

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Present: Ms. Debin Bruce, Mr. Russell Carrier, Ms. Lisa Downing, Ms. Molly Moss, Mr. Joseph Twarog, Ms. Katy Wight. **Also Present:** Seth Gregory, Strategic Branding Consultant. **Present via Zoom:** Elizabeth Sheirer; Jacquie Fraser, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library. **Absent:** Emily Prabhaker.

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 February 21, 2023.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Wight moved that the Secretary's report of January 19, 2023 be accepted and placed on file with a minor correction. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

An updated 2023 contact list for the trustees and state and local legislators was distributed.

Library Branding

Ms. Wight introduced Seth Gregory, Strategic Brand Consultant, who presented the preliminary recommendations for a new visual branding for Forbes Library. The recommendations fulfill the initial intentions to design a contemporary brand identity system with the following traits: flexible and modular (able to be arranged in numerous formats, and also deconstructed to support a broader conceptual design motif); utilizes open-source fonts which are readily accessible to staff for the creation of library media; accommodates a wide variety of color and works well in single-color as well; strikes a tone that is welcoming and warm while also conveying competency and reliability; rooted in the legacy of the building, while resonating with a broader mission of community engagement and enrichment; a distinct logotype which supports the use of "For All" as a key component of outreach and messaging efforts; a system which results in a cohesive family of affiliated identities for the Coolidge Museum, Friends of Forbes, The Hosmer Gallery and The Hampshire Room. Examples of the logotype in various uses was distributed to the trustees.

Mr. Gregory presented three variations for the trustees to consider and asked for their response and feedback. The trustees reviewed the designs and provided feedback on preferences. Overall, the preference was for the first option, which more closely reflects the stone arches in the building's architecture. Mr. Gregory said the color was inspired by the terracotta color of the stones in the arches and could be further adjusted.

The trustees thanked Mr. Gregory for his work and he left the meeting at 4:25 PM.

Treasurer's Report

The trustees reviewed the Treasurer's Report for the month ending January 31, 2023. The General Aid Fund had positive net activity for the month of \$28,538 and closed with a balance of \$15,471. The Book & Media Fund had negative net activity of \$20,692 and closed with a deficit of \$12,714, due to \$27,700 of endowment distributions that have not yet occurred. The Doland Reference Room Fund had negative net activity of \$5,306 and has a deficit of \$6,866. The Garvey Book & Media Fund had positive net activity of \$905 and closed with a balance of \$12,450. The Halberstadt Technology Fund had negative net activity of \$587 and has a balance of \$13,297. The Lyman Special Collections fund had negative net activity of \$3,191 and has a deficit of \$38. The Morin Fund had positive net activity of \$24,247 and has a balance of \$120,835. The Programming Fund-Adult had negative net activity of \$3,609 and has a balance of \$3,757. The Programming Fund-Children had positive net activity of \$1,027 and has a balance of \$3,430. The Watson Copier Fund had positive net activity of \$665 and has a balance of \$2,869. The balance in the endowment as of January 31, 2023 was \$6,046,673.15

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month ending January 31, 2023 and place it on file. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Downing said that the transfers to the endowment approved at last month's meeting are not reflected on this month's report and will appear on next month's report. She said that more than half way through the fiscal year, the budget is looking close but okay. Mr. Carrier reminded the trustees that the treasurer is authorized to transfer funds from the Garvey Book & Media Fund (money collected from the parking meters) from the operating account to the endowment when they total over \$5,000. Ms. Moss said that the Watson Copier Fund does not reflect all billing and needs to be brought up to date.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

Ms. Downing submitted a list of undesignated gifts received from multiple donors since the last trustees' meeting with \$26,326.19 going to the Morin Fund and \$2,025 to the Lyman Special Collections Fund.

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

The following donations were received since the last trustees' meeting: a woodcut of Hadley Tobacco Workers by Nancy Haver donated by Martha McCormick.

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

2nd Quarter Report

Ms. Downing reported that mid-year the budget appears to be generally on target with personnel costs running very close to budget, electricity running over, and several other operating expenses off budget due to the timing of bills. She will continue to watch the budget as the library moves into the third quarter.

