

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Tuesday, March 26, 2019

Present: Ms. Buckhout, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Hess, Ms. Moss, Mr. Twarog, Ms. Reall, Ms. Sheirer, Ms. Wight. **Also Present:** Serena Smith, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA); Faith Kaufmann, Arts & Music Librarian; Peggy MacLeod from Western Massachusetts Pollinator Networks; Michael Goodman. **Absent:** None.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM in the Watson Room.

Public Comments

Michael Goodman spoke to the Trustees concerning harassment he's been receiving at the library by another library patron. In one instance the police were called and there was a cooling off period where no harassment took place. However, on Saturday he alleges that he was physically harassed again by the same person, and would like for him to be trespassed from the library. He spoke to Ms. Downing about his concerns, but was not happy with her response. He wanted to make sure the Trustees were aware of the situation and asked what Ms. Downing intended to do if the harassment continued.

Mr. Carrier said that the Trustees have heard what he's said, and that the next step is for Mr. Goodman to appeal Ms. Downing's decision in writing and submit it to Ms. Downing and the Trustees.

Mr. Goodman left the meeting at 4:04 PM.

Proposal for Forbes Library Pollinator Plantings

Ms. Downing introduced Peggy MacLeod of the Western Massachusetts Pollinator Networks, who spoke to the Trustees last year and has since developed a more detailed proposal to install pollinator-friendly plantings at Forbes Library, as part of a vision to achieve a Pollinator Pathway for Northampton. The proposal includes 5 steps beginning in April and ending in September and includes identifying existing areas and plants; documenting existing conditions, estimating costs, and drafting recommendations; discussion and approval by the Trustees; publicity and recruiting volunteers; and planting in September. Ms. MacLeod said that interest and momentum has been growing since last year, and she is also working with the Senior Center. She said that the next step is to get a pro-bono landscape designer to assess what's here and develop a plan to improve the garden in front of the Children's Department entrance and the edible garden in the back of the building and to bring those plans to the June Trustees' meeting. There is a hands-on pollinator workshop scheduled for April 24 at the Senior Center, and she would like to schedule one at Forbes later in July or September. The plan also calls for developing promotional and educational materials and signage.

In response to a question from Ms. Reall, Ms. MacLeod said that her group works closely with the master gardener program. Ms. Reall also asked that native plants be used as much as possible, and that if using shrubs or small trees, to choose varieties with a natural pleasing shape and low maintenance. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. MacLeod said that the planting and maintenance will be done by community volunteers and she can guarantee that the gardens will be properly maintained.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Western Massachusetts Pollinators Network pursuing a design for the two gardens, and to present it for approval

Proposal for Forbes Library Pollinator Plantings (continued)

at the June Trustees' meeting. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Ms. MacLeod left the meeting at 4:15 PM.

Arts & Music Department Report

Faith Kaufmann presented the annual report of the Arts & Music Department with accomplishments, projects in progress, and future plans and needs. Ms. Kaufmann highlighted a few accomplishments including the use of work-study students to upload digital content into Omeka to create online exhibits on local history and the Howard Collection. Photos and descriptions were uploaded to Omeka from the 100th Anniversary book and will be used to create an online 125th Anniversary exhibit. In response to a question from Ms. Reall, Ms. Kaufmann said that a few years ago the art collection was professionally photographed, and she would like to hire the same photographer to photograph newer acquisitions obtained since then to upload to Omeka. In response to a question from Ms. Wight, Ms. Kaufmann said that items in Omeka are discoverable through google searches.

Ms. Kaufmann said that Mr. Petcen obtained an estimate to replace the fabric on the Hosmer Gallery walls. The panels will be completed offsite and Ms. Kaufmann hopes they will be installed at the end of May. Ms. Kaufmann said that the library pays per view for videos in Kanopy and budgets \$600 per month. When the \$600 is used up before the end of the month, patrons are unable to view any more videos. She has been trying to work with Kanopy on updating their messages to patrons, and would like another \$200 per month for the service. Ms. Reall suggested soliciting donations of musical instruments from the community. Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Kaufmann to work with the library administration on making a list of needs, prioritizing it, and obtaining cost estimates. Ms. Downing will then help determine funding sources and bring it to the Trustees.

Ms. Kaufmann left the meeting at 4:30 PM.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Hess moved that the Secretary's Report of February 21, 2019 be accepted and placed on file with a few minor corrections. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Buckhout presented the Treasurer's Report of February 28, 2019. The General Aid Fund had positive net activity for the month of \$2,208 and a cumulative balance of \$79,386. The Book & Media Fund closed with negative net activity of \$731, and a cumulative balance of \$14,658. The Civic Hub Grant fund had negative net activity of \$838 and now has a balance of \$5,325. The Community Webs Fund had negative net activity of \$627 and a balance of \$1,171. The Externally Financed Transaction Fund had positive net activity of \$1,687 and has a balance of \$491. The Garvey Book & Media Fund had positive net activity of \$1,040 and a balance of \$6,206. The Macomber Fund had positive net activity of \$145 and has a zero balance. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$7,187 and a balance of \$88,575. The Programming Fund-Children had negative net activity of \$516 and a balance of \$6,457.

