

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Present: Ms. Debin Bruce, Mr. Russell Carrier, Ms. Lisa Downing, Ms. Ruth Francis, Ms. Molly Moss, Ms. Elizabeth Sheirer, Ms. Anne Teschner, Ms. Katy Wight. **Also Present:** Trustee candidates: Rebekah Anderson, Kristen Barry-George, Patrick 'Duke' Corliss, Alexander George, Irene Rosenthal, Ann Michele 'Shelly' Ruocco, and Sean Vitalli; JoEllen MacKenzie, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library. **Absent:** Trustee candidate: Lolana Sevilla.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

Mr. Carrier welcomed the candidates and said the trustees were pleased to have so many highly qualified people interested in the position. He thanked them for submitting their statements in advance and said the trustees have carefully read them. He said it will be a difficult decision with so much great talent at the table. Because the responsibilities of the trustees have grown so much over the years, the trustees decided they needed to increase their number from five to seven several years ago. He gave a brief history of the considerable efforts to enact this change which involved probate court, the state attorney general, the mayor and city council, the state senate, and finally a signature by the governor of Massachusetts. He said that since only two of the candidates could be selected, he urged the others to look for other opportunities to be involved, and he introduced Ms. MacKenzie, the president of the Friends of Forbes. He then outlined the process for the meeting. The usual way to become a trustee is through an election and this process is only used to fill vacancies between elections. The appointed candidates will be eligible to run for re-election in 2025.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Trustee Candidate Interviews

Mr. Carrier asked the candidates to introduce themselves, and the trustees introduced themselves to the candidates. The trustees then took turns asking the same six questions of all the candidates, allowing them up to 2 minutes for each answer. A sound and signal was given to alert candidates that their time was up if needed. All candidates responded to each question before moving on to the next question. The order in which the candidates responded was rotated.

Mr. Carrier: Do you have experience serving on other boards or committees or in other groups, and if yes, what role did you serve? What are some of the strengths, skills, and talents you feel you could contribute to the Board of Trustees?

Ms. Wight: How would you help raise awareness and advocate for library services, collections, and programs?

Ms. Bruce: What are some ways the library can increase usage of the library from underserved communities?

Ms. Francis: What would you do if a community member reported to you that a book in our collection had offended them and should be removed?

Trustee Candidate Interviews (continued)

Ms. Teschner: Being an effective trustee requires attendance at the scheduled monthly Board meetings, along with time beyond the monthly meetings for committee meetings, special projects, etc. Do you feel you have the time to make such a commitment?

Mr. Carrier: Is there anything else you want us to know about you?

Following the question period, there was a brief break of 10 minutes, and the candidates, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Barry-George, Mr. Corliss, Mr. George, Ms. Rosenthal, Ms. Ruocco, and Mr. Vitalli, left the meeting.

Trustee Candidate Selection

Mr. Carrier said it was fortunate to have this process whereby the trustees could get to know more about the candidates before making a decision. He suggested the trustees think about the various backgrounds and strengths of the candidates and which fit with current library needs. Ms. Wight said to think about the library's strategic plan and where the candidates might fill a role. Ms. Teschner said that she would like to hear from staff. Ms. Downing said it was an amazing pool of candidates and the library could benefit from working with all of them. She said the board functions really well right now and she values the interpersonal dynamics and contributions of each trustee. She would like someone who can listen thoughtfully, but also roll up their sleeves and get work done; someone who will support the other board members, library staff, and community members and someone who is passionate about the library and will speak up for the library at every opportunity. Ms. Moss said the reason for expanding the number of trustees was because of the increased workload, and she would like someone who will step up and do the work, not just make more work for library staff. Ms. MacKenzie said that while experience is important, she also values energy level, enthusiasm, and an eagerness to learn.

Mr. Carrier outlined the selection process. The trustees will vote in rounds. The secretary will call the roll call vote asking each trustee to vote for their top two candidates. After the voting is completed, the secretary will present the tally to the president who will read the results and eliminate the candidate with the least number of votes. If more than one candidate did not receive any votes or was tied for the lowest number of votes, they will be eliminated in that round. The voting will end when there are two candidates remaining.

Ms. Sheirer then called the roll call vote. Ms. Bruce voted for Rebekah Anderson and Alexander George; Mr. Carrier voted for Rebekah Anderson and Shelly Ruocco; Ms. Francis voted for Kristen Barry-George and Shelly Ruocco; Ms. Teschner voted for Sean Vitalli and Shelly Ruocco; Ms. Wight voted for Rebekah Anderson and Shelly Ruocco.

Mr. Carrier read the vote tally. Rebekah Anderson received 3 votes, Kristen Barry-George received 1 vote, Sean Vitalli received 1 vote; Shelly Ruocco received 4 votes; and Alexander George received 1 vote. Candidates receiving no votes were eliminated, and candidates tied for receiving the lowest number of votes were also eliminated, leaving two remaining candidates, Rebekah Anderson and Shelly Ruocco.

Trustee Candidates Appointments

Mr. Carrier as President appointed the two trustees, Rebekah Anderson and Shelly Ruocco. The appointees will need to be sworn in by the City clerk for a term ending in December 2025. Mr. Carrier will notify them this evening. Ms. Downing will notify the other candidates in the morning.

At 7:04 PM Ms. Teschner moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Francis seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, Ms. Teschner, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 PM.