

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Tuesday, November 19, 2019

Present: Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Hess, Ms. Moss, Mr. Twarog, Ms. Reall, Ms. Sheirer, Ms. Wight. **Also Present:** Sarah Johnson, Children's & Young Adult librarian and representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA); Bill Breitbart, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library. **Absent:** Ms. Buckhout.

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM in the Library Director's office.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Hess moved that the Secretary's Report of October 24, 2019 be accepted and placed on file with a minor correction. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report for the period ending October 31, 2019 was distributed to the Trustees. The General Aid Fund had positive net activity for the month of \$2,171 and closed with a balance of \$8,258. Labor and Repairs is overspent year to date by \$9,390 due to \$7,000 for slate roofing and \$2,469 for mechanical expenses. Personnel expenses are overspent by \$1,333, which is expected due to the seasonal fluctuation of part time employees. The Book & Media Fund closed with positive net activity of \$19,177 and has a balance of \$4,808. The annual distribution from the Doland Fund in the endowment occurred in October. Year to date, e-books are overspent by \$9,843 due to the annual payment the library pays to CW Mars, this year being \$14,508. Databases are overspent by \$6,085 due to the payments of annual subscriptions. The Doland Fund had positive net activity of \$2,406 and has a cumulative balance of \$4,513. In October a distribution from the endowment occurred for \$28,000; \$3,000 was disbursed to the Aid Fund, \$19,000 to the Book & Media Fund, and \$1,500 to the Staff Development Fund. The Halberstadt Technology Fund had positive net activity of \$10,303 and has a balance of \$6,812. A \$10,733 transfer from the endowment occurred in October. The Lyman Special Collections Fund had positive net activity of \$4,772 and a balance of \$8,164. A \$5,000 transfer from the endowment occurred in October. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$520 and has a balance of \$99,043. The Moving Memories IMLS Grant had positive net activity of \$161 and a deficit of \$269. The Staff Development Fund had positive net activity of \$887 and a balance of \$1,856. The Watson Copier Fund had negative net activity of \$277 and a deficit balance of \$591.

Ms. Downing said that she is closely watching the Labor & Repairs category in the General Aid Fund, which is already overspent early this fiscal year, with more expenses anticipated. Ms. Downing recommended that the balance in the Civil War Grant Fund be transferred to the Doland Fund, so it can be closed at the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to transfer \$139.24 from the Civil War Grant Fund to the Doland Fund, and that the Civil War Grant Fund be closed at the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report (continued)

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report of October 31, 2019 and place it on file. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Blackstone Real Estate Income Trust Pamphlet

Ms. Downing distributed information from Bartholomew Inc. about the Blackstone Real Estate Income Trust (BREIT) to consider as a possible investment option for the endowment. The Trustees will discuss this with the representatives from Bartholomew Inc., who will be invited to the January Trustees' meeting.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

Ms. Downing distributed a list of recent undesignated gifts including approximately \$6,300 raised from the library's annual fundraising campaign and a \$25,000 donation to the Morin Fund from the Melvin Hershkowitz Trust, in honor of Alene Moroni and Benjamin Kalish at the Reference Desk.

The following designated gift was received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$125 from Mary Harding, Florence, MA to the Doland Fund.

The following donation was received since the last Trustees' meeting. Thanks to Elise Bernier-Feeley, Richard Frary of Southampton has donated his collection of local ephemera including 300+ postcards, matchbook covers, advertisement cards, Grace Coolidge signed (franked) envelope and Hampshire Bookshop materials to Forbes Library in October. There are many unique and rare items from local businesses. Work-study students will re-house the collection this semester and the items will begin to be digitized.

There were no receipts from sales/rents this month.

Ms. Hess 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

There was no financial report this month.

Children's & Young Adult Department Report

Sarah Johnson, Children's & Young Adult Librarian, presented the report for the Children's & Young Adult Department. Last year, Ms. Johnson spoke about efforts to make spaces more user friendly by creating new signage, relocating items in the collection to make finding them more intuitive, and weeding old and underused items. Since adopting these changes, and expanding hours in April, there has been an increase in library use. Compared to FY18, circulation of children's and young adult materials increased 15% in FY19 and summer reading sign ups increased 9%. Forbes received a Summer Learning Expanded Grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) and thanks to this funding, a 4-part STEM program for children, Robo Adventures, was created. Last month, she applied for a Northampton Arts Council Grant to hire local children's book author and illustrator Jeff Mack to paint a mural in the basement bathroom highlighting the five early literacy practices: read, write, sing, talk, play. Two weeks ago she also applied for a 2020 Summer Learning Expanded Grant for \$2,000 to host performers as part of a "World Vices" series that would highlight the cultures, stories, and languages of people from around the globe. One of the most exciting developments for the department has been that the contacts that

