

**TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY**  
**Tuesday, January 25, 2022**

**Present:** Ms. Debin Bruce, Ms. Cheri Buckhout, Mr. Russell Carrier, Ms. Lisa Downing, Ms. Molly Moss, Ms. Emily Prabhaker, Ms. Elizabeth Sheirer, Mr. Joseph Twarog, Ms. Katy Wight. **Also Present:** Mr. Brian Jamros, Ms. Susan Kelley, and Ms. Kathleen Glowacki, representatives of Bartholomew Inc.; Maxine Schmidt, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA), Julie Bartlett Nelson, Archivist. **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 3:45 PM.

**Bills & Warrants**

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to verbally approve the warrant dated January 25, 2022. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, 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.

**Bartholomew Quarterly Report**

Mr. Jamros introduced Susan Kelley and Kathleen Glowacki who work on the Forbes account. Ms. Glowacki presented a review of the endowment portfolio. The balance as of December 31, 2021 was \$6,970,502.86. The balance as of last night's close was \$6,583,555. The balance at the beginning of 2021 was about \$6.5 million. \$318,000 was contributed to the endowment, and after withdrawals, unrealized losses, interest, dividends and capital gains, the gain for the year was \$218,929. Since inception in January 2009, the total gain has been 4.6% even with withdrawals, earning an 8% total rate of return. For 2021 the portfolio earned 9.22% after fees, compared to a benchmark of a typical 50/50 equity/bond mix earning 8.5%. Ms. Glowacki said she was pleased with this return especially since the Forbes portfolio follows an ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) mandate. Ms. Glowacki said that the last three years have been strong, but that the market is now returning to more volatility. The portfolio is down about 5% this month, but she recommends staying the course. She said that they will be making some changes but nothing dramatic, and that the overall strategy is good for the long haul. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Glowacki said that she does not recommend shifting the portfolio from the current 45/55 equity/fixed income mix as it has served the library well during the up periods. Mr. Jamros said the goals for the portfolio are long-term, while the volatility is a short-term event. He said that using the 20 trailing quarters to determine the withdrawal rate will help to smooth out the ride. He pointed out the alternatives in the portfolio such as the Blackstone Real Estate and Gold that help to diversify the portfolio and smooth out the ride. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Mr. Jamros and Ms. Glowacki said that they would contact the trustees if they felt like a significant move needed to be made before the next trustee's meeting. If the trustees needed to vote, a special meeting would be called with a 48 hour notice for posting the agenda in

**Bartholomew Quarterly Report** (continued)

accordance with the open meeting laws. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Glowacki said that this is a challenging time, but a market downturn was bound to happen. She said she felt the market reaction was extreme in relation to the underlying conditions which include inflation, high energy prices, and foreign tensions with Ukraine and Russia. Interest rates are rising which hurts both the bond market and stocks. Things will settle down and smooth out eventually, though no one can say exactly when. The strategy is to stay the course and rebalance as usual. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Mr. Jamros said that he prefers to watch the S&P index rather than the Dow Jones because it represents more companies. Ms. Glowacki said that she monitors indices that are closely matched to the mix that they are building in the Forbes portfolio.

Mr. Carrier thanked the representatives from Bartholomew Inc. and they left the meeting at 4:17 PM.

**Secretary's Report**

Ms. Bruce moved that the Secretary's Report of December 16, 2021 be accepted and placed on file. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

The trustees reviewed and updated their contact information for 2022.

