

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, December 19, 2019

Present: Ms. Buckhout, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Hess, Ms. Moss, Mr. Twarog, Ms. Reall, Ms. Sheirer, Ms. Wight. **Also Present:** Janelle Gaffer and Keith Purcell, representatives of Downey, Pieciak, Fitzgerald & Co., P.C.; Julie Bartlett Nelson, Archivist; Scott Kennedy, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Mr. Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA). **Absent:** None.

The meeting was called to order at 3:45 PM in the Library Director's office.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Auditor's Report

Copies of the Forbes Form 990 tax return for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019 prepared by Downey, Pieciak, Fitzgerald & Co., P.C., along with the auditor's report, financial statements and a letter to the Trustees was distributed prior to the meeting. Ms. Buckhout introduced Janelle Gaffer and Keith Purcell who presented the report. Mr. Purcell said that based on their work, they are expecting to issue a clean opinion. Ms. Gaffer discussed the changes in accounting standards that were adopted since last year including changing asset classifications from three to two: assets without donor restrictions (undesignated and Board designated) and assets with donor restrictions (temporary and permanent in nature) to make it clearer when the assets are restricted by the donor as opposed to the board. The Statement of Functional Expenses which used to be optional is now required and breaks down expenditures by program services, general and administrative, and fundraising expenses. Investment income net fees is now reported on the Statement of Activities as required by the new accounting standards (ASU) 2016-14 *Presentation of Financial Statements of Not-for-Profit Entities*. Note 3- Liquidity of the Financial Statements shows \$240,864 in liquid assets. Should the need for additional funds arise, amounts could be withdrawn from investments without donor restrictions of \$1,842,168. Ms. Janelle said that next year, they will be able to provide side by side comparisons with this year. Revenue and expenses are in line with last year. Note 7-Prior Period Adjustment of the Financial Statements explains the adjustment for accrued vacation of \$107,309 to decrease beginning net assets without donor restrictions and increase the accrued vacation in the prior year. Note 8-Net Assets With Donor Restrictions shows which funds are restricted and how those funds were used in FY19. Note 10-Leases now includes both the lease of land for \$1,500 a year and the copier lease.

Mr. Purcell said that during the audit, the firm became aware of several matters that are opportunities for strengthening internal controls and operating efficiency. Their recommendations include that Forbes keep a detailed depreciation schedule going forward that includes the list of individual assets, depreciation methods, useful lives and in-service dates. They also recommended that the number of employees with access to the Amazon account be limited, and that the credit card information be entered manually each time a purchase is made. They reported on three upcoming accounting standard changes that impact revenue streams where it has been determined that a contract exists between the entity and a customer and revenue streams from government grants. In addition, it will be required that operating leases be recorded on the statement of financial position as an asset and a liability.

Auditor's Report (continued)

In response to questions from the Trustees, Mr. Purcell said they were unable to get itemized depreciation information from the previous auditor, and that it would be difficult if not impossible to recreate it for current assets, but that they would itemize all new assets going forward. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Buckhout said she believed the library will be able to comply with these recommendations. Overall, Mr. Purcell and Ms. Gaffer said that the audit went well, there were no difficulties with management, all misstatements were corrected none of which were material in nature, and that they planned to issue a clean letter.

Ms. Gaffer made a few comments on the Form 990 and the numbers tie into the financial statements. She said there were no surprises and the library has all the required policies in place. There were some changes to Schedule D with additional disclosures about the endowment.

Ms. Reall made a motion that the Trustees approve the audit and the Form 990 as presented by the auditors. Ms. Hess seconded the matter, which was passed unanimously.

