

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, October 24, 2019

Present: Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Hess, Ms. Moss, Mr. Twarog, Ms. Reall, Ms. Sheirer, Katy Wight. **Also Present:** Mr. Brian Jamros and Mr. Joshua Paul, representatives of Bartholomew Inc.; Serena Smith, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Mr. Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA); Leslie Skantz-Hodgson, candidate for Trustee.
Absent: Ms. Buckhout.

The meeting was called to order at 3:45 PM in the Library Director's office.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Endowment Report

Mr. Jamros and Mr. Paul thanked the Trustees for inviting them to the meeting. Mr. Jamros distributed copies of the Forbes Portfolio Review as of September 30, 2019. The value of the portfolio as of September 30 was \$5,194,699.24. Mr. Paul presented the portfolio noting that the current asset allocation is 60% stocks and 40% fixed income (bonds and cash). The portfolio has grown 13.13% year to date and 7.27% since inception. In comparison, a 60/40 equity/bonds portfolio has grown 13.04% year-to-date. Historically stocks have earned 8-10% a year, and have had several good years of greater than average returns. Mr. Paul said that the portfolio has performed well enough to grow by \$1 million after fees and withdrawals. Mr. Paul said inevitably good years are balanced out by downturns in the market and it is time for the Trustees to consider reducing the risk in the portfolio through reallocation.

In response to an earlier question from the Trustees about how their decision to implement an Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) portfolio, divesting of fossil fuels, has affected the value of the portfolio, Mr. Paul said that the stocks in the Forbes portfolio are up 22.37% this year, while a standard 60/40 portfolio without limitations is up 19%, and an ESG model benchmark is up 23.55%. Most standard models have a lighter than normal weighting on value stocks that haven't performed as well, and haven't had as good a year as growth stocks, so in this instance Forbes is out-performing the standard portfolio, although this is not always going to be the case. Mr. Paul said that overall the change to an ESG portfolio has not hurt the value of the Forbes portfolio.

In response to a question from Ms. Reall, Mr. Paul said that historically the third year of a president's term is strong, and election years are typically not as good, although there are a lot of other variables. In response to a question from the Trustees, Mr. Paul explained that negative interest rates usually come into play when economies aren't doing well and are designed to make it easier to loan money to stimulate the economy. Interest rates in the United States are currently about 1.5-1.8%. If they go into negative territory, Mr. Paul will come back and advise the Trustees on how to reallocate the portfolio. In response to questions from the Trustees about including CDs in the portfolio, Mr. Paul said he would check to confirm that they are an option in the Trustees' current investment policy. Mr. Paul said the current withdrawal rate of 2.5% to 4% is reasonable.

The Trustees then discussed whether to change the asset allocation to a more conservative 50/50 mix of stocks and bonds. Mr. Paul recommended making the change now, coming off of several years of over-performing markets. The

Endowment Report (continued)

change does not need to be forever and can be reversed at some point in the future. Mr. Jamros mentioned a new option in alternatives, Blackstone Real Estate Income Trust, which the city of Northampton incorporated into their portfolio as an alternative at 1.5%. He said that it can be difficult to identify alternatives that are ESG compliant. Earlier in the month, the bankers added gold as another alternative to smooth out volatility.

Ms. Hess made a motion to accept the recommendation of Mr. Paul and transition to a 50/50 stocks/equity portfolio. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

The Trustees will consider the recommendation for the Blackstone investment and discuss it at the December Trustees meeting. The auditors are coming to the November Trustees meeting.

