

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, September 17, 2020

Present: Ms. Buckhout, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Hess, Ms. Moss, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, Ms. Sheirer, Ms. Wight. **Also Present:** Chris Hannon, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA) Paula Elliott, Head of Technical Services; Alene Moroni, Head of Reference. **Absent:** None.

Pursuant to Governor Baker's Emergency Order Modifying the State's Open Meeting Law issued March 12, 2020, this meeting was held using remote participation via Zoom teleconferencing.

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 PM.

Bills & Warrants

Ms. Hess made a motion to verbally approve the warrant dated September 7, 2020. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Downing will be sending out a Doodle poll to schedule a time for the trustees to come in and sign a variety of documents. At the same time she can give them a tour of how the library is currently operating.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Secretary's Report

Mr. Twarog moved that the Secretary's Reports of July 30, 2020 and the Executive Session of July 30, 2020 be accepted and placed on file with a few minor corrections. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Buckhout presented the Treasurer's Report for the months ending July 31 and August 31, 2020. The General Aid Fund had positive net activity for the period of \$12,899 and closed with a surplus of \$40,244, \$27,345 which is from the prior year. The Book & Media Fund had negative net activity of \$17,135 and has a deficit of the same amount, due to large spending in e-books. The Aldrich Accessibility Fund had negative net activity of \$10,000 due to work on the driveway and now has a balance of \$12,778. The Auxiliary Services Fund has a deficit of \$1,003. The BayState Hotel Music History Fund had positive net activity of \$1,250 and a balance of \$428. The Community Engagement Fund had negative net activity of \$611 and a balance of \$676. The Externally Financed Transaction Fund had positive net activity of \$525 and a balance of \$589. The Halberstadt Technology Fund had negative net activity of \$1,510 and has a deficit of \$1,849. The Morin Fund had positive net activity of \$12,864 and a balance of \$106,691. The Moving Memories IMLS Grant had negative net activity of \$1,366 and a deficit of \$1,366. The Summer Learning Expanded Grant had negative net activity of \$2,000 and has a zero balance. The balance in the endowment as of August 31, 2020 was \$5,636,721.

Ms. Buckhout said she is waiting to finalize the FY20 adjustments which will likely not affect the Aid Fund or the Book & Media Fund, but may change the numbers in a few of the other funds including the Auxiliary Fund. The deficit in the Halberstadt Fund will be covered by the annual distribution this

Treasurer's Report (continued)

month, and the deficit in the Moving Memories grant will also decrease. Ms. Buckhout said that the final FY20 Report should be ready to be sent to the city within the next few weeks. Ms. Downing said that quarterly reports have been sent regularly so they have a clear idea where things stand.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for the months ending July 31 and August 31, 2020 and place it on file. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

FY2020 Audit

Ms. Buckhout requested to extend the timeframe for the audit, which was originally going to be done before November 15. The expectation now is that it will be finalized by mid-January.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

The following undesignated gifts totaling \$1,013 were received since the last trustees' meeting to be deposited in the Book & Media Fund: \$500 from Todd Thompson and Elisa Mason, Northampton; \$300 from Gerrit Stover, \$103 from Scott Fulmer, in memory of Janet Hemminger; \$60 from Nicole Sibley, Amherst, MA; \$20 from Morgan Brown; \$20 from Elizabeth Webster, Northampton, MA; \$10 from Cecelia Lang, Northampton.

The following designated gifts were received since the last trustees' meeting: \$18 from Renee Benenfeld to the Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund; \$5,000 was received from Christopher Saner, Huntington, MA in memory of Julia Saner to be deposited in the Morin Fund for the purchase of a picnic table, Adirondack chair, and towards the pollinator garden bed, to be recognized with plaques bearing, "In honor of Julia Tessier Saner, lover of books, Forbes and Northampton," and \$25 from Alexander George, Amherst, MA to the Lyman Special Collections Fund.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that they FY21 budget has allocated \$12,500 in gifts for the Book & Media Fund, of which \$3-4,000 will be going towards a new microform reader. This month's gifts will go towards that \$12,500.

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

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the designated and undesignated gifts as proposed by Ms. Downing. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Technical Services Department Report

Ms. Elliott presented the Technical Services Department Report 2020 to the trustees including projects completed in the last year, ongoing projects, new projects, and ongoing issues.

