

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, February 17, 2022

Present: Ms. Debin Bruce, Mr. Russell Carrier, Ms. Lisa Downing, Ms. Molly Moss, Ms. Emily Prabhaker, Ms. Elizabeth Sheirer, Mr. Joseph Twarog, Ms. Katy Wight. **Also Present:** Martha McCormick, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA). **Absent:** Ms. Cheri Buckhout.

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 3:46 PM.

Bills & Warrants

Ms. Wight made a motion to verbally approve the warrant dated February 17, 2022. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, 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.

FY2021 Audit

The auditors were not ready for the meeting this month so will present their report at next month's trustees' meeting. Ms. Downing will alert Ms. Buckhout so that she can invite them for 3:45 PM on Thursday, March 24.

Secretary's Report

Mr. Twarog moved that the Secretary's Report of January 25, 2022 be accepted and placed on file. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Downing presented the Treasurer's report of January 31, 2022 that was prepared by Ms. Buckhout. The General Aid Fund had negative net activity for the month of \$58,406 and has a balance of \$33,317. The Book & Media Fund had positive net activity of \$17 and has a balance of \$16,975. The COVID Fund closed with negative net activity of \$771 and has a deficit of \$1,820. The David W. Shearer Memorial Periodical Fund had negative net activity of \$4,042 due to funds being transferred to the endowment and has a zero balance. The Doland Reference Room Fund had negative net activity of \$607 and has a balance of \$2,536. The Externally Financed Transactions Fund had positive net activity of \$343 and has a balance of \$343. The Gertrude P. Smith Book Fund had positive net activity of \$2,500 and has a balance of \$2,500. The Lyman Special Collection Fund had positive net activity of \$2,865 and has a balance of \$6,431. The Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children Book Fund had negative net activity of \$850 due to a transfer to the endowment and has a zero balance. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$19,515 and has a balance of \$83,248. The Moving Memories IMLS Grant had negative net activity of \$1,569 and has a deficit of \$2,325. The Pris Pike Fund shows zero net activity due to the \$68,402 bequest being transferred to the endowment. The Watson Copier

Treasurer's Report (continued)

Fund had negative net activity of \$730 and has a deficit of \$654. The balance in the endowment as of January 31, 2022 was \$6,664,291.55.

Ms. Downing said that electricity is already over budget by \$5,000 this year due to an unaccounted for price increase and there are still several months to go. She is also monitoring the personnel budget closely.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report of January 31, 2022 and place it on file. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, 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 \$863.43 from multiple people to the Morin Fund; \$68,401.98 from the Priscilla Pike bequest to the Pris Pike Fund; \$100 from Janet and Richard Moulding, Northampton MA in memory of Peter Rowe to the Lyman Special Collection Fund; and \$25 from Alexander George, Amherst MA to the Lyman Special Collection Fund.

The following designated gifts were received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$100 from Russ Carrier and Andrew Dausch, Florence MA to the Lyman Special Collection Endowment Fund in memory of Peter Rowe.

Ms. Downing said that it felt appropriate to allocate the gifts in memory of former trustee Peter Rowe to the Lyman Special Collection Fund as a way to honor his interests.

The following donations were received since the last trustees' meeting: Calvin Clark and Justin Clark account books from Elizabeth Kelly-Griswold, New Hope, PA; Book of Paul Shoul photographs of David Narkewicz retirement event from the Campaign to elect David Narkewicz; and McKown First Church Family History Book from Betty McKown and Jane Holloway.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the designated and undesignated gifts and donations as proposed by Ms. Downing. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

There were no receipts from sales/rents this month.

Financial Report

There was no financial report this month.

Department Report: Adult Programming

Ms. Moss presented the 2021 Adult Programming Highlights. Most of the programming continued to be on zoom including the Reading Nature book discussions in partnership with Lily Library and Mass Audubon, All Hamptons Read of *Station Eleven* in collaboration with NEA Big Read, A Conversation about Racism program and follow-up, several author readings, virtual reception for virtual gallery exhibit "in This Together", and a 2-part program on Marketing Your Artwork. There was some outdoor programming during the summer including concerts by the Quark Quartet, Flywheel Inside Out and eekappella. Regular programs included Weekly Writing Room, Yoga and Poetry Discussion groups, monthly book discussions, Frances Crowe Film series, Far Out Film Discussion, Zine Club, and more. The Coolidge and Special

