

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, February 18, 2021

Present: Ms. Buckhout, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Hess, Ms. Moss, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, Ms. Sheirer, Ms. Wight. **Also Present:** Maxine Schmidt, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library. **Absent:** None.

Pursuant to Governor Baker's Emergency Order Modifying the State's Open Meeting Law issued March 12, 2020, this meeting was held using remote participation via Zoom teleconferencing.

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 PM.

Bills & Warrants

Ms. Hess made a motion to verbally approve the warrant dated February 18, 2021. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. Ms. Downing will wait until there are a few more months of warrants and then schedule a time for the trustees to come in and physically sign them.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Hess moved that the Secretary's Report of January 21, 2021 be accepted and placed on file with a minor correction. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Buckhout reported that she has been working on the reporting requirements to obtain forgiveness for the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan that Forbes received last spring, but that it has been delayed because the government is prioritizing the processing of new loan requests. Mr. Carrier suggested she contact Florence Bank if she needs help.

Ms. Buckhout presented the Treasurer's Report of January 31, 2021. The General Aid Fund had negative net activity for the month of \$46,474 and has a balance of \$16,289. January was a 3-pay period month. Revenue is under budget by \$22,000, which is the amount due from State Aid. Expenses are underspent by \$17,341. The overspending in Labor and Repairs of \$6,735 and Payroll of \$7,029 is offset by the underspending in almost all other expenses. The Book & Media Fund had positive net activity of \$1,469 and has a balance of \$2,690. The BIPOC Art Fund had positive net activity of \$10,000 due to matching funds transferred from the Morin Fund and has a balance of \$20,000. The COVID Fund closed the period with negative net activity of \$624, and has a deficit of \$1,303. The Externally Financed Transactions Fund had negative net activity of \$2,610 and has a deficit of \$5,775. The M. Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund had positive net activity of \$7,736 and has a balance of \$16,398. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$26,426 and has a balance of \$87,953. The Moving Memories IMLS Grant had negative net activity of \$1,277 and has a deficit of \$4,676. The Programming Fund-Adult had positive net activity of \$2,496 and has a balance of \$8,774. The Staff Development Fund had negative net activity of \$2,997 and has a deficit of \$2,522. The Watson Copier Fund had negative net activity of \$1,085 and has a deficit of \$2,246.

Treasurer's Report (continued)

Ms. Buckhout said that with the increase in the state aid payment, she is anticipating that the General Aid Fund will either come in right on budget or with a small surplus this fiscal year. The Book & Media Fund is right on target. Ms. Downing said that the Watson Copier Fund has a deficit due to the lack of income from reference printing as a result of the pandemic. Ms. Downing said that the library got rid of a lot of individual desktop printers for staff which has reduced the need for ink cartridges, which has resulted in increased expense for the Watson Copier Fund. A transfer will be needed at the end of the fiscal year to close out the deficit. She plans to increase the printing budget in next year's budget. Ms. Buckhout said she is keeping an eye on the COVID Fund, which was initially funded with money from the city from the CARES Act. It's unknown if the next stimulus package will include any additional funding. Ms. Moss said that they are using Intermittent Part Time (IPT) workers instead of work study students, and have hired some Smith College students, some of whom are enrolled and some not, and are paying them out of the IPT line item. Ms. Downing said that Smith College has a solid plan and feels it is safe for them to be in the building.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report of January 31, 2021 and place it on file. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

