

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Meeting of November 19, 2014

Present: Ms. Downing, Ms. Hess, Mr. Rowe, Mr. Morin, Ms. Moulding, Ms. Sheirer, Mr. Twarog. **Also Present:** Peter Kobel, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Susan Schaeffer, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA). **Absent:** Ms. Burnham and Mr. Carrier.

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM in the Watson Room in Forbes Library.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Secretary's Report

Mr. Rowe moved that the Secretary's Report of October 21, 2014 be accepted and placed on file with a few minor corrections. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Morin presented the FY2014 fiscal year-end report. The year ended with a \$2,000 surplus in the AID fund, and a \$15,000 deficit in the Book & Media fund, which was eliminated at the start of the new fiscal year. Mr. Morin noted that this was the first year that the employee wages category exceeded \$1 million, and it was within .36% of the budgeted amount. State Aid to Public Libraries was \$5,000 less than expected in FY14. Electricity and heating gas were both a little over budget. Library supplies were a little under budget. Labor and repairs was \$2,500 over budget. This year Ms. Moulding has budgeted \$10,000 instead of \$5,000 for labor and repairs. Mr. Morin will send copies of the report to the Trustees, so they can approve it next month.

Mr. Morin then presented the October 31 Treasurer's Report. October ended with a deficit of \$25,000, a reduction of \$7,000 from September. \$4,200 was received from the City for an employee's unused vacation time payout. Wages is \$19,000 over budget for the year because July was a 3 pay period month. Electricity is running high. The City asked Ms. Moulding to cut \$7,000 from the electricity line item this year. An "old" State Aid payment of \$650 from prior years was received. A water/sewer bill of \$2,100 was paid this month. The Book Fund has a \$76 surplus in October. \$25,000 was paid for art acquisition from a transfer from the endowment as requested by the Trustees. A \$5,000 transfer will be sent to the endowment this month from the monies collected from the parking meters. The outreach car was sold for \$175. An insurance deposit of \$75,000 was put into the 2nd Floor Cleanup Fund, and a payment was made to Service Master in October.

Mr. Twarog moved that the Treasurer's Report of October 31 be accepted and placed on file. Ms. Hess seconded the motion which was passed unanimously.

Administrative Report (Ms. Moulding & Ms. Downing)

Ms. Moulding reported that former Trustee and Trustees Award recipient, John Detmold, died on November 9. He was a kind, intelligent man who loved libraries. The family will hold the memorial service at Forbes Library on Sunday, December 14 at 2:00 PM.

The Children's room has continued to be busy with multiple programs and workshops including a T-shirt to Scarf workshop, Greg McAdams's program Tales from Beyond, a Haunted Library party, a Minecraft Workshop, and an Origami workshop. They also now have three book groups: Read with Me for younger

Administrative Report (continued)

children, New Reader Reading Group for beginner readers, and an Independent Reading Group. A Knitting Workshop is in the works.

The Social Media Committee has established an Instagram account for the library. It can be reached via the badge at the bottom of the library's homepage. Instagram is a great way for the library staff to share photographs and short videos. It is also being used as the platform for a "Shelfie" contest that invites patrons to take pictures of their bookshelves and submit them to be judged on creativity and content. It is a spinoff of the popular mobile phone self-portrait called a "selfie." The contest is being targeted to teens although adults are welcome to enter as well. Another social media initiative this month was the library's first reader's advisory online forum on Friday, November 7th. Facebook Fans were invited to tell us the name of a book they read recently and enjoyed, and we suggested another one or two from our collection. It was very popular and during the course of the four hours, 19 book recommendations were given.

Part of the storm water run-off drain in the back of the parking lot collapsed, leaving a deep hole. DPW was called and their sewer department determined it was a broken section of pipe and are replacing it.

Roof repairs began on Tuesday, and are being coordinated with Central Services. Since the estimate was under \$10,000, the job didn't have to go out to bid. There is water damage to the wall in the staff room as a result of the roof leaks that will need to be repaired.

Tomorrow morning a video is being filmed for Valley Gives Day with a 1970s theme. Valley Gives Day is December 10th. The Friends of Forbes have allocated \$5,000 as a matching gift pledge. Prizes will be awarded this year for the number of new donors.

Ms. Hess moved that the Administrative Report be accepted and placed on file. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Friends of Forbes Meeting

Mr. Rowe attended the November 5 meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library and reported that the Friends have \$41,000 in cash, and their portfolio performance has been impressive. The wine tasting made almost \$4,000 and 165 tickets were sold. A report was submitted with analysis and suggestions for next year. The Friends discussed and approved the new carpeting and signage for the Community Room. They also discussed the newsletter design and publication issues. Mr. Kobel added that they decided to use Paradise Copies and it is going well. There was a question about returned mail postage, which Jenny Pittsinger is looking into. The Friends discussed new ideas for fund raising and invite suggestions from the Trustees.

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the Trustees is scheduled for Wednesday, December 17, 2014 at 4:00 PM in the Watson Room. Mr. Morin will invite the representatives from Bartholomew Inc. to attend.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held Wednesday, December 3 at 6:30 PM. Mr. Carrier will attend on behalf of the Trustees.

The Coolidge Advisory Committee will be meeting in 2014 at 4:00 PM on Monday, December 1. Ms. Burnham will attend on behalf of the Trustees.

Communications

None this month.

Financial Report

None this month.

