be offset by additional appropriations from the City of Newark.

- d. **Personnel and Policy Committee Report:** The Committee met in October 2023. Some items discussed include policies, hiring, engagement, and the Newark Municipal Employees Health Fair. Job postings have gone up on Indeed, interviews have concluded for the Assistant Director of Development, and a job offer has been made. Union negotiations are scheduled for December 2023.

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Farewell:** The Board said farewell to Dr. Maat and recognized her years of service. A letter from the mayor was read and Dr. Maat gave her thanks to the Board and library.
- b. **Clinton Hill Action on Partnership and Progress:**

On a motion made by A Richardson, seconded by R. Steinbaum, it was resolved to ratify the MOU between Clinton Hill and the Newark Public Library with amendments to include an opening statement that defines the Newark Public Library role, add the sentence that the Newark Public Library is the lead and decides the complementary uses for the commercial space, to remove the post-construction portion, and to ensure the language describing the language is affirmative. One abstention. Motion carried.

It was noted that for a neighborhood to thrive, a fine library is needed. The library serves many purposes, including being a safe place for people to go. The Economic Development Authority has a billion dollars, and it was stated that this money could be used as support for this project.

The aim is a mixed-used site with complementary commercial spaces and community services. In this partnership, this group will work as an advocate for the library, and it will be important to ensure that the library is not lost in the process. The MOU will clarify the relationship.

L. Wells requested more historical information provided regarding this project. For Clinton Hill, there have been many discussions regarding the ownership of the land and selling the land. It was noted that there are assumptions about the library's role in the MOU, and this should be clarified. It was noted that the role of the library is to serve as the lead developer, providing guidance on the design and programming for the library branch.

There was discussion regarding funding models for this project. There has been discussion regarding the balance of power between the library, the developer, and the church. C. Zabriskie explained that the MOU is a handshake and many of the details will be addressed as the project continues. C. Zabriskie voiced concern that, because the branch has been closed for a few years, a community partnership is needed to revitalize the branch when it opens.

The Board discussed the language needed for the MOU to be acceptable to the Board. The Board discussed having a Clinton Hill Committee.

c. 2024 Library Board Meeting Dates:

On a motion made by A. Maat, seconded by R. Steinbaum, it was resolved to approve the presented Board of Trustee meeting dates for 2024. Motion carried.

d. 2024 Holiday Dates:

On a motion made by H. Nazario, seconded by A. Maat, it was resolved to approve the holiday closures as presented. Motion carried.

e. Formation of Nomination Committee for Library Board of Trustees Officers: It was noted that D. Morel and R. Steinbaum will be heading the nomination committee.

f. Review of Customer Code of Conduct and Violation Consequences: This was tabled until it has been fully reviewed.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

9. RESOLUTION TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion made by R. Steinbaum, seconded by H. Nazario, 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 A. Maat, seconded by R. Steinbaum, it was resolved that the Newark Public Library Board of Trustees reconvene in Public Session. Motion carried.

11. HR RESOLUTION

On a motion made by A. Richardson, seconded by R. Steinbaum, it was resolved to approve the personnel resolutions for the Newark Public Library November 15, 2023, Board meeting. Motion carried.

12. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by R. Steinbaum, second by A. Maat , it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m. Motion carried.

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