Mr. Jamros and Mr. Paul left the meeting at 4:45 PM.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Wight moved that the Secretary's Report of September 19, 2019 be accepted and placed on file with a minor correction. Ms. Reall seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Downing distributed the Treasurer's Report for the period ending September 30, 2019 prepared by Ms. Buckhout. The beginning balances in the General Aid Fund, Book & Media Fund and Cutter Fund were adjusted due to items addressed in the audit. Once the audit is complete, a final report will be provided to the Trustees to review. The General Aid Fund had negative net activity for the month of \$2,082 and ended with a balance of \$6,087. Labor and repairs is overspent year to date due to mechanical repairs. The Book & Media Fund had negative net activity of \$1,674 and a deficit of \$14,309. The Civic Hub Grant had negative net activity of \$1,700 and now has a zero balance. The Doland Fund had negative net activity of \$4,653 and has a balance of \$2,107. The Externally Financed Transaction Fund had positive net activity of \$386 and has a balance of \$327. The H. Clifton Kellogg II Memorial Fund had positive net activity of \$825 and a balance of \$825. The Halberstadt Technology Fund had negative net activity of \$1,173 and a deficit of \$3,492 that does not reflect the \$10,733.06 transfer that was made in October. The Lyman Special Collections Fund had positive net activity of \$1,674 and a balance of \$3,393. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$1,688 and a balance of \$99,584. The Programing Fund-Adult had positive net activity of \$1,305 and balance of \$9,965. The Staff Development Fund had positive net activity of \$1,046 and a balance of \$969. The Watson Copier Fund had negative net activity of \$1,410 and balance of \$314.

Ms. Hess made a motion to transfer the \$825 from the H. Clifton Kellogg Fund to the endowment. Ms. Reall seconded the motion which was passed unanimously. Ms. Downing said there will be more money coming into this fund which can also be transferred at a later date.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report of September 30, 2019 and place it on file. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

The following undesignated gifts were received since the last Trustees'

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc. (continued)

meeting. The Trustees were asked to approve that they be deposited as requested: \$500 from the Todd K. Thompson, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$500 from the Harris and Eliza Kempner Fund, Galveston, Texas as a matching gift to Mr. Thompson's to the Book & Media Fund; \$228.57 from the estate of Rose A. Markham to the Book & Media Fund; \$125 from Elise Bernier-Feeley, Southampton, MA to the Lyman Special Collections Fund in honor of Russell Carrier's anniversary as Forbes Trustee, Chair; \$100 from Mark Aldrich, Hatfield, MA to the Aldrich Fund; \$100 from John Frey, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$100 from Anonymous, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$55 from Nicole Sibley, Amherst, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$50 from Maureen Cain in memory of Mary Ann to the Book & Media Fund; \$50 from Christine Ridout, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$50 from Charles L. Robertson & Denise Rochat, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$50 from John M. Corbett, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$50 from Anonymous, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$50 from Larry Hunt, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$50 from Peter Stradinski, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$36 from Beth Notar & Joshua Roth, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$25 from Breanna Lynch, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$25 from Alexander George, Amherst, MA to the Lyman Special Collections Fund; \$25 from Cathi Hanauer, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund; \$25 from Ann Scagel, Northampton, MA to the Book & Media Fund.

The following designated gift was received since the last Trustees' meeting. The Trustees were asked to approve that it be deposited as requested: \$50 from Robert & Bunny Mogilnicki, Rochester, MA to the H. Clifton Kellogg II Mem. Fund in memory of Norma Kellogg; \$50 from Karen Leigh Hoffman & Stephen R. Moyer to the H. Clifton Kellogg II Mem. Fund in memory of Norma Kellogg; \$50 from Osa Flory and the members of "Fortnightly" to the H. Clifton Kellogg II Mem. Fund in memory of Norma Kellogg.

There were no donations or receipts from sales/rents this month.

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

Financial Report - 1st Quarter Report

Ms. Downing distributed the First Quarter Report for the period July 1-September 30, 2019, showing budgets amounts and actual spending to date. She said that donations from the annual appeal are coming in including a large donation from Dr. Hershkowitz. She said the budget is tight, and labor and repairs is already overspent early in the fiscal year, but otherwise there are no surprises. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that she did not budget for electricity savings as a result of the new HVAC system, and that it is not looking as though there will be any.

Annual Statistical Summary - ARIS Report

Ms. Moss presented a summary of the 2019 ARIS Report for fiscal year 2019. There were several staffing changes and Forbes continues to rely on Smith College work study students. Open hours increased by an additional 8 hours/week on April 29, 2019, but this was not a long enough period to be counted in the FY19 ARIS statistics. Those additional hours, plus the summer Saturdays that were added back in 2018 is an increase of 12%, up to 56 hours/week. The collection size increased slightly by 1.4% after a 3.1% decrease last year. Electronic collections usage saw a dramatic decrease

Annual Statistical Summary - ARIS Report (continued)

