

**TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY**  
**Thursday, November 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:** Ben Kalish, Information Services Librarian; JoEllen MacKenzie, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA); Maggie Hodges, artist; Eli Porth. **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 for some participants as indicated.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

**Bills & Warrants**

The trustees signed the warrant dated November 17, 2022.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**Secretary's Report**

Ms. Wight moved that the Secretary's reports of October 20, 2022 and the Executive Session of October 20, 2022 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.

**Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Downing presented the Treasurer's Report for the month ending October 31, 2022. The General Aid Fund had negative net activity for the month of \$7,967 and has a balance of \$45,618. The Book & Media Fund had positive net activity of \$13,775 and has a balance of \$17,415. The Auxiliary Services Fund had positive net activity of \$570 and has a balance of \$1,079. The Go Local (Outside Voices) Grant fund had negative net activity of \$3,039 and has a negative balance of \$49. The Hosmer Art Gallery Fund had positive net activity of \$943 and has a balance of \$2,521. The Keogh Family Fund had positive activity of \$10,000 and has a balance of \$20,000. The Lyman Special Collection Fund had positive net activity of \$985 and has a balance of \$5,681. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$1,886 and has a balance of \$75,360. The Programming Fund-Adult had positive net activity of \$1,810 and has a balance of \$4,635. The Programming Fund-Children had positive net activity of \$1,144 and has a balance of \$2,223. The RCCR Centennial Fund had positive net activity of \$5,691 and has a balance of \$7,824. The Staff Development Fund had negative net activity of \$560 and has a balance of \$4,191. The Watson Copier Fund had positive net activity of \$1,420 and has a balance of \$1,773. The balance in the endowment as of October 31, 2022 was \$5,574,249.65.

Ms. Downing said that roughly half way through the fiscal year, she is not seeing any major problems. The heat was just turned on, so energy costs will start going up. Some funds are in the process of being closed out, which will be reflected on next month's report. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that she would check if the personnel payment from the city has been appropriately applied.

**Treasurer's Report** (continued)

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month ending October 31, 2022 and place it on file. 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.

**Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.**

Ms. Downing submitted a list of undesignated gifts received from multiple donors since the last trustees' meeting totaling \$5,434.99 with \$246 going to the Book & Media Fund, \$3,378.99 to the Morin Fund, \$10 to the Adult Programming Fund, \$200 to the Aldrich Accessibility Fund, \$1,000 to the Halberstadt Technology Fund, \$100 to the Outreach Fund, and \$500 to the Children's Programming Fund. The following designated gifts were received: \$10,000 to the Keogh Family Fund and \$200 to the Lyman Special Collection Fund. There were no receipts from sales/rents this month.

The following donations were received since the last trustees' meeting: an oil painting by William Trost Richards from the estate of Peter Rowe, and a watercolor painting by Richard Yarde of Sojourner Truth from the Sojourner Truth Memorial Committee.

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.

Ms. Downing said that so far 108 gifts totaling just over \$15,000 have been received in response to the annual appeal. Last year at this time \$11,500 had been received and 2 years ago it was \$8,000. She said the budgeted amount of donations to the Book & Media Fund has been met and that undesignated gifts will now go to the Morin Fund. The donation to the Halberstadt Fund will be used to purchase new staff computers.

**Final FY22 Report**

Ms. Downing said that the Final FY2022 report was still being finalized and hoped it would be done soon so the auditors could begin work.

**Department Report**

There was no department report this month.

**Friends of Forbes**

Ms. Prabhaker attended the November 3 meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that their budget is in good shape and on track for the rest of the year. The Membership Committee is preparing their newsletter mailing. The Special Events Committee has set the date for the Artisan Fair for next year. The Finance Committee will meet to discuss next year's budget. The Garden Tour is scheduled for June 11 and they are sorting through sponsor lists. They will be re-ordering Paco t-shirts and will budget for that next year. The Arrive@5 event was a success. It was not as much work as the Wine Tasting, but will not be an annual event. Ms. Downing submitted a request for matching funds to a state grant of \$2,500 to use for design planning for the performance stage. The Friends agreed to contribute \$2,500 in matching funds for a total of \$5,000. They also agreed to fund the Booklist Reader subscription, which is a new publication similar to Bookpage.

**Administrative Report**

Ms. Downing reported that everyone is so proud that Mr. Carrier has been recognized with the Library Trustee of the Year Award by the Massachusetts Library Trustee Association for his 41 years of dedicated volunteer service to Forbes. The trustees congratulated him on this award. Mr. Carrier thanked Ms. Downing for all her help and support. He said he wanted to publicly set the record straight on two things that were mis-reported in the local newspapers. First, the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* article stated that Mr. Carrier had founded the Friends of Forbes. While he was on the original board of the Friends, the Friends group was founded by Gertrude Smith. Secondly, the article in the *Reminder* said that Forbes is completely independent from the city, which is not true. While the trustees are elected and the library is managed by the board of trustees, the city provides the majority of the library's funding.

