

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Wednesday, September 15, 2021

Present: Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Hess, Ms. Moss, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, Ms. Wight. **Also Present:** Jacquie Fraser, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA); Paula Elliott, Technical Services, Debin Bruce, Stan Sherer. **Absent:** Ms. Buckhout, Ms. Sheirer.

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 4:02 PM.

Bills & Warrants

Ms. Hess made a motion to verbally approve the warrant dated September 15, 2021. Ms. Prabhaker 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 July 22, 2021 and the Executive Session of July 22, 2021 be accepted and placed on file with no corrections. Mr. Twarog 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

The Final FY2021 Treasurer's Report dated June 30, 2021 will be presented at the October meeting.

Ms. Downing presented the Treasurer's reports of July 31 and August 31, 2021. The Aid Fund had positive net activity of \$18,937 and has a balance of \$27,937. The Book & Media Fund had negative net activity of \$38,964 and has a deficit of \$25,364 due to the budgeted endowment distributions of \$23,600 not yet disbursed. The COVID Fund had negative net activity of \$571 and has a deficit of \$571. The Digital Capacity Grant had positive net activity of \$1,700 and which is the balance. The Doland Fund had negative net activity of \$1,798 and has a balance of \$3,503. The Externally Financed Transactions Fund had negative net activity of \$1,630 and has a balance of \$8,433. The Go Local (Outside Voices) Grant had negative net activity of \$728 and has a balance of \$4,144. The Halberstadt Technology Fund had negative net activity of \$654 and has a balance of \$2,172. The Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children Book Fund had positive net activity of \$1,550 and has a balance of \$1,600. The Morin Fund had positive net activity of \$1,114 and has a cumulative balance of \$99,637. The Moving memories IMLS Grant had negative net activity of \$1,916 and has a deficit of \$9,317. The RCCR Centennial Fund had positive net activity of \$568 and has a balance of \$1,205. The balance in the endowment as of September 30, 2021 was \$1,509,081.

Treasurer's Report (continued)

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Reports of July 31 and August 30, 2021 and place them on file. 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.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

The following undesignated gifts were received since the last Trustees' meeting: a total of \$6,841.08 to the Book and Media Fund including: \$3,466 from Allison Ryan, Florence, MA; \$3,000 from Karen Howat, Fort Collins, CO; \$300 from Anonymous; \$108 from Anonymous; \$100 from Faye and Harold Wolfe, Northampton, MA; \$50 from Elizabeth Suozzo, Northampton, MA; \$37.08 from Deborah Singer-Frankes; \$60.00 from Nicole Sibley, Amherst, MA; and \$20 from Morgan Brown, Northampton, MA. In addition, \$77.25 in memory of Leith Colen from Lynn Marcus, Northampton, MA; \$50 in memory of Zane Kotker from Donald Fairbairn, Wyckoff, NJ to the Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund; and \$25.00 from Alexander George, Amherst MA to the Lyman Special Collections Fund.

The following designated gift was received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$2,000 from Zane Lumelsky, Northampton MA in memory of Leith F. Colen for an autumn gold ginkgo shade tree and plaque expenses (\$500) and the balance (\$1,500) to be put into the Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund endowment to be used to purchase children's books which will be acknowledged with memorial book plates honoring Leith.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the 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 receipts from sales/rents or donations this month.

Financial Report: Fourth Quarter Report

There was no financial report this month.

Department Report: Technical Services

Ms. Elliott reported on the activities of the Technical Services Department. Projects completed in the last year include retrospective cataloging of materials in the Hampshire Room. This totaled 6723 items and Paula recognized Portia Henle, former staff member and volunteer, for her many years of work on it. Other accomplishments include remote programming being done by Steven Stover, recataloging of the Easy Readers in the Children's Department, recataloging of DVDs in the YA section, and the installation of new books shelves in Tech Services. Ongoing programs include the library-wide weeding project, revising the Standing Order Program for fiction, even more important now with supply chain issues, editing of the Cutter's Seventh Classification Schedule and Sixth Classification Schedule to make sure the language reflects current usage and is inclusive, and reinstatement of periodical subscriptions that were suspended due to the pandemic. New projects include an inventory of the Hampshire Room book collection, new location codes for YA and juvenile graphic novels, and reviewing the Native American tribal names in the Cutter Tables with the assistance of Benjamin Kalish and Heather Diaz. Ongoing issues include inadequate lighting in the Technical Services department. This is part of the project that also encompasses the children's program room.

Department Report: Technical Services (continued)

The trustees thanked Ms. Elliott for her report. Ms. Hess added her specific appreciation and thanks.