(35%), but there was a large increase (22%) in the use of downloadable video. The DVD circulation remained very steady. The total circulation increased by 5.4% to over 400,000, with print circulation increasing by 8.9%. Interlibrary Loan has again increased this year, with a 9% increase in materials received and a 9.5% increase in materials loaned to other libraries. Attendance in the library increased slightly 0.5% to 223,131. The meeting rooms were used 1,923 times last year by various groups and organizations, remaining fairly steady from the previous year. Adult programming attendance was up 12.5% this year to 14,364 after a 30% increase last year. This increase was anticipated with all of the 125th Anniversary and Civic Hub grant activities. Children's and teen programming also continues to increase, by 3.3% over the previous year. Reference transactions increased slightly by 2.5%. Forbes continues to have very busy reference services compared to area and comparable libraries. Registered borrowers increased by 7.5% or 1,152 to 16,528. This is 64% of the population assigned to Forbes by MBLC. Wireless sessions increased this year by 90%, to 29,412, due to the improved wireless internet infrastructure, and more accurate statistics. Public computer usage increased slightly by 5.8% with 548 people using Forbes computers each week. The website had 182,719 hits, a number first reported this year.

Friends of Forbes

None of the Trustees were able to attend the Friends of Forbes meeting on October 2, 2019, so there was no report.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that on September 18, ten local authors read at the *Writing in Common* event to celebrate Forbes' 125th Anniversary. Mike Curato read a Little Elliot story at the absolutely jam-packed event in the Coolidge Museum. The event was cohosted by the Straw Dogs Writers Guild and Writer-in-Residence, Art Middleton.

The annual appeal mailing arrived mid-month and donations have already begun to come in. This mailing included an annual report summary for the first time. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss extended special thanks to Nicole Sibley and Katy Wight for their work on both the appeal letter and the logistics of the mailing, which has received positive feedback.

Forbes was awarded a Yiddish Book Center "Coming to America" grant for 2020 for a Reading Groups for Public Libraries program, featuring a reading and discussion program to engage teens and adults in thinking about immigrants' experiences encountering America. Faith Kaufmann wrote the grant and Forbes will receive books, training and support to host four discussions next year.

Senator Comerford has announced her 2019-2020 Library Tour where she will be holding open forums at every library in her district. She is coming to Forbes on March 14, 2020 at 2:00 PM.

The Friends wine tasting was a wonderful success. Their board is appreciative of the Trustees support for what has become an annual tradition and major fundraiser for the library. They raised \$5,450 from sponsors for the event in addition to ticket sales, raffle and silent auction for a total gross income over \$13,000.

There is an embargo by MacMillan publishers that will limit all of CW MARS to purchase a single copy of each new e-book title for the first eight weeks after a book's release. This embargo will create longer queues for patrons.

Administrative Report (continued)

The 16th Hot Chocolate Run, a fundraiser for Safe Passage, will be held on Sunday, December 8, 2019, and Forbes Library has a team. Trustees can join the team (and do the 3k walk, a 5k fun run, or the 5k race) or donate at <https://hotchocolaterun.greatfeats.com/team/forbes-library>

Forbes had a visit from the Montessori school's 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students. Sarah Johnson and Kat Janeczek gave them a tour of the department and an overview of how to do research at the library that was well received. A copy of the research handout was distributed to the Trustees.

Janet Gross has shared her essay about the "Forbes-Smith Controversy of 1905" and it was distributed to the Trustees. It is very well researched and sheds light on the early years of Forbes relationship with Smith College.

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 Tuesday, November 19 at 3:45 PM. The following meeting was previously scheduled: Thursday, December 19.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held Tuesday, November 5 at 6:30 PM. Ms. Reall will attend on behalf of the Trustees.

Communications

There were no communications this month.

Trustee Election

Ms. Hess reported that the library Trustee candidates have not been invited to participate in a debate. Ms. Downing reached out to the Gazette and they indicated that they would print candidate statements but nothing had been arranged yet. This happened four years ago and at that time the board sent an editorial letter to the Gazette expressing disappointment and concern that Forbes Library Trustee candidates were excluded from the debate forums. The Trustees discussed whether to send a similar letter now.

Ms. Reall made a motion to send a letter to the Daily Hampshire Gazette and the head of the League of Women voters expressing disappointment and concern that Trustee candidates were not included in public forums. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. Ms. Downing will send the letter.