Ms. Downing distributed a list of undesignated gifts totaling \$2,292.50 to be deposited in the Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund: \$1,030 from Richard Parrish, Northampton, MA; \$300 from Matthew Bansfield, Brookfield, MA in Memory of Joseph Perez; \$200 from Faith Thayer, Florence, MA in Memory of Ruey Lindblom; \$103 from Sara Newland, Northampton, MA; \$100 from Susan Enz, Northampton, MA; \$100 from Thea Hardigg, Northampton, MA; \$100 from Robert and Eileen Mahar, Florence, MA in Memory of Joseph Perez; \$100 from Tom and Barbara Quinn, Easthampton, MA; \$25 from Joanna Campe, Northampton, MA; \$25 from Alvin and Shirley Cohen, Easthampton, MA in Memory of Joseph Perez; \$25 from Jo Ann Petcen, Hatfield, MA; \$20 from Carla Cooke, Northampton, MA; \$10 from Morgan Brown, Northampton, MA. The following undesignated gifts were also received: \$154.50 from Sarah Pebworth, Blue Hill, ME in Memory of David Shearer to the Shearer Fund; and \$25 from Alexander George to the Lyman Special Collections Fund.

The following designated gift was received since the last trustees' meeting: \$50.00 from Arlene Carmichael, Pelham MA to the Book & Media Fund.

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 with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

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

In response to a question from Ms. Buckhout, Mr. Carrier said that Ms. Buckhout should move funds received each month for the Marie Hershkowitz Fund to the endowment.

FY21 State Aid

Ms. Downing reported that the first state aid payment was announced online and Forbes is expecting to receive \$27,019.04 which represents about 50% of

FY21 State Aid (continued)

the annual total. Ms. Downing had budgeted for \$44,000 for this year and it looks like significantly more than that will be received.

FY2022 Budget

Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss prepared a draft FY2022 budget with a 3% increase. It includes contractual increases, potential cost of living increase for benefitted staff and increases to the Intermittent Part Time (IPT) worker lines to keep them ahead of the minimum wage hike. There are a few minor staffing changes but it calls for level staffing overall. The operating side of the budget accounts for anticipated inflationary increases and known contractual services increases. It is a level services budget for what she expects will be a return to pre-pandemic hours and services.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that the budget includes an increase in the minimum wage. Ms. Downing said there are about 25 IPT workers, though not all of them are currently working due to the pandemic. Ms. Downing said that it was challenging preparing a budget based on this year's expenditures since it was an unusual year. She said that water and sewer were higher than expected considering the building wasn't open, and electricity continues to be disappointingly high. She added a few regularly recurrent expenses such as carpet cleaning, boiler maintenance, etc. under contracted services. Mr. Carrier suggested she consider adding the printer and copier expenses to this line item as well. Ms. Downing anticipates being invited to a budget meeting with the city next month and will bring the budget back as an action item once it is ready. Mr. Carrier and Ms. Hess will accompany Ms. Downing to the budget meeting and she will let them know the date and time.

Department Report - Adult Programming

Ms. Moss presented the 2020 Adult Programming Highlights. Last year there was about 2 ½ months of normal programming before the pandemic and a switch to online programming. Several grants that were already in the planning stages were transitioned to an online platform. Online programming is difficult for many because of accessibility, internet access and/or Zoom overload. Some participants have been gained due to online programming because of distance, driving and accessibility, and some programs have seen an increase in participation. For example, there are now 20 people attending the weekly Writing Room, while the Watson Room only accommodates 15. Live captioning is now available via Zoom and programs can be recorded and shared via YouTube. With what has been learned, future programming will include a hybrid component and she is looking into getting technology for the Watson Room that will allow for live streaming. An application has been submitted for a Mass Humanities digital capacity grant, "Beyond Our Walls: Building Engagement through Digital Programming," for technology to stream, broadcast and video record programs in the Coolidge Museum for audiences who can't or prefer not to attend in person. Grant programs include "The Right to Vote: Past, Present, Future", a Yiddish Book Center grant "Coming to America" reading groups for public libraries, and "Opioid Crisis in the time of Pandemic", and MBLC Social Infrastructure mini-grant in partnership with Hampshire Hope. Regular programs that switched to online include the Weekly Writing Room, Yoga and Poetry Discussion groups, monthly book discussions, Frances Crowe Film series, Far Out Film Discussion, and Zine Club. Coolidge and Special Collections programming included Coolidge and Civil Rights with Rushad Thomas, North to Market - Lu Stone Book talk, and the Presidential Book discussion. Other programming included The Real Gentleman Jack: Transcribing the diaries of Anne Lister, Teach Me Tuesdays, and Storytime for Grownups.