Children's & Young Adult Department Report (continued)

have been building in the schools and community are now seeking Forbes out to collaborate, rather than Forbes needing to initiate contact. They have been working with kindergarten teachers at the Northampton Public Schools and created a booklist of 50 age-appropriate titles for their new social studies curriculum. As a result, second grade teachers have also reached out to Forbes. Last month, Montessori teachers asked Forbes to help teach their 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students how to conduct research. They also continue to build upon outreach efforts outside of the library in places and at events such as the Bridge Street School and Jackson Street School's Science Fairs, the Northampton Senior Center, the Week of the Young Child Festival, YMCA Healthy Kids Day, Northampton High School, Literacy Night at Leeds Elementary School, the Eric Carle Museum, and at the Summer Meals sites at the Florence Heights and Meadowbrook Apartments. Looking ahead, in February 2020, they will partner with Erika Frank, Northampton Public School's Early Childhood CFCE (Coordinated Family and Community Engagement) Coordinator to offer a story time celebrating grandparents. Ms. Johnson reported that Children's Librarian Kat Janeczek is leaving and will be greatly missed. The position has been advertised.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier about how the Trustees can help, Ms. Johnson said that the grant from the Northampton Arts Council would not cover the entire cost of the planned mural in the Children's Room bathroom, and she requested that the Trustees consider funding the remainder of the cost so it will not be taken away from other programming.

The Trustees thanked Ms. Johnson for her all her work and improvements to the Children's Department.

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Downing reported on the Friends of Forbes meeting of November 5. They discussed their membership mailing and reported back on their discussion with the endowment advisers. The Friends plan to meet with the Bartholomew Inc. representatives and mirror the Trustees investment decisions for their endowment. The finance committee is working on their budget for next year. Serena Smith announced that she will no longer chair the annual wine tasting event, and a new chair or co-chairs are being sought.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that the auditors have requested presenting at the December meeting instead of this month so the meeting start time was changed back to the usual 4 PM.

Mr. Carrier was very surprised to be recognized after last month's meeting on the occasion of becoming the longest serving trustee in the library's history. A Valley Forge Elm was planted in the back of property that will soon be accompanied by a recognition plaque. As was stated at the program several times in several ways, Mr. Carrier's leadership and dedication has been unwavering and is largely to thank for the beautiful library we have today. Mr. Carrier thanked everyone for the honor.

Mayor Narkewicz, Community Preservation Committee Chair Brian Adams, Ms. Wight and several staff members reviewed the results of the nearly completed window renovation project with architect Margo Jones. Everyone was pleased with the results of a project that is the final piece of the building envelope restoration.

Administrative Report (continued)

Jacque Fraser from the Friends spoke eloquently about the need for the library grounds master plan at the Community Preservation Committee meeting. Several others came out to show their support for which the Trustees are very grateful.

The Kingsley painting, *New England Elms* has been restored and will be rehung in the Reading Room. The result is a much brighter and appealing piece of artwork.

As Ms. Johnson mentioned in her report, Katharine (Kat) Janeczek is leaving Forbes to move to a position in New York City. Ms. Janeczek began working at Forbes as a Smith College work study student and now holds a Masters in Information and Library Science. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss are very proud of her achievements and grateful for her years of exemplary service at the library. She will be greatly missed on staff and by many in the community. Ms. Janeczek is featured in a video about the library that was recently released by Coldwell Banker Upton-Massamont Realtors and is available to view online, <https://www.facebook.com/CBUMR/videos/1320825884732376/>. Forbes was nominated by one of their realtors to be the subject of this short film which is one in a series featuring community resources.

Forbes is participating in the city's annual coat drive now through December 2nd. A flyer about the drive was distributed to the Trustees.

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, December 19 at 4:00 PM. Ms. Downing will let new Trustee, Emily Prabhaker, know about the meeting. The Trustees will discuss their meeting location at the January meeting when meeting dates and times will be set for the year.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held Wednesday, December 4, at 6:30 PM. Ms. Hess will attend on behalf of the Trustees.

