

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, March 24, 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:** Faith Kaufmann, Head of Arts & Music; Chris Hannon, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA). **Absent:** Ms. 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 4:01 PM.

Ms. Downing said that she and Ms. Moss are trying out "Owl" technology at this meeting to facilitate hybrid meetings. She and Ms. Moss are attending the meeting together in person in Ms. Downing's office. The rest of the meeting participants are attending the meeting remotely.

Bills & Warrants

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to verbally approve the warrant dated March 24, 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. 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. Wight moved that the Secretary's reports of February 17 and March 15, 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 February 28, 2022 prepared by Ms. Buckhout. The General Aid Fund had positive net activity for the month of \$8,228 and closed with a balance of \$41,751. The Book & Media Fund had negative net activity of \$890 and has a balance of \$16,085. The BIPOC Art Fund had negative net activity of \$5,960 and has a balance of \$13,965. The COVID Fund had negative net activity of \$639 and has a deficit of \$2,459. The Doland Reference Room Fund had negative net activity of \$1,065 and has a balance of \$1,471. The Lyman Special Collection Fund had negative net activity of \$3,390 and has a balance of \$3,041. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$7,536 and has a balance of \$75,883. The Moving Memories IMLS Grant fund had negative net activity of \$1,264 and has a deficit of \$3,589. The Pris Pike Fund had zero net activity and has a zero balance as all of the funds have been transferred to the endowment. The balance in the endowment as of February 28, 2022 was \$6,546,501.

Ms. Downing said there were no surprises and that as the end of the fiscal year approaches, a more accurate picture of where the FY22 budget stands will emerge. She said that the library is on budget, although it is tight. Ms. Moss added that there is still one more 3-pay period month left this fiscal year, which will eliminate the current surplus.

Treasurer's Report (continued)

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report of February 28, 2022 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.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

The following undesignated gifts were received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$2,000 from Allison Ryan, Florence, MA to the Morin Fund; \$222.22 from Alicia Ralph, Florence, MA to the Morin Fund; \$92.70 from Mary Kitagawa, Amherst MA in memory of Ruey Lindblom to the Morin Fund; \$53.56 from Jonathan Hogan, Ware, MA to the Morin Fund; \$51,50 from C.D. Finley, Charlemont, MA in honor of Tzivia Gover to the Morin Fund; \$30 from Nicole Sibley, Amherst, MA to the Morin Fund, \$10 from Morgan Brown, Northampton, MA to the Morin Fund; \$5 from Molly Moss and Benjamin Brau to the Morin Fund; and \$365 from Susan Enz, Northampton, MA to the Forbes Book Endowment Fund.

There were no designated gifts, or receipts from sales/rents this month.

The following donations were received since the last trustees' meeting: Vote Calvin Coolidge President pin from Timothy Friden; and Pride March 1989 VHS from Aliza Ansell.

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

FY23 Budget Update

Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, Ms. Downing, and Ms. Moss met with Mayor Sciarra, Finance Director Charlene Nardi, and Chief of Staff Alan Wolf earlier this week. Ms. Downing said that the meeting was very cordial, open and transparent, with mutual appreciation expressed. They discussed the FY23 budget along with several other topics. Forbes was asked to prepare a level-service funded budget and presented a budget with a 4% increase that included a 33% increase in electricity costs. They were asked to bring it down closer to a 3% increase which is in line with Lilly Library. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss have been working on reducing the budget. They've increased income by increasing the takeout yield from the Clark and Earle funds to 4% from 3.5%, and reducing the increase in the hourly rate for IPT workers, along with a few other tweaks to the personnel budget. They plan to reduce electricity costs by raising the temperature of the building during the summer months. Future cost savings would be possible by completing the transition to LED lighting and insulating the attic. The changes total about \$17,000 and get it to about a 3.2% increase from FY22.

Mr. Carrier said that the trustees will approve the budget after the numbers are complete and Ms. Downing has run it by the city. Mr. Carrier suggested that Ms. Downing let the city know where the additional cuts have been made and that the trustees are unanimous in recommending it. Ms. Downing said that she has heard from Ms. Nardi that the city will cover Forbes' \$2,500 in unbudgeted COVID-related expenses for FY22. They also discussed the planned bathroom ventilation project and renovation of the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum (CCPLM) exhibit space, which will help to increase tourism.

Department Report: Arts & Music

Ms. Downing acknowledged Faith Kaufmann's 34th anniversary with Forbes and said that the Arts & Music staff have taken the lead in navigating the pandemic's impact on programming and exhibitions, moving first to remote then hybrid formats. She said Ms. Kaufmann has also taken the lead in grant initiatives and now in exploring issues of intellectual freedom and censorship.

