

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, November 18, 2021

Present: Ms. Buckhout, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Hess, Ms. Moss, Ms. Prabhaker, Ms. Sheirer, Mr. Twarog, Ms. Wight. **Also Present:** Bill Breitbart, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA); Debin Bruce, Forbes Library Trustee-elect. **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 4:00 PM.

Bills & Warrants

Ms. Wight made a motion to verbally approve the warrant dated November 18, 2021. 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. Ms. Downing will wait until there are a few more months of warrants and then schedule a time for the trustees to come in and physically sign them.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Hess moved that the Secretary's Report of October 21, 2021 be accepted and placed on file with a minor correction. 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.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Buckhout presented the Treasurer's report of October 31, 2021. The General Aid Fund had positive net activity of \$8,385 and has a balance of \$52,394. The Book & Media Fund had positive net activity of \$10,258 and has a balance of \$18,712. The Community Engagement Fund had negative net activity of \$692 and has a balance of \$442. The David W. Shearer Memorial Periodical Fund had zero net activity because the \$300,000 donation was transferred to the endowment. The Go Local (Outside Voices) Grant had negative net activity of \$2,045 and has a deficit of \$80. The Halberstadt Technology Fund had negative net activity of \$1,430 and has a balance of \$11,689. The Lyman Special Collection Fund had positive net activity of \$725 and has a balance of \$9,612. The Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children Book Fund had negative net activity of \$2,100 for the transfer of the fund balance to the endowment. The Morin Fund had positive net activity of \$181 and has a balance of \$91,197. The Moving Memories IMLS Grant had negative net activity of \$1,206 and has a deficit of \$3,667. The Outreach Fund had negative net activity of \$2,079 and has a balance of \$6,757. The Watson Copier Fund had negative net activity of \$942 and has a deficit of \$495. The balance in the endowment as of October 31 was \$6,926,259.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Buckhout said that the endowment transfers approved by the trustees usually happen in the month they are requested. Ms. Downing said that the Go Local grant has a small deficit, but that it is the type of grant where the expenses are incurred before requesting reimbursement. The Moving Memories grant is federal funding that must be paid to the city and then requested by Forbes. Ms. Downing said that the "Pay What You Can" printing plan will change how the Watson Copier Fund

Treasurer's Report (continued)

is used and that it makes sense to move printing expenses into the Aid Fund in FY2023. Mr. Carrier said that a comprehensive plan is needed for how printing income and expenses are handled.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report of October 31, 2021 and place it on file. 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.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

The following undesignated gifts were received since the last Trustees' meeting: a total of \$5,729.15 from multiple people to the Morin Fund; \$718.50 to the Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund; \$900 to the Lyman Special Collection Fund in memory of Mary Harding; \$250 to the David W. Shearer Memorial Periodicals Fund; and \$50 to the Lyman Special Collection Endowment Fund.

The following designated gifts were received since the last trustees' meeting: \$300,000 from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts to the David W. Shearer Memorial Periodicals Fund; \$100 from Joseph and Barbara Beatty, McMinnville, OR to the Lyman Special Collection Endowment Fund; \$103 from Gretchen Lerch to the Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund in memory of Leith Filley Colen; \$400 from Jean and Mary Savarese to the Outreach Fund; and \$100 from Bettie Farber to the Outreach Fund.

Mr. Carrier said that enough funds will be added to the donations to the Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund to equal \$1,000 and then transferred to the endowment.

The following donation was received since the last trustees' meeting: Allison Lockwood research files donated by Miriam Zoll.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the designated and undesignated gifts and donation as proposed by Ms. Downing. 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.

There were no receipts from sales/rents this month.

Financial Report: First Quarter Report

There was no financial report this month.

Department Report

There was no department report this month.

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Downing attended the November 3 meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that their budget looks good with an anticipated surplus of \$2,000-3,000 at the end of the fiscal year. Their end-of-year appeal and newsletter are going out in early December. The Provisions fundraiser netted about \$800. The Garden Tour committee is in need of new members. Martha McCormick created a bookplate in collaboration with Paula Elliott to recognize the contributions of outstanding Friends members. The first plate will be in recognition of Yvonne R. Boucher who was a longtime member and never missed participating in the Friends' annual meetings. The Friends are also considering moving away from PayPal.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing congratulated Mr. Carrier on his reelection and Debin Bruce for winning a seat on the board. She said that Forbes was very fortunate to have a strong candidate pool and are hopeful that the number of seats on the board can be increased in the future.

Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss toured the recently constructed Hadley Library with director Patrick Borezo. The building has lots of natural light, a large youth programming room, and an active teen space.