Ms. Wight moved that the minutes from the 2021 executive sessions of May 20, June 24, and July 22 be released and placed on file. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

**Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Buckhout presented the Treasurer's report of December 31, 2021. The General Aid Fund had positive net activity for the month of \$29,644 and has a balance of \$91,723. There is underspending of \$37,159 in payroll, \$6,351 in gas, but significant overspending in Labor & Repairs of \$10,005. The Book & Media Fund had negative net activity of \$3,369 and has a balance of \$16,958. The Garvey Book & Media Fund had negative net activity of \$486.23, which was transferred to the endowment. The Google Ads Grant had zero net activity and a zero balance, as \$1,120 in grant revenue and \$1,120 in advertising expenses was recorded. The H. Clifton Kellogg II Memorial Fund had negative net activity of \$975 and has a zero balance. The Lyman Special Collection Fund had negative net activity of \$6,455 and has a balance of \$3,566. The Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children Book Fund had positive net activity of \$750 and has a balance of \$750. The Morin Fund had positive net activity of \$12,740 and has a balance of \$102,934. The Outreach Fund had negative net activity of \$1,325 and has a balance of \$6,266. The Watson Copier Fund had positive net activity of \$285 and has a balance of \$75.

Ms. Buckhout said that next month she will have a good look at payroll and will be able to get a better idea of where it stands. In March she will address the Watson Copier Fund and she will ask the representatives from Bartholomew to remove the MacFarlane fund from the endowment report since it has a zero balance. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, she said there are no other areas to be concerned about. Ms. Bruce said that she appreciated the detailed list of activities and goals she compiled for the new Treasurer.

**Treasurer's Report** (continued)

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report of December 31, 2021 and place it on file. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, 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 \$7,048.67 from multiple people to the Morin Fund; and \$2,445.02 to the Lyman Special Collections Fund. Mr. Carrier requested that \$54.98 be added to the Lyman Special Collections Fund from the Morin fund to make it an even \$2,500.

The following designated gifts were received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$2,500 from Roy Faudree and Sheena See, Florence MA for the Gertrude P. Smith Book Fund; and \$2,355.21 from the Narkewicz campaign Committee and David Narkewicz and Yelena Mikich to the Lyman Special Collection Fund to offset costs for the mayoral portrait project.

The following donations were received since the last trustees' meeting: digital images and binder of information about Pioneer Valley Ballet from Maurine Sutter; three issues of the Mother of Voices underground newspaper purchased from Ebay for \$84.48; and a commemorative plate recognizing the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Calvin Coolidge as Mayor of the City of Northampton from David Narkewicz.

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

There were no receipts from sales/rents this month.

**Second Quarter Report**

Ms. Downing presented the second quarterly General Aid Budget report. Labor & Repairs is over budget by \$10,005 while all other categories are as expected. The Book & Media Fund is also on target. Ms. Downing said that she anticipates that it will be a pretty tight fiscal year, and while there is nothing to worry about, she will keep an eye on it.

**Preliminary FY2023 Budget**

Ms. Downing presented the first draft of the FY23 budget. She has not received any directive yet from the city and prepared a level services budget with an overall 4.26% increase. High energy costs and inflation are having an impact on non-personnel categories. She will submit the FY23 budget to the city and schedule a meeting with the new finance manager and mayor to discuss it. Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss, Mr. Carrier, and another board member will attend the meeting. At that time they'll get a directive or sense from the city of where Forbes stands and vote on the budget at the next trustees' meeting.

**Department Report: CCPLM and Special Collections**

Julie Bartlett Nelson presented the report for the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library & Museum (CCPLM) and Special Collections. All programming was online in 2021, and Faith Kaufmann is leading a Mass Humanities grant to provide new equipment in the Coolidge Museum for hybrid programming. Electrical work was done in December and camera installation will be done in early 2022 to allow for recording and live streaming. Program highlights include: Stan Sherer's