Mr. Twarog moved that the Treasurer's Report of February 28, 2019 be accepted and placed on file. Ms. Hess seconded the motion which was passed unanimously.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

The following undesignated gifts were received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$504 from the Lucey Family Endowment Fund to the RCCR Fund; \$100 from Brian & Lindsey Wilby, Florence, MA to the Morin Fund; \$100 from Mark Sullivan, Northampton, MA to the Morin Fund; \$50 from Dan Levy, Northampton, MA to the Morin Fund; \$50 from Phyllis Flandreau, Northampton, MA to the Morin Fund; \$50 from L. Snowden & Gary Lane, Southamton, MA to the Adult Programming Fund; \$40 from Anonymous to the Morin Fund; \$25 from Nicole Sibley, Amherst, MA to the Morin Fund; \$25 from Charles Bobala, Easthampton, MA to the Morin Fund.

Mr. Carrier said that the Lucey Family gift is a recurring gift expected every February.

The following designated gift was received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$100 from Lucinda Worthington in memory of her aunt, Sheila A. Potter, to the Outreach Delivery Service Fund; \$31.70 from Cheri Buckhout, for mailings to the Aid Fund.

There were no receipts from sales/rents since the last Trustees' meeting.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the undesignated and designated gifts as proposed by Ms. Downing. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Auditor Search

Ms. Buckhout distributed a letter summarizing the auditor search process. Ms. Buckhout, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss, and Jennie Lamour met with two firms and agreed on a recommendation. While both firms are highly qualified and professional, the recommendation is for Downey, Pieciak, Fitzgerald & Co. because they submitted a more detailed proposal, will do comparables the first year provided they can get sufficient records from the current auditor, use software for automated data entry, and submitted a lower cost estimate.

Ms. Reall made a motion to engage Downey, Pieciak, Fitzgerald & Co., P.C. of Springfield as auditors, and to prepare the library's tax return. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Mr. Carrier thanked and commended Ms. Buckhout on how thorough and professional the search process was. Ms. Buckhout will invite Bartholomew Inc. to the April Trustees' meeting on April 25 at 3:45 PM.

Ms. Buckhout left the meeting at 4:41 PM.

FY20 Budget

Ms. Downing reported that the FY20 personnel and operating budgets have been prepared. The city has increased Forbes' appropriation by 3% or \$39,341 bringing the total appropriation to \$1,350,722 and additional non-city funding of \$247,072 bringing the total budget to \$1,597,794. This budget continues to address the minimum wage increase and staffing to support increased hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The minimum wage will increase to \$13.75 and eventually to \$15 in a few years. Ms. Downing said that it is a very tight operating budget and she is concerned that the library is not yet seeing any electricity savings as a result of the HVAC project. The city has announced the water and sewer rate increases and Ms. Downing has taken them into account. In some cases, the library has multi-year contracts so she can

FY20 Budget (continued)

work with accurate figures. The cost for the auditor is going from \$4,500 to \$8,000, which is a significant increase.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the FY20 budget as presented by Ms. Downing. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Downing reported on the March meeting of the Friends of Forbes. They are currently planning for the garden tour in June and the wine tasting in September. Jo Ellen Mackenzie has stepped forward to be the next president of the Friends and will be voted in at the annual meeting in April. The membership committee is planning a postcard mailing to new library card holders, followed by one to new community members. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Moss said that the Friends have approved all the recurring requests and will distribute the funds according to schedule.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that Senator Comerford's Legislative Breakfast was held at Jones Library on Friday morning. Unfortunately, Lindsay Sabadosa could not attend, but she sent an aide in her place. Senator Comerford has confirmed a tour of Forbes followed by a meet and greet with the board at 12:30 on Friday, April 19. Ms. Hess will work with Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss on list of discussion topics for the meeting.

The library has a new online store to sell merchandise that is available both in the library as well as custom printed items through a third party vendor. Ben Kalish took the lead on the project as part of Forbes 125th anniversary activities to increase the functionality and ideally the sales of items. The library store is available at forbeslibrary.org/store.

The Friends have a raffle going now at the main desk and online. Anyone who submits their name and email address has a chance to win one of 3 downtown Northampton gift cards. The Friends have also set their annual wine tasting fundraiser for Friday, September 27th.

Three Trustees are up for re-election this fall. Election papers will be available from the city clerk's office beginning on April 2 and will be due back by August 2. Trustees should let Mr. Carrier know if they do not plan on running for re-election.