The Trustees thanked the auditors, who left the meeting at 4:15 PM.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Hess moved that the Secretary's Report of November 19, 2019 be accepted and placed on file with a minor correction. Ms. Reall seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Buckhout presented the Treasurer's Report for the period ending November 30, 2019. The General Aid Fund had positive net activity of \$8,880 and ended with a balance of \$15,991. The Book & Media Fund closed with negative net activity of \$811 and a balance of \$30,047. The Civil War Grant fund had negative net activity of \$139 and now has a zero balance. The Garvey Book & Media Fund had positive net activity of \$538 and a balance of \$5,130. A \$5,000 transfer to the endowment was completed in December. The Halberstadt Technology Fund had negative net activity of \$1,463 and has a balance of \$5,348. The Lyman Special Collections Fund had negative net activity of \$714 and a balance of \$7,450. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$339 and a balance of \$98,704. The Moving Memories IMLS Grant fund had negative net activity of \$2,877 and a deficit of \$3,146. The Programming Fund-Adult had negative net activity of \$987 and a balance of \$8,748. The RCCR fund had negative net activity of \$670 and a balance of \$1,003. The Watson Copier Fund had positive net activity of \$527 and a deficit of \$64. Ms. Buckhout said that she is keeping a close eye on payroll, but no other problems jump out.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report of November 30, 2019 and place it on file. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

Ms. Downing distributed a list of recent undesignated gifts including approximately \$5,867 raised from the library's annual fundraising campaign. She said that donations are still coming in and that she will provide a detailed analysis at the next Trustees meeting. The target amount for the Book & Media Fund has been met and donations are now going to the Morin Fund.

The following designated gift was received since the last Trustees' meeting:

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc. (continued)

\$100 from Russ Carrier & Andrew Dausch, Florence, MA to the Lyman Special Collections Fund.

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

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the designated and undesignated gifts as proposed by Ms. Downing. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Financial Report

There was no financial report this month.

Coolidge Museum & Hampshire Room for Local History Report

Ms. Julie Bartlett Nelson presented a report on the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum (CCPLM) and Hampshire Room. The CCPLM Standing Committee consists of 15 members and 2 emeritus members. There are 3 subcommittees including the Nominating committee, Marketing and Communications committee, and Programming committee. Three new members were recruited in 2019. A new brochure was produced and a Coolidge Museum Facebook page was created. Work has begun on an introduction video to show in the museum and share online. A Presidents Book Group was begun in February that meets the 4th Monday of the month. In September, there was a program on the 100th anniversary of the Boston Police strike including a lecture by Hugh Howard. Plans are underway for a Presidents Trivia night this winter and programming to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 1920 election and women's vote. They are also working on a new field trip curriculum for elementary and high school students as well as adult tour groups. The first annual meeting was held November 2 with featured speaker historian David Pietrusza. This summer the Standing Committee embarked on an 18-month self-assessment program called StEPs-Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations, where they will be looking at current practices and the professional standards in the museum, local history and archives fields and identifying areas for improvement as well as setting goals. The Sioux headdress was on loan to Vermont from May 2018 to March 2019. The Christy portrait of Grace Coolidge will be loaned to the National Portrait Gallery in Washington D.C. for "Every Eye is Upon Me": America's First Ladies exhibit which will be open November 13, 2020 to May 23, 2021. Plans and goals for 2020 include: continuing work on the StEPs program; planning for programs and physical and virtual exhibits and social media around the 1920 election, and presidents' trivia night; planning for a summer retreat to the Coolidge homestead in Plymouth Notch, Vermont; finishing the Coolidge introduction video; and creating field trip curriculum for all ages.

Highlights for the Local History and Genealogy room include staffing changes. Elise Bernier-Feeley stepped down to 4 hours a week and Dylan Gaffney has moved into a new position, Information Services Associate for Local History and Special Collections. Mr. Gaffney and Ms. Nelson served on the 125th anniversary committee. Faith Kaufmann arranged for a panel in the art gallery to highlight items from Special Collections. Ms. Kaufmann, Mr. Gaffney, Ms. Nelson, and Ms. Feeley along with students and volunteers created 8 physical and virtual exhibits. The Cookies with the Curator series featured the theme of Forbes 125th anniversary, and a timeline for Forbes Library history was launched. Forbes received funding for an IMLS Moving Memories Lab grant, and Heather Diaz is the lead on the project with assistance from Mr. Gaffney. It is a 2-year project with funds for equipment for the public to capture and record oral history. Additional funds may be sought from the Friends. Forbes

