

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Wednesday, February 19, 2020

Present: Ms. Buckhout, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, Ms. Sheirer, Ms. Wight. **Also Present:** Nicole Sibley, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Steven Stover, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA). **Absent:** Ms. Moss.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM in the Library Director's office.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Hess moved that the Secretary's Report of January 23, 2020 be accepted and placed on file with a few minor corrections. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Reports

Ms. Buckhout presented the Treasurer's Report for the month ending January 31, 2020. The General Aid Fund had positive net activity of \$28,652 and ended with a balance of \$56,133. The annual budget has been exceeded for Labor & Repairs by \$3,550 and Miscellaneous Expenses by \$2,313. The Book & Media Fund closed with negative net activity of \$4,094 and a deficit of \$145, as a result of reclassification of \$2,356 of donations into the Morin Fund. The Auxiliary Services Fund had negative net activity of \$382 and a deficit of \$272. The Doland Reference Room Fund had negative net activity of \$1,183 and a balance of \$2,670. The Externally Financed Transactions Fund had positive net activity of \$548 and a balance of \$260. The Halberstadt Technology Fund had negative net activity of \$712 and a balance of \$1,965. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$1,666. There was \$7,033 in donations of which \$5,000 was the contribution for part of the bill from JohnCarlo Woodworking paid by the Friends. The Moving Memories IMLS Grant had negative net activity of \$2,667 and has a deficit of \$6,630. A check from the City to reimburse \$3,146 of expenses was received in February.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report of January 31, 2020 and place it on file. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Next month Ms. Buckhout will present a report on her activities over the last year to update the library's accounting practices, and what she plans to do in the coming year.

Ms. Hess made a motion to transfer \$2,000 from the RCCR Fund in the endowment to the RCCR fund in the operating account. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

The following undesignated gifts were received since the last trustees' meeting: \$2,000 from Jane Sommer, Northampton, MA to the Morin Fund; \$1,896 from Roger Schwartz, White Plains, NY in memory of David Shearer to the Morin Fund; \$1,000 from Mary Ruddy, Arlington, MA to the Morin Fund; \$100 from Anne S. Lombard, Northampton, MA in memory of David Shearer to the Morin Fund; \$100 from Nora Keil, Worcester, MA in memory of David Shearer to the Morin Fund; \$100 from Stephen & Valerie Loring, Falmouth, ME in memory of David Shearer to the Morin Fund; \$50 from Claire Christopherson, Northampton, MA to

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

the Morin Fund; \$40 from Joseph & Barbara Giroux, Chicopee, MA in memory of David Shearer to the Morin Fund; \$30 from Nicole Sibley, Amherst, MA to the Morin Fund; \$25 from Joanna Campe, Northampton, MA to the Morin Fund; \$25 from Alexander George, Amherst, MA to the Lyman Special Collections Fund; \$15 from Carla Cooke, Northampton, MA in memory of Elizabeth Farnsworth to the Morin Fund; \$10 Morgan Brown, Northampton, MA to the Morin Fund; \$5 from Anonymous, Easthampton, MA to the Morin Fund; \$5 from Susan Enz, Northampton, MA to the Morin Fund.

The following designated gifts by the Friends of Forbes Library were approved for 2020: \$8,000 to the Book & Media Fund from the Friends of Forbes Library; \$4,000 to the Staff Development Fund from the Friends of Forbes Library; \$2,844.29 to the Moving Memories IMLS Grant Fund for additional equipment to support the Moving Memories grant from the Friends of Forbes Library; \$2,500 to the Adult Programming Fund from the Friends of Forbes Library; \$2,000 to the Community Engagement Fund from the Friends of Forbes Library.

The following gifts by the Friends of Forbes Library are designated as listed to be paid directly to the recipient or passed through the library's EFT fund: \$2,000 for the annual stipend to the library's Writer in Residence; \$1,825 for museum pass subscriptions; \$300 for staff appreciation barbeque; \$300 for volunteer appreciation event; \$325 for Book Page subscription.

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

The following donations were received since the last trustees' meeting: 5 boxes of materials related to genealogy of Benjamin Waite, early settler of Northampton compiled by Kenneth Waite and donated by Ellen Rockett, Leeds, daughter of compiler.

There were no receipts from sales/rents this month.

Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund

A second \$25,000 gift was received from the Melvin Hershkowitz Trust. Last month Ms. Buckhout created a placeholder fund for the previous \$25,000 gift from Dr. Hershkowitz. Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss and Mr. Carrier met with Mr. Hershkowitz and proposed creating an endowed fund to purchase books and other materials for children in the community in memory of his daughter Marie, who was a beloved teacher at the Bridge Street Elementary School.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the establishment of the Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund in the amount of \$50,000. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Carrier said it is hoped that others will contribute to the fund. Ms. Prabhaker said that Dr. Hershkowitz has done a lot for the Bridge Street School and is very concerned about identifying areas of need where he can help. Mr. Carrier said that Forbes is currently only putting about \$20,000 a year into the Book & Media fund, collected from the parking meters, and should be looking for other ways to increase book funding so it does not become necessary to go to the city to ask for more. Currently all book and media funding comes from other sources, but it may become necessary at some point to ask the city for additional funding in order to meet the requirements to receive state aid. In response to questions from Ms.

Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund (continued)

Buckhout, Mr. Carrier said that Dr. Hershkowitz did not place restrictions on the use of the donated funds, and that the Trustees proposed creating the book fund in honor of his daughter. Ms. Downing will send a thank you letter, and a press release is being planned.

Financial Report - FY2021 Budget

Ms. Downing reported that she has been invited to a budget hearing with the Mayor on Monday, March 16. The Mayor's office has asked Forbes to prepare a 3% budget increase (\$40,521) over last year. This is presuming the override passes. If it does not pass, Forbes will be instructed to reduce the budget proposal to somewhere between level funded and a 1% increase. It will be known by the date of the meeting with the Mayor if the override has passed or not and Ms. Downing will present an appropriate budget for approval at the March trustees' meeting. Mr. Carrier asked that Ms. Downing include recommendations on how much to withdraw from the Clark & Earle funds for the 2021 budget.

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Prabhaker reported on the Friends of Forbes meeting of February 5. Eli Porth observed the meeting and was voted in as a board member at the end of the meeting. There was a report on the January trustees' meeting and their decision to switch to a less aggressive portfolio. The Friends of Forbes will consider making a parallel move and will meet with Bartholomew Inc. to discuss switching to a more conservative mix of stocks and bonds. They are temporarily using the same budget as last year since the Finance Committee has not been able to meet yet. The membership committee is happy about the \$6700 of new membership money. They are going to draft a Love Your Library/Join the Forbes email. The Special Events Committee needs to set up a meeting to begin planning for the wine tasting event in September. Ms. Moss presented the same report on adult programming that she prepared for the trustees. Ms. Prabhaker was excited and pleased to see the list of recurring items that the Friends support. Heather Diaz made a request for \$2,844.29 to purchase additional equipment for digitization for the Moving Memories IMLS grant. They discussed the speaker for their annual meeting and how best to acknowledge donors.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that Senator Comerford will be visiting Forbes on March 14 at 2:00 PM as part of her tour where she is visiting every library in her district. Her invitation states, "Join Jo for an informal gathering at your local library to learn more about the work she's doing on your behalf in the legislature, ask questions, and join in conversation about issues affecting your community." While libraries won't be the sole focus of her visit, this is a great opportunity to advocate for library funding and other initiatives that impact Forbes and the community at large.

Martha McCormick and Elaine Reall were delighted to learn that they are recipients of the Trustee Award this year and confirmed their availability for April 1. The schedule and program are being coordinated with the Friends.

Alene Moroni is now a qualified Notary Public in addition to Benjamin Kalish, Dylan Gaffney, and Faith Kaufmann.

Dylan Gaffney, Jill Emmons and Callie Sieh have been working on an archival project based on the former music venue, Bay State Hotel. They are partnering with The Northampton Arts Council and Signature Sounds for *Back to the Bay*

Administrative Report (continued)

State, an event featuring performances and stories from legendary Bay State Hotel-era musicians. It takes place on the Academy of Music stage on Sunday, February 23 and kicks off at 2:00 PM. Get a look at the ongoing work of the Bay State Hotel Project, including interview clips, photos, flyers, and a teaser for a documentary in progress.

Forbes Library is joining CREW (Communities Responding to Extreme Weather), a network of local leaders building grassroots climate resilience through inclusive & hands-on education, service, and planning. They are recruiting libraries and other community organizations to provide information, host programming and identify themselves as a Climate Resilience Hub. Forbes already does most of the tasks that a hub agrees to, including programming during Climate Preparedness Week.

Brian Jamros from Bartholomew Inc. walked Ms. Downing, Mr. Carrier and Ms. Buckhout through the paperwork signing to update Forbes' investment policy, set up a new account to safely accept stock transfers and to add up to 1.5% of Blackstone Real Estate Trust to the alternatives in the portfolio.

Census Day, April 1 is fast approaching and Forbes is working with others in the community to ensure as complete a count as possible. Throughout the month of March Forbes will be helping to spread the word about the importance to our community of completing the census.

The memorial service for David Shearer on Sunday, February 2 was very lovely. Many friends and family members came out to express their condolences to his widow, Alice and their family as well as to celebrate a life that was characterized by a deep commitment to service to others. Mr. Carrier spoke on behalf of the library very eloquently about Mr. Shearer's lasting impact.

Food for Fines has wrapped up for the year and Forbes is delivering 619 items of food to the Northampton Survival Center. In addition to supporting those in need in the community and giving many patrons a fresh start on their library accounts, this year's program was special because of the \$1,200 gift by Susan Maguire & Marlene Marrocco, Florence, MA to offset the fines forgiven.