The volunteer form for the library is now available online. It is hoped this will make application easier for potential volunteers, as well as streamline the process for matching them up with library departments and projects.

Heather Diaz and Dylan Gaffney applied for a 2 year IMLS Accelerating Promising Practices for Small and Rural Libraries program to develop the *Moving Memories Lab* for \$45,000. This grant is targeting the preservation of local history with publicly accessible equipment for recording and digitizing images, film, etc. Equipment would be purchased to record and digitize a range of media and also be circulated for pop-up residencies at partner organizations. Awards will be announced in June. If funded, the grant would begin in September 2019.

The Trustees Award program will take place on Wednesday, April 3 with an illustrated talk by Archivist Julie Nelson. An invitation was distributed to the Trustees.

Administrative Report (continued)

Forbes held an end of winter staff party at Packard's earlier this month that included access to pool tables and a buffet of hot and cold food. This was in lieu of a holiday party and was greatly enjoyed by the staff that were able to participate.

Callie Sieh joined the Borrower Services team as a part time Assistant this month. She is familiar to the library through her work study and IPT service in several roles including the Children's & Young Adult department and for her work on the grant funded Baystate Hotel Music History Archive. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss are delighted to have her in this expanded role at the library.

Jill Emmons was promoted to Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Specialist, a position that will now become part of the Information Services team. Ms. Emmons has worked at the library since 2014 in a variety of roles including as an assistant in ILL for the past 3 years. She will train under Liz Maguire before her retirement later this year.

Mr. Twarog moved that the Administrative Report be accepted and placed on file. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the Trustees is scheduled for Thursday, April 25 at 3:45 PM and Ms. Buckhout will invite Bartholomew Inc. to attend. The following meetings for the rest of the year were previously scheduled: Thursday, May 23; Thursday, June 20; Thursday, July 25; Thursday, September 19; Thursday, October 24; Tuesday, November 19; and Thursday, December 19.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held Wednesday, April 3 at 5:30 PM followed by the Friends' Annual Meeting and Trustees Award at 6:30 PM. Ms. Hess will attend the business meeting on behalf of the Trustees.

The Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum (CCPLM) Standing Committee is meeting at 4:00 PM on Monday, April 1, 2019. Mr. Carrier and Ms. Wight will attend on behalf of the Trustees.

Communications

There were no communications this month.

Sustainability Letter to the Editor

Ms. Downing reported that based on a suggestion from Mr. Carrier, a draft letter to the editor was created to highlight strides the library has been making to improve sustainability. The Trustees reviewed and discussed the letter.

"The Trustees of Forbes Library have recently divested their investments from companies involved in extracting fossil fuels. This move was made in an attempt to reduce climate change by tackling its ultimate causes. This move is in line with the City of Northampton's investment parameters and a handful of other municipalities across the state. Other sustainability improvement efforts undertaken by the library include converting much of our lighting to LED and the installation of a more energy efficient heating and cooling solution for the library's special collections, both in partnership with the city. Libraries buy books that are shared by many readers and provide public spaces that serve as co-working and meeting spaces for thousands each year. As we prepare to celebrate Earth Day, include a visit to Forbes or another of our area's wonderful libraries to enjoy a public institution that has sustainability built into its mission."

Sustainability Letter to the Editor (continued)

Ms. Reall made a motion to submit the letter to the Daily Hampshire Gazette signed by Ms. Downing and Mr. Carrier on behalf of the Trustees. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Library Giving Day

Ms. Downing reported that the Community Foundation of Western MA will not be supporting Valley Gives Day this year. The Library's Development Committee has been discussing ways to continue to offer an online day of giving in the spring as a complement to the fall annual fund drive. The group discovered a national project started by the Seattle Public Library called "Library Giving Day" set to take place this year on April 10. The Development Committee recommends that the library participate in Library Giving Day and allocate up to \$500 from the anticipated proceeds from the event for promotion. The net proceeds will go to the Programming funds.

Ms. Downing said that online giving has largely a different audience from the fall mailing. The committee will promote the event through postcards, signage, a video, and bookmarks. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that the library made \$8,000 from last year's online day of giving. She doesn't expect that this event will fully make that, but the Friends have agreed to give \$6,500 in matching funds. The event may be extended beyond one day to try to make up as much of that as possible. Ms. Moss said there were at least four other libraries in Western Massachusetts participating in the "Library Giving Day."

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the director's recommendation to participate in the online "Library Giving Day" on April 10 and to allocate up to \$500 from the proceeds for expenses. Ms. Reall seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Coolidge Standing Committee Recommendations

Ms. Downing reported that the Coolidge Standing Committee recommends participating in the Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations (StEPs) from the American Association for State and Local History. This would provide the framework for a self-study and could form the basis of a strategic plan for the museum.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve \$364 from the RCCR fund for the StEPs program. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

The Standing Committee recommended that the board chair appoint emeritus status to Brian Tabor in recognition of his many years of service on the former advisory board and Mr. Carrier made the appointment.