Draft FY24 Budget

Ms. Downing reported that Forbes was instructed to submit a level services budget although with guidance from the Mayor's office to keep the increase

Draft FY24 Budget (continued)

between 2.5 and 3%. A draft budget has been compiled with a 3.3% overall increase (3.92% increase in personnel and 2.97% increase in operating expenses overall. The city's increase is 3.61% for personnel and 1.45% for operating expenses). The library continues to be greatly impacted by large increases in electricity and overall inflation. This budget prioritizes staff salaries and relies on additional support from the Friends, the Doland Fund, and an anticipated increase in state aid. Ms. Downing expects to be invited to a budget meeting next month. Mr. Carrier said that the trustees should discuss how they will present the budget to the city and emphasized the need to prioritize wages.

Department Report

There was no department report this month.

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Prabhaker attended the February 1 meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that the Artisan Fair has been scheduled for October 1 with no rain date. The Finance Committee came up with a couple of options of what to do with the surplus this year and after discussion the Friends decided to put 75% in the endowment and 25% in the director's discretionary fund. The Garden Tour committee met and is gathering sponsors for the annual event to be held on June 10 this year. Ms. Downing put forward a range of funding requests totaling close to last year's amount: \$10,000 for the Book & Media Fund, \$5,000 for Staff Development, \$4,000 for Children's & Young Adult Programming, \$4,000 for Adult Programming, \$2,000 for Community Engagement, \$2,200 for museum passes, \$300 for staff appreciation, \$300 for volunteer appreciation, \$402 for Book Page subscription, and \$375 for Booklist Reader. The funding requests were approved as well as an additional TV stand and funding towards a Smart TV for youth programming. Matching funds for Library Giving Day were also approved. Archivist Julie Nelson talked about the move to a new archives catalog system and gave grant updates. Ms. Downing discussed the library's budget and strategic plan. Mr. Carrier noted that the Friends agreed to fund almost \$30,000 in requests, an amount never anticipated when the Friends were founded. He expressed appreciation for all that the Friends do.

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

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing thanked the trustees for attending the reception for the new pieces by artists of color in Forbes' permanent collection with special thanks to Ms. Wight for creating a beautiful guide to the collection and to Mr. Carrier for chairing that initiative. The response has been enthusiastically positive from the community.

Induction hotplate kits are the latest addition to Forbes' Library of Things. These came to the library through a partnership with three climate organizations - Center for EcoTechnology, Local Energy Advocates, and Mothers Out Front.

Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss were pleased to announce that regular hours are back in the Hampshire Room on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 10 AM-2 PM. This is in addition to research assistance by appointment that has been offered throughout the pandemic.

Administrative Report (continued)

The library has joined the Library Speaker's Consortium which brings Forbes high profile authors and other authors of interest each month for Zoom interviews and the opportunity for patrons to submit questions to the author.

This month Forbes also became a collaborating agency with Access To Justice (A2J). This initiative makes Trial Court virtual services, such as the Court Service Centers, Law Libraries, and Virtual Front Desks, more easily found by self-represented litigants who may struggle navigating the voluminous Mass.gov website. For court users that are unable to access virtual court services at home for any reason, or who face challenges getting to the court in-person, their local library can be the bridge that allows them to access justice through the courts.

Forbes is holding a toiletries drive to support distribution in the community through the Friends of Hampshire County Homeless. Library patrons have been very generous and hundred of items have already been collected.

Paula Elliott has announced her intention to retire at the end of June after more than 40 years of service that has included earning her Masters in Library Science in 1988 and becoming head cataloger. She is well respected across the staff and will be dearly missed. Ms. Downing said she hopes to post the position and hire someone who will overlap with Ms. Elliott before she leaves.

Forbes has welcomed an intern from Northampton High School named Ryan Weinsier. She is beginning her semester-long internship shadowing in Children's, Reference, and Special Collections and then will be doing some project work for the library.

There is a new state system for the conflict of interest testing that all staff and trustees must take every two years. Jennie Lamour is working with Pam Powers to get all registered and when renewal time comes, everyone will receive an email from the state with information. Please be on the lookout for it and follow the directions in the email.

Once again, the Friends decorated the staff room and filled it with yummy treats in appreciation of the staff for Valentine's Day. The staff loved it!