Department Report - Adult Programming (continued)

Continuing partnerships include Straw Dogs Author Showcase, Climate Change & Your Community (co-hosted with Kestrel Land Trust), Proposition 2 ½ Town Hall Meeting (co-hosted with City of Northampton), Making End-of-Life Choices that Reflect the Life You Lived (co-hosted with Northampton Neighbors), Discussion of Strongmen with Vijay Prashad (co-hosted with Historic Northampton and UMass/Five College History Writer-In-Residence Program), and Grow Food Northampton Garden Day.

Mr. Carrier said that Ms. Moss should come back to the trustees if the Mass Humanities digital capacity grant is not received to seek alternate sources of funding. Ms. Hess said it was amazing and impressive how much Ms. Moss and library staff were able to accomplish this year in spite of the pandemic.

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Hess attended the Friends of Forbes virtual meeting on February 3 and reported that their endowment balance is \$509,450. They reiterated their recommendation to reduce the amount in their checking account and transfer funds to the endowment. The Director's discretionary fund will be separated from the rest of the budget. Julie Bartlett Nelson gave the same presentation that she gave the trustees last month on the activities of Special Collections and the CCPLM. They had a long discussion on the wine tasting and whether it should be an in person or virtual event. They need to get sponsors and set up a subcommittee to plan. The garden tour is scheduled for July 17. Ms. Downing reported on the FY22 budget. Stan Shearer is doing a documentary about the history of Forbes and Ms. Downing proposed having the initial screening at the Friends' annual meeting on April 7. Ms. Downing made requests for the Book & Media Fund for FY22, additional outdoor seating, technology for hybrid programming, and funding for a new content management system. Future large projects include renovation of the Young Adult space and the Hampshire Room. The Development committee reported that there are 12 people in the Legacy Society and discussed complimentary tickets to events as a way to say thank you and stay in touch. Ms. MacKenzie talked about expanding their store to include such things as puzzles, Paco, and Coolidge items.

Ms. Schmidt said that the Wine Tasting subcommittee had met and realized that it would not be possible to do an in-person event this year and are looking into another event that can be held outdoors or virtually.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reminded the trustees that they have been invited to attend two upcoming training events alongside the staff. The Resilience Roadshow is from 10:30-12 on Monday, February 22 to help gain understanding about the impact of trauma and ways the library can help address it. There is also the three-part Interrupting Racism Level 2 training coming up on March 8, 15, and 22 from 10-12. This is a continuation of the anti-racism training from the fall. The second level builds upon the first and focuses on skills for respectful and equitable interactions.

David Barclay was invited to create an ice sculpture on the front patio as he has in the past several years. This year's sculpture is of a sea turtle and it is hoped it will last for several days in the cold February weather.

Dates are being considered to present awards to the 2020 and 2021 Trustees Award recipients at a small outdoor ceremony. Ms. Downing said it will be a small event on library grounds. Ms. Downing suggested that the date be May 15 at 2 P.M. with May 22 as the rain date. She's reached out to Dr. Hershkowitz

Administrative Report (continued)

with both dates and suggested a family member might be able to receive the award on his behalf. She will bring a proposal to next month's meeting.

Ms. Downing thanked everyone who has turned in their Open Meeting Law Certification. A paper copy of the form that needs to be completed was distributed to the trustees.

The Winter Reading Challenge was a success! 120 people of all ages registered and earned 632 badges and logged 466 books. Two new programs have been launched. Teen Loot Crates: teens can register to receive a mystery box complete with goodies, a craft, and two library books picked just for them. Every two weeks, there will be crates available on a different theme. The current theme is Real Life, and each crate will contain supplies for do-it-yourself printmaking. Beginning this month there will also be Adult Take and Make Kits, starting with calligraphy.