Restoration of Painting

The large oil painting, "Orpheus and Eurydice" which is attributed to George L. Brown, was sent to the Williamstown Art Conservation Center for evaluation and an estimate for restoration. The painting was located on the top landing of the main staircase and was cleaned after the fire. That cleaning was paid for by the insurance company, but the cleaning revealed that paint was flaking and the frame was in need of repair. The estimate for restoration of the painting is \$6,425. The separate estimate for restoration of the frame is \$3,850. However, there is the option to remove the bronze paint from the frame revealing the gold leaf gilding underneath. That would cost an additional \$4,655. Ms. Moulding spoke with Hugh Glover, the woodwork restorer at Williamstown, to ask whether there is any way to know if the gilding is in good enough shape to warrant the removal of the bronze paint. Mr. Glover is fairly confident that it is, but will let Ms. Moulding know if he finds otherwise. This painting was donated to the library by Julia and Rosa Watson in 1926. They said the family tradition was that it was a copy of "Orpheus and Eurydice" by Nicolas Poussin. It is similar to that painting, but not an exact copy. Paintings by George L. Brown have sold for as much as \$300,000 and as little as \$2,000. This painting is not signed so does not have nearly the value of a signed painting. Its value is difficult to determine, but may be about the cost of the restoration. The painting is a popular fixture at Forbes and seems perfect for its spot on the staircase landing. George L. Brown was born in Boston in 1814 and died in 1889. Because of its quality, popularity, and association with the Watson Family, Ms. Moulding and Faith Kaufmann recommend that the painting be restored with money from the Special Collections Fund.

The Trustees discussed the painting and its attribution. In response to a question from Mr. Twarog, Ms. Moulding said that it is an appropriate use of the Special Collections fund, which is intended for restoration and digitization, etc. It is an ongoing fund, although the bulk of it was generated from the large weeding project done in the 1990s. Ms. Moulding, Ms. Kaufmann, and Ms. Nelson make recommendations on the use of the Special Collections funds.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the expenditure of up to a total of \$14,930 from the Special Collections Fund for restoration and cleaning of the "Orpheus and Eurydice" painting. If removing the bronze paint is not feasible, then \$4,655 of that amount will not be used for that purpose. Mr. Morin will transfer \$15,000 from the Special Collections fund in the endowment to the operating account to cover the cost. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Director's Evaluation

The form the Trustees have used in the past to evaluate the director was distributed. Mr. Rowe raised questions including: When and how often the evaluation should take place? Should it be done in conjunction with the Director's goals? What forms the basis of the elements to be evaluated since there is no job description? Should there be a job description for the Director? Are the questions in the evaluation form the ones the Trustees

Director's Evaluation (continued)

should be asking, or are there others? Additionally Mr. Rowe asked about the Trustees' role in relationship to the library staff. Is there an informal channel of communication and/or should there be something more formal?

Ms. Hess said the Trustees' handbook covers what not to do when communicating with staff, but more guidelines may be helpful. She added that the current evaluation form worked well last time. The Trustees agreed by consensus to continue the discussion at the December Trustees' meeting after they've had some time to think about the questions raised by Mr. Rowe, and to fill out the evaluation form with their own thoughts and comments. Ms. Moulding said that she usually presents the Director's Goals and Trustees' Goals at the January meeting. Mr. Rowe asked if the Trustees should review their goals more often than once a year.

Gifts, Bequests, Sales, etc.

The following designated gift was received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$2,000 from anonymous, to be deposited in the Outreach Fund.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the allocation of the designated gift as proposed by Ms. Moulding. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

The following undesignated gift was received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$5,000 from R. Michaelson Galleries, Northampton, to be deposited in the Book & Media Fund

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the allocation of the undesignated gift as proposed by Ms. Moulding. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

The following receipt from sales/rents was received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$45 from NEBA for sale of books to be deposited in the Special Collections Fund, \$123.50 from NEBA for sale of books to be deposited in the Special Collections Fund.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the allocation of the receipt from sales/rents as proposed by Ms. Moulding. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Mr. Morin left the meeting at 5:03 PM.

Elevator Project

The accessible elevator project has been out to bid, and bids were due at 2:00 PM today, however Ms. Moulding reported that the bid opening for the general contractor was postponed to Monday November 24 at 2:00 PM to allow extra time for clarification of an item in the bid. Sub-bids were opened last week, and the general trend is good. The total of the sub-bids came to \$270,000 not including the general contractor, of which there are 5 very active bidders, so it is hopeful that the whole project will come in around \$400,000.

Fire and Restoration

Ms. Moulding reported that the restoration work is completely finished. Everything looks as it should and is very clean. The only missing piece of art is "Orpheus and Eurydice" which is at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center for restoration.

LSTA Grant Report

Ms. Downing reported that this month the library has issued a survey about library accessibility that is available online from the library's website and paper copies are available in the library and at the senior center. To date over 100 responses have been received and the survey will be kept open through the rest of the month. Ms. Moulding and Ms. Downing reported on the initial findings, the field trip to the Perkins Braille Library in Watertown, and their conversation with the city's Commission on Disability. The feedback from the survey has been positive, although most of the comments are about physical access. The Commission on Disability was also very supportive, and they had many questions about the elevator project. Forbes will become an institutional member of the Perkins Braille Library, and will be able to sign up people who have various disabilities including vision loss, learning disabilities, or the inability to hold books. Forbes will maintain a small deposit of digital books for browsing, and a rotating collection of Braille books. Ideas for equipment to purchase include a countertop loop system and headset for transactions at the Circulation and Reference desks, A/V enhancements to the Community Room to improve the sound and projected image quality, FM assisted listening devices, and JAWS software to make it easier for people with visual disabilities to use the library computers.

Reports on workshops/meetings/activities

MLS Annual Meeting (Lisa Downing) - The Massachusetts Library System held their annual meeting this month in Worcester and the keynote speaker presented a talk entitled "Re-imagining How to Tell the Story: Why the Library Matters More Than Ever" by Michael Margolis.

At 5:15 PM Ms. Hess moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 PM.