Some of the highlights include the database maintenance that was able to be done in April and May due to the building closure. Errors were made when records were transferred from the old library system to the new system, and Ms. Elliott and her team were able to run reports and make corrections. They are also retyping the Cutter Classification tables, which has allowed them to be updated and put into a format available to everyone. They've subscribed to the Resource Description & Access (RDA) toolkit with new standards for

Technical Services Department Report (continued)

cataloging, which dropped in price, and are now well-placed with the tools they need. They've temporarily suspended all periodical subscriptions and are using W.T.Cox as a subscription service, which makes receiving and claiming much easier. They are very appreciative of the painting of their offices.

An ongoing issue is that the lighting in the office is inadequate. The florescent lights cause a lot of glare. Ms. Downing said that Mr. Petcen has been looking into options for a lighting consultant. The Children's Department lighting might be included in the project to make it large enough to attract interest. In the meantime Ms. Downing and Mr. Petcen will explore temporary solutions with task lighting.

Ms. Hess said that as a retired cataloger she looks forward to the Technical Services report each year and is very appreciative of all the work the department is doing. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Elliott said that about 90% of the special collections project is completed with about 400 items left to do.

The trustees thanked Ms. Elliott for all her and her department's work and Ms. Elliott left the meeting at 4:22 PM.

Reference Department Report

Ms. Downing said that the Reference Services department has been working through the library's virtual front door since the pandemic began, and she thanked Ms. Moroni and the reference services team for working so hard to keep the library up and visible to patrons.

Ms. Moroni presented the Reference Department Report to the trustees including accomplishments, support for grants, ongoing and in progress projects and challenges and opportunities. The challenges and additional opportunities for improved access this year include promoting library services during the pandemic building closure, improving and maintaining public services with the building closed, removing/discontinuing overdue fines for adults to improve access to online materials and services, and implementing a "pay what you can" public printing to improve access to this important service.

Ms. Moroni said that she is extremely grateful that the trustees have prioritized the staff during the pandemic. She said that early on the reference team used the pandemic to catch up on backlogs and other projects, but also fairly quickly began brainstorming ideas and opportunities for connecting with patrons. She said the most important accomplishment was moving the reference collection out of the reference room to create a space open to the public without opening up the entire building. The space is refreshed frequently with new displays and grab and go set ups of materials for patrons. There are multiple grants underway which enhance the depth of services the library is able to offer beyond the regular budget, allowing them to meet a variety of needs beyond books. Ms. Moroni and Heather Diaz have been working closely with the Racial and Social Justice Committee and have a lot of ideas to offer about purchasing materials, and reading suggestions and book lists that prioritize inclusivity. The challenges include not knowing when the library will return to normal operations and creating new ways to connect with patrons.

Ms. Hess said she was impressed by all the team is able to do while the building is closed, and she especially thanked Ms. Moroni and Ms. Diaz for

Reference Department Report (continued)

their contributions to the Racial and Social Justice committee. Mr. Carrier also thanked her and her team on behalf of the trustees for their great work.

Ms. Moroni left the meeting at 4:32 PM

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Hess attended the Friends of Forbes virtual meeting on September 9 and reported that their endowment has recovered since the losses earlier in the year. Income has been from memberships, and expenses were incurred for the donor database and Children's Room programming. There was an estate bequest that was put on the agenda for next month's meeting, to discuss how it should be used. The Finance committee will meet to discuss the bequest and seek advice from Bartholomew Inc. on rebalancing the portfolio. Ms. Downing gave an update to the Friends on the self-service checkouts and the library's PPP loans, which will hopefully be forgiven. The library's Wi-Fi is being improved to strengthen the outdoor signal. The Development committee asked the Friends to help with thank you phone calls, and they are launching a Judge Forbes legacy society for bequests.

The wine tasting event, a virtual "toast" to Forbes Library, is now planned for October 23. Local authors are being invited to suggest books and wine sellers are being asked for recommendations. Old and new sponsors are being solicited. Tickets will be sold at various price points and the event will be promoted through social media. Flyers will be distributed with books beginning in early October. Since both the garden tour and wine tasting event were cancelled this year, it is hoped this event will help make up some of the revenue shortfall in their budget.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported the driveway expansion project and concrete work for the new book drops has been completed. She is very pleased with Duffy Willard's work including their coordination of preservation and restoration efforts for the large oak tree that is adjacent to the worksite. Arrival of the new book drops is awaited to complete the project. Mr. Petcen said they were being shipped at the end of next week from California.