Forbes was selected to be the sole recipient in Massachusetts of The Golden Collection. Created by the makers of SLAVE PLAY by Jeremy O. Harris, The Golden Collection is an initiative to donate plays totaling 800 scripts by Black playwrights to public libraries and community centers in all 50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, and Guam. Visit slaveplaybroadway.com/resources/ to learn more. The donation will be publicized and local theater groups will be invited to collaborate on staging plays from the collection. Mr. Carrier suggested that Forbes could collaborate with other libraries on this as well.

Ms. Downing said that the Friends have done it again. They festooned the staff room table with treats and flowers for Valentine's Day and were extra thoughtful about doing it in a very safe way. We love our Friends!

Phased Reopening Plan Update

Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss reported that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) has been in touch with the state about prioritizing library staff in the vaccine rollout, and it is hoped that libraries will be added to the second phase. Everyone is so happy that members of the community are beginning to get vaccinated and have heard very positive things about the clinic that the Public Health Department has set up at the senior center.

There has been an improvement in the case counts for Northampton over the past several weeks. The impact of thousands of college students returning to the area will be monitored closely and it is hoped that Smith's very solid plan will be implemented safely.

New CDC guidance has come out around how to wear mask(s) most effectively. NPR had a segment recently about double masking and other ways to alter masks to make them tighter and thus more effective that has been shared with the staff. At this point the requirement remains a single well-fitting mask but it is something that will be kept a close eye on. KN95 and KF94 masks have been ordered for staff which have higher particle filtration than the surgical masks that have been provided previously.

Mr. Twarog moved that the Administrative Report including the Phased Reopening Plan Update be accepted and placed on file. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Wednesday, March 17 at 4:00 PM. The following meetings have been scheduled for 2021: Thursday, April 15; Thursday, May 20; Thursday, June 24; Thursday, July 22; Wednesday, September 15; Thursday, October 21; Thursday, November 18; Thursday, December 16. The meetings will be at 4:00 PM unless the representatives of Bartholomew are invited, in which case the meeting will begin at 3:45 PM.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held Wednesday, March 3, at 6:30 PM. Ms. Prabhaker will attend on behalf of the trustees.

Communications

The trustees received an email on January 29 from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) announcing a new monthly series, "Trustee Deep Dives" that will bring trustees together for an in-depth conversation on trustee roles and responsibilities.

Director's Evaluation

Ms. Moss distributed a compilation of the trustees' director evaluations for review of performance from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020. Each trustee completed their evaluation form with ratings and comments and Ms. Moss compiled the results. The trustees discussed the evaluations and finalized the ratings and comments.

Ms. Hess said that the last year has been so difficult and Ms. Downing has done an amazing job. Mr. Carrier concurred and said the trustees are so lucky to have her as director. He mentioned one area on the evaluation, item #12, having to do with informing the trustees of comparative analyses based on professional sources such as the ALA. He mentioned that Ms. Downing includes articles each month on relevant information in the packet that is distributed to trustees. Ms. Hess suggested that occasionally an article can be highlighted and discussed even if it is not related to a specific agenda item. Mr. Carrier said that the Administrative team could channel information through Ms. Moss and Ms. Downing to give to the trustees that they think the trustees should be more aware of. It will be helpful when the trustees are faced with a controversial decision to have additional background information. The trustees agreed this would be helpful.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the compiled director's evaluation and place it on file. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Downing thanked the trustees for their thoughtful and generous comments and ratings and said she really values their opinions and all the work they do for the library. She also thanked Ms. Moss and all the library staff for all the work they do, and said she could not do it without them. She asked for feedback on the evaluation process and the trustees said they felt the process worked well.

BIPOC Art Committee

Ms. Downing asked the trustees to approve the following charge for the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Art Committee and to appoint committee members as recommended by the director.

"The BIPOC Art Committee makes recommendations for BIPOC art acquisitions for the permanent collection as well as for temporary

BIPOC Art Committee (continued)

exhibition following the library's Special Collections Policy and the parameters of the BIPOC Art Fund. Recommendations for acquisitions of art for the permanent collection will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. Committee members are appointed by the President of the Board for up to one year and are eligible for reappointment. The committee will function ad hoc."