As of Monday, Forbes is fully staffed for the first time in a while. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss are pleased to announce that Joshua Vyrsen and Pamela Acosta have joined the staff. Mr. Vyrsen has worked as IPT staff for six years and is now with Forbes 30 hours per week as Interlibrary Loan/Public Services Library Assistant. He brings graphic novel and comics expertise, innovative programming ideas, connections to the local arts community, and excellent customer service skills. Ms. Acosta has been hired at 25 hours per week as a Public Services Assistant. She is originally from Northern Mexico and Southern Texas and bilingual in English and Spanish. She is a painter, illustrator and occasional animator. She can often be found in the company of plants, books, and drinking copious amounts of tea.

Maya Sungold who is an IPT member of the staff will be doing a Simmons School of Information and Library Science field experience in the Children's and Young Adult Department during the spring semester. She is interested in getting programming, promotion, and outreach experience and will be helping to conceptualize, plan, and promote the Summer Reading program.

Phased Reopening Plan Update

Ms. Downing reported the committee continues to monitor the case count in Hampshire County which has remained steady in the upper range of "High" which means more than 100 cases per 100,000 people, or more than 10% positivity. She is hopeful with the addition of the 5-12 year old vaccine and the boosters and most importantly the overall number of fully vaccinated people will positively impact the cases. Northampton is currently 13% partially and 72% fully vaccinated. Once there is a steady trending decline the plan is to increase capacity limits in meeting spaces and expand indoor/in person programming. Several staff have received boosters as they are eligible and staffing remains 100% vaccinated.

Mr. Twarog moved that the Administrative Report including the Phased Reopening Plan Update be accepted and placed on file. 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.

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, December 16 at 4 PM.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held Wednesday, December 1, at 6:30 PM. Mr. Twarog will attend on behalf of the trustees.

Communications

Ms. Downing received an email on November 15 from Heather Diaz announcing the new Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA) officers. Jason Petcen is President, Dylan Gaffney is Vice President, Madison Bishop is Treasurer, and Heather Diaz is Secretary. A meeting will be scheduled soon to talk to all four officers.

FY2023 Action Plan

Ms. Downing presented the final action plan in the library 2019-2023 strategic plan. This action plan represents activities that have been pushed out due to the pandemic, ongoing projects, and new initiatives with an emphasis on those that support the library's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. Ms. Downing said that the action plan is required to be filed annually in order to be eligible for Library and Services Technology Act (LSTA) grants. She said that this is the last year of the library's current strategic plan and that planning for a new strategic plan will need to commence next year. She said that the pandemic has changed the timeline and focus of some items. Highlights of the plan include the creation of an Historian-in-Residence position, similar to the current Writer-in-Residence position, that would use the library's collections for research and/or programming. A committee is being formed to conduct a search. If it goes well, the position will carry on for multiple years. The position is mostly volunteer, but could be paid a stipend. How much and how it will be funded is yet to be determined. Ms. Downing also highlighted the crowdsourced transcription of the multi-volume Judd Manuscript. Sylvester Judd was an early editor of the Daily Hampshire Gazette and the manuscript is one of the most used items in the Forbes' local history collection. Forbes is partnering with a UMass public history grant to get the project off the ground.

Ms. Downing said that she is very excited that with the addition of several new bi-lingual staff members that there can be new outreach and connections with Spanish-speaking members of the community. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier about other language speakers, such as the recent Afghan refugees, Ms. Downing said that the Spanish language outreach is a good first start and can be built upon in the future. She said that the Catholic Charities is working with the Afghan refugees and that the Center for New Americans and MassHire will host a job fair for them soon.

Ms. Moss talked about the proposed bike book program, which will use an electric bike with a trailer to bring books and information about the library to events, such as farmer markets, fairs, etc. Ms. Downing said that upgrading the basement HVAC, renovating the Young Adult Room, and adding a bandshell to the grounds are capital projects with funding to be requested from the city.

In response to a question from Ms. Hess about which actions specifically address and increase diversity, equity, and inclusion, Ms. Downing pointed out the first two items under "Community Hub" including actively engaging with the Resilience Hub and Department of Community Care and seeking out programming partnerships with community groups that serve or represent BIPOC members of the community. She said that the Historian-in-Residence could also represent the BIPOC community. Raising public awareness of the library's resources and services by offering Spanish language library tours and library card registration along with conducting publicity to highlight the library's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion will also further those goals. In addition, increasing the number of trustees will also create opportunity for more BIPOC representation.