The outdoor sheds were broken into on consecutive days in late August. The alarm was tripped and dispatch sent officers but nothing was noticed. Luckily, Frank noticed the doors open and was able to recover what someone attempted to walk off with but abandoned on the edge of the property. The next day the doors on the shed by the back door were broken into again but library staff had moved out the items that were portable on foot. Mr. Petcen is getting a quote to replace the fascia of that enclosure with something more secure which will be brought back to the board at a later date. A motion sensor light may also be installed over the shed by the parking lot.

This is National Library Card Sign-up Month and the library has been using ALA's Wonder Woman graphic to spread the word about getting a library card online from the library's website. Several community e-newsletters including Northampton Neighbors ran the announcement. The word will continue to be spread over the coming weeks.

Jacque Fraser is leaving the Friends board this month after several years of service. She was active in the wine tasting event and will be missed. We wish her much happiness in retirement.

Administrative Report (continued)

While this year's summer reading program was very different because of the pandemic Ms. Moss and Ms. Downing were pleased with the level of participation: 143 participants aged 0-5, 216 participants aged 6-12, 71 teen participants, and 77 adult participants.

Ms. Wight moved that the Administrative Report be accepted and placed on file. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, October 22 at 3:45 PM. Ms. Buckhout will invite the representative of Bartholomew Inc. to attend. The trustees have previously scheduled the following additional meetings for 2020: 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, October 7, at 6:30 PM. Ms. Prabhaker will attend on behalf of the trustees.

Communications

Ms. Downing received an email invitation from the Massachusetts Library Trustees Association (MLTA) for an event "creating diverse or sustainable boards" on Saturday, November 14, time to be determined. She said if any of the trustees are interested to let her know and the library can cover the entry costs.

Northampton Chamber of Commerce Membership

Ms. Downing reported that community engagement has been prioritized for the past few years and in an effort to connect with various constituents Forbes has become a member of organizations including the Downtown Northampton Association, Northampton Open Media and most recently the Council of Social Agencies of Hampshire County. This year is a particularly difficult one for the business community and Ms. Downing would like to prioritize this group for outreach and support and a chamber membership would put Forbes at the table. She recommended that Forbes become an institutional member for an annual fee of \$625 from the Community Engagement fund.

Mr. Twarog made a motion for Forbes to become a member of the Northampton Chamber of Commerce for \$625 to be paid from the Community Engagement Fund. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Payroll Tax Holiday

Ms. Buckhout and Ms. Downing reported that the President issued an executive order for a "payroll tax holiday" that provides employees the option of a higher net paycheck now through December by not having to pay in their Medicare tax (.0145%) but employees would have a lower paycheck January-April to pay it back. It also does not offer any guidance on what to do if an employee leaves the organization. Ms. Buckhout and Ms. Downing recommend that Forbes not participate in this tax holiday and the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA) is not concerned with this recommendation.

Ms. Hess made a motion that Forbes not participate in the "payroll tax holiday". Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

CCPLM Sign Holder Purchase

Ms. Downing reported that the Coolidge Standing Committee recommended the purchase of a wooden sign and brochure holder for the front lobby to promote the museum and its events and exhibits. The proposed design is from John Carlo Woodworking, who has been working with Forbes for all of the recent wood projects, for a total cost of \$2,800 to be paid from the Morin Fund.

Mr. Petcen said it will go in the lobby near the staircase and Ms. Downing said it can be moved for cleaning. Ms. Wight said the committee has been talking about this for a long time and that anything made commercially was roughly the same price, and with John Carlo we know it will be good quality. Mr. Petcen said the table in the Director's office was done and the only thing left to do is the table in the gallery.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to spend \$2,800 from the Morin Fund to John Carlo Woodworking for a wooden sign and brochure holder for the front lobby to promote the CCPLM events and exhibits. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Annual Fall Appeal Mailing

Ms. Downing reported that the Development Committee is preparing for a fall appeal that will be sent by mail with email follow up. Funds raised will be used to support the purchase of circulating materials including the option to target donations to the recently created Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund. She requested up to \$1,500 from the Morin Fund to pay for the mailing.