Special Collections Collection Policy

Ms. Moss reported that Julie Bartlett Nelson, Faith Kaufmann and other members of Information Services have drafted an updated policy which defines Forbes special collections and outlines parameters for adding and removing items. This policy has been amended since the Board reviewed it in July, with a definition of the collections included, clearer relationship to the Collection Development Policy, and a statement regarding the library's commitment to intellectual freedom. The trustees were asked to discuss and approve this policy. Ms. Hess said that her concerns about the earlier policy had been addressed.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the revised Special Collections Collection Policy. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Photography and Video Policy

Ms. Moss said that in light of an increasing number of 'First Amendment Audits' at public libraries around the country as well as at City of Northampton departments, the Leadership Team reviewed the current Photography and Video Policy, and have only minor changes to recommend. This review was done in consultation with the Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association and Attorneys Sandra and Eric Lucentini, who said that it is a "*content-neutral restriction reasonably tailored to the day-to-day needs of the Library.*" The policy continues to state that permission is needed to film, photograph or record staff, and includes a commitment to patron privacy.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the revised Photography and Video Policy. Ms. Reall seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Signature Solicitation Request

Ms. Downing asked Attorney Sandra Lucentini for an opinion about members of the public soliciting signatures on the property and received a response, which she shared with the Trustees. Massachusetts case law is clear that common spaces, even on private property must be open to the public for election-related purposes, such as gathering signatures. Assuming the signature collection is with the goal of getting the Voter Choice ranked choice voting system on the ballot, it falls with this law. Signature collection outside the Library would be permissible, subject to any reasonable and content-neutral time, place and manner restrictions. The policies and rules would need to be consistently enforced regardless of who is trying to collect signatures. In light of this, Ms. Downing recommends that Forbes modify item 6 in the Behavior Policy as follows:

Current: Canvassing, selling, soliciting or distributing materials is prohibited except when written permission to do so has been obtained in advance from the library director.

Proposed: Canvassing, selling, soliciting or distributing materials is prohibited except when written permission to do so has been obtained in advance from the library director with the exception of election-related signature gathering which is permissible on the grounds as long as it does not interfere with building access.

In response to a question from Ms. Hess, Ms. Downing said that the policy does not permit canvassers to disturb patrons inside the building, and that she asked Attorney Lucentini specifically about gathering signatures.

Ms. Reall made a motion to approve the revision to item 6 in the Behavior Policy as proposed by Ms. Downing. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Coolidge Museum Comment Response

At last month's meeting the Trustees heard a public comment from Mr. Dan Krauss about his concerns that the Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum (CCPLM) is at Forbes. A letter has been drafted and approved by the museum's Standing Committee. In the letter, the Trustees thank Mr. Krauss for his comments, then go on to summarize the recent changes to the management of the CCPLM and creation of a Standing Committee. A copy of the new mission and priorities will be included with the letter. The letter states that "We are aware that Coolidge is a controversial figure at certain periods and are committed to portraying a balanced viewpoint... we view his library and museum not as a place to glorify Coolidge but to provide an opportunity for people

Coolidge Museum Comment Response (continued)

to learn from his legacy." Mr. Krauss is invited to tour the museum and ask questions.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve and send the letter to Mr. Krauss about the Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Mr. Twarog asked that how the Trustees respond to public comments be added to the agenda for the November Trustees meeting. Ms. Downing will research how the school committee and other public organizations handle open public comment sessions.

Food Policy Complaint Response

At last month's meeting the Trustees received a comment from Ms. Estella Vallejo about eating and drinking in the library because of her and her son's allergy concerns. Ms. Downing consulted with the public health nurse and researched other libraries' policies. Because of the nature of the open public library, Forbes is unable to control what comes in on people's hands and personhood, nor what library materials are exposed to once they leave the library. Therefore, Forbes cannot create an environment that is safe from allergens.

Forbes Library is more generous than many other libraries in regard to where food and drink can be consumed. Eating and drinking has become part of the library's culture both at public events that frequently happen at the library and by visitors, including many students who appreciate the ability to snack while working, studying or relaxing. The library's role has expanded greatly to become a third space, not home, not workplace - an alternative to both and as a result there is a new culture at the library where eating and drinking are commonplace.

