

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, June 20, 2019

Present: Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Hess, Ms. Moss, Mr. Twarog, Ms. Reall, Ms. Sheirer, Ms. Wight. **Also Present:** Heather Cupo of Local Harmony; Peggy MacLeod of Western MA Pollinators Network; Maria Sperduti, Outreach Delivery services; Sarah Johnson, Children's & Young Adult Librarian; Chris Hannon, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA). **Absent:** Ms. Buckhout.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM in the Library Director's office.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Garden Design

Landscape designer Heather Cupo of Plant Euphoria presented designs for the two pollinator-friendly garden beds discussed at the Trustees' meeting last month. Ms. Cupo said that the edible garden designed by Jessica Tanner is doing well and only needs to be beefed up with more of the same kinds of plants, especially strawberries, and the soil improved to help them flourish. She then presented a plan for the small garden under the Japanese maple tree. She recommended moving the Siberian iris that are currently there to another location on the library property, and replacing them with four different types of plants: Yellow Crocus of two different varieties and bloom times, and which are early food for pollinators; Cliff Green, *Paxistima canbyii*, which is a fine-textured low evergreen that offers wintering shelter for pollinators; Butterfly weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*, which is an orange summer flowering perennial beloved by butterflies and other pollinators; and Heath Aster, *Symphiotrichum ericoides*, which has many small white flowers blooming in late summer/early autumn and attractive to butterflies.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the garden plan as presented by Ms. Cupo. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Ms. Downing said she will be in touch with Ms. Cupo on how to proceed.

Ms. Cupo and Ms. MacLeod left the meeting at 4:07 PM.

Outreach Delivery Service Department Report

Maria Sperduti, Outreach Delivery Service coordinator, presented the 2018 Outreach Delivery Service report. There are currently 36 volunteers (up from 29) serving 98 patrons (up from 86). Nearly 90% of the volunteers reported that their overall experience with the program was satisfying. Ms. Sperduti distributed a list of quotes from the volunteers about their experiences working with outreach patrons. She also distributed a list of 2019 goals including working with the library's Disability Advisory Board to expand presentations into assisted living communities; investigating the feasibility of offering an online version of the ODS Volunteer Guide; hosting the first roundtable discussion for Western Massachusetts outreach delivery service coordinators; providing volunteers with Forbes library tote bags, providing patrons with memory loss tote bags to store library materials; and doing one direct mail campaign to Northampton seniors.

Ms. Sperduti said that one goal is already done, providing memory loss patrons with brightly colored tote bags to help them store and find library

Outreach Delivery Service Department Report (continued)

materials. She showed the Trustees magnifiers to help patrons with visual disabilities and CD players for patrons to listen to music or audio books. A public service announcement was created by NCTV. Ms. Downing said the current iteration of the outreach service is three years old and is moving from the development phase into becoming a stable and established program. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Sperduti said she had not yet developed a budget, and that the funding has so far met the needs.

The Trustees thanked Ms. Sperduti for her outreach work and her report. Ms. Sperduti left the meeting at 4:13 PM.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Hess moved that the Secretary's Report of May 23, 2019, the executive session of May 23 and the Secretary's Report of the Special Meeting of June 12 and the executive session of June 12, 2019 be accepted and placed on file with a few minor corrections. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

The Trustees reviewed the Treasurer's Report of May 31, 2019. The General Aid Fund had negative net activity for the month of \$8,535 and an ending balance of \$38,188. The second payment of State Aid from the City is still expected. The surplus is due to \$5,443 of the remaining \$15,799 beginning balance, the under spending of payroll of \$14,850 and service contracts of \$8,217, all of which are being closely monitored. The Book & Media Fund closed with net negative activity of \$2,551 and a balance of \$20,895. During the month \$4,161 in donations were transferred to the Morin Fund. The surplus is largely a result of the beginning surplus balance of \$9,753. The Auxiliary Services Fund had negative net activity for the month of \$750 and a cumulative deficit of \$1,871. The Doland Fund had positive net activity of \$4,694 and now has a balance of \$11,061. The Externally Financed Transaction Fund had positive net activity for the month of \$903 and has a balance of \$455; a \$5,000 transfer to the endowment from the Garvey fund occurred in June. The Garvey Book & Media Fund had positive net activity of \$2,277 and a cumulative balance of \$5,171. The Lyman Special Collections Fund had positive net activity of \$2,453 and a balance of \$3,597. The MacFarlane Fund had positive net activity of \$813 and balance of \$813. The Macomber Fund had positive net activity of \$1,773 and a balance of \$1,773. The Morin Fund had positive net activity of \$6,594 and a balance of \$96,426. The Programming Fund - Adult had positive net activity of \$1,424 and a balance of \$8,262. The Programming Fund - Children had negative net activity of \$801 and a balance of \$8,378. The Staff Development Fund had positive net activity of \$542 and a balance of \$962. The Summer Learning Expanded Fund had negative net activity of \$600 and a balance of \$300. The Watson Copier Fund had positive net activity of \$1,211 and a balance of \$659.