Ms. Prabahker made a motion to approve the Technical Services' report and place it on file. 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. Elliott left the meeting at 4:24 PM.

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Prabhaker attended the Friends of Forbes meeting on September 8 and reported that the representatives from Bartholomew Inc. attended and gave a review of their portfolio. The balance is currently \$582,000, an almost 50% increase from the initial investment of \$423,000 in 2018. The Friends discussed their investment strategy and if they should move to a more conservative mix going forward. The banker said there have been a lot of complicated COVID related factors and not to expect this much gain in the future. Bartholomew Inc. needs to clarify the fossil fuel mandate and the Friends should continue thinking about their goals and have a larger discussion of how much money to hold onto in the endowment moving forward. Ms. Downing said that the renovation in the Young Adult section of the library is going to happen and that it is hoped that the city will contribute funds along with gifts from the Friends. The Friends had a very successful garden tour. It was wise to cancel the wine tasting this year given the current pandemic conditions, and the Friends are planning on the next one for September 30, 2022. The Friends approved \$10,740 from the discretionary fund to pay for half of the museum programming chairs. Jacquie Fraser has moved back to the area and was invited to rejoin the Friends' board and she accepted.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that a new initiative is being launched in partnership with Lilly Library called "Northampton Neighborhood Free Libraries" that will bring weatherproof outdoor boxes containing books that people can take. It will start with 5 boxes this fall and 5 more will be added in the spring. Neighborhoods are being prioritized that do not currently have little free libraries or easy access to a public library. Library volunteers will be responsible for restocking the libraries on a regular basis using donated and withdrawn books, and will likely reach out to the community for a targeted donation of children's books. Maria Sperduti will be overseeing the program as an additional Outreach Service. It is hoped that the libraries will be placed later this fall. The trustees thanked Ms. Sperduti for her work on this project.

The city covered the cost of the \$11,645.36 burst outdoor pipe repair that occurred on June 30, 2021. This type of unanticipated expense that exceeds what can be absorbed in the annual \$10,000 labor and repairs budget is exactly the kind of building expense that makes sense for Forbes to go to the city for additional funding and all are very pleased and grateful that they covered it.

Accessibility related concrete work was completed that restored the integrity of the library's handicapped ramp and book drop pads, and added a curb cut to

Administrative Report (continued)

the west lawn. The contractor will be back to add another curb cut to the sidewalk heading to the back parking lot as well as a pad for an accessible picnic table.

The library will be opened mid-day on October 7th to allow for a full staff training and BBQ. This will be the first time that staff have gathered in person since the pandemic and the first time that Forbes will close the library based on permission granted by the trustees to do so in the fall of 2019.

Lindsey Musielak resigned from her position as library assistant in mid-August. She started over 6 years ago as a Smith College work-study student before joining the staff. She has moved away and plans to pursue a library degree and she is wished all the best.

The following thank you note was received about the take and make craft kits that were part of the animal themed summer reading program "My grandchildren love doing these projects. Here are pictures of the jellyfish and the lizards. Thank you for doing this." The kits were very popular with patrons of all ages.

A new Reading Buddy dog program was started with Sunny the lab and her human. This continues to be a popular offering.

The Friends had a phenomenally successful garden tour in July raising about \$14,000! This is a tremendous undertaking by the garden tour with support from the Friends board. Congratulations and thank you to everyone involved! The Friends have set their sights on holding their 10th wine tasting on September 30, 2022 so make sure to mark your calendars.

Representative Sabadosa and Senator Comerford signed onto HD4418, An Act modernizing library access to electronic books and digital audiobooks. <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/HD4418>. This bill addresses the unreasonable licensing terms libraries are offered for digital content. Hopefully it will move forward and everyone is very grateful for the support from our delegation.

Ben Kalish has just been appointed to the C/W MARS Development Committee. He also serves on the ECDI, Evergreen Community Development Initiative Committee. By serving on these committees he is able to give Forbes a voice at the table and work on behalf of Evergreen libraries to improve functionality.

Forbes hosted a Northampton Meet and Greet with Senator Elizabeth Warren on Sunday, September 12th. She presented updates and answered questions to a full crowd out on the west lawn.

Forbes Library is partnering with the Center for New Americans and the International Language Institute to recognize Welcoming Week which is a national initiative of Welcoming America and unites communities in our belief that all people, from long-time residents to newly-arrived immigrants, are valued contributors and are vital to the success of our communities and the creation of a shared future of prosperity.

