

**TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY**  
**Thursday, November 16, 2023**

**Present:** Mr. Russell Carrier, Ms. Lisa Downing, Ms. Molly Moss, Ms. Emily Prabhaker, Ms. Elizabeth Sheirer, Mr. Joseph Twarog, Ms. Katy Wight. **Also Present:** JoEllen MacKenzie, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA); Ruth Francis, trustee-elect; Anne Teschner, trustee-elect. **Present via Zoom:** Ms. Debin Bruce; Ms. Kyle Hamilton; Mr. Brian Jamros and Kathleen Glowacki of Bartholomew Inc.; Alene Moroni, Head of Technical Services. **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 3:47 PM.

**Bills & Warrants**

The trustees signed the warrant dated November 16, 2023.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**Bartholomew Quarterly Report**

Mr. Brian Jamros presented a review of the endowment portfolio as of June 30, 2023. Mr. Jamros reported that the value of the portfolio on October 31, 2023 was \$5,659,870. There have been some positive signs in the last few weeks with the Federal Reserve signaling that they are done raising rates, inflation is settling down, gas prices are down, and the markets are taking off. The value as of yesterday was \$5,976,000. The market is rallying everywhere except with alternatives which are designed to provide stability in a down market. The Forbes portfolio has been reallocated as a 60/40 equities to bonds mix which Mr. Jamros said was appropriate with the library's current withdrawal rate and amount of donations. Individual positions have been adjusted to fit the 60/40 allocation mandate. Should donations decrease, the withdrawal rate and asset allocation should be reconsidered. The value of the account was down 6.01% for the quarter, but up 5.72% since inception.

The trustees thanked Mr. Jamros and Ms. Glowacki who left the meeting at 4PM.

**Secretary's Report**

Ms. Prabhaker moved that the Secretary's report of October 19, 2023 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. Hamilton presented the Treasurer's Report for the month ending October 31, 2023. The General Aid fund closed with a balance of \$72,562. The Book & Media Fund ended with \$15,619. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss said the balances are due to timing issues of when particular yearly expenses are paid. They will talk to Ms. Hamilton about these annual fluctuations in a separate meeting. Ms. Hamilton is looking at ways to simplify the monthly Treasurer's Reports.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month ending October 31, 2023 and place it on file. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion,

**Treasurer's Report** (continued)

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 in October with \$3,422.65 going to the Book and Media Fund, \$3,057.34 to the Morin Fund; \$4,000 to the Performance Stage Fund, \$500 to the Programming Fund-Children; \$250 to the Rosamond Chester Coolidge Fund; and \$100 to the Lyman Special Collections Fund. A designated gift of \$225 was received for the Lyman Special Collections Fund.

There were no receipts from sales/rents in October.

The following donations were received since the last trustees' meeting: Florence Civic Center Photo Collection consisting of 200+ glass plate negatives and 10 photo albums covering Florence history and Florence families from late 19th century and early 20th century; The Iron Horse Collection containing a range of materials collected by Jordi Herold over the course of 25+ years; and one small November 1907 blotter from Kingsley's Drug Store.

Ms. Prabhaker 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. Moss reported that the annual fund has so far received 108 gifts for a total of \$15,993.39, with more still coming in.

**Financial Report: Final FY2023 Report**

The audit is scheduled to be reviewed at the December meeting. After that, Ms. Hamilton will be able to present a final FY2023 budget report.

**Department Report: Reference**

Ms. Alene Moroni presented the Reference department report. As of June, the department is now known as Adult Services, with Priya Charry as the new Head of Adult Services. Accomplishments include cataloging nonfiction items not already in the catalog; refreshing travel books; ongoing collection maintenance; switching to MobilePrint; and reorganizing the new public computers. Grants include collaborating with Kelly Anderson (Smith College) on Northampton Pride Liberation: LGBT Voices From the Valley oral history project. Ongoing work includes providing remote library services; providing online chat service; supporting outreach; prioritizing efforts to increase inclusivity; allocating funds to support circulating nonfiction refreshment in areas of need; maintaining and refreshment of Adult fiction collection; maintaining and refreshment of Adult nonfiction collection; maintaining and updating displays; migrating book groups back to in-building meetings; supporting the adult summer reading program; and weeding and rearrangement of the Reference collection. Individual staff accomplishments were noted. Challenges include pandemic safety measures; staffing the library for increased hours with IPT workers; dissatisfaction with current one-on-one appointment scheduling system; evaluating library services and improving upon existing library services; implementing "pay what you can" public printing; and general effects of the pandemic.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said the department was renamed to Adult Services because Reference is just one arm of what the

**Department Report: Reference** (continued)

department does, with outreach, marketing, and programming making up other arms. Ms. Moroni concurred saying that "Reference" is intimidating and outdated terminology and that Adult Services is more welcoming and better reflects the work of the department. She said that she has been working closely with Ms. Charry during the transition and it has been very rewarding. She said that the dissatisfaction with the appointment scheduling has largely been resolved by Ms. Charry and Heather Diaz. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier about the department's needs, she said that is now up to Ms. Charry.