Coolidge Museum & Hampshire Room for Local History Report (continued)

received an IMLS grant in 2017 for the Community Webs Project to work with the Internet Archive to collect and document websites of Northampton news, arts, culture, activism. Mr. Gaffney presented on the project at the Society of American Archivists. Mr. Gaffney, Jill Emmons, and Callie Sieh have continued to work on documenting the music scene of the Baystate Hotel in Northampton. A program is planned at the Academy of Music in February 2020 to feature archived materials and live music. Window work has taken place for Spring-Winter 2019 and new carpeting in the Hampshire Room is on the facilities list for 2020. Storage space continues to be a concern. Ms. Nelson and Ms. Kaufmann re-wrote the Special Collections Policy which was approved by the Trustees in Fall 2019. Several donations were received including Northampton Area Vintage Postcards/Trade cards from Gregory Wilson donated by the Gutterman and Pohlman family. In October 2019, a large collection of postcards and ephemera was received from Richard Fray including over 300 postcards, matchbook covers, advertisement cards, Grace Coolidge signed envelope and Hampshire Bookshop materials. Students and volunteers will work to re-house the collection in the Spring of 2020. Plans and goals for 2020 include working with Historic Northampton and UMass students on researching the history of enslaved people in Northampton; working with volunteer Jim Cope to continue to work with faith organizations on indexing records for local history and genealogy researchers; and working with Easthampton High School history and art teachers and the UMass public history department on documenting mill workers in Easthampton.

In response to a question from the Trustees, Ms. Nelson said there has been no luck tracking down the portrait of Grace Coolidge that was in the Clarke School building when it was sold recently for development. No one seems to know where the portrait is, and she is continuing to investigate.

The Trustees thanked Ms. Nelson who left the meeting at 4:27 PM.

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Hess reported on the Friends of Forbes meeting of December 4. Children's and Young Adult Librarian Sarah Johnson gave a report stressing the activities paid for by the Friends. The Friends have \$440,000 in their endowment with Bartholomew Inc. There has been little change in the operating account at Greenfield Bank, with income coming mostly from memberships and expenses mostly from museum passes. The membership committee reported that a mailing went out in November. Ms. Downing reported that Forbes did not receive the Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding for the landscape master plan. The Friends discussed committee assignments and members starting dates. They need to recruit new members, especially for the wine tasting with a suggestion that the development committee coordinate with the wine tasting committee.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing said Forbes is gearing up for the 2020 Census in a couple of ways. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) issued information along with a guide on the important role libraries can play in supporting as complete a count as possible. Additionally, Ms. Downing has been invited to participate in the city's Complete Count Committee that has been assembled by the Mayor's Office. Northampton has been identified as a community with a higher than average population that falls in the "hard to count" category including college students, children under 5 and renters. Everyone will be encouraged to complete the survey online for the first time and this means that the library's public internet computers along with staff with technical expertise will be very valuable.

Administrative Report (continued)

Ms. Downing said that she is grateful and pleased that Senator Comerford has joined the Library Caucus meaning that she is prioritizing libraries in her legislative agenda.

Stan Sherer took a photo of the staff in honor of Forbes' 125th anniversary. Staff photos going back to the library's earliest days have been enjoyable to look at by both the staff and the public and Mr. Sherer's photo will be a nice addition to the collection.

The library received extensive coverage by Cynthia Simison in the Springfield Republican about her early reminiscences of Forbes. It is a lovely way to round out the anniversary year. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss would like to thank Ms. Wight for chairing the anniversary committee and all of the board, staff, volunteers and community members who helped celebrate.

Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss and the Trustees would like to acknowledge Ms. Reall on the occasion of her last meeting as a member of the board. Ms. Reall has a long and fruitful history with the library that started way before becoming a member of the board and one it is hoped will continue after she leaves office. Her legal background, keen attention to detail, and sharp wit will be among the many things missed about having her on the board. Mr. Carrier thanked Ms. Reall for her years of service.