Department Report: Adult Programming (continued)

Collections programming included the Presidential Book discussions, which continue to have about 30 participants. Forbes has continuing partnerships with Straw Dog Voices for Resistance and Author Showcase, and Reading Frederick Douglass. Progress has been made on the Mass Humanities digital capacity grant, "Beyond Our Walls: Building Engagement through Digital Programming" for technology to stream, broadcast and record programs in the Calvin Coolidge Library and Presidential Museum (CCPLM) for audiences who can't or prefer not to attend in person. A Meeting OWL Pro was purchased with the support of the Friends to use in smaller hybrid programs and meetings. Ms. Moss thanked the Friends as always for their support.

Ms. Wight made a motion to accept the Adult Programming Highlights report and place it on file. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Bruce attended the February 2 meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that the 2021 budget surplus resulted in an addition of \$17,845 to the endowment. Once the Finance Committee meets to finalize the 2022 budget, the Director's discretionary account will be \$36,650. The Treasurer recommended an additional contribution of 2.5% of the value of the endowment and a finalized number will be available for the February trustees' meeting. The following topics were covered: the Pris Pike fund was established with a bequest to benefit the Coolidge Museum, \$500 was added in memberships, special events are still in the planning phase due to COVID, the nominating committee is looking for a new Vice President, Ms. Nelson reported on grants and work in Special Collections, and a grant to conduct environmental monitoring will start soon. Ms. Downing reported on news and recent library projects of interest. The Friends also discussed board member term limits, Employee Appreciation Day on February 14, the Garden Tour, and the Friend's Annual Meeting in April. Mr. Carrier added that the Friends are looking for new members.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to accept the Friends meeting report and place it on file. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that the Trustee Award ceremony for Marjorie Hess will take place on Saturday, May 14. Ms. Hess is honored and delighted to have been selected. An indoor reception with refreshments is desired, but a decision will be made closer to the event. After discussing the time for the event with the trustees, Ms. Downing will offer 11 AM and 4 PM to Ms. Hess to choose the time she prefers. Since it is Smith graduation weekend, Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to think about reserving spaces in the library's parking lot for the event.

Forbes was honored to have David Barclay back to delight all with his ice sculpture of a breaching humpback whale to help promote the Downtown Northampton Association's ice festival that took place on Friday February 11. Unfortunately with the warm weather it only lasted about 24 hours, but it can be seen on the library's Facebook and Instagram pages.

Administrative Report (continued)

The Western Massachusetts Library Advocates (WMLA) Legislative Breakfast was a success with over 100 attendees. Thanks especially to the trustees who attended. Forbes is lucky to have their local legislators be such library supporters, including being active in the Library Caucus. It is very helpful for them to be able to go to their colleagues and let them know how important libraries are in Western Mass with the numbers that turned out and spoke passionately about the importance of libraries. The event is on the Libraries' YouTube channel. After the event, Senator Eric Lesser posted: "Always great to meet with Western Mass Library Advocates - WMLA! Our libraries break down barriers and give families a space to learn, engage, and feel included. They're also meaningful partners to all of us in the Legislature, providing residents technology access, food insecurity, and job hunting help."

Ms. Downing reported that the Friends have done it again and decorated the staff room table with treats and flowers for Valentine's Day and were extra thoughtful about doing it in a very safe way.

COVID Safety Update

Ms. Downing reported that she is so glad that the cases are continuing to decline. Some of the additional safety precautions that were put in place during the surge have begun to be rescinded. She anticipates continuing to reopen spaces and services as long as the numbers continue to decline. She said that she has not heard anything about the city lifting its indoor mask mandate, but that the health department is meeting this evening.

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

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, March 24 at 3:45 PM. Ms. Buckhout will invite the auditors to the meeting. The following meetings for the rest of 2022 were previously scheduled: April 26 at 3:45 PM; Thursday, May 19 at 4 PM; Thursday, June 16 at 4 PM; Thursday, July 21 at 4 PM; Thursday, September 22, at 4 PM; Thursday, October 20 at 3:45 PM; Thursday, November 17 at 4 PM; Tuesday, December 20 at 4 PM.