**Department Report: CCPLM and Special Collections** (continued)

documentary about Forbes Library; events surrounding the All Hamptons Read for 2021 of *Station Eleven*; and a talk by Dylan Gaffney and Ms. Downing entitled *Forbes Library: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. Heather Diaz continued work on the Moving Memories Lab Grant which includes equipment for the public to digitize materials. Mr. Gaffney and Jill Emmons have continued to work on collecting and documenting music in Northampton through the Bay State Music History project. Mr. Gaffney, Ms. Diaz, Aibhe McDonnell and Harrison Greene continued to work on collecting oral histories and history of the Pride movement in Northampton. There is a waiting list of people to be interviewed by Smith College work study students. Local History material and photographs continue to draw the highest engagement on the Forbes Library Facebook page. The Documenting Early Black Lives in the Connecticut River Valley project seeks to surface and gather the fragmentary information about early Black lives in the area from the wide range of sources in Western Massachusetts. The original grant has ended but the project is continuing now to include indigenous peoples as well. The pandemic continued to shift daily tasks, and patrons are being served by email, phone, and zoom. Materials are being delivered by email, mail, or a live tour of an item. The Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library & Museum (CCPLM) Standing Committee shifted to zoom meetings. The Presidents Book Group averages about 25-30 attendees. A short intro video for the CCPLM is in progress. Ms. Nelson and Ms. Downing met with the Smith Voke Librarian who is applying for a grant to offer professional development workshops to Northampton teachers about Coolidge and 1920 themes. The Grace Coolidge portrait by Howard Chandler Christy was loaned to the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery and is now in the process of being repaired. The Coolidge Museum Facebook page continues to grow and engage with followers. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) received a grant for environmental monitoring of special collections in public libraries and Forbes will be receiving equipment to participate in February. The CCPLM was closed to visitors January-June, 2021. Research appointments resumed in May 2021 and regular museum hours for visitors resumed in July 2021. Research questions are answered by email, phone, and zoom appointments.

For 2022, the biggest focus is on a new content management system (CMS) for archives and photographs. The Friends have pledged \$6,200 toward the project and Ms. Moss is negotiating the contract. Ms. Nelson is also applying for several grants to help with the cost. She doesn't have firm numbers yet but anticipates needing an additional \$15,000. She is also working on new reparative language in the catalog, and making sure that first names are included in labels. When asked what further support the trustees could offer, she said that funding is needed for the Coolidge Committee for programming, especially for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Coolidge's presidency. Planning for the celebration includes virtual and physical programming, art projects, a lecture series, and tours. Ms. Downing added that the HVAC system is still underperforming in special collections and the CCPLM and that it has been uncomfortably cold. Mr. Petcen said that it is tricky scheduling the HVAC company to come and work on the programming because it needs to be on a cold day and they are coming from New York.

Ms. Downing thanked Ms. Nelson and her team for all their work especially around equity and inclusion. She said she is excited to see what comes next with the new CMS project, which will allow for so much more content to be available online.

The trustees thanked Ms. Nelson for her report and she left the meeting at 4:45 PM.

### **Friends of Forbes**

Ms. Prabhaker attended the January 5 meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that they received a generous annual donation of \$3,500 and about \$5,500 in memberships. Expenses included printing the Paco T-shirts and membership drive materials. Looking back at the year, they said they feel very lucky to have such generous support and to be doing so well. They have a \$16,000 surplus and discussed what to do with it. They decided to put half of it in the Director's discretionary fund and return the other half to the endowment. They discussed the process of deciding how much to put in the discretionary fund at the beginning of the budget year. They need to make a decision in March about holding the wine tasting next fall. The garden tour will be easier to plan for since it is outdoors, and is tentatively scheduled for the second Saturday in June. Five neighborhood book boxes are up and turnover is happening. The Paco T-shirts are selling slowly, some each week.

### **Administrative Report**

Ms. Downing reported that all are very saddened by the passing of Peter Rowe this month. He was a beloved trustee and the recipient of the 2016 Trustees Award for his exceptional service. Mr. Carrier said that he was a friend as well as a trustee and a very sad loss.

Debin Bruce was welcomed to her first official meeting, and the board will take care of all the annual housekeeping tasks including setting the year's meeting dates. A new group photo would have been taken at this meeting but with COVID it was decided to delay until the board can meet in person again.