Madison Bishop has been hired as the new Children's & Young Adult Librarian and she will begin in February. Ms. Bishop received her MLS from Simmons in 2017 and is currently the Head of Youth Services at Plymouth Public Library. She is a reviewer for School Library Journal and has a wide range of experience from toddler story times to teens and tweens. She is dedicated to outreach and has recently been involved with a LSTA grant project, which included the design and construction of a Teen Space. In response to a question from Ms. Wight, Ms. Downing said that the interim between when Ms. Janezcek leaves and Ms. Bishop arrives will be filled with Intermittent Part-Time workers and an intern.

Mr. Twarog arrived at 4:30 PM.

In response to a question from Ms. Hess, Ms. Moss said that Senator Comerford's staff is meeting with constituents at the library on January 6.

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

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the Trustees was scheduled for Thursday, January 23 at 3:45 PM. Ms. Buckhout will invite the representatives from Bartholomew Inc.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held Wednesday, January 8, at 6:30 PM. Ms. Hess will attend on behalf of the Trustees.

Communications

Ms. Downing received a letter dated December 12, 2019 from the MBLC saying that Forbes had met the requirements for state certification, and that the first state aid payment of \$27,428.24 was being distributed, with Lilly Library receiving \$5,485.65 and Forbes receiving \$21,942.59, slightly more than anticipated.

Communications (continued)

Ms. Hess reported that she sent congratulations to Senator Comerford on her joining the Library caucus and received a thank you note in reply.

Massachusetts Library Trustees Association

Ms. Downing reported that the board's membership in the Massachusetts Library Trustees Association (MLTA) is due for renewal. The MLTA serves as a resource for trustees to become knowledgeable advocates to improve their community libraries by sponsoring workshops and seminars and disseminating information on a variety of topics. The association advocates for library legislation at the local and state level and works with the MBLC to improve libraries in the Commonwealth, concentrating on communications among the trustees (e.g., producing the Trustees' Handbook with the MBLC). The board was asked to approve \$100 from the Aid Fund to renew the membership.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve \$100 from the General Aid Fund to renew the Trustees' MLTA membership. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Library Personnel Budget Reallocation

Ms. Downing reported that Elizabeth Maguire retired as the head of Inter-Library Loan (ILL) in August of this year, a position that has been restructured. The work of ILL has been folded into Borrower Services which also includes circulation duties. A FLEA member was given the title of ILL Specialist. This position has other duties but spends about half of their time on coordinating the ILL workflow and answering the more difficult questions. The workflow model is much more distributed with both the Borrower Services and Information Services teams assisting in ILL work. The model was implemented in July and it has been working very well.

The funding from the former head of ILL position has been used to fund additional hours to FLEA members and additional intermittent part-time employees (IPT) as well as to keep up with the increasing minimum wage both directly through increases to IPT rates as well as grade and step changes for FLEA members to minimize wage compression.

The impetus behind the staffing decisions have been to allow staff to serve the public with expanded hours and services as well as to provide time to attend to specialized work. The additional hours to existing FLEA members as well as increases in the grades of 3 positions has brought them in alignment with their descriptions and the needs of the library.

At this point Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss would like to utilize the remaining personnel funds from the vacant position to increase hours to FLEA members with the balance for IPT staffing instead of hiring an additional benefited employee. Ms. Downing feels as though this is in the best interest of the library by providing employment at a sustainable level for existing staff and providing the flexibility in future staffing that the IPT model brings. The proposal would sustain FLEA hours overall with substantial increases to FLEA hours in Borrower Services, Information Services and the Children's & Young Adults departments.

The Mayor's office does not consider the cost of benefits when calculating Forbes' appropriation. City finance manager Susan Wright said that Forbes could bring a benefited position back as long as there was funding in the library's personnel budget to cover the salary, meaning there is the option to bring back an additional benefited position in the future.

Library Personnel Budget Reallocation (continued)

This proposal in no way is reflective of a decreased need in staffing. It is critical that Forbes keeps this funding in personnel even if the hours end up being reallocated. Staffing levels are already strained. It is being addressed through the addition of self service at the main desk, cross training of staff to provide more staff flexibility and a team based approach to increase the nimbleness of staffing patterns. Maintaining personnel funding overall is needed despite these changes because of increased hours, circulation, program attendance and door counts, as well as an emphasis on special collections initiatives.