Mr. Carrier said that the trustees will continue to meet via Zoom for the time being, but will consider a hybrid meeting in the future. Ms. Downing said that the library has purchased new equipment to facilitate hybrid meetings.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held Wednesday, February 2, at 6:30 PM. Ms. Bruce will attend on behalf of the trustees.

Communications

Ms. Downing received a note from the Community Action Pioneer Valley thanking her and the Forbes Library staff for being an outreach spot for the "Community Needs" survey. Ms. Downing is now on their governing committee, helping to figure out what governance model they should follow. Forbes will work collaboratively with their service model.

Trustees Goals

Ms. Downing distributed a draft of the 2022 goals for the trustees' review and approval. The goals include: get the library back to a fully functional state as soon as it is safe to do so; have a new treasurer in place by mid-year; develop a multi-year strategic plan for the library that begins in FY24; increase board size to seven and work to diversify it and staff; increase both the amount raised and the number of donors annually as well as the amount invested in the endowment; improve bathroom ventilation; complete BIPOC Art Fund purchases; increase the personnel hours in the Coolidge Museum and hire a consultant to redesign the permanent exhibit in the Coolidge Museum; continue planning to add a bandshell to the west lawn; and continue planning to renovate the young adult room, add a youth programming room, and update the HVAC system that supports the ground level. Ms. Wight suggested adding a goal for the committee changes approved at the last trustees' meeting about chairing, scheduling, goal setting, note taking and reporting.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the Trustees' Goals for 2022. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Administrative Goals

Ms. Downing presented the proposed Administrative goals for 2022 including short-term, medium term (within 2-3 years), and long term goals. Short term goals for advocacy, fundraising and community engagement include hosting the western Massachusetts virtual library legislative breakfast, hosting the Chamber of Commerce Arrive@5 event, sharing information about recent bequests to honor donors and inspire others, conducting Spanish language outreach campaign, and launching a book bike program. Administrative short-term goals are complete comprehensive job description review, oversee completion of FY22 Action plan, participate in development of a new multi-year strategic plan, support the trustees in realizing their annual goals, hire a new Head of Borrower Services, offer staff safety training, and support staff training as part of the Cybersecurity grant program. Programmatic short-term goals are support completion of Moving Memories Lab IMLS grant, support Outside Voices LSTA grant, refresh library's branding, work with special collections staff to develop a Historian in Residence program, and grow the Northampton Free Book Box program. Medium term goals include review employee grade chart, remodel the Young Adult Room and create a new programming room, successfully realize the goals in the FY19-FY23 Strategic Plan, diversify library staff, partner with Smith College and include CCPLM in tourism publicity with new Neilson Library. Long term goals include stabilize funding for the Book & Media Budget, improve the Children's Room entrance, and expand and renovate Special Collections and the CCPLM.

Ms. Downing said she was particularly excited about outreach to the Spanish language speaking community and said that she was hoping to do something around national library week in April. She also said that many in the BIPOC community are not aware of the library's digital resources and she is looking for ways to make them more comfortable and aware of what the library has to offer. She also mentioned the importance of the strategic plan and helping the trustees in realizing their goals. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss discussed ways of increasing staff diversity including work-study students. In response to a question from Ms. Prabhaker about the Children & Young Adult's Room renovation committee, Ms. Downing said the committee will meet once the architectural and engineering drawings and budget estimates are received.

Administrative Goals (continued)

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Administrative Goals as presented by Ms. Downing. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Strategic Planning

Ms. Downing said that the current Strategic Plan expires in FY23 and now is the time to begin working on the next plan. The new plan needs to be submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) in the fall of 2023 to go into effect in FY24. She said this is a great time to strategize beginning with listening to the community and its stakeholders. She would like to do a three-year plan this time instead of five-year plan since the first three years are generally the most useful. She said the strategic plan is used extensively in guiding the library's direction. She is committed to a streamlined process and using a consultant to take some of the burden off of the staff and trustees on the committee.

Mr. Carrier appointed the Strategic Planning Committee with Ms. Wight as chair, and Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss as members. Other members will be added to the committee in the future. The other trustees will be called upon to help with specific tasks and projects as needed. Ms. Moss suggested bringing questions and issues about the plan and planning process to the trustees' monthly meetings as discussion topics so that all can weigh in. Once the committee is up and running, a budget will be requested. Mr. Carrier asked the committee to let the trustees know when they need help.