Forbes had a furry visitor at the library last week. A young bear ambled across the parking lot and ended up spending quite a bit of time up in a tree that was visible through the Reading Room windows before going on its way.

Covid Safety Update

Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss reported that cases are on the decline along with the early rush of flu cases. With several additional benefits that were granted during the pandemic expiring next month, it is anticipated that some of the library's patrons will be feeling the additional burden and anxiety of financial and other pressures. Forbes will work to connect patrons with resources and assistance provided by partner agencies.

Ms. Bruce 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, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, March 23 at 4 PM. Ms. Bruce will attend via Zoom. The trustees previously scheduled the following meetings for the remainder of 2023: Wednesday, April 26; Thursday, May 25; Thursday, June 22; Thursday, July 20; Thursday, September 21; Thursday, October 19; Thursday, November 16; and Thursday, December 21. Meetings will convene at 4 PM, unless the representatives of Bartholomew Inc. are invited, in which case the meeting will begin at 3:45 PM.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held on Wednesday, February 1 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

There were no communications this month.

Trustees Goals

Goals for 2023 based on last month's discussion were distributed to the trustees. They include: have a new treasurer in place by mid-year; increase board size to seven; increase BIPOC participation and voices in trustee decisions; complete a multi-year strategic plan for the library; support increased marketing and publicity efforts by exploring the possibility of allocating budget funds to marketing and publicity to cover dedicated staff hours as well as materials and advertising costs; implement new strategic branding; increase both the amount raised and the number of donors annually, as well as the amount invested in the endowment; improve bathroom ventilation; increase the personnel hours in the Coolidge Museum and hire a consultant to redesign the permanent exhibit in the Coolidge Museum; add a performance stage to the west lawn; prepare to renovate the young adult room, add a youth programming room, and update the HVAC system that supports the ground level; seek opportunities to serve as an ambassador for the library and advocate for the library's needs.

Mr. Twarog said he has two recommendations. First, he would like for Forbes to purchase an AED defibrillator. Secondly, he would like Forbes to participate in the monthly art walk on the second Friday of every month. This would require the library to remain open past 6 PM, and there was discussion about how this could happen.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Trustees 2023 goals. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Performance Stage Design

Ms. Downing reported that Berkshire Design in partnership with Kuhn Riddle Architects have created a siting and design concept for the performance stage that the landscape committee is bringing forward for the board's consideration. This design work was completed on a tight budget and timeline, yet accomplishes everything the committee was seeking in terms of meeting the library's programming needs, siting that makes the most sense for the west lawn, and a design that does not compete with the building. The plan calls for siting the stage in the back corner of the west lawn near the parking lot, away from the noise from the road. It also is the most accessible location. Landscaping including a seating wall and plantings could be added at a later date, though grading should take place with the initial installation. The size of the stage being considered is 16' x 24'. Mr. Carrier said that some of these decisions can be made once it's known how much money

Performance Stage Design (continued)

will be available for the project. Ms. Downing reported that Forbes has received \$80,000 in ARPA funds, which is likely half of what will be needed. Ms. Bruce said that approval of both the siting and the design of the stage can take place at a later date.

Team Development Proposal

Ms. Downing said that the library's work teams are the backbone of library operations yet have very little time or resources to come together to grow and bond. She requested \$1,500 from the Morin Fund and submitted a proposal for calling all Forbes Library teams (Borrower Services, Information Services, Children's and Young Adult Services, Tech Services, Administrative Team, and Facilities) to come together for a team development gathering that should have both learning and socializing objectives. Teams should plan 2 gathering sessions - one before June and the other between September and December 2023. Team proposals should be developed by each team collectively. Proposals should be submitted to Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss for approval using a form that will be provided. The budget is \$25 per team member per gathering. Team development sessions can be up to 3 hours in length. Teams can meet in the library or go off-site. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss will do everything they can to help with logistics including arranging food, space, and desk coverage as needed. Receipts and other paperwork will be required. A brief summary of outcomes and desired follow-up should be submitted to Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss after each gathering. Staff that serve on multiple teams are to be invited to the gatherings for each team they are a part of. The trustees agreed with the proposal, but suggested raising the budget to \$50 per team member per gathering for a total budget of \$3,000.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve \$3,000 from the Morin fund for library team development based on the proposal submitted by Ms. Downing. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Faxing