The Trustees discussed the proposal to convert the remaining personnel funding to additional hours for existing FLEA positions with the balance to IPT staffing, and asked questions of Ms. Downing. Under this proposal the library will be going from 25 benefitted positions to 24, but total FLEA hours will increase substantially to 755 hours per week. In response to questions from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that many of the changes have already been made and she is asking for approval of the remaining \$7,500 in the reallocation of personnel funds. The other area of the budget that is tight is labor and repairs. Ms. Downing said that she has alerted the city that this line item is overspent, and if at the end of the fiscal year there isn't enough money left in the budget to cover this deficit, she will request additional funds from the city.

Ms. Wight made a motion to convert the remaining personnel funding to additional hours for existing FLEA positions with the balance to IPT staffing totaling approximately \$7,500. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Window Restoration Update

Ms. Downing reported that the replacement windows in the basement have been installed and trim work is being completed. There is some finish hardware to install on the rest of the windows and some punch list items to complete but the project is very close to completion. The exterior of the windows will be cleaned in the spring. It appears that the project will come in under budget.

Strategic Plan Update

Ms. Downing distributed a progress report for the first quarter of the fiscal year, including significant grant funded projects, completion of the anniversary year and the realization of usage increases based on groundwork that was begun over the past year. While it is still early in the fiscal year, there has been progress in increasing hours and library usage. The CPA did not fund the master plan for the library grounds, but a new application will be submitted in the Spring.

Community Engagement

Ms. Moss reported that Forbes had the largest team yet in the 16th annual Hot Chocolate Run for Safe Passage. She thanked the staff, Friends, patrons and family who ran and walked. Ms. Moss distributed a list of recent and upcoming community engagement events at Forbes.

Reports on subcommittee meetings/activities

Advocacy! Learn the Rules of the Road - Ms. Downing reported that she, Ms. Hess and Ms. Moss viewed a webinar hosted by the Community Foundation of Western MA that clarified what Forbes as an organization can and cannot do to use advocacy to advance its mission. It was presented by a representative from Bolder Advocacy who directed them to a self-assessment called the

Reports on subcommittee meetings/activities (continued)

Advocacy Capacity Tool (ACT) that Ms. Hess completed on their behalf. The areas in which Forbes could strengthen its advocacy capacity are: Agenda; Plans, Strategies, and Adaptability; Advocacy Partners and Coalitions; Electoral Advocacy; and Organizational Commitment. Ms. Hess said she learned a lot from the webinar and that the library can be doing more advocacy including spending for ballot measures and legislation, but not for candidates. She said that while the Trustees have done advocacy, it has not been done in an organized way, and that she would be happy to be more involved. She is planning to attend a follow-up meeting with Senator Jo Comerford and Representative Aaron Vega.

Development Committee - Ms. Downing reported that Traci Wolfe has joined the committee. She is a colleague of Nicole Sibley's at the development office of Amherst College and brings a great wealth of knowledge. The annual fund is doing very well and gifts are continuing to stream in. An analysis of this year's fund as compared to last year's will be done early in January and results will be shared. The committee is getting closer to launching a legacy society for people who have let them know that they have bequest intentions for the library. The society will be a way to recognize people while they are alive. The development committee is looking for a member of the board who would be willing to publicly share that they are intending to remember the library in their estate plans along with their reasons for doing so. This would be very helpful to model this generous act for others as Forbes seeks to launch a legacy society. Mr. Carrier added that former Trustees would also be a good source. He pointed out that the budget now relies on about \$8,000 raised by the annual fundraising campaign to benefit the Book and Media Fund. This should be taken into account when undertaking a capital campaign and the annual fundraising is suspended.

Other Business

Ms. Wight attended an override meeting where the mayor mentioned the benefits the library received from the last override. He asked Ms. Wight if she would like to be involved in the wording for the next override. Ms. Hess said it comes back to advocacy and asked if the Trustees want to support the override as a board. Ms. Wight asked that this be added to the next Trustees' agenda.

At 5:04 PM Ms. Hess moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Reall seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 PM.