Ms. Downing said that \$7,000 from the General Aid Fund from this fiscal year for roofing expenses will be deferred until September. She also said that the city has agreed to take over the elevator maintenance contract expense, which is about \$4,000. Ms. Moss said that the Book & Media Fund will come in close to what was budgeted for this year, but the surplus from last fiscal year remains. There was a change in accounting methods which resulted in some items appearing to be underspent, but it will be made up in other areas. Mr. Carrier said that the surplus should be returned to one of the book funds at the end of the fiscal year.

Treasurer's Report (continued)

Ms. Reall made a motion to transfer \$813 from the MacFarlane Fund and \$1,773 from the Macomber Fund to the Morin Fund to zero out the balances so the funds can be closed at the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

The following undesignated gifts were received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$200 from Mary Hall, South Hadley, MA to the Morin Fund; \$100 from Brian & Lindsey Wilby, Florence, MA to the Morin Fund; \$100 from Judith Abuza, Florence, MA to the Morin Fund; \$25 from Nicole Sibley, Amherst, MA to the Morin Fund; \$25 from Alexander George, Amherst, MA to the Lyman Special Collections Fund.

The following designated gift was received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$3,000 from the Friends of Forbes towards refurbishing the quiet study areas; \$2,000 from the Friends of Forbes towards replacing the outdoor book drops; \$40 from Arlene & James Carmichael and Heather Mahoney, Pelham, MA, "In Loving Memory - Mother, Nanny, Friend, Emily Rennet" to the Book & Media Budget for large print books; \$20 from Laura Bellusci, Northampton, MA to the Outreach Delivery Service Fund.

There were no receipts from sales/rents since the last Trustees' meeting. Ms. Downing said she has decided to list the donations from the Friends each month to be on record for the annual report. The \$5,000 donated by the Friends this month represents the remainder of the \$10,000 budgeted by the Friends for this calendar year. If something unexpected comes up, the Trustees could ask the Friends for additional funding. It is very helpful for the Friends planning process to allocate a budgeted amount each year.

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

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Reall attended the June 5 meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that their new bank and budgeting process are working well. They discussed mailing membership post cards and the garden tour which took place on June 8 with members stepping up to help out as needed. They had an overview of the outreach delivery service and the new adaptive devices for people with hearing and vision impairment, and approved \$5,000 in funding as previously reported by Ms. Downing.

Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to send a letter to Mark Aldrich letting him know how the funds donated in memory of his wife are being used to fund the adaptive technology.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that the 26th Northampton Garden Tour had a huge turnout on a gorgeous day. She and Ms. Moss were able to tour the gardens and meet many of the gardeners and volunteers whom they thanked for their efforts on behalf of the library.

The DPW worked on repairing the front patio and ramped sidewalk this month. They replaced several of the most severely damaged patio blocks and used a light-colored cement crack filler on the seams in the sidewalk. They plan to come back to do more work soon.

Administrative Report (continued)

The kick off to the all ages summer reading programs will take place on Saturday, June 29 with a "Blast-Off" party from 10-1. The 125th Anniversary Committee will have a presence as drawings and writing pieces are accepted for the time capsule. Participants will also be invited to take Polaroid selfies to include in the time capsule. There will be 125 cupcakes and the Trustees were encouraged to stop by.

Staff from the Children's & Young Adult Department will be attending all three of the Northampton Summer Meals sites in July to do library card and Summer Reading sign ups.

The staff will be celebrating Liz Maguire's retirement on Tuesday, June 25. Ms. Maguire has worked at the library on and off for decades and has served as Head of Inter-Library Loan since 2000. She will be missed for her friendly disposition and dedication although she has promised to consider coming back as a volunteer. The Trustees asked Ms. Downing to convey their thanks and appreciation for her years of service.

Lindsey Musielak has been hired for a benefited part-time Borrower Services Assistant position. Ms. Musielak started at Forbes as a Smith work study student in 2015 and has been a substitute in Information Services since that time. She has a degree in American Studies with a focus in Music & Popular Culture and we are delighted to have her expand her role at the library.