Phased Reopening Plan Update

Ms. Downing reported that the library has resumed its full schedule of 56 open hours under a new configuration that increases evening hours including in the children's department. The new schedule is Monday-Thursday 10-8 and Friday-Saturday 10-6. One of the last services to resume is in person programming and meeting rooms for the public. Staff were prepared to start that this month but are holding off and revisiting it at the end of the month because of the increased cases in our area. Outdoor programming and use of the library grounds continues to be offered. Toddler time is going very well and baby play time and a new music series geared for preschoolers have been added.

The "Pandemic Delivery Service" has been renamed to "As Needed Delivery Service" and it will continue to deliver library materials to people's homes who don't need or qualify for Homebound Delivery Service but don't have ready access to the library due to transportation, scheduling or other impediments.

Mask compliance continues to be followed by the vast majority of patrons although there have been several visitors who needed regular reminding and at least one person who had to leave because they refused to wear a mask. Dealing with this is an additional strain on the public services staff as is the news of increasing cases. The reopening committee has agreed to meet more regularly and will be closely monitoring the situation.

Ms. Prabhaker 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 Thursday, October 21 at 3:45 PM. The following meetings have been scheduled for 2020: 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 trustees discussed the meeting location. Meetings will continue on zoom for now.

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

Communications

There were no communications this month.

Programming Chairs for Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library & Museum (CCPLM)

Ms. Downing said that the museum is the library's largest programming space and in pre-pandemic times often held lectures and discussions that lasted up to 2 hours. Folding chairs have been used that have served the needs well for many years but it is time to replace the chairs with something more comfortable and to add some chairs with arms as an accessibility feature. Ms. Moss and Mr. Petcen have searched high and low and have finally found a chair that is comfortable for people of all sizes, lightweight, durable, and comes with an extended warranty, although not inexpensively. The request is for 60

Programming Chairs for Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library & Museum (CCPLM)
(continued)

chairs without arms, 20 chairs with arms, and 4 dollies for transporting the chairs, for a total of \$19,957. The Friends have approved covering half the cost and the trustees are asked to approve funding the balance, up to \$10,000, from the Morin Fund.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve \$10,000 from the Morin Fund for the purchase of programming chairs for the CCPLM. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Meeting Rooms & Grounds Use Policy

Ms. Downing presented an updated Meeting Rooms policy that has been expanded to cover use of the grounds as well as to explicitly deny groups that support racist ideology or use hate speech. The trustees were asked to discuss and approve the revised policy that has been endorsed by the Racial & Social Justice Committee and the Leadership Team. The trustees discussed their concerns that the Northampton School District had to rescind their policy because of ACLU concerns. Ms. Downing explained how Forbes' policy addresses these concerns. There was also discussion on the section regarding political use and the grounds. The policy will be edited to address these concerns, shared with Ms. Hess first, then brought back next month for approval.

Remote Work Policies

Ms. Downing presented informal and formal remote work policies that define expectations and responsibilities for both the employee and the library. These policies have been reviewed by the Leadership Team and the Labor Relations Committee. The formal policy is based on a model provided by the library's insurance company.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the proposed Remote Work Policies as edited (with the sentence 'software may be used' removed). Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Confidentiality Notices

Ms. Downing said a confidentiality notice for staff and volunteers has been prepared to explicitly state expectations around confidential information both during and after working for the library. This is a best practice that was not previously in place. There was discussion about the word 'confidential,' what it means and how it is defined. The notice will be clarified and brought back to the trustees next month.

Funding for Coolidge Documentary

Ms. Downing reported that the Coolidge Standing Committee requests funding of up to \$250 for film rights for footage to be used in the documentary about Coolidge that the committee is working on. The trustees are asked to approve this request from the RCCR fund.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve funding up to \$250 from the RCCR fund for a documentary about Coolidge. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Annual Fall Appeal Mailing

Ms. Downing reported that the Development Committee is preparing for a fall appeal that will be sent by mail with email follow up. She requested up to \$1,500 from the Morin Fund to pay for the mailing. This expense will be paid back from the funds raised from the appeal.

Ms. Twarog made a motion to approve up to \$1,500 from the Morin Fund for the cost of the annual fall appeal mailing. 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.

Funding for Little Neighborhood Libraries

Ms. Downing requested up to \$2,500 from the Outreach Delivery Fund for five little library boxes, including labelling. This will be in addition to funding from Lilly Library and a private donor.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve up to \$2,500 from the Outreach Delivery Fund for the cost of the little library boxes. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Discussion Topic

There was no discussion topic this month.