Interior Wall Repair and Painting

Ms. Downing reported that there are several interior walls that need to be touched up and repainted including the main staircase as a result of water penetration and the lighting project and in the Coolidge Museum. The estimate for the work is \$4,000 and Ms. Downing requested that it be paid from the Morin Fund.

In response to a question from the trustees, Mr. Petcen said that water comes in through the outside brick façade when there is driving rain. He said that a water blocker will be applied. Mr. Carrier thanked Mr. Petcen for bringing these issues to the trustees' attention.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve \$4,000 from the Morin Fund for interior wall painting. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

CCPLM Standing Committee Recommendations

Ms. Downing reported that an ad hoc committee including the chair, vice-chair, trustees, and staff on the Coolidge Standing Committee met in January to prioritize goals as well as to make housekeeping recommendations to support the smooth and efficient running of the committee. The committee unanimously recommends these for approval by the trustees. The housekeeping changes include: change the name and charge of the Programming Committee to the Programming and Education Committee; change the name and charge of the Marketing & Communications Committee to the Marketing & Outreach Committee; task committee chairs with submitting monthly reports to Ms. Nelson; limit the monthly packet to the agenda, minutes, committee reports, and action items and commit to getting them out no later than the Thursday before the standing committee meeting; create a "Coolidge in the News" shared folder

CCPLM Standing Committee Recommendations (continued)

where relevant articles and announcements are made; and allow time during some standing committee meetings to have participatory discussions. The short-term priorities are: administration and trustees develop a plan to add Coolidge personnel hours; archivist investigate hiring a facilitator to help finish the STePS self-assessment; Programming and Marketing committees will focus on preparing for the 100th anniversary of Coolidge's ascension to the presidency in 2023 including completing the short documentary film and figuring out how to show it to visitors, developing programming for the anniversary year possibly in collaboration with other organizations, supporting a Northampton Education Foundation grant for Northampton educators to learn about Coolidge and his era to develop curriculum to be offered during the 2022-23 school year, and developing a marketing plan for the anniversary year; and form an Exhibit Committee whose first charge will be to develop a proposal to hire a consultant to redesign the museum. Longer term priorities include adding Coolidge personnel hours; expanding the museum docent program to include more volunteers, which will require recruitment and developing a training program; completing the STePs self-assessment; and securing funding to hire a consultant to redesign the museum.

Mr. Carrier said it was important to show the Standing Committee that the trustees care about the CCPLM and are committed to bringing it into the 21st century, and that one of the best ways to do that would be by increasing the personnel hours. He said that while the museum is not their top priority, it is still very important to show their commitment to it.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the housekeeping changes and 2022 priorities as proposed by the CCPLM Standing Committee. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

CCPLM Exhibit Committee and Charge

Ms. Downing reported that one of the priorities identified by the CCPLM Standing Committee is moving forward with updating the museum exhibits. An ad hoc committee was proposed with the following charge:

The subcommittee will recommend the hiring of a consultant to the full Coolidge Standing Committee. This consultant will upon approval by the Board of Trustees work with the subcommittee to develop a plan to update the content of the permanent exhibit that will offer a balanced portrayal of Calvin Coolidge, his record of public service, personal life, early 20th century history, and the life of Grace Coolidge.

The subcommittee should be mindful that the new exhibits should fit within the current space available and take into consideration that the museum has dual purposes serving both as a museum and a public meeting space. The proposal should include a budget estimate to cover the cost of the consultant and any anticipated expenses needed to complete the planning for this first phase of the project, as well as possible funding sources for this first phase. If possible, the subcommittee will submit the plan to the Coolidge Standing Committee by the end of 2022.

The subcommittee will keep notes and give reports at Standing Committee meetings.

Ms. Downing said that the exhibits are in great need of being updated to meet the expectations of 21st century visitors. She said that Beth Myers, Head of

CCPLM Exhibit Committee and Charge (continued)

Special Collections at Smith College, has agreed to chair the committee. This is an amazing opportunity for the library to benefit from her knowledge, expertise, and connections. The charge focuses on hiring a consultant to work within the constraints of the physical space, and to come back with a proposal for a plan and budget at the end of the year. Ms. Downing said there are several big questions the committee would like resolved before moving forward. First, will the trustees make a commitment to keeping the museum in the library rather than seeking an alternate location. Second, what fixtures in the space need to be retained. And third, can the committee seek efficiencies in space usage by considering the local history room in conjunction with this project.