There was a 14.28% increase in circulation last month compared to a year ago. The adult collection circulated 22,267 items compared to 20,252 last May for a 9.95% increase. The Children's Collection circulated 7,969 items compared to 6,205 items last May for a 28.3% increase. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Moss said that the increase may be partially due to the fact that the internet last year was not working, but also attributable to the newly expanded hours and outreach efforts in the Children's Department.

Ms. Moss and Alene Moroni attended the Library Journal Day of Dialog and BookExpo in New York. Speakers at these events (authors, editors, and publishers) share what libraries and librarians have meant to them over the course of their lives, providing access to books and other resources, opening new worlds to them, and influencing their decisions to choose literary careers. Specifically, many spoke of the critical importance of libraries and librarians in their lives as children.

Ms. Janeczek attended the School Library Journal Day of Dialog, where much of the day's discussion centered on opportunity and potential. Speakers emphasized the importance of amplifying previously underrepresented voices in a variety of ways. Author Ibi Zoboi spoke about the research she's currently doing on Octavia Butler. If you read Butler's childhood journals, it's clear that she was not just a talented writer; she was also a scientific genius. But no one was reading her work. No one was looking through a lens that would allow them to say, as she put it, "this child is remarkable." Every day, youth services librarians strive to treat every child as remarkable and full of potential, no matter who they are, and what their circumstances might be.

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

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the Trustees is scheduled for Thursday, July 25 at 4:00 PM. The following meetings for the rest of the year were previously scheduled: 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, September 4 at 6:30 PM. Mr. Twarog will attend on behalf of the Trustees.

Communications

Ms. Moss received a letter dated June 7, 2019 from Barbara Wurtzel expressing appreciation for Forbes' facilitation of a weekly writing group in the Watson Room.

Ms. Downing received an email on June 11, 2019 from Ann McNeal, expressing appreciation for the opportunity to exhibit her artwork in the Hosmer Gallery.

FY20 Book & Media Budget

Ms. Moss reported that the state mandated Materials Expenditure Requirement for FY20 is a number equivalent to 12% (with MBLC waiver) of the operating budget or \$162,087. She said that due to recent changes, 10% of the budget can now be spent on public technology, and last year \$16,000 was spent to replace the computers in the reference room. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Moss said that funding for streaming media has increased a little while it has gone down a bit for CDs and DVDs, trends she expects to continue.

She distributed the proposed FY20 Book & Media Budget Expenditures and two proposals for the Income. The first proposal has a draw from the book funds of 3%. The second has a draw from the book funds of 3.1%, eliminates fines for children and young adults (currently $\frac{1}{3}$ of fines income), and increases gifts by ~\$2000. A portion of the proceeds from Library Giving Day (April 10, 2020) can be dedicated to the Book & Media budget as needed. Option 1 calls for drawing \$14,000 from the Garvey Book & Media Fund, while Option 2 draws \$15,000. The library is currently collecting about \$20,000 per year from the parking meters which goes into the Garvey Book & Media Fund. Ms. Moss reported that CWMARS voted to implement automatic renewals on July 1, which will also reduce fine revenue. If renewals on items are available, they will happen automatically with the patron being notified of the new due date, reducing the number of overdue notices and fines. Option 1 allots \$18,000 for fine revenue, while option 2 allots \$12,000, due to the elimination of fine revenue from children and young adults. Ms. Moss showed that fine revenue has already been on a downward trend, being 50% less than 2017 and likely to go down another 25-30% with the implementation of auto-renewals.

Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Moss if she was philosophically in favor of removing all fines and fees. Ms. Moss said there was a difference between fines and fees. She said card replacement costs could be eliminated except for chronic offenders. She said that fees for lost books should be kept, along with accounts being blocked from further borrowing, to encourage people to bring their items back.