Children's & Youth Services Department Renovation

Ms. Downing reported that a contract has been signed with Dietz & Company Architects for the renovation of the young adult room, addition of a youth programming space, and upgrades to lighting in these spaces and additional spaces in the department as well as staff work areas in the basement. Mr. Petcen, Ms. Johnson, Ms. Bishop and Ms. Downing have met with the architects a couple of times and are expecting to have drawings fairly soon. This project dovetails with the HVAC renovation project for the basement which is nearing completion. Deitz has reviewed the engineering drawings for that project to ensure that the two projects will work together seamlessly. Both projects are expected to be on the capital improvements request list this fall. Once the project is at the point where design decisions need to be made, Mr. Carrier and Ms. McCormick will be invited to join the discussion. The trustees discussed concerns about their role in the process with the city. They will discuss their concerns with the new mayor.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve contracts from the city for Dietz Architects. 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.

Increasing Board Size

Ms. Downing reported that the Lucentinis will be assisting Forbes in preparing an argument for the probate court regarding increasing the number of trustees. It is anticipated that the process will take some time to work through all of the necessary steps but because the rationale for this increase is sound it is hoped to be able to achieve the increase in time for the 2023 election.

Filling Board Vacancies Mid-Term

Ms. Downing reported that the city charter change regarding filling trustee vacancies mid-term has been approved by the state legislature and she plans to bring a revised set of Forbes' bylaws to the October meeting. Here is the approved language:

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.

In addition to updating the bylaws, procedures need to be developed for filling vacancies according to these new guidelines because when the situation arises the trustees will need to move quickly. Mr. Carrier and Ms. Downing discussed this and came up with the following considerations to be included in the procedures. Ms. Downing sought suggestions from the board for these procedures: establish requirements for publicizing the vacancy; seek a statement explaining why the person wants to be a trustee; trustee interviews of candidates during an open public meeting and invite members of public to attend; majority trustee vote needed, lowest vote getter dropped each round until someone gets a majority; deadlines within the 30 day process.

Ms. Downing said that a special meeting is needed to change bylaws, which will be prior to the November Trustees meeting. Trustees should let Ms. Downing know of any suggestions of topics to add to the process. They will be discussed at the next meeting if necessary.

Racial & Social Justice

Ms. Moss reported that CW MARS Bibliographic Services had a joint meeting with the CW MARS Social Justice Committee (including Ms. Elliott and Ms. Moss) regarding subject headings. The Social Justice Committee approved changing "illegal aliens" to "undocumented immigrants," and discussed the use of racially insensitive language in the catalog. Ms. Moss distributed a list of recent and upcoming Racial & Social Justice activities.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings

Development Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the fall appeal will be mailed later this month with messaging that includes the library going fine free. Also working on donor impact statements to be shared with donors who have significant donations.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings (continued)

Racial & Social Justice Committee - Ms. Hess reported that the committee met in late July and discussed a draft Racial & Social Justice FY22 Action Plan that they plan to review with the advisory committee at their September meeting before bringing it back to the board for formal approval. The committee also discussed a possible partnership with the Northampton Human Rights Commission to develop programming and training in collaboration. The intent is to start with bystander training and then work on acknowledging Human Rights Day in December with a focus on housing.

Landscaping & Grounds Committee - Mr. Twarog reported that the committee met this week. There was a need for trimming an oak tree with a hanging branch. The tree looks quite sick according to the tree warden. A curb cut was added to the west lawn and the handicapped ramp to the library and pad for the new book drops was completed. They discussed planning for a stage on the west lawn for programming, but have concerns about the priority of many ongoing projects. They are looking for funding for a basic architectural study. This will be a very visible structure on the library lawn and should reflect positively on the library. They are looking at the spring CPA application process. They want something that fits the space size-wise and will mark it out on the lawn so that the trustees can see how it would fit the space.

Mr. Sherer left the meeting at 5:58 PM.

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the committee met this week. The annual meeting is being planned as a virtual event for November 15 or 16. Still waiting on electricity for hybrid programming in the museum. Julie is working on grants for CMS for local history. The Grace Coolidge portrait is being restored and will be back soon. The Presidential book club is still going strong, and they are up to Taft in October. Their annual meeting will be in mid-November online, with the theme Coolidge as remembered by his Northampton friends. They are trying to get their video done and have started to think about redesigning the display space.

BIPOC Art Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that this committee had not met since the previous Trustees meeting. They have seen a lot of work by various artists, and will be bringing a proposal soon for approval of purchases.

Other Business

None.

At 6:00 PM Ms. Prabhaker 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 6:01 PM.