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the charge for the BIPOC Art Committee. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Downing said that committee appointment recommendations are Jose Adastra, Community Co-Chair of the library's Racial & Social Justice Advisory Group; Russell Carrier, Chair/President of the Trustees of Forbes Library; Lisa Downing, Forbes Library Director; Sarah Johnson, Forbes Library Head of Children's & Young Adult Services; Faith Kaufmann, Forbes Library Arts & Music Librarian; Bella (Isabella) Kosiba, an art student at the high school who comes highly recommended by NHS art teacher Louise Martindell; Martha McCormick, Friends of Forbes board member; former NHS art teacher; Katy Wight, trustee of Forbes Library.

Mr. Carrier made the appointments as recommended. Ms. Downing will schedule the first meeting and start an agenda.

Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund

Ms. Downing reported that the library has raised \$16,600 through donations to the newest book fund. The Development Committee recommends matching this amount with funds from the Morin Fund which in combination with the original \$50,000 gift from Dr. Hershkowitz and the interest it has gained will bring the balance close to \$100,000. This amount will allow the library to begin taking a sustainable yield from the fund towards the annual Book & Media budget. A 3.5% withdrawal rate as recommended by Bartholomew Inc. would be \$3,500, which will buy a lot of children's books.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to transfer \$16,600 from the Morin Fund to the Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund in the endowment. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

FY21 Action Plan Mid-Year Review

Ms. Downing reported that the Leadership Team updated the action plan with progress notes. A copy of the plan was distributed to the trustees. Ms. Downing said that progress has been good in spite of the impact of the pandemic, and that the majority of items should be completed by the end of the fiscal year.

Special Collections HVAC

Ms. Downing reported that in consultation with Central Services, Energy Management and Control Services, Inc. was hired to do some repair work that included allowing for the resumption of recording data logs of performance of the system. This is a necessary step to get the data needed to try to solve the underperformance problem of the system in the summer and winter months that has been an issue since it was installed. While on site, the contractors found a damper that was mistakenly closed and are hoping that by reopening the damper the system will work better. The work is expected to cost about

Special Collections HVAC (continued)

\$3,000 and will be allocated to Labor & Repairs. Ms. Downing said the work is essential so that any climate control problems in Special Collections can be quickly detected.

Community Engagement

Ms. Moss reported that Children's Librarian Sarah Johnson gave a brief presentation to 45 people at the Preschool Resource Fair about the services and programs that Forbes is offering during the pandemic. A child's card application was received from an attendee, and later that day another attendee requested readers' advisory help.

Ms. Moss distributed a list of recent and upcoming community engagement events.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings

CCPLM Standing Committee - Ms. Downing reported that the programming committee has had great success with moving its presidential book group online. The committee is now planning a program with indigenous experts about Coolidge's relations with native peoples during his presidency.

Development Committee - Ms. Moss reported on fundraising last year compared to this year: Total raised for 2020 was \$88,988.95 from 427 donors, including the establishment of 2 new funds: the Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund and a fund for the purchase of artwork by BIPOC (2019: \$81,846.16 from 409 donors). Library Giving Day is April 7, 2021. This year they are asking board members to share videos, written testimonials and/or pictures of short reasons why they give that will be used for promotional purposes.

Racial & Social Justice Committee - Ms. Hess and Ms. Downing reported that the committee reviewed feedback from the first Interrupting Racism training series and is looking forward to level two next month. The committee was very positive about the progress and direction the advisory group is already making as well as the creation of the new BIPOC Art Fund. The committee is discussing ways to observe Juneteenth.

Other Business

In response to a question from Ms. Hess, Ms. Downing said that trustees should send their completed Open Meeting Law certifications to her or Ms. Moss and they will forward it to the city.

At 5:09 PM Ms. Hess moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 PM.