In light of what she has discovered, Ms. Downing proposed that in addition to restricting food from special collections areas, certain tables be designated as food free. Signs would be posted and those tables would be monitored to the best of staff's ability. If people are noticed eating there they will be asked to move to another table. The surface cleaning schedule has also been reviewed and the frequency increased with which tables, counters and doorknobs are wiped down. Staff will continue to request that patrons alert them if there is a spill or a situation that is causing concern and provide cleaning wipes upon request.

The Trustees were asked to approve revising the food policy portion of the Behavior Policy as stated below, approve designating some tables as food free and approve replying to Ms. Vallejo with an update on these actions.

Current: Covered beverages and neat food consumption are allowed in the library. No food or drink is allowed in the Coolidge Museum or in the Hampshire Room.

Proposed: Covered beverages and neat food consumption are allowed in the library. No food or drink is allowed in the Coolidge Museum, the Hampshire Room or at designated tables.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the designation of some tables as food-free, the revision to the Food Policy, and notification to Ms. Vallejo as proposed by Ms. Downing. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Coolidge Documentary Budget

Ms. Downing reported that the library is getting close to being able to begin filming for a short documentary about Coolidge that is being directed by Stan Sherer. In addition to resources in the collection, licensed content mostly from the Library of Congress is being used and she requested a budget of up to \$500 from the RCCR fund to cover costs. This recommendation has been approved by the Standing Committee.

Ms. Reall made a motion to approved spending \$500 from the RCCR Fund for licensed content from the Library of Congress for use in the documentary about Coolidge. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Hawley Desk Plaque

Based on feedback from last month, language for a proposed sign to hang near the Hawley desk on the second floor was revised as follows to include mention of the desk:

Desk of Major Joseph Hawley (1723-1788) upon which he wrote some of the most important documents of the Revolution. Joseph Hawley was an ardent patriot, staunch abolitionist, and fierce advocate of liberty. One of the foremost leaders of the American independence movement, he greatly inspired his fellow Revolutionaries.

A bronze plaque for \$500 was proposed, but the Trustees felt the cost was excessive and recommended that a less expensive approach be taken.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the wording for the sign. Ms. Reall seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Mr. Petcen left the meeting at 5:26 PM.

FY 2021 Action Plan

Ms. Downing distributed the action plan for FY 2021, which is due to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) by December 1. The action plan developed by the leadership team with input from staff represents the third year of Forbes' ambitious five-year plan and is intended to further achieve the goals set forth by the plan.

Ms. Reall made a motion to approve the FY2021 Action Plan. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Window Restoration Update

Ms. Downing reported that all but the basement windows and one on the main staircase has been removed and are expected to be reinstalled by the end of October. The basement windows are on order and will not arrive until mid-November. She has invited the Mayor along with members of the Historical Commission and the Community Preservation Committee on site to see the project on Thursday, November 7 at 1:00 PM and hear from the architect, Margo Jones. The Trustees were invited to attend.

Leslie Skantz-Hodgson left the meeting at 5:30 PM.

Special Collections HVAC Update

Ms. Downing reported that Jason Petcen and Ms. Moss have received training on the new system which represents one of the last requirements before the city closes out this project that began in January 2018.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Library Grounds Master Plan Request

Ms. Downing reported that she presented Forbes' request for \$20,000 in Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to be used alongside a \$5,000 grant from the Friends to develop a grounds master plan. There is a meeting where public comment on proposals is encouraged to be held on Wednesday, November 6 at 7:00 PM.

Labor Relations Update

Ms. Downing reported that she and Ms. Moss met with two Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA) officers and decided to try to come to the table with what each side perceives as minor language updates to the contract. Once these have been reviewed they will come back to the board with a recommendation on how best to proceed.

Community Engagement

Ms. Moss reported that Mr. Carrier and Ms. Downing attended the annual Smith Community Breakfast that included presentations about their new landscape master plan and an update on the Neilson Library project. The President announced several large gifts to the community and invited participation in her colloquium series. A schedule for the series and their annual report to the community was distributed to the Trustees. Ms. Moss distributed a list of recent and upcoming community engagement events at Forbes.

Reports on subcommittee meetings/activities

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Downing reported that the first portion of the self-assessment program the committee is working on is nearly complete and the committee will now be focusing on collections. The programming subcommittee is discussing a presidential trivia night series for the winter months.

At 5:31 PM Mr. Twarog moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Reall seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:31 PM.