Ms. Downing said that Forbes offers public faxing services that are often used by patrons to submit required documents. In a recent poll of other libraries, there is a trend to eliminate the fee to send faxes as a way to reduce barriers. Ms. Downing proposed eliminating the current charge (\$1 per fax) in light of the fact that very minimal telephone expense is incurred for this service and it has become a core service for patrons. Currently between \$20-\$40 is generated per month through faxing fees so the financial impact to the library will be minimal. Ms. Bruce said that commercial establishments charge much more for faxing. The trustees discussed whether this would cause large numbers of people to come to the library for faxing, and then decided that if it did, that could be a positive.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to eliminate the fees for sending faxes. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Parking Recommendation

Ms. Downing reported that the city has announced parking fee increases and changes to enforcement times and practices. This prompted her to contact the Parking Department and to reassess the library's parking situation. As a result, the parking office has offered to replace the library's current meter heads with digital heads that will take nickels, dimes, and quarters at no cost to Forbes (city surplus). This can happen as soon as next month and will

Parking Recommendation (continued)

be more convenient for patrons because the current heads are getting older and only take quarters. Ms. Downing said that the ParkMobile app charges \$.23 a transaction, which would require a significant raise in the parking rates to break even, so she recommends staying with the coin meters. Ms. Downing recommends that no changes be made to the library's current parking rates. They were set many years ago as a deterrent for people parking all day to go off elsewhere as was common practice before the meters were installed. This has and continues to be effective. The library's lot is rarely full these days although there has started to be an increase as library attendance grows with the receding pandemic concerns. Ms. Downing said there are also some new businesses and organization coming to the area and if the library's parking becomes a problem again, she recommends that the rates be revisited. In the meantime, the current rate continues to be effective and minimizes the financial toll and inconvenience for patrons that are encouraged to visit often and linger. The current rates that she proposes retaining are \$.25 for 30 minutes for short term parking along the side of the building and \$.25 for 60 minutes in the rear lot. Additionally, the parking enforcement hours will change from their current 9-5 to 10-7 starting next month as well. Ms. Downing will work on notifying library patrons of this change and the stickers will be updated on the meter heads. Ms. Downing would also like to see if it would be possible to add a couple of handicapped spots near the front right corner of the lot (nearest the west lawn) in anticipation of increased use of the lawn by people with disabilities now that there is a curb cut granting access to the lawn and with the forthcoming stage bringing more visitors.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the director's recommendations for parking and parking rates. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

William Trost Richards Painting

Ms. Downing reported that she and Faith Kaufmann are working with Bonham's Auction House to get the William Trost Richards painting into an American art auction coming up in May. They have been asked to set a reserve (minimum price) and following the recommendation of the gallery, Ms. Downing suggests it be set at \$20,000. The proceeds from the sale will go to the Lyman Special Collections Fund.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to set a reserve (minimum price) of \$20,000 for the William Trost Richards painting to be sold at auction in May. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Administration Goals

Ms. Downing distributed updates on the Administration's 2022 goals. Completed goals include hosting the Western MA library legislative virtual breakfast, hosting a Chamber of Commerce Arrive@5 event, sharing information about recent bequests to honor donors and inspire others, overseeing completion of the FY22 Action Plan, hiring a new Head of Borrower Services, offering staff safety training, supporting staff training as part of the Cybersecurity grant program, supporting completion of Moving Memories Lab IMLS grant, supporting Outside Voices LSTA grant, and successfully realizing the goals in the FY19-FY23 Strategic Plan. Goals in progress include conducting Spanish language outreach campaign, completing comprehensive job description review, participating in development of a new multi-year strategic plan, supporting

Administration Goals (continued)

the trustees in realizing their annual goals, refreshing the library's branding, growing the Northampton Free Book Box program, remodeling the Young Adult Room and creating a new programming room, diversifying library staff, stabilizing funding for the Book & Media Budget, and expanding and renovating Special Collections and the CCPLM. Goals not yet begun include launching a book bike program, working with special collections staff to develop a Historian in Residence program, reviewing employee grade chart, and partnering with Smith College to include CCPLM in tourism publicity with new Neilson Library. It was decided not to pursue the goal of improving the Children's Room entrance. They plan to continue to work on those that are not yet completed and will develop a new set of goals based on the forthcoming strategic plan.