Mr. Carrier, Ms. Wight, Ms. Moss, and Ms. Downing met with Mayor Sciarra before she took office in a transition meeting with Mayor Narkewicz. It was a really productive meeting and Forbes looks forward to continuing the strong working relationship with the city.

Forbes lost two community members with connections to the library this month. Susan Hoyt worked at the library in what was called "Circulation" at the time and Dick Frary who was a longtime patron of the Hampshire Room, and who donated items including a postcard collection to Forbes.

The 2019 Annual Report is available and paper copies were distributed to the trustees. It can also be read online: <https://forbeslibrary.org/info/annual-reports/>. It was delayed due to the pandemic and work on the next report covering January 2020 through July 2021 has already begun.

A Winter Reading Challenge BINGO is being offered for kids and adults, which includes a raffle of a \$50 Downtown Northampton gift card for anyone who completes the challenge.

The new programming chairs have arrived thanks to support from the Friends of Forbes and donors to the library. They are very comfortable and look great.

The new book drops are finally in place. After a long wait trying to make them function properly, there are now three gorgeous, ADA compliant book drops that are big enough that they should not need to be emptied on Sundays and sturdy enough that they should last for decades.

### **COVID Safety Update**

Ms. Downing reported that so far staff have continued to remain largely healthy which can be credited to them for getting vaccinated and boosted. Some staff have had to be out because of symptoms and having close contacts

**COVID Safety Update** (continued)

with COVID which has impacted the workforce, but so far it has been manageable and the library has been able to maintain the scheduled open hours. KN95 masks have been obtained for staff to wear and staff can participate in weekly asymptomatic PCR testing.

Signage has been posted requesting that patrons keep visits to the library brief if possible. To support this the length of computer sessions has been reduced to 15 minutes and meeting room use by patrons has been paused. All indoor programming has been halted at this time as well as one on one in-person research appointments. There has been an uptick in the usage of curbside and As Needed Delivery Services.

The MBLC suspended the Open Hours Requirement for the State Aid to Public Programs from December 20, 2021 to April 4, 2022. This flexibility is greatly appreciated, and it is hoped that Forbes will not need to take advantage of it.

MassHire has gone back to fully remote services. They also have a new director, Maura Geary, after Teri Anderson's recent retirement. A tour of the library has been offered.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that the MBLC was not loosening the Municipal Appropriations Requirement (MAR) for state aid because they feared this might cause communities to reduce funding for their public libraries.

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

**Next Meetings**

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, February 17 at 3:45 PM. The trustees scheduled the following meetings for 2022: Thursday, March 24, at 4 PM; Tuesday, April 26 at 3:45 PM; Thursday, May 19 at 4 PM; Thursday, June 16 at 4 PM; Thursday, July 21 at 4 PM; Thursday, September 22, at 4 PM; Thursday, October 20 at 3:45 PM; Thursday, November 17 at 4 PM; Tuesday, December 20 at 4 PM.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held Wednesday, February 2, at 6:30 PM. Ms. Bruce will attend on behalf of the trustees.

**Communications**

Ms. Downing received an email on January 3 from Hilary Detmold sharing a story of how Dylan Gaffney helped her find an old print in the photo archives.

Ms. Downing received a notice from Brian Tabor that he is retiring from the library at the end of July. He will leave an amazing legacy of service after 49 years of working at Forbes. He would like to continue in a volunteer capacity in special collections and the Coolidge museum. A celebration will be planned. Ms. Prabhaker added that he has always been so nice and generous to her and her children. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that every job opening presents an opportunity for reorganization and that diverse candidates will be sought.

### **Election of Officers**

Ms. Wight nominated Mr. Carrier for President. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Mr. Twarog nominated Ms. Wight for Vice President. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

### **Appointment of Secretary and Treasurer**

Ms. Wight made a motion to appoint Ms. Sheirer as Secretary and Ms. Buckhout as Treasurer. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

The new Treasurer will be appointed at the February meeting. Mr. Carrier said that Ms. Buckhout has been one of the most consequential Treasurers that Forbes has ever had, and that she has done much to update Forbes' fiscal policies and bring the books up to the standard where they need to be.