Ms. Downing reported that Forbes received a \$2,500 Community One Stop for Growth state grant intended to help communities, "realize their economic potential and to ensure that residents live, work, and play in thriving communities." This grant had a matching requirement that the Friends have approved making a total of \$5,000 towards the design of a performance stage on the west lawn. Ms. Downing thanked Ms. Bruce who had drafted the application. She said that Forbes was encouraged to apply for additional funding for the performance stage from the same group.

The library had ninety-nine objects professionally photographed at the end of October including all of the new art acquisitions. These digital images will be included in the new online collection management system that will be going live early next year. The ten new pieces acquired through the BIPOC art initiative were all hung as well. A reception is being planned for early next year.

The library's work with the Center for New Americans to document the lives of immigrants to the community through oral history recordings was featured on NEPM's Connecting Point. This is part of Forbes' ongoing work to continue to document local history for future researchers spearheaded in part by IMLS grant funds. "We really feel strongly that it's to the benefit of the public at large that we preserve a history that reflects the city as it is today for the people of future generations to understand Northampton and the larger area," said Dylan Gaffney.

Central Services has submitted for the installation of a new chiller in FY24 to the Capital Improvements Plan. This is a very expensive and necessary project. As a result, the basement HVAC and children's renovation has now been pushed out to FY26.

The library expanded its "Library of Things" collection this month to include a pass to the Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra that admits up to four people along with pickle ball and bocce sets.

Ms. Downing and Mr. Carrier attended the Smith community breakfast this month. They learned about their geo-thermal project that will help the college achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. It was great to connect with so many college and community members for the first time in person since the pandemic started.

**Administrative Report** (continued)

There were nearly one hundred people at the Arrive@5 Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce networking event held in the Reading Room. It was fun to showcase the library and everyone seemed to have a great time.

Forbes hosted a second grade class visit from Jackson Street School with about forty-five students this week. One of the stops was the director's office where students got to see behind the scenes at the library including the 19th century toilet in the Director's Office.

Mr. Kalish joined the meeting at 4:15 PM.

**Covid Safety Update**

Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss reported that there have not been any changes this month.

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.

**Cybersecurity Grant Update**

Ms. Downing introduced Information Services Librarian Ben Kalish, who chairs the library's Cybersecurity Committee. Mr. Kalish said there are 4 members on the committee, including Ms. Moss, which was formed in 2020 or 2021. After an initial flurry of meetings, they now meet a few times a year. They did an initial assessment of risks to identify areas where the library might be vulnerable and where changes could be made. He said one of the biggest successes was in changing how the library's PayPal account was handled. They are doing away with shared accounts and passwords, and have implemented a process for keeping track of and managing various staff library accounts. Recently there have been efforts around the education of staff through a grant from the state of Massachusetts. In addition to training sessions in cybersecurity, the grant funded simulated phishing attacks to help educate staff on how to detect and avoid phishing scams. There have also been opportunities for questions and discussion about these issues and what staff can do to keep things more secure.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Mr. Kalish said that the committee is not requesting the same grant again next year, but will continue to keep staff up to date and will look at other training options. In response to a question from Ms. Bruce, Mr. Kalish said that there are a lot of people in the library world looking at cybersecurity issues including the MLA and NELA. He said it makes more sense for Forbes to handle their own cybersecurity training rather than being part of the city's training because Forbes is able to customize and personalize the training. On behalf of the trustees, Mr. Carrier thanked Mr. Kalish for all the work he does for Forbes and for going above and beyond.

Mr. Kalish left the meeting at 4:28 PM.

**Next Meetings**

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Tuesday, December 20 at 4 PM.

**Next Meetings** (continued)

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held on Wednesday, December 7 at 6:30 PM. It will be a hybrid in-person and virtual Zoom meeting. Ms. Bruce will attend on behalf of the trustees.

**Communications**

Ms. Downing received a letter from retired Staff Sergeant Cindi Curtis thanking Forbes for the donation of books to the VA Hospital in Leeds, MA.

Ms. Downing received an email today from the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA) notifying her that the current FLEA officers have all been re-elected.

**Discussion Topic**

There was no discussion topic this month.

**Director Evaluation Process**

Ms. Downing said it will be time to evaluate the director again early next year. The trustees were asked to review the form and process in preparation. The form used last time and information about director evaluations from the MBLC were distributed to the trustees. Ms. Downing and the trustees agreed that the same process used two years ago could be used again this time. Ms. Moss will have the form ready for the trustees to use by the December trustees' meeting. The trustees will submit their evaluations and comments individually and Ms. Moss will compile them into one document. The evaluation form for staff will be sent to them in early January with a week's deadline. Ms. Moss will compile those responses as well and have it all ready for the January trustees' meeting.