Communications

Ms. Downing received a letter dated October 23, 2019 from the Northampton Survival Center thanking Forbes for participating in their Business Stroll Series by hosting a toiletry drive.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy

Ms. Downing reported that the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library & Museum (CCPLM) Standing Committee self-study identified that Forbes does not currently have an Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy which is something that the new auditors also noted. Ms. Downing asked Attorney Sandra Lucentini to draft a policy, which covers the Trustees, all library staff and volunteers. Section V. pertaining to volunteers has received the approval of the standing committee.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy as presented by Ms. Downing. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Trustee Orientation Handbook

At Mr. Carrier's suggestion, Ms. Downing developed a list of resources for new Trustees as well as a reference tool for board members. It will be provided electronically with paper copies available upon request. A copy was distributed to the Trustees, who all agreed that it will be very helpful. Ms. Downing said it is a "living" document and will be amended as needed over time. Ms. Wight said that she would have found this very helpful when she first came onto the board and suggested including a list of all library staff and the library's organizational structure. Ms. Hess suggested that the Trustees of Forbes Library Subcommittee documents, under essential documents, be changed to standing subcommittees.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the Trustee Orientation Handbook incorporating Ms. Wight and Ms. Hess's suggestions. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Ms. Downing will share the document with Ms. Prabhaker.

Coolidge Data Cleanup

Ms. Downing reported that the CCPLM Standing Committee put forth a recommendation to spend up to \$750 from the RCCR fund for data cleanup to the drive housing digital content related to Coolidge. The funds will be used to hire an experienced hourly employee to work on the project.

Ms. Wight made a motion to spend up to \$750 from the RCCR fund for data cleanup to the drive housing digital content related to Coolidge. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Public Comment Period

At the last meeting, Mr. Twarog requested that the Trustees review the parameters around the public comment period at the beginning of board meetings. Ms. Downing reviewed practices in the community and distributed information about how public comments are handled at the Northampton Public Schools and City Council. Additionally, Ms. Downing distributed the public comment policy of the Clinton Community Library. Another library included a statement about the public comment period, "Issues requiring possible action by the board may be added to a future meeting agenda, and issues that can be addressed by library administration will be noted." The Trustees discussed the various options and agreed by consensus that a policy was not needed at this time since there are few public comments, but that the Board President should issue a statement at the beginning of the public comment period thanking the commenter and giving a statement similar to the one quoted by Ms. Downing. Issues raised by commenters cannot be discussed at the current meeting because it would be a violation of the open meeting law. All agenda items must be posted 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The contact information of the commenter will be collected so a written response can be made if appropriate. Ms. Downing will work on the wording of the statement and bring it back to the Trustees for approval at the December Trustees' meeting.

All Staff Meetings

Ms. Downing reported that since Forbes has expanded open hours it is very difficult to find a time to get all of the staff together for training. She would like to be granted the flexibility to close the library up to two half days per year to allow for all staff to participate in training. She would like to begin by closing the morning of Thursday, March 26, 2020. She said that any closure will be posted well ahead of time to alert the public.

All Staff Meetings (continued)

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve Ms. Downing's recommendation to close the library up to two half days per year to allow for all staff training. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Window Restoration Update

Ms. Downing reported that UV film is being applied to the windows on the north face of the building because those windows are reusing the original glass and do not have UV protection built in like the rest of the windows. The project overall is coming along very nicely and if the weather cooperates should be wrapping up by mid-December. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said there were no major problems with the contractor, and that the work has been excellent and may come in under budget.

Trustee Election

Ms. Downing and the Trustees congratulated Mr. Twarog and Ms. Wight on their reelection to the board and would like to extend a warm welcome to Emily Prabhaker who will be filling the vacant seat in January. Forbes was very fortunate to have a strong pool of candidates including Maxine Schmidt who will continue to serve on the Friends board. Ms. Downing will offer Ms. Prabhaker a tour and a welcome packet with orientation materials.

Community Engagement

Ms. Moss reported that several staff enjoyed a behind the scenes tour of the Making it on Main Street exhibit, including information on design and exhibit decisions as well as getting to play with the hands-on components. 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 annual meeting of the new standing committee was held earlier this month with a respectable sized crowd and a well-received program about the election of 1920.

Development Committee - Ms. Downing reported that the annual appeal mailing has received a strong response with gifts to date totaling \$32,477 including a lead gift of \$25,000 from the Melvin Hershkowitz Trust.

Other Business

Ms. Wight spoke with the new Ward 4 City Councilor John Thorpe who said he would be happy to come to the library for a tour and to meet with the Trustees to discuss ways he can work with the library. Ms. Downing will invite him to the February Trustees' meeting.

At 4:41 PM Ms. Hess moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:41 PM.