**Department Report: Technical Services**

Ms. Moroni presented the Technical Services department report. As of June, the Technical Services Department was reorganized with Ms. Moroni as Head of Technical Services, Benjamin Kalish as Cataloger and Technology Librarian, and Kathryn Mizula as Technical Services Assistant. Steven Stover continues to work on unpacking and receiving and Brian Marchese continues to work on periodicals along with their duties in other departments (Interlibrary Loan and Borrower Services respectively). Collection data includes 11,948 items added in the last year, and 14,322 items deleted, for a total of 173,982 items valued at \$4,732,432.35

Completed accomplishments include transition to the new organizational structure; creating a handbook and guidelines for staff; meeting with other department heads; adding a Smith College work study position; reviewing fiction donations; revising Ingram iPage practices and changing standing order plan to notification only; ironing out glitches in order submissions; establishing routine communication with leadership; setting up a schedule for routine fiction and nonfiction ordering; eliminating purchase slips; retroactively updating adult fiction call numbers; revising "problem slip" to expedite materials; documenting procedures and practices for acquisitions ordering, cataloging, unpacking/receiving, etc.; updating reading room (new book) practices; improving Library of Things descriptions; weeding, shifting, and maintaining collections; establishing communication channels and collaboration opportunities with Interlibrary Loan department; implementing agile practices to accommodate variable workflows around deaccessioning; collaborating with Outreach Delivery Service; adding surplus computer from Reference to processing station for unpacking/receiving; repurposing YA room furniture; designing new book plates; revising classification schedules from LEJ through LEL; reclassifying most national literature (Y36-Y99); relabeling items; and moving all single biographies of doctors to the main section of biographies.

In process work includes reviewing periodicals subscriptions; reviewing Ingram iPage standing order author notifications; reporting monthly statistics; compiling lists of Technical Services recurring routines; replacing small book ends, replacing department's Periodicals computer; establishing routines for recurring departmental projects; evaluating collection location list; working with Children's department to bring call numbers into alignment; reorganizing and relabeling World Languages collection; and inventorying department supplies.

The Five-Year Plan includes cataloging Susan Howard Case poetry corner, cataloging the Literacy Collection, and creating a procedure to review classification. Immediate needs include a barcode printer for the main desk (\$1,000), adjustable tables for cataloging and processing stations (on order), improved lighting (1990s style torchiere floor lamps), tablets for Libby magazine use in reading room, 2-3 ergonomic adjustable chairs for staff, and a new phone extension.

**Department Report: Technical Services** (continued)

Ms. Moroni said that she went into a lot of detail in the report and was thrilled to see that they had accomplished so much. In addition, she said that she has found four old typewriters in the department and is thinking of adding one of them to the Library of Things. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, she said that a barcode printer at the desk will allow staff to print barcodes on the fly for books that do not have them on the cover, which will reduce processing time for returns. In addition, it will allow them to print new barcodes for library patrons who want to retain their old number. Ms. Downing will add it to the library's budget. Ms. Downing said that lighting upgrades were to be part of the basement renovation, but that since that won't happen for a while, task lighting can be purchased instead. Ms. Moroni said that the plan for lighting in the department has changed from what was originally proposed since they are using the space differently. Ms. Moroni said that two tablets will be very useful in the reading room for patrons to access magazines through Libby, which includes 4,000 subscription titles and 6,000 one-off titles. Login to the devices and security still need to be worked out. Ms. Moss said they could be purchased using the Halberstadt Technology Fund. Ms. Moroni said that an additional phone extension in the back room would be helpful since she and Mr. Kalish currently share one. Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to put this request on the facilities list.

The trustees thanked Ms. Moroni for her report and all the great work she does. Ms. Moroni left the meeting at 4:25 PM.

**Friends of Forbes**

Ms. Wight attended the November meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that they discussed and decided to retain their endowment asset allocation which is also 60/40. They discussed the performance stage, their membership mailing, and the Coolidge annual meeting. The Artisan Fair went well and next year they are seeking more sponsors. They are also seeking sponsors for the garden tour next June.

**Administrative Report**

Ms. Downing reported that Children's Librarian Sarah Johnson and Ms. Moss recently connected with new Northampton Superintendent Dr. Portia Bonner at events out in the community. Dr. Bonner is very receptive to exploring ways to partner with Forbes and will be touring the library later this month. One of the projects being launched is a universal kindergarten library card registration, a project that Ms. Johnson has been interested in for years.