Children's & Young Adult Librarian Sarah Johnson spoke impassionedly of her first-hand experience with the effect of fines on children and young adults. She spoke of her own experiences growing up with limited resources and the library being an equalizing place where money didn't matter. She said it is a

FY20 Book & Media Budget (continued)

tragedy now when children are blocked from checking out books due to unpaid overdue fines, which are mostly beyond their control or ability to pay. A \$5 fine which for many people would be an inconvenience can be a burden for someone on a very limited income. Being blocked from borrowing creates additional hardship at a time when access is most needed. She said that fines can accrue quickly for children who often check out ten books at a time. Once blocked from borrowing, they often don't return. Ms. Johnson also spoke passionately of the documented positive effects of reading on children's lives and development. The Trustees thanked Ms. Johnson for her presentation.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Johnson said that if the book is not returned, the account is charged a replacement fee based on the cost of the book. The maximum late fee that can accrue for books that are returned is \$2.40. If a person asks, Ms. Johnson can refer to Ms. Downing and she will try to work out something with them. Ms. Downing said that the purpose of fines is to encourage the return of materials, but often it has the opposite effect. Once the fine has accrued, the patron never returns. She said that eliminating fines results in more materials being eventually returned, even if late. Ms. Hess said that she'd been unaware until now that accounts were being blocked because of overdue fines. She said it was inconsistent that the purpose of the fines was to encourage people to follow the rules and return materials on time, yet the library depended on people not returning items on time by incorporating the fine revenue into the budget. She said the policy decision should be considered separately from the revenue issue, and if it is something we believe in we can find a way to make up the budget shortfall. In response to a question from Mr. Twarog, Ms. Johnson said that patrons are informed by email or mail when their accounts are blocked, but sometimes it results in awkward interactions at the service desk when children attempt to check out books and are informed that their accounts are blocked. It can cause feelings of shame resulting in the child never returning. Ms. Johnson said that the change to auto-renewal will help, but not completely eliminate the problem. She said that announcing that Forbes is doing away with fines for children and young adults will have a positive impact in the community.

Ms. Reall said that the Mayor is against the elimination of fines, due to revenue concerns, and that part of the purpose of the fines is to teach responsibility and accountability. Mr. Carrier also expressed concern for how this change would be received by the city. Ms. Downing said that relying on an unstable source of income such as fines creates structural instability in the book budget. Mr. Carrier noted that relying on gifts or fundraising is also an unstable source of income. Ms. Downing said that she and the staff are committed to making this work and will do whatever fundraising is needed to make up the difference. Ms. Moss said that 36.7% of the libraries in CWMARS have eliminated fines including Springfield and Hadley, and Jones Library in Amherst will also be considering it soon. Ms. Johnson said that the American Library Association passed a resolution encouraging the elimination of fines and that Forbes should be among the first wave of libraries to adopt the policy. Ms. Hess and Ms. Wight said that the conversation with the mayor about fines was very informal and no specific proposal was presented. The library would not be seeking additional funding from the city to make up the difference but would seek alternate funding sources on their own. Mr. Carrier added that it was the Trustees' decision to make.

Ms. Reall suggested postponing the vote and waiting to see what other local libraries do and how the auto-renewals affect fine income before making a decision. She said she would feel more comfortable with the decision if other

FY20 Book & Media Budget (continued)

libraries also made the change. Mr. Carrier said that he also comes from a disadvantaged background, but eliminating the repercussions of not returning books on time can send the wrong message to children. He said the library budget was not based on social equity but on the departmental needs to be met. Ms. Hess said that while teaching children responsibility is important, the mission of the library is to encourage curiosity, free inquiry, and lifelong learning and provide a friendly physical environment as a community meeting place, all of which are consistent with the elimination of fines. Ms. Downing added that children up to the age of ten must be accompanied by an adult and rely on their parents for transportation, and it is unfair to hold them responsible for the actions of their parents.

Ms. Hess moved to approve option 2 of the FY20 Book & Media Budget as proposed by Ms. Moss with the elimination of fines for children and young adults, a draw from the book funds of 3.1%, and an increase in gift revenue of approximately \$2,000. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed with Ms. Hess, Mr. Twarog and Ms. Wight voting in favor and Ms. Reall and Mr. Carrier voting against.

Ms. Johnson left the meeting at 5:15 PM.

Mr. Twarog suggested that Ms. Wight work on a press release with Ms. Moss.

NETA Community Impact Fees

Ms. Wight asked the Trustees to form a committee to explore whether there are any ways the Community Impact Fees being paid by NETA to the city could be used at the library. The funds can only be used for specific purposes.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to form a committee to explore if the Community Impact Fees being paid by NETA can be used at the library. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Ms. Wight, Ms. Downing, and Ms. Moss will be on the committee.