Madison Bishop started on February 10 as the Children's & Young Adult Librarian. She has jumped right in and Ms. Downing is so delighted to have her on the team.

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

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, March 19 at 4:00 PM. The trustees scheduled the following meetings for 2020: Thursday, March 19; Thursday, April 16; Thursday, May 21; Thursday, June 18; Thursday, July 23; Thursday, September 17; Thursday, October 22; Thursday, November 19; Thursday, December 17. The meetings will be at 4:00 PM unless the representatives of Bartholomew are invited, in which case the meeting will begin at 3:45 PM.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held Wednesday, March 4, at 6:30 PM. Ms. Hess will attend on behalf of the trustees.

Communications

Mr. Brian Tabor received a thank you note dated January 24, 2020 from the International Language Institute thanking him for the tour and introduction to Forbes Library.

The trustees received an email from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) on February 3 announcing that the Spring 2020 Trustee Orientation sessions are open for registration. Ms. Downing and Ms. Prabhaker have been in touch about attending one of the sessions. If other trustees are interested, they should let Ms. Downing know.

Ms. Hess received an announcement and invitation from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) inviting trustees and friends to a workshop on March 11 to gather feedback for their strategic plan. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss are already planning on attending.

Ms. Downing reported receiving a renewal notice from the Western Massachusetts Library Association (WMLA). Ms. Hess made a motion to renew Forbes' membership for \$50 to be paid from Miscellaneous. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Sidewalk Condition Concern

Ms. Downing reported that staff and patrons have commented about the delayed treatment of the sidewalk in front of the former Baptist Church a few doors down from the library after winter weather. Pedestrians traveling up to the library from downtown are often forced to pass over treacherous sidewalk conditions or walk in the road. The guidelines for this property permit that the owner has until the earlier of 24 hours or 9:00 AM the following business day after a weather event ends, but due to the prominent location of this sidewalk and the lack of alternative routes to the library for many visitors, Ms. Downing recommends that a letter be sent to the city's disability commission expressing safety concerns and the desire for a discussion about possible solutions that would reduce the risk for dozens if not hundreds of people attempting to get to the library after inclement weather.

Ms. Downing said the issue was brought up at a Downtown Northampton Association meeting which expressed a preference for the city to take over snow removal downtown, however there is currently no money for this in the city budget. Ms. Wight said that the disability commission meets once a month and has no legal jurisdiction over this issue. Ms. Downing said that replacing the sidewalk is planned for 2023.

Ms. Wight made a motion to send a letter to the city's disability commission expressing safety concerns about the late snow clearing on the sidewalk in front of the former Baptist Church and to copy other relevant bodies and elected officials. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

CCPLM Standing Committee Annual Meeting Speaker

The Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library & Museum (CCPLM) Standing Committee recommends Barbara F. Berenson, author of *Massachusetts in the Woman Suffrage Movement: Revolutionary Reformers* for the speaker at their annual meeting on September 30.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve Barbara F. Berenson as the speaker at the annual meeting of the CCPLM Standing Committee on September 30, and to approve a budget of up to \$550 from the RCCR fund for speaker fees and travel accommodations. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Window Restoration Update

Ms. Downing reported that Central Services approved adding weather stripping to the windows on the north side of the building which was the only elevation where the original single pane glass was reused for historic preservation. The work was completed today.

Administrative Contracts Update

Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss, Mr. Carrier and Ms. Prabhaker met to review the administrative contracts and have made an initial pass at them to make them current and consistent. The job descriptions also need to be reviewed and once that is complete they will proceed to signing, hopefully in March.

Adult Programming Summary

A summary report on Adult Programming and statistics from 2019 prepared by Ms. Moss was distributed to the trustees. This year there were about 14,000 participants at programs for adults. Events included concerts, films, tours, lectures, book groups, exhibits, readings, and clubs. Highlights include events related to the library's 125th anniversary, the civic hub grant, and the start of several new grants that will see more results in 2020. Programming is funded by the Friends, the Library Giving Day fundraiser, and many staff initiated grants. Ms. Downing said attendance has been strong and steady, limited only by capacity.

Community Engagement

Ms. Downing reported that it has been a very busy time with multiple outreach events, including the International Language Institute, Northampton Neighbors, Northampton Arts Council, local schools, and the Ice Festival. Ms. Downing distributed a list of recent and upcoming community engagement events at Forbes.

Reports on subcommittee meetings/activities

Development Committee - Ms. Downing reported that the committee is preparing for participating in the online day of giving, Library Giving Day on April 23 to benefit programming. The committee also invites a second trustee representative to serve with Mr. Carrier and trustees should let Mr. Carrier know if they are interested. Ms. Downing said they are seeking statements about why people support the library to help illuminate and inspire others to give on Library Giving Day. Trustees should contact Ms. Downing with their statements.

At 4:46 PM Mr. Twarog moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:46 PM.