Ms. Hess said this mailing is going out at about the same time as the Friends' invitation for the wine tasting, which could cause some confusion. Usually the wine tasting is in September and was delayed this year due to the pandemic. Ms. Moss said that one is an event and the other is an appeal, which will hopefully create a distinction.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve up to \$1,500 from the Morin Fund for the cost of the annual fall appeal mailing. Ms. Hess seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Interrupting Racism Training

Ms. Hess and Mr. Twarog reported that the Racial & Social Justice Committee reviewed training options and recommend a two-part training called "Interrupting Racism" that is offered by Human in Common based out of Florence. A description of the training and Human in Common's approach was distributed to the trustees. They recommend that the training be mandatory for library staff and strongly encouraged for the members of the trustees, Coolidge Standing Committee, and Friends boards. They realize that one of the most difficult aspects will be scheduling the 12 hours of training so that the highest attendance possible be achieved. They are prepared to offer alternative training experiences for those who are unable to attend. The cost for both levels is \$5,040 and they recommend offering one this fall and the other early next year with funding from Staff Development.

Ms. Hess said the committee likes how the program is structured, and that the 6 hours can be done in either two 3-hour sessions or three 2-hour session. Mr. Twarog said the committee looked at other programs, but the charges were by the participant, and this program had a flat rate regardless of how many

Interrupting Racism Training (continued)

people attended. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss said they were in favor of the program, which focuses on racial justice, and which provides something for people of all levels and backgrounds on this issue. Ms. Downing had the opportunity to do a condensed version of the training and she found it very effective. Ms. Downing said the library may close during the daytime so staff can do the training during their normal working hours. Ms. Prabhaker said she was excited about the training and proud of Forbes to be able to offer it.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to authorize a two-part training on Interrupting Racism for Forbes staff and boards for \$5,040 to be paid from the Staff Development Fund. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Phased Reopening Plan Update

Ms. Downing reported that self-service hold pickup times are now available 6 days a week, supplementing the curbside/drive-up times. Patrons are responding very positively to being able to pick up their holds without the need for an appointment and enjoy browsing the curated exhibits that are kept stocked. There are 350-420 patrons served each week, who have checked out over 1,000 items per week. Preparations are being made for the next stage of the reopening. The acrylic barriers are being installed at the service desks and Ms. Downing has reached out to seek advice about air quality once the heating season begins and with the possibility of increased numbers of people in the building at one time.

Ms. Downing said that patrons are missing computer access and she would like to be able to safely offer it. The outdoor Wi-Fi is being strengthened and additional seating is being ordered. Mr. Petcen has ordered upgraded air filters for the air handling units for the upcoming winter months. An online application for children's library cards has been added to the website. Ms. Downing said that some libraries are further ahead in their reopening plans while others are a little slower. Some that have opened more quickly have had to pull back. She is attending a webinar next week with libraries that are all dealing with this and will give an update at the October trustees' meeting. Mr. Carrier asked her to put this near the top of the agenda.

FY2020 Action Plan Update

A report on the action plan for the last fiscal year was distributed to the trustees. Many of the initiatives have been curtailed due to the pandemic. The leadership team will be carrying forward initiatives that continue to seem relevant and a revised FY2021 action plan will be presented at next month's meeting followed in November by a plan for FY2022.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said she has not yet heard from the MBLC about a reduction in the requirements for State Aid to Libraries this year though she is confident that the MBLC will do the right thing. The open hours requirement is the most concerning.

Community Engagement

Ms. Moss reported that activity has picked up as Forbes has been collaborating with several different organizations in a number of different areas. She distributed a list of recent and upcoming community engagement events.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings

CCPLM Standing Committee - Ms. Downing reported that the annual meeting is scheduled for September 30 at 7 PM with a presentation about the women's suffrage movement in Massachusetts. The trustees are all cordially invited to attend. The programming committee's subcommittee has reconvened the President's Book Group online and the first discussion had about 25 participants.

Development Committee - Ms. Downing reported that the committee is launching the Charles Forbes Legacy Society this month with an insert in the annual fund mailing. This is a group of people who are intending to leave Forbes in their will. The committee is very excited to start the society because it will allow them to thank people and strengthen the relationship during their lifetime as well as serve as inspiration for others to join by showcasing the impact of bequests both large and small. Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to add publicity to the next agenda.

Racial and Social Justice Committee - Ms. Hess reported that in addition to their training recommendations, they are building the advisory group which they plan to call together for the first time in October or November. It is a strong and diverse group that they are looking forward to working with. In response to a request from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess said she would bring the list of proposed advisory group members to the trustees for approval. The library's by-laws call for committee members to be appointed by the President.

At 5:26 PM Ms. Wight moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:26 PM.