Director's Evaluation

Ms. Hess reported that each Trustee submitted their individual evaluations to her and she compiled them into an evaluation of the director's first two years, which was then presented to Ms. Downing. Ms. Hess highlighted the most important accomplishments including using the budget creatively to expand library hours and increasing community engagement. She compiled all the comments and summarized the ratings. She said the Trustees should discuss whether or not to continue using the same form for the director's next performance evaluation in January 2021. Ms. Reall said that Ms. Hess did an excellent job compiling and summarizing the results, and the Trustees thanked her for her efforts. Mr. Carrier said that he has worked closely with Ms.

Director's Evaluation (continued)

Downing over the past few years and said the Trustees, staff, and community are lucky to have her.

Ms. Reall made a motion to approve the summary evaluation and place it on file. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. The Trustees and Ms. Downing signed it.

Ms. Downing thanked everyone for going through the process and especially Ms. Hess for compiling the results. She appreciates the Trustees support and encouragement and will continue to grow and improve.

Window Restoration Update

Ms. Downing reported that the window project is going out to bid a third time under the following timeline: March 27: Advertisement, Central Register/COMMBUYS; March 27: Post bid--City website & Hamp Gazette; April 3: Walk Through, 10 AM, Forbes Library; April 16: Filed Sub-bids Due, Painting, 2 PM; April 23: General Bids due, 2 PM; April 30: Contract Award; May 15: Project Start; Sept 15: Project Completion. Ms. Downing is hopeful that two or more sides of the building can be completed this round. Mr. Carrier said the entire project will eventually be completed.

Special Collections HVAC Update

Ms. Downing reported that there does not seem to be much progress on solving the programming errors with the Special Collections HVAC system this month. The workaround continues to keep the rooms at temperature with additional electricity use. Ms. Downing said that Susan Wright will be asking the City Council to approve \$50,000 for the needed new pumps.

Charter Review Committee Update

Ms. Downing reported that she, Mr. Carrier, and Ms. Wight attended the hearing on March 19 and requested the removal of the line "Vacancies shall be filled in a like manner as a city clerk vacancy." from section 5-2 of the charter. The chair asked a couple of questions about our past practice including what our bylaws currently state. Mr. Carrier also informed the committee about the clarification that the agreement provided.

Expanded Library Hours

Ms. Downing reported that Forbes will be expanding Tuesday and Thursday open hours from 1:00 to 5:00 PM to 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM beginning on Tuesday, April 30. Additional open hours are the number one thing patrons have asked for in the last two strategic plans. These hours are being made possible through a concerted and multifaceted effort. Ms. Downing would like to commend the staff for their support and sacrifice to make these hours possible. It is anticipated that this will greatly improve access to the library and have a positive impact on attendance and circulation. Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to let staff know how much the Trustees appreciate their efforts to find ways to keep the library open more hours.

2014 Arson Fire Updates

Ms. Downing said that The Daily Hampshire Gazette reported that Eric Nathaniel Bertrand, who had earlier admitted starting the fire in the stairwell in July of 2014 that caused over \$200,000 in damages, was found not guilty by reason of mental illness and will remain committed to a secure mental health facility. A copy of the Gazette article was distributed to the Trustees.

Community Engagement

Ms. Moss reported that Forbes Library will be participating in the Northampton Education Foundation's popular spelling bee fundraiser again this year. Tex Teghtsoonian, Alene Moroni and Josh Vryson will be participating under the team name "Spellementary, my dear Watson". The Children's Department has been doing a lot of outreach to local schools. Ms. Moss distributed a list of recent and upcoming community engagement events.

Reports on subcommittee meetings/activities

Development Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that in addition to planning for Library Giving Day, they are continuing to work with consultant Julia Riseman on developing a fundraising plan for the library. At their next meeting they will work on prioritizing and deciding which fundraising to do.

Ms. Moss said that she met with building consultants last week to look at the Children's and Young Adult area and Mr. Carrier said that the building committee will be bringing recommendations to the Trustees.

Library Legislative Day - Ms. Downing reported that she was able to speak with both Senator Comerford and Representative Sabadosa at their State House offices earlier this month and hear a keynote address by Senator Lesser about the important role of libraries in our democracy. She said the main takeaway was that state funding has hit a crisis point and we need to convey the "urgency" to state legislators.

Other Business

Ms. Downing said that there is a meeting scheduled with FLEA for April 8 where they will present their recommended updates to their contract language. The changes are to clarify the language, and not to change the terms of the contract. Contract negotiations can begin after that date.

At 5:32 PM Ms. Hess moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Reall seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 PM.