Ms. Wight said that reading through the objectives that were written in 2017, she was pleased to see how well they've held up given the pandemic and where we are in the world today. The trustees agreed that the strategic plan was very well written.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve the FY2023 Action Plan which will then be filed with the MBLC. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed

FY2023 Action Plan (continued)

unanimously with Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hess, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Library Values

Ms. Downing said that value statements list the core principles and behaviors that guide and describe an organization's culture. Identifying and outlining the library's values not only creates a benchmark for future decision-making and strategic planning, but unites staff and leaders with a set of enduring, passionately-held beliefs. They function as a moral compass for the library and its staff, guiding decision-making and establishing a standard against which actions can be assessed. They attempt to define who we are, what we do, and why we do it.

The leadership team with input from the staff have drafted a set of values that they believe define Forbes Library's core principles and that dovetail and support Forbes' mission and vision.

Welcoming - We offer an inclusive space that builds community and belonging.

Inspiring - We foster curiosity, creativity, fun, and lifelong learning.

Equitable - We ensure that the library is accessible and free for all.

For each value there are practical and explicit guidelines and expectations for staff as well as a sense of how to behave. These are more than just words on paper and the endorsement and support of the trustees along with their feedback was requested. Ms. Prabhaker and Ms. Hess said they were impressed and thought the value statements were really good.

Ms. Hess made a motion to endorse the set of values. 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.

Second Century Plaques

Ms. Downing reported that the front lobby has eight plaques including two large bronze plaques that commemorate donors and others that made the Second Century campaign possible. The plaques have been on display for about 20 years. The library continues to be very grateful to the people listed on these plaques and this might be an appropriate time to remove the plaques to make space for other things. The locations of these plaques are prime real estate for displaying artwork from the library's growing collection. Mr. Petcen said that the plaques can be sold for salvage.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the removal of the two plaques. 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.

Stipends for Volunteer Committee & Board Members

Ms. Downing reported that the Racial & Social Justice Committee recommends the following policy for providing stipends to volunteer committee and board members. Unfortunately, the trustees are ineligible due a provision in the library's incorporation that prevents them from compensation. Trustees are eligible to have expenses reimbursed as the board sees fit including for professional development.

In order to remove barriers which may limit participation, the library welcomes requests for assistance with costs associated with childcare, technology, transportation and/or other necessary expenses incurred in

Stipends for Volunteer Committee & Board Members (continued)

the course of service by voluntary members of library appointed committees, boards and groups on an as-needed basis.

For consideration, please complete our stipend request application. Funding of up to \$500 per calendar year is available and can be reapplied for annually while serving on a library board or committee. The library has funds available to cover up to \$2,000 in requests annually and after that requests may be delayed until additional funding is approved.

Ms. Downing said that the purpose of the policy is to increase diversity by removing barriers and making it easier for a variety of people to participate in trustee-appointed committees, such as the Racial & Social Justice Committee, Coolidge Committee, and Development Committee by removing constraints around childcare, transportation, and technology. Ms. Downing suggested capping it at \$2,000, funded from the Morin Fund, for the first year, and then reassessing. First, all eligible committee members would be notified, then all future announcements and on-boarding documentation would include the new policy. Mr. Twarog said it made sense for this to be a pilot program to try for a year and then reassess. Mr. Carrier asked what "other necessary expenses" might include and if the application would include a question about what the funds were needed for. Ms. Buckhout said that there may be tax consequences for non-receipted expenses which may be required to be reported as income on a 1099 form. She said that she would need to research the issue further and discuss it with the auditors. Ms. Prabhaker said that when this topic came up in the Racial and Social Justice Advisory Committee, the feeling was that the less documentation and forms required, the more likely people would be to take advantage of the stipend. Having to document and itemize expenses was considered to be burdensome. She said that trusting people and having robustly diversified committees was more important than requiring fully documented expenses. The trustees then discussed the possibility of offering stipends to all committee members and not requiring any forms. Mr. Carrier said that Ms. Buckhout should look into the tax issues, and that the trustees should keep thinking about this and continue the discussion next month.

Human Resource Records Retention Schedule

Ms. Downing reported that she and Jennie Lamour have developed a records retention schedule for documents related to human resource processes in consultation with the employer association. They used the guidelines for municipalities as the starting point. This comprehensive schedule will guide staff to maintain proper records including when it is appropriate to discard records. Working on this project has also allowed for further thinking about electronic storage where appropriate and they will continue to work in this direction as they are able.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the proposed human resources records retention schedule. 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.