Second grade classes from Jackson Street School visited Forbes this month. They toured the director's office and learned about the history of the building, learned how to operate the book drops, and spent time in the Children's and Young Adult Department getting library cards, browsing, and borrowing books.

Mary Biddle teamed up with Sandra Lucentini and Ian Breen as the "I Bee-Forbes E" team in the NEF Spelling Bee. They won their first round and all are so grateful to them for representing the library with such style and smarts.

Forbes is partnering with CWMARS on a pilot project to offer patrons a small daily allowance of free printing. The pilot will be closely monitored and in the meantime patrons who are able will be encouraged to make a donation to the library.

**Administrative Report** (continued)

There is art on display on the first floor until the end of the month from the "Waves of Healing" Art Exhibit, part of "A Stone's Throw: A Northampton Festival of Visual Art and Performance illuminating the experiences of Military Veterans and their Families."

Benjamin Kalish and Friends of Forbes board member Nicole Sibley got married earlier this month. They shared their happy news on a joint Facebook post of both organizations. All are so happy for this beautiful couple and wish them years of happiness.

The Arts & Music and Adult Services departments enjoyed a beautiful afternoon at Art in the Orchard for their fall outing.

Congratulations to Katy Wight, Ruth Francis, and Anne Teschner on winning their elections. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss are so glad to be able to continue to work with Ms. Wight and to welcome Ms. Francis and Ms. Teschner's fresh eyes and ideas.

Mr. Twarog moved that the Administrative Report 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.

**Next Meetings**

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, December 21 at 3:45 PM. Ms. Hamilton will invite the auditors to the meeting.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held on Wednesday, December 6 at 6:30 PM both in person and via Zoom. Ms. Wight will attend on behalf of the trustees.

**Communications**

Work study student, Ahn-Thu was given an illustrated book about Paco created by a child patron.

**Discussion Topic: Orienting New Trustees**

Ms. Downing said that two new trustees will be joining the board in January, and the board wants to support their growth and development into these new roles so that they have the knowledge and comfort to be able to enjoy the experience and become active and successful board members. A few years ago, a package of orientation materials was developed that Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss can present to new trustees. Ms. Downing will schedule a time with Ms. Teschner and Ms. Francis to review the documents. Mr. Carrier said there is a lot of information there and that the new trustees should not feel that they need to learn it all at once, and that they should feel free to ask questions. Ms. Downing gave an overview of what is included in the package and said that she will remind the trustees every January about this information. Ms. Wight said that the new city councilors are not aware of the agreement that Forbes has with the City of Northampton and that it is worth reaching out to Jim Nash to let him know.

**FY2025 Action Plan**

Ms. Downing said that in addition to an approved strategic plan, Forbes needs to annually submit action plans to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) with the objectives and specific actions the library plans to take in the upcoming fiscal year. This will be the first year of the

**FY2025 Action Plan** (continued)

new action plan and Ms. Downing presented a list that was developed with feedback by the leadership team and other staff members. The plan calls for publicly supporting legislation that protects intellectual freedom and library employees; reviewing the privacy policy; reviewing the social networking policy; reviewing the collection development policy; offering public instruction on accessing the library digitally; holding annual fall welcome event for Smith College community; exploring solar panels over the parking lot; advocating for improved links to existing and planned bike infrastructure in the city to the library; improving accessibility and ventilation of the bathrooms; conducting targeted marketing campaign to Latinx members of the community; seeking grant funding to develop a communications strategic plan; developing annual promotions calendar; staffing a table at the Center for New American's July 4<sup>th</sup> naturalization ceremony; producing a series of brief video segments about the library in partnership with Northampton Open Meia; increasing the use of bilingual signage and marketing materials; improving findability of library materials in the collection increasing cardholders living in Northampton Housing Authority properties; exploring hosting a community information fair; regularly offering tours to educators and social service providers in the community, filling vacant seats on the Racial and Social Justice Standing Committee and prioritizing those from traditionally marginalized communities; adding an accessible performance stage to the west lawn; increasing circulation of items in the Library of Things collection; expanding the Library of Things collection based on feedback from the community; increasing world language ability of staff to reflect community language needs; defining core competencies for staff and providing necessary training; promoting access to the newly digitized Judd Manuscript Collection; digitizing additional local history collections through MA state Digitization Project, celebrating centennial anniversaries of milestones in Coolidge's life and career, and developing a plan for renovating exhibits in the Coolidge Museum.

Mr. Carrier said that this list seems like a lot and asked if Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss were sure they wanted to commit to so much. Ms. Downing said that the list covers now through June 2025, almost a year and a half, and she thought it was manageable. She said the planning process builds enthusiasm and she wanted to capitalize on it. Ms. Moss added that they are using a team approach so that not all of the work will fall on Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the FY25 action plan. 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.