Ms. Kaufmann then presented the Arts & Music Department report to the Trustees. The report included staffing, professional development, and a review of programs and exhibits. Projects in progress include working on the Digital Capacity grant from Mass Humanities for equipment and training to stream and record hybrid programs live from the CCPLM; the weekly meetings of the Far Out Film Club, and a virtual program on Keith Haring in conjunction with the Senior Center. Special Collections is applying for an LSTA grant for Managing Fine and Decorative Arts. A Simmons student is completing an archives internship in the Hampshire Room; the BIPOC Art Committee has acquired four works of art; a 7-year contract for the Argus Collections Management System has been signed and migration and editing will take place this year; Dylan Gaffney is working with students and volunteers on Documenting the Early History of Black Lives in the Connecticut River Valley; and Mr. Gaffney, Jill Emmons, and Heather Diaz are finishing up the Outside Voices grant. Staff are also working on a new theme for the library's website which will be more accessible and adaptable. Future plans and projects include working with the Landscaping Committee on plans for a performance stage on the west lawn and Cinema Northampton will return this summer with three movies on the lawn.

Ms. Kaufmann highlighted the most recent virtual exhibit Forbes has done on the theme of "Home," which has drawn a lot of interest, people, and artists, and has helped build community. She is also working on a procedure for objections to library materials in all formats from book displays to online resources and programming in response to requests for censorship. Ms. Kaufmann said that needs and requests include a request to acquire Judith Abraham's Madwimmin Books diorama for the permanent collection; an upgrade to the track lighting in the Hosmer Gallery; appropriate storage for the art works that are being removed from the walls to make room for the new acquisitions; and additional space for the historical photograph collections in the Hampshire Room.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Kaufmann said that the Madwimmin Books diorama is very popular at Forbes, and that Ms. Abraham is willing to sell the diorama to Forbes, but that the price needs to be negotiated. Mr. Carrier said that when Ms. Kaufmann, Ms. Downing, and Ms. Moss have a firmer purchase proposal they should bring it back to the trustees. Ms. Kaufmann is working on drafting a grant application to have all of the library's art works photographed that have not already been photographed. All of the photographs will be available through the online public portal. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Mr. Petcen said that he thought the track lighting in the Hosmer Gallery could be upgraded during the couple of days between exhibits in May. Ms. Kaufmann said more storage for art work is needed as the library expands its art collection. She removed some older portraits from the back staircase but does not plan to hang other artwork in that location.

The trustees thanked Ms. Kaufmann for her report and she left the meeting at 4:32 PM.

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Bruce attended the March 2 meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that they will post an ad on the Friends' website for the Coolidge Committee to hire a person to record the minutes of their meetings. The Treasurer gave a report and indicated that although the balance in the endowment was down, they still plan to make the Friends' quarterly transfer to the Director's Discretionary Fund. The Special Events Committee is not expecting to hold a wine tasting as the decision timeframe is quickly closing. They will contact last year's sponsors and ask for their support of the garden tour. As an added fundraiser for that event, there will be a craft fair and possibly a poster for sale. The Finance Committee met and finalized a budget. The Nominating Committee is forwarding Martha McCormick to take the position of Vice President. Ms. Downing reported on several recent library projects of interest and Ms. Moss reported on programming. Ms. McCormick proposed a banner for the glass window of the Children's entrance, "Sign Up for Summer Reading." April 6 will be the Friends annual meeting, which will be held on Zoom. The business meeting will begin at 6:30 PM, followed by the annual meeting at 7:30 PM. It will be short as there is no program, but a slate of officers will be elected.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to accept the Friends Report prepared by Ms. Bruce and place it on file. Mr. Twarog 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 Faith Kaufmann with help from Pam Acosta and former writer in residence, Art Middleton, curated a beautiful and powerful virtual exhibit on the theme of "home". There will be a virtual reception on Thursday, April 14 at 7 PM.

The Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) and the Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA) are partnering with the Western Massachusetts Library Advocates (WMLA) for a virtual event on Tuesday, April 5, 2022, at 10-11 AM, that serves as a virtual library legislative day. Senator Jo Comerford, Representative Lindsay Sabadosa and Ms. Downing will be speaking at the event. The trustees were asked to please join if they are able. Registration at: <https://masslib.org/event-4685344/Registration>

The Lucentini attorneys have indicated that they expect to have a draft nonjudicial settlement agreement for the trustee expansion for the board's review soon. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that they reached out about a week and a half ago and are awaiting review and approval by State Attorney General Eric Carriker before presenting the agreement to the trustees. Mr. Carrier said that all changes need to be signed off on by three parties - the trustees, the city representatives, and the attorney general.

On February 15, 2022, Governor Baker signed into law a new session law which extends certain COVID-19 related measures. The new law, Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, includes an extension until July 15, 2022, of the remote meeting provisions of the Governor's March 12, 2020, Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. Included was a link for "Updated guidance on holding remote and hybrid meetings until July 15, 2022".