Mr. Carrier gave some background context information about the museum's history and status in the library. He said this is an exciting opportunity to upgrade both the CCPLM and Hampshire Room, and that there is a group excited, ready and able to take this on including Beth Myers, Lisa Downing, Julie Nelson, Dylan Gaffney, JoEllen Mackenzie, and Rich Szlosek. The initial charge is limited in scope and designed to get them up and running quickly, but they can come back to the trustees if they want to explore a more expansive charge. The trustees will have the final approval of any plans. The trustees agreed that this is an amazing opportunity that should be undertaken. They agreed by consensus that the CCPLM should remain at Forbes for the foreseeable future, that none of the old furnishings need to be retained, and that both the CCPLM and Hampshire Room can be considered together, though it must be kept in mind that the CCPLM doubles as a large scale meeting space.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to form an Exhibit subcommittee for the CCPLM and to approve the charge as proposed by the Standing Committee. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to let Sam Masinter, the library's liaison at Smith College, know how appreciative the trustees are of Ms. Myers involvement in the project.

CCPLM Standing Committee Secretary

Ms. Downing said that the trustees approved hiring a committee secretary for the CCPLM Standing Committee in November for a salary of \$40-\$50 a meeting. The job was posted at \$30-\$40 per meeting but there have not been any applicants. She asked the trustees to approve reposting the job at \$50 per meeting with the salary coming from the personnel budget. The position will also be posted more widely and the Friends will disseminate it via social media and email to their members.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve reposting the recording secretary position at \$50 per meeting. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

BIPOC Art Committee Purchase Recommendations

Ms. Downing reported that the BIPOC Art Committee unanimously recommends purchasing *Progressions I* oil painting by Priya N. Green for \$2,500 from the BIPOC Art Fund. This artist received an MFA from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and has shown her work internationally at spaces including the Jersey City Museum, UMass Amherst University Museum of

BIPOC Art Committee Purchase Recommendations (continued)

Contemporary Art, Zimmerli Art Museum, the School of the Art Institute in Chicago, and Cuchifritos Gallery. She is a recipient of the international Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant as well as a fellowship from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She lives and works in Springfield, MA.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the purchase of the artwork *Progressions I* by Priya N. Green as proposed by the BIPOC art committee for \$2,500 to be paid from the BIPOC Art Fund. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

The trustees discussed where the new artwork will be hung and Mr. Carrier said that an overall plan for the display of all of the library's artwork should be discussed after the BIPOC Art Committee completes its work.

Discussion Topic: Commercial Photography

Ms. Downing said that Forbes has not had a commercial photography request in a number of years and she would like to discuss the board's opinions about this topic. This was prompted because a local textile designer approached Forbes about using the library for a photoshoot. The discussion will help her respond to this particular request and to decide if it is a potential revenue generating opportunity to explore. Ms. Downing distributed a copy of the current Photography and Video Policy approved in 2016 and updated in 2019, which allows for commercial photography with express permission from the Director. Ms. Downing said that the specific request has been withdrawn but she is still interested in the trustees' thoughts. The trustees discussed issues surrounding taking pictures when the library is open and patrons and staff are present. Ms. Downing said that although this could be a potential revenue stream, it could also cause disruption, and she would prefer not to advertise it. She will handle requests on a case by case basis, and the trustees expressed confidence in her judgement.

Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness Grant

Ms. Moss reported that Forbes is a beneficiary of the Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness Grant Program 2022. Cyberattacks are becoming more frequent, including close by at the Boston Public Library and the Town of Agawam. Forbes' continued effort to increase cyber awareness across the organization is especially important now that the library has a Cybersecurity team that has been researching and addressing areas of concern in the systems and staff are participating in a training program from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The program consists of two assessments and four assignments. This training is required for all salaried staff, and voluntary for intermittent part time staff. As an added incentive, a \$50 Northampton gift card will be raffled. Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Moss to report back after the training to let the trustees know what was learned.