Window Restoration Project Sign

Ms. Downing reported that Jones Whitsett Architects have designed a window restoration project sign that includes acknowledgement for the project investors. The sign would be 5 feet by 5 feet on vinyl and cost about \$150. The Trustees discussed the design of the sign and agree that the library should not pay for a sign that advertises the architect and builder.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve a 5 foot by 5 foot vinyl sign for \$150 to be paid from the printing budget thanking the mayor, city council, and Community Preservation Act (CPA) for funding and making the project possible. Ms. Reall made a motion for a friendly amendment that the architect and builder be asked if they would like to share in the cost of the sign and have their names added to it. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Non-FLEA Contracts

Ms. Downing reported that she, Ms. Moss, and Jennie Lamour have individual contracts with the board that do not specify the amount of vacation time that can be rolled over at the end of the year. The contracts state that benefits of employment shall be at least equal to, but may be greater than, the common benefits allowed by the Forbes Library Employees Association contract. The FLEA contract language regarding vacation states, "An employee may not begin the leave year with a balance in excess of twenty-five (25) vacation days. A

Non-FLEA Contracts (continued)

member of the bargaining unit who leaves the employ of Forbes Library shall be paid for whatever leave balance exists as of the date of termination; no employee may be paid for more than twenty-five (25) vacation days of leave."

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said there is no cap on sick leave accrual for FLEA members, and they are paid a portion of their accrued sick leave when they retire. Three employees are grandfathered in at a higher amount, but the remaining employees are capped at \$5,500. Ms. Downing said the three non-FLEA employees are covered at an equal or common rate as the FLEA employees. Mr. Carrier suggested the board consider clarifying the language in the non-FLEA contracts for vacation time and sick leave accrual and payout when those contracts come due. Ms. Moss's contract comes due in February 2020 and Ms. Downing's in July 2020. Ms. Lamour is on a rolling contract. The negotiation committee will take this up later in the summer and look at all three contracts.

Window Restoration Update

Ms. Downing reported that the first 20 windows have been removed from the second floor for restoration. Existing interior storms were able to be used to secure the openings in all but the half moon windows. The project has gone very smoothly so far. Window Masters plans to have sample window sashes complete for review next week. Mr. Petcen said a sample window will be ready on Monday and showed the Trustees sample colors designed to match the existing windows.

Special Collections HVAC Update

Ms. Downing reported that pumps were ordered in mid-May and are anticipated to be installed in late July or early August. In the meantime, the house system continues to be used to maintain proper cooling which means that more energy is being used than would be otherwise.

City Charter Commission

Ms. Downing reported that the City Charter Commission approved the following wording which is the wording approved by the Trustees at the May meeting with a few minor non-substantive changes:

Whenever a vacancy occurs on the board of trustees under the will of Charles E. Forbes, the president of the board shall declare a vacancy and, within 30 days following the date of the vacancy, call a meeting of the trustees to fill the vacancy. The board of trustees shall choose a person to fill the vacancy from among the voters entitled to vote for the office. Persons appointed by the trustees to fill a vacancy shall serve only until the next regular city election, when the office shall be filled by the voters. The candidate elected to an office filled by appointment prior to the election shall be sworn to the office immediately, and shall serve for the unexpired term of the seat to which such candidate was elected. If the seat to which the candidate was elected would have been on the ballot for the next regular city election notwithstanding the vacancy, such candidate shall be elected for a full four-year term. No vacancy shall be filled under this section if a regular city election is to be held within 120 days following the date the vacancy is declared to exist. Persons appointed by the trustees to fill a vacancy under this section shall not be entitled to have the words "candidate for reelection" printed with that person's name on the election ballot.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the revised wording. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Community Engagement

Ms. Moss reported that some of the library's outreach events to the schools have been cancelled due to the work-to-rule of the teachers' union. Ms. Moss distributed a list of recent and upcoming community engagement events.

Reports on subcommittee meetings/activities

Grasstop Library Advocacy - Ms. Downing reported that she and Ms. Moss watched a webinar sponsored by "United for Libraries" which is a division of ALA titled, "Local, State, and National Library Advocacy: A Grasstop Approach." "Grasstop" refers to people who have connections with decision makers who should be kept well informed and engaged year-round.

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Downing reported that the committee has begun working on a workbook based assessment program called "StEPs" (Standards and Excellence Program) from the American Association for State and Local History. The committee is discussing a field trip up to Vermont to visit the homestead in Plymouth Notch.

Development Committee - Ms. Downing reported that the committee went through a workbook activity to further develop their thoughts around starting a legacy circle for bequest intentions. They are also working on developing an abbreviated version of the annual report that could be useful in working with current and future donors.

At 5:35 PM Mr. Twarog moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 PM.