Administrative Report (continued)

Alene Moroni is presenting a session called "Actively Anti-Racist Service to Leisure Readers" at the Public Library Association national conference in Oregon this week.

Forbes has received five additional hotspots through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC)'s program. They continue to be very popular.

Covid Safety Update

Optional masking went into effect after the special meeting of the board last Tuesday, March 15. This is the public messaging that was sent out about this change:

Masks are not required in the library. If requested, library staff will wear a mask while working with you - please don't hesitate to ask. Some library staff may ask you to wear a mask while working with you - the library can provide masks if needed.

Capacity limits will remain in place for meeting rooms.

Many thanks to all our patrons for actively working to keep each other safe over the past two years (and beyond)! We are grateful to the community for your continued support.

The Massachusetts COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Leave ended March 15. This temporary additional benefit provided paid time off for a variety of COVID related reasons that are also covered by the library's sick time benefit.

Ms. Wight moved that the Administrative Report including the COVID Safety Update be accepted and placed on file. Mr. Twarog 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 Tuesday, April 26 at 3:45 PM and the representatives from Bartholomew Inc. will be invited to attend. The following meetings for the rest of 2022 were previously scheduled: Thursday, May 19 at 3:45 PM (the library's auditors will be invited to attend); 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.

The trustees discussed options for holding the next meeting virtually, in person, or as a hybrid meeting. Mr. Carrier said that he felt the trustees should meet in person since staff are now working in person and COVID cases are relatively low right now. He also said there should be a virtual option for those who cannot attend in person for a variety of reasons. It was decided that the in-person meeting should take place in the CCPLM rather than a smaller room to allow for more social distancing. Ms. Moss said that she assumed that the bankers would want to attend virtually next month to reduce travel time. Trustees should let Ms. Moss know by Friday, April 22 if they plan to attend in person or virtually. Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to look at the board of trustees' bylaws to see if they allow for virtual meetings or if they need to be tweaked.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, April 6, at 6:30 PM, followed by the annual meeting at 7:30 PM. Ms. Bruce will attend on behalf of the trustees.

Communications

Mr. Carrier received a letter from Jason Petcen, President of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA) dated March 21, 2022, requesting a meeting to open contract negotiations. The negotiating committee consists of Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Ms. Downing, and Ms. Moss. They will schedule a meeting once the budget has been approved.

Performance Stage Architectural Design Competition

Ms. Downing reported that the Landscaping Committee is requesting the approval of the design competition. It is modeled after a couple of similar competitions offered by the Planning Department and in consultation with local architects. The competition calls for \$2,000 in prize money that the Friends of Forbes have approved funding. Mr. Carrier thanked Ms. Bruce for taking the lead on this and for all the time and work she has put into it. Ms. Bruce said that she likes the process that was used, which included input from staff and the committee before presenting it to the trustees. The plan is to put out a request for design submissions based on the project's scope, site description and parameters. Submissions will be made available to the public for feedback and the winning design will be selected by a jury of professionals that will include at least one trustee or staff member. There will also be a "people's choice" award based on a popular vote. The trustees discussed whether or not a budget amount should be stated to encourage designs to be competitive and consistent in scale. Mr. Carrier said that a project of this size will require a large fundraising commitment from the trustees. Ms. Wight said that a performing space will allow for grant applications outside of what the library normally would apply for. Ms. Bruce suggested making a "cost-effective design" part of the selection criteria, rather than listing a target number. Mr. Carrier said that the design competition does not commit the trustees to going forward with the project if the cost is too high. It is also possible that someone will hear about the project and come forward with funding. He also thanked the Friends for funding the \$2,000 prize.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the design competition for the performance stage with the agreed upon changes. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Semi-Permanent Storywalk

Ms. Downing said that a storywalk places an illustrated children's book, taken apart and displayed page by page, generally outdoors. Forbes has been offering a storywalk on the west lawn for over a year now. The current storywalk has been in partnership with the Parent Center and features a new picture book each month and related books and an activity to pick up inside. It has been well received except for the fact that pages are constantly blowing away because of the current display design. The Landscaping Committee recommends installing a semi-permanent storywalk on the west lawn based on a design that Children's Librarian Sarah Johnson found at the Julius Lester Trail in Amherst. The wooden posts and plexiglass "pages" will be able to be relocated if desired. Jason Petcen can construct and install them in house. The project is expected to cost about \$1,000 for materials and funding will be requested from the Friends.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve the installation of a semi-permanent storywalk on the west lawn for \$1,000 for materials to be built in-house, with funding to be requested from the Friends. 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.