Treasurer's Search Update

Ms. Downing reported that David Pascucci has begun training with Ms. Buckhout and will continue to do so until he needs to take leave from early April through mid-May. His official appointment will take place at the May trustees' meeting to be effective around June 1. Ms. Buckhout has agreed to stay on as treasurer through this transition and all are so grateful for her generosity of time and flexibility.

Community Block Grant Application

Ms. Downing reported that an application has been submitted for a grant for \$37,500 for accessibility improvements to the library's seven restrooms, and has received a positive response. She presented the project to the city's disability commission and they were very pleased that Forbes was attempting to address these barriers to access. She has also been in communication with Central Services about improving ventilation in the restrooms. A consultant has said that the cost will be \$5,000 to develop a plan and oversee construction.

Children's & Young Adult Renovation Update

Ms. Downing reported that the library is awaiting completion of architectural and engineering drawings as well as budget estimates. The city has pushed the project out to FY25, though planning will begin in July 2024. Once the drawings and budget have been received, the library's Children's & Young Adult Renovation Committee will meet to review them.

Library Use Statistics

Ms. Moss reported that the door count in January was about 45% lower than January 2020, but it appears it has returned to pre-Omicron levels. In-house circulation is still down about 28% compared to pre-pandemic levels (comparing January 2020 to January 2022). Circulation is recovering faster than door count, and doesn't include ebooks. Usage of ebooks and eaudiobooks continues to grow, putting overall combined circulation at 20% below January 2020 levels.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings

Development Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the fundraising committee last met on January 12 and welcomed Ms. Bruce to the committee. They began planning for Library Giving Day on April 6 with hopes of increasing the amount raised annually. A year by year fundraising comparison was distributed to the trustees showing statistics from 2017-2021. The good news is that there has been constant improvement in most categories during this period. In addition, Forbes was able to add \$330,000 to the Endowment in fiscal year 21 and \$318,000 so far this fiscal year. They also began discussing how the library might increase the number of individuals who contribute annually as well as those who remember the library when they make end of life financial decisions. Mr. Carrier said bequests are coming to the library from Mary Harding, Peter Rowe, and Arlene Hines who included Forbes in their estate plans. As always, there is still a need for folks to make thank you calls to past donors. The committee decided to try meeting every other month in the coming year. The Development committee is looking for new members to work on projects, not ask for money directly. If anyone has any fundraising ideas or names of people who might become donors, they should let the committee know.

Landscape & Grounds Committee - Mr. Twarog reported that the committee was approached by the Conway School for Landscape Design about a possible student project that would involve a complete grounds study. The student is giving a virtual presentation tomorrow and the trustees can get the link from Ms. Bruce if they are interested in attending. The committee met yesterday to discuss this and the bandshell project. They elected Ms. Bruce as chair. They discussed having an overall plan for the grounds rather than doing things on a piecemeal basis. Mr. Twarog mentioned the possibility of including a play structure for children which was positively received by the trustees as a way to attract more families and utilize every inch of space both indoors and outdoors.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings (continued)

BIPOC Art Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the committee met on February 14 and unanimously recommended the trustees purchase another piece. They are still looking at two more artists and hope to finish up with their final recommendations at the March meeting.

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the committee reviewed recommendations by an ad hoc committee that are being brought forward to the trustees along with the formation of an exhibit committee that Beth Myers, Director of Special Collections at Smith College, has agreed to chair once it is approved. The committee is very pleased with the funding from the Pris Pike bequest.

Other Business

Mr. Twarog said he was pleased to see that Peter Rowe was remembered by gifts, and would like the library to do something more to remember him. Ms. Downing said that she would look for a picture of him and also of Mary Harding to put on the library's digital kiosk in remembrance of their service to Forbes as trustees.

Mr. Twarog said he would like to see a display of banned books in the lobby in support of free expression and in opposition to the books currently being banned around the country. Ms. Moss said that Forbes has done that in the past, and that the ALA has a list of banned books, but that it is also unclear if that helps or hurts by creating tangible targets. Ms. Bruce said she supported it in a general sense but had some concerns and needed time to think about it. Ms. Wight said that the library had posted about it on social media and could perhaps use that as a basis for a more formal statement. Mr. Carrier asked that it be put on next month's agenda as a discussion topic.

At 5:27 PM Ms. Prabhaker moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:27 PM.