**Northampton's Lights Painting**

Ms. Downing reported that Maggie Hodges exhibited in the Hosmer Gallery in October and a painting titled, "Northampton's Lights" caught her and Faith Kaufmann's eyes. Ms. Hodges brought the painting to show the trustees. She is local and attended Williston Northampton Academy where she studied drawing, printmaking and calligraphy. She received her BFA from Syracuse with a concentration in Graphic Design. She was a designer for Hasbro and Spalding Sports and then designed and sold children's clothing. More recently she developed a passion for painting. She has opened a studio/gallery in downtown Amherst, she travels to plein air events and is a member of the Amherst Plein Air Society. The piece depicts the railroad bridge across Main Street at night. Ms. Downing and Ms. Kaufmann believe "Northampton's Lights" would be a great addition to the library's permanent collection. The price is \$1,900 and the trustees were asked to consider this recommendation.

Ms. Hodges said it was very nice to be here and that she is thrilled the trustees' are considering purchasing the painting. She said it would be an honor for her artwork to be displayed along with that of Barry Moser who she studied with at Williston. She then answered questions from the trustees about her painting process. Mr. Carrier recommended purchasing the painting with funds from the Lyman Special Collection Fund. Ms. Moss said it will hang on the east wall of the reading room.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to purchase "Northampton's Lights" for \$1,900 from the Lyman Special Collection Fund. 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.

### **Investing New Funds**

Ms. Downing reported that after consulting with Bartholomew Inc., the trustees are being asked to approve a change from a vote made last month where the board approved, "\$10,000 in the RCCR Fund along with the \$25,100 in the Harding Local History and Special Collections Fund and the \$10,000 in the Keogh Family Fund should be sent to Bartholomew Inc. with instructions to invest them in Treasury investments." When this request was received, Bartholomew Inc. reiterated that now is not the time to stray from the library's investment plan. The trustees were now asked to retroactively approve investing these funds totaling \$45,100 into the library's portfolio following the library's investment policy.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to retroactively approve the recommendation of Bartholomew Inc. and invest the \$45,100 in the library's portfolio rather than in Treasury investments. 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.

Mr. Carrier said that the library has about \$140,000 in various funds at Florence Bank, and that is the money that Bartholomew Inc. recommends investing in short-term treasury investments. Once Ms. Buckhout is able to confirm the amounts, and if she agrees, they will bring a proposal to the trustees at a future meeting.

### **Grace Coolidge Portrait Transport Fee**

Ms. Downing reported that the portrait of Grace Coolidge that has been at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center being repaired and cleaned is ready to be returned. The CCPLM standing committee recommends spending \$567.50 for the return of the painting. Ms. Downing suggests this come from the Lyman Special Collection fund. The National Portrait Gallery's insurance covered the cost to repair and clean the portrait.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve spending \$567.50 from the Lyman Special Collection Fund for the return of the Grace Coolidge portrait. 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.

### **Increasing Board Size Update**

Ms. Downing reported that Attorneys Eric and Sandra Lucentini continue to keep her apprised of their work on this. Mr. Carrier said that he spoke with them yesterday and they have not yet heard back from State Attorney General Eric Carriker and will reach out if they don't hear back soon. There is also the option to go to the Probate Court to try to speed things up.

### **Treasurer Search**

Mr. Carrier reported that Mr. Pascucci found the Treasurer's position more detailed and more work than he anticipated and has decided to step down. The trustees are grateful for the assistance he provided. Ms. Downing reported that the search committee formed last year consisting of Mr. Carrier, Ms. Wight, Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss, and Jennie Lamour has reformed and in consultation with Cheri Buckhout is moving forward. They are starting with the finalists from last year's search and have an interview scheduled for next week. Ms. Buckhout will attend the interviews to better explain the job requirements and gauge the candidates skills.

**Reports on Subcommittees and Other Meetings**

Strategic Planning Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the community survey received over 1,200 responses. An open community focus group was scheduled for December 8 as well as an invitational session for November 30. Both of these will be happening as the committee wraps up the information gathering phase of their planning work.

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the programming subcommittee has developed a proposal for the centennial years beginning in 2023 that includes lectures and a social event next summer. Committee Chair, J.R. Greene will be doing a book talk on his Coolidge in 100 objects book on Tuesday November 29 at 6 PM.

**Other Business**

There was no other business.

At 4:59 PM Ms. Wight moved to adjourn the meeting. 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. The meeting was adjourned at 4:59 PM.