BIPOC Art Committee Recommendation

Ms. Downing reported that the BIPOC Art Committee unanimously recommends purchasing *All the Light Begins and Is Borrowed* by Alex Callender for \$3,775. Alex Callender's studio practice incorporates painting, drawing, and installation to explore intersections between myth, colonial legacies, and material culture. Through the visual forms of historical narrative, repurposed archival imagery, and speculative fictions, she considers questions of race and borders, environmental instability, and hybridized landscapes. Callender has exhibited nationally and internationally, and has held studio residencies with the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, The Drawing Center's Open Session program, the Art in Embassies Program, Santa Fe Art Institute, The Vermont Studio Center, Urban Glass, the Santa Fe Art Institute, Alice Yard in Trinidad, and DRAWinternational and The BAU Institute in France. Raised in New York City, Callender now lives in western Massachusetts and is an Assistant Professor of Art at Smith College, she will be a researcher-in-residence at the Schomburg Center in New York, Fall 2021. Mr. Carrier added that this purchase achieves the secondary goal of increasing representation of female artists.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the purchase of *All the Light Begins and is Borrowed* by Alex Callender for \$3,775 to be paid from the BIPOC Art Fund as proposed by the BIPOC Art Committee. 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.

Library Giving Day Mailing

Ms. Moss reported that Library Giving Day (LGD) is coming up on April 6 and the Friends are providing an \$8,000 matching challenge grant. There is an additional \$2,365 in matching gifts. The fundraising goal for the day is \$10,365+. The Development Committee recommends that a postcard mailing go out before the event to raise awareness of the online giving day. The estimate for the mailing is \$700. The trustees are asked to approve this request with the funds coming out of what is raised on LGD.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve \$700 for a postcard mailing to raise awareness of Library Giving Day, to be paid from the proceeds of the day. 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.

Library Use Statistics

Ms. Moss reported that this month, in addition to circulation and door count statistics, she is distributing statistics for new card sign-ups in February. In-house circulation is down about 26% compared to February 2020, but eBook & eAudiobook circulation is up 66% compared to the same month. Overall combined circulation is at 19% below February 2020 levels, similar to last month's comparison. Door counts are still recovering slowly, with February 2022 levels down 52% versus 2020, although visits to the Children's and YA Department have been steadily increasing since December of last year. And finally, new card sign-ups are steady as well, with a plurality of new Smith students' cards this month. This month's analysis of February 2020 versus February 2022 concludes the time range for which there is a pre-pandemic month for comparison just two years prior. Ms. Moss thanked Heather Diaz for helping her compile these statistics.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings

Development Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the committee finalized plans for Library Giving Day on April 6. This year's goal is \$10,365. Three individuals have donated a total of \$2,365 in advance to be used as matches

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings (continued)

during the day. After a lengthy and very fruitful discussion, the committee decided to continue working on goal setting at the next meeting. The committee seeks names of possible new members, help with thank you calls, and someone who knows an elder affairs attorney about suggesting Forbes as a potential bequest recipient when people come to him about end-of-life plans and are looking for local gifting opportunities.

Landscape & Grounds Committee - Ms. Bruce reported that the committee reviewed the working draft of the call for performance stage designs and recommended bringing it and funding for a semi-permanent storywalk forward to the board for discussion. They also discussed environmental concerns brought to Ms. Downing by Paige Bridgens especially about the library's use of leaf blowers. The committee was very sympathetic to her concerns and are working on making strides toward greener grounds maintenance.

BIPOC Art Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the committee continued discussing potential purchases and unanimously decided to recommend one work each by Michelle Falcon Fontanez and Alex Callender to the trustees at their March meeting. The committee plans to look at the work of two or three more artists at their April meeting.

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the President's Book Group has made it as far as Coolidge with a lively discussion about Amity Shlaes biography last month. The committee approved drafting a letter to local elected officials requesting federal funding for the museum. The committee will be presenting it to the trustees at some point to request signing it from the board. The exhibits committee has begun its work with hopes of having an RFP ready to go by the fall for a consultant. Ms. Downing said that Beth Myers, who is chairing the exhibits committee, came for a tour of the Hampshire Room and special collections. She recommends keeping the focus for now on exhibition space, rather than expanding it to include storage and research areas, which can be tackled at a later date with different grant funding. Ms. Wight said that the standing committee is also working on plans for the anniversary of Coolidge's presidency. Mr. Carrier said the committee is close to resolving the issue of hiring a secretary to take notes at their meetings.

Discussion Topic: Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

Due to the late hour and time constraints, it was decided to table this discussion until next month. Ms. Wight said it would make sense to consider it along with the work that Faith Kaufmann is doing in this area. Mr. Carrier asked that it appear higher on the agenda next month and that other agenda items be kept to a reasonable number.

Other Business

The trustees provided feedback to Ms. Moss and Ms. Downing on the use of the "Owl" technology for hybrid meetings.

At 5:32 PM Ms. Bruce 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 5:32 PM.