

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Special Meeting of July 3, 2025

Present via Zoom: Rebekah Anderson, Debin Bruce, Russell Carrier, Lisa Downing, Molly Moss, Ruth Francis, Elizabeth Sheirer, and Katy Wight. **Also Present via Zoom:** Jo Landers, Bookkeeper; Jo Ellen MacKenzie, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Joshua Vyrsen, observer for the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA); Jason Petcen. **Absent:** Shelly Ruocco, Anne Teschner.

Pursuant to the extended authorization for certain remote meeting provisions signed into law by the Governor, and now available through June 30, 2027, this meeting was held via remote participation.

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 PM.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Children's HVAC/Renovation Funding

Lisa Downing reported that the bid opening for the Children's HVAC and renovation project was held on Wednesday, June 25, and the library must respond by July 14, which is why she called for this special meeting. Four bids were received with the apparent low base bid from Keiter Corporation for \$1,563,609. The base bid includes all of the HVAC work and the construction of the new children's and young adult programming room, but not the renovations to the teen room which appear to be currently out of reach. The base bid also did not include a contingency in case of change orders which the city advised to include at 5% bringing the construction cost to \$1,641,789.50. She distributed a spreadsheet with all of the construction and soft costs including those of the alternates, and the sources of income from the city, grants, and the library. The first alternate would add about \$243,000 for renovation of the teen room and lighting. The second alternate adds \$17,458.35 for work in the Wizard of Oz room, and alternate 3 adds \$46,522.45 for lighting in the crafts area and past Paco's tank into the Wizard of Oz room.

The City Council approved \$1,440,535 in capital improvements funds earlier this year and there have been preliminary discussions with the building committee and the Friends of Forbes about contributing a combined \$100,000 towards the cost of the project which was initially thought to be needed for furnishings and technology. Now that the funding gap for construction is known, Lisa Downing is seeking \$50,000 from the Friends, expecting \$50,000 in reimbursement grants and rebates, and is hopeful that the city will be able to contribute an additional \$100,000 if other city projects are not shovel ready to move forward this fiscal year. Additionally, in reviewing the contract it seems that the control work for the HVAC system was overstated and there might be a credit of an unknown amount, anywhere from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Several of the library's large capital projects are all coming to fruition at the same time including construction of the performance stage, the Coolidge museum renovation, and this project.

Lisa Downing asked that the trustees approve committing up to \$200,000 in endowment funds so that this critical project can move forward. She proposed increasing the amount of funds used for the Book and Media budget from the Doland fund ("the excess may be used to provide supplementary income to the general book endowment of the Forbes Library.") and using money from the trustee (but not donor) restricted book funds for this project as well as any

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Children's HVAC/Renovation Funding (continued)

FY25 surplus. The balance in the endowment as of May 31, 2025 was \$7,146,252.76. Molly Moss said that the current budget calls for disbursing \$220,813 in endowment funds for FY26, which is a draw of 3.4% (from the 20 rolling quarters). \$320,000 would be 5% and \$420,000 would be 6.5%. This would still be taken from the earnings of these accounts, not the principal amount. Lisa Downing said it is an important project and a huge investment from the city. The endowment funds need to be committed so the project can move forward, but she hopes they won't be needed if other sources of funding come through. If needed, the endowment funds would be used last after all other sources. If the project is postponed, the costs will continue to rise due to inflationary pressures. The HVAC work is critical to moving the library away from steam toward geothermal. The old equipment is at the end of its life, and it makes sense for the building's health and longevity.

In response to questions from Russell Carrier, Lisa Downing said that the gap in funding was created when the bids came in higher than expected and the 5% contingency was added. If the library is lucky, the endowment funds won't be needed for construction, and could possibly be reallocated to furnishings and technology, but that would be brought back to the trustees for a vote. Russell Carrier said the Development Committee could look to raise funds to put back into the endowment and Katy Wight said it would be an appealing "ask" for the Children's Department. Ruth Francis asked why the teen room is not included in the project. Lisa Downing said the base bid does not include the teen room but is included in alternate 1 for an additional \$243,000 which is beyond the available funds at this time. Should more funding become available, it could be added. Ruth Francis asked about the other bids. Molly Moss said all of the bids were pretty close, with the next lowest bid being only \$6,000 more. Because it is a public bid, the library is required to take the lowest qualified bid. Ruth Francis asked about fundraising for the project and why more hadn't been done already. Lisa Downing said that the hope was that it would be fully funded by the city, which is responsible for the maintenance of the building. Additionally, it is a more aggressive timeline than expected. The Development Committee has been focusing on fundraising for the performance stage and Coolidge museum which were thought to be shorter on the horizon. Ruth Francis asked about disruptions during construction. Molly Moss said that disruption will be less without the teen room renovations, but it will be a disruption to staff whose offices are in the basement. The timing and disruptions won't be fully known until construction meetings and discussions are held. In response to a question from Russell Carrier, Jason Petcen said that Keiter Corporation did the work on the bathroom ventilation project and that there were no problems or overages. Katy Wight said Keiter had been awarded several city contracts and that their work on Memorial Hall was due to wrap up before this project begins. Lisa Downing said the project could begin August 1 and wrap up in the Spring of 2026. Turning off the heating and/or cooling will be necessary during part of the construction, but she is committed to maintaining the building and occupancy throughout the project.

Rebekah Anderson made a motion to approve funding up to \$200,000 from the endowment for the HVAC and Children's Department renovation project. Ruth Francis seconded the motion, which was passed with Rebekah Anderson, Debin Bruce, Russell Carrier, and Katy Wight voting yes, and Ruth Francis voting no.

At 4:31 PM Debin Bruce moved to adjourn the meeting. Ruth Francis seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:31 PM.