**Outdoor Athena Sculpture**

Ms. Downing said that she was approached by Eileen Travis about accepting a sculpture into the Library's art collection in memory of her husband, Thomas J. Ruane. Ms. Travis and Mr. Ruane moved to Northampton in June of 2022 so they could be closer to family. Ms. Travis wrote, "Although Tom only visited your library on a few occasions, he loved to visit when he was feeling up to it. Tom was all about reading and knowledge." The artist that she is proposing is a local metal artist, Brian McQuillian, who would create a statue of Athena, goddess of wisdom. McQuillian's work can be seen at Art in the Orchard, which is currently showing a sculpture of Diana, and he had a show in the Hosmer Gallery last year.

Ms. Carrier, Faith Kaufmann, Ms. Moss, and Ms. Downing discussed this offer and agreed that it was very interesting and in alignment with the library's

**Outdoor Athena Sculpture** (continued)

special collection policy. They met with Ms. Travis, her son, and Mr. McQuillian to review the artist's sketches and discuss placement. The sculpture will be constructed of steel and will sit about 6' tall on a stone pedestal. After reviewing several locations, the front garden bed to the left of the front doors as you face them was settled on. Ms. Travis is a landscape architect and said that she would help envision how to integrate the sculpture into the landscape. Ms. Downing said that the sculpture will naturally age and have a patina. The existing plantings can be rearranged, and walking stones and a bench can be added. This gift would include the sculpture, installation, and any necessary maintenance. Mr. Carrier said that over the years, the trustees have tried to utilize every inch of the interior as best they can, and that improving the outdoor space with sculpture and the performance stage are the next priority.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to accept the donation of a sculpture with terms as outlined above 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.

**Increasing Board Size Update**

There were no new updates to share this month.

**Building Projects Update**

Ms. Downing reported that the new boiler is up and running for which she is so grateful since the temperatures have dropped. There is insulation work that needs to be done before the project will be completed. Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss, Mr. Carrier, and Mr. Petcen met with Patrick McCarthy, the new Director of Central Services, and made him aware of the library's agreement with the city and their responsibility for large capital projects. Mr. McCarthy submitted four of Forbes' projects as part of the Capital Improvement Plan for FY25 funding including the performance stage; the bathroom ventilation and accessibility project; the new reversible chiller; and the lower level HVAC and Children's Department renovations. The mayor asked for the list to be cut back once, and then again, and only the bathroom renovation project made the final list to be submitted to the City Council for funding. The trustees agreed that the bathroom project was critical since there are already funding sources in place and it involves safety and accessibility. Mr. McCarthy forwarded an email on November 15 urging support for the Children's Department and HVAC renovation as an important project that has been continually pushed forward into subsequent fiscal years. The design and construction documents are 90% complete and an added selling point is that the project includes removing one of the three remaining steam zones, which would help in converting the heat from new steam to hot water. This is in line with the City's 2030 Carbon Neutral goals, and also germane to the potential ground source heating system being investigated for the Hub and Forbes Library. The Capital Planning Committee meetings are happening in November-December with recommendations to the Mayor by late December. Submission to the City Council is on February 29, 2024, and the Council will vote on the projects prior to May 31, 2024.

Mr. Carrier said that having the city be responsible for the projects is beneficial in terms of the funding, but causes the projects to cost more and take longer. The library can continue to do smaller projects with help from the Friends and outside funding, that will be quicker and cheaper. He said that the trustees must also rethink the performance stage project. The library has secured \$80,000 in American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds, and has put

**Building Projects Update** (continued)

away about \$44,000 in donations. The Friends have agreed to contribute about \$25,000, and the library has recently received an anonymous donation of \$50,000, so now has about \$204,000 it can commit to the project. The library will now need to negotiate with the City over the process.

**Reports from Subcommittees and Other Meetings**

Racial and Social Justice Advisory Group - Ms. Prabhaker reported that the committee created a list of activities to work on that are included in the library's strategic action plan. This will provide some continuity as Ms. Prabhaker steps off as chair.

Trustee Committees Review - Mr. Carrier reported that the committee met on November 2 and began the process of identifying the specific responsibilities of each of the proposed committees. The goal is to finish their work in early December so that their recommendations can be discussed at the December trustees' meeting.

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the committee met for their annual meeting this week. She said it was a good meeting. The film by Stan Sherer was shown and he answered questions. There was also a musical performance. The Exhibits sub-committee met last week and will meet again in December to discuss what is needed to improve the exhibit space.

**Other Business**

There was no other business.

At 5:16 PM Ms. Prabhaker 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 5:16 PM.