Reinforcement of New Book Drops

Ms. Downing submitted a proposal from Accufab Ironworks to reinforce and install three stainless steel book drops so that they will work properly. Due to their large size, the rear doors on the drops don't swing freely open and closed. The work proposed by Accufab will fix that and includes installation

Reinforcement of New Book Drops (continued)

for a price of \$8,479.85 with an option for an additional \$1,482.45 for extra reinforcement on all side panels for a total of \$9,962.30

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve up to \$9,962.30 from the Morin Fund for the reinforcement of the book drops. 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.

Mr. Carrier said that this was the second recent project where more money had to be spent than originally budgeted, and that he hoped some lessons could be learned from the experience. He said he did not mean for these remarks to be criticism, but just hoped that some lessons could be learned for the future.

Discussion Topic

None this month.

Treasurer's Search Update

Ms. Downing reported that the search committee is reviewing the initial applications and still accepting applications for the treasurer's position. A display ad will be run in Saturday's Daily Hampshire Gazette. She will call the committee together soon, and anticipates scheduling interviews for early December. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, she said there are definitely some viable candidates.

Increasing the Number of Trustees

Ms. Downing reported that Attorneys Eric and Sandra Lucentini discovered a statute approved in 2012 that will simplify the process of seeking approval to increase the number of trustees from 5 to 7 members called a "non-judicial settlement agreement." It is intended for cases like this where there doesn't appear to be any objection to the change from interested parties. The Lucentinis have received a positive response from Eric Carriker in the Attorney General's office as well as from city solicitor Alan Seewald. The Lucentinis are going to be preparing to submit what is needed to the Attorney General's office to request an agreement after Thanksgiving and will be back in touch with next steps.

Mr. Carrier said that this is happening more quickly than he anticipated and that the trustees should reach out to the new mayor-elect to let her know of their intentions to increase the board. Ms. Wight said that she is already aware of the situation and there is no reason for concern.

Library Use Statistics

Ms. Moss distributed circulation and door count statistics to the trustees. The door count has ranged from 40-55% of pre-pandemic levels. Circulation is still down about 33% compared to pre-pandemic levels, with the exception of ebooks, which have seen a 70% increase. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Moss said that attendance will likely not increase until fears from the pandemic have abated and in-person programming has resumed.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings

Landscaping & Grounds - Mr. Twarog reported that the committee is assembling information about the bandshell project in anticipation of seeking funding for an architectural study as a next step in the project. Debin Bruce is working with Ms. Downing on how to approach this. Ms. Wight said that until the number of trustees is increased, only two trustees can serve on the committee.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings (continued)

Development Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the committee met yesterday and that they looked into finding an alternative to PayPal, however, the company has been sold and the new owners are trying to be more proactive in support of democracy than the previous owner and founder who supported authoritarian principles. They talked about helping the city with fundraising for the new bandshell and the possibility of naming it for a local business. They agreed to recommend hosting the Chamber of Commerce "Arrive at Five" event in November of 2022. This would be an in-person event for about 100 people including eating and drinking, and would be dependent upon easing of the pandemic. A fiscal partner would be sought to help with funding. It is a wonderful opportunity to partner with the Chamber of Commerce which has made a big push over the last few years to become more of a community organization promoting the financial health and vibrancy of the community. Mr. Carrier said that this might be a way to interest and encourage more people to become involved in the library either financially or by serving on a committee.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve Forbes hosting a Chamber of Commerce "Arrive at Five" event in 2022. 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.

Racial & Social Justice Committee - Ms. Hess reported that the library is continuing to work with the Human Rights Commission and anticipates having joint programs to announce soon. The committee also discussed the "pay what you can" model for printing, copying and faxing that was brought up by Ms. Moroni in her Reference Department report. They are gathering more information and plan to continue discussing it at their next meeting.

BIPOC Art Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the committee is pursuing artwork for the Children's and Young Adult department first and should have recommendations to bring forward to the board soon. They are meeting next week and are in the process of narrowing the choices down. He said that in addition to adding BIPOC artists, they are also looking for more women artists.

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the annual meeting was postponed and a new date will be announced soon. The committee recommends hiring a recording secretary to take minutes at the meetings for a salary of \$40-\$50 per meeting. The annual expense will be about \$500 and the library can absorb this from the personnel budget. It will first be offered to library staff, and if no one is interested, someone outside of the library will be sought.

Ms. Hess made a motion to approve up to \$500 a year for a recording secretary for the Coolidge Standing Committee to be paid from the Morin Fund. 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.

Other Business

None.

At 5:20 PM Ms. Hess moved to adjourn the meeting. 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. The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 PM.