Increasing Board Size Update

Ms. Downing reported that the Lucentinis have reconnected with Erik Carriker from the Attorney General's office about increasing the size of the Forbes' board of trustees from five to seven. They spoke with him by phone and based on that conversation, they are now recommending that the trustees pursue this change through probate court. It will be a lengthy process. Once the judge rules, it will need to be approved by the City Council and then go before the voters for approval. The State legislature will also need to sign off on it.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to pursue increasing the size of the Forbes Board of Trustees through probate court. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Downing will notify the attorneys to begin this process and also to notify the city, who is on board with this change. Broader communication with the public could also begin.

Accessibility Committee

Ms. Downing said that Forbes has had a committee that focuses on accessibility for people with disabilities for over 10 years. Ben Kalish has been chairing it and participants from the community with lived experience advise the library on a variety of things including services, programs, and accommodations much the same way that the Racial and Social Justice group advises the library on those same areas with a racial and social justice lens. Mr. Kalish would like the committee to be a recognized advisory group to the trustees and would like to invite a trustee to be a liaison and possibly to chair or co-chair the committee. Ms. Downing plans to bring back a charter as an action item at a forthcoming meeting. For now she requested thoughts about this idea and asked if anyone on the board would be interested in working with the Accessibility Committee in the future. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that the group has been meeting quarterly in a hybrid format. Mr. Carrier said that this is a good idea and makes sense, and that the trustees would like to see a formal proposal.

Trustee Election

This is an election year for three of the five trustees. The City Clerk has posted the schedule of important dates related to the election. The schedule can be viewed online at <https://www.northamptonma.gov/755/Elections>. Nomination papers will become available in April and will be due back in early summer. Mr. Carrier asked the trustees to let him know if they plan to run for reelection.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings

Strategic Planning Committee - Ms. Wight reported that they have analyzed the data collected through the survey, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews and have identified some obvious goal areas for the strategic plan. They've asked for feedback from the management team before fleshing out objectives and activities related to each goal area. They are aiming to have a draft to share at the March trustee's meeting. They've also been meeting regularly with Seth Gregory about branding and are excited to hear feedback from the trustees and others.

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the committee has come up with a calendar of events for the centennial year beginning with a program on the "Death of a President" tentatively scheduled for the evening of June 7th. Mr. Carrier said that the committee needs more members and a discussion should be had about broadening the search especially in light of the accepted adoption of remote meetings.

Facilities Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the committee held its first half year meeting and all present seemed to feel it was a good idea to take a look at the progress of the projects approved for the current year at the halfway point. There were no surprises, some projects were already complete and some were still in progress. The major obstacle holding up a few of them was getting folks to get back to Jason Petcen with a quote. He is keeping an eye on those projects and trying to not be so pushy that they never call back when called for future projects. The committee did recommend purchasing a large screen TV for the young adult area and a number of tables for the children's room. These items had been brought up by Sarah Johnson during her recent monthly report. It was decided to ask the Friends to fund them. Their next regularly scheduled meeting is in June 1.

Development Committee - Mr. Carrier said they were sad to hear that Cindy Langley no longer had the time to remain on the committee due to her new commitments at the Senior Center. Everyone greatly appreciates her many contributions and wish her well. The committee finalized plans for Library Giving Day which will be on April 4. The Friends of Forbes have agreed to increase their \$8,000 match for that day to \$10,000. Fundraising has been strong during the previous year. The amount raised from the Library Giving Day almost doubled the previous year's total coming in at \$12,595. Gifts for this year's Annual Fund have already exceeded those from last year's appeal by almost \$8,000 and totals \$41,189 at this point. Membership in The Charles Forbes Society increased by six as well. Finally, the committee reviewed their 2022 goals and updated them for 2023. They were distributed to the trustees.

Landscaping Committee - Ms. Bruce said that in light of the new city department for Climate Action and Project Administration, Forbes should consider the idea of covering the parking lot with solar panels.

Other Business

Mr. Carrier said that for clarification, Forbes, as a charitable trust, cannot take a position on the issue of reparations in Northampton.

At 5:39 PM, Mr. Twarog moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:39 PM.