### **Trustees Award**

The trustees discussed a potential recipient for the Gertrude P. Smith Trustees Award. The award honors a community member or members who have given exceptional volunteer service or have made another significant contribution to Forbes Library and is named after the first recipient who is responsible for starting the Friends of Forbes Library.

Ms. Downing recommended Marjorie Hess who served as trustee for twelve years. She was amazingly dedicated to the board and advocated for Forbes by speaking out and talking to elected officials. She oversaw the library director search, and participated in the search for the assistant director. Most recently her commitment to racial and social justice was evident in her work on the Racial & Social Justice Committee. Mr. Carrier said that he greatly valued her input as Vice President to the board, and that she was very helpful during the library's disagreement with the city. The trustees all agreed that Ms. Hess's service to the board was very valuable and exemplary.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to give the trustees' award this year to Marjorie Hess. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Downing will contact Ms. Hess and discuss possible dates for the ceremony later in the spring when it can be held outdoors.

### **Priscilla Pike Bequest**

Ms. Downing reported that Forbes has received a \$68,401.98 bequest from the estate of Priscilla Pike of Easthampton. Ms. Pike worked as a teacher for years at the Clarke School and her estate was handled by Ostberg & Associates. Included with the check was note from Rob Ostberg saying that throughout her life, Ms. Pike was very grateful to the library and appreciated its impact on the community. Her generosity is remarkable and truly appreciated.

Ms. Downing proposed establishing the Pike endowment fund with the bequest with the following description: Established by the Trustees in 2022 with a bequest by Priscilla Pike who was a longtime teacher at the Clarke School and believed in the importance of the public library. The income is to be used to

**Priscilla Pike Bequest** (continued)

support the needs of the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum and other operating expenditures as needed or desired by the board. Mr. Carrier said that the Coolidge Committee needs funding for programming and that this will be an appropriate use of the bequest due to Ms. Pike's connection to the Clarke school. Ms. Wight said it will be useful to have some money to spend with the 100 year anniversary of Coolidge's presidency coming up. Ms. Bruce said that Ms. Pike's relationship to the library is long one, as she brought many Clarke School students to the library. She said that she had talked to many members of the community who all refer to her as Pris Pike.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the Director's recommendation as proposed and establish the Pike endowment fund with the \$68,401.98 bequest. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Wight made a motion to transfer \$6,598.02 from the Morin Fund to the newly established Pike Fund to bring the starting balance up to \$75,000. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

**BIPOC Art Committee Purchase Recommendations**

Ms. Downing reported that the BIPOC Art Committee has its first purchase recommendations to bring to the board. The selections were made based on the following criteria that were established: artist identifies as BIPOC/AAPI; significant connection to Northampton and/or Western Massachusetts; robust representation across underrepresented groups including Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian-American; seek gender diversity among artists; seek artwork for children, teens, and adults; artwork is appropriate for hanging in the library: size fits space we have or can make available; art and framing can be safely displayed long term without significant fading, damage, or special maintenance, interest in the works is likely to be long term, engages viewers, must follow the library's current display/exhibit policy; final acquisition decisions should be made after viewing artwork in person if at all possible, being prepared to make accommodations for artists for whom sharing the art in person would be a hardship.

Mr. Carrier said that the committee thought it best to start the process by thinking about artwork for children and teens. The recommendations were unanimous and will use up about half of the funds allotted for this project. Next, the committee will bring forward recommendations for adult artwork to purchase with the remaining funds.

Ms. Moss displayed the proposed artwork on the screen. The recommended purchases include: "The Transition" by Ryan Murray for \$2,960 - spray paint and layering texture. It includes an image of Northampton High School and addresses issues of mental health and wellness and the transition from junior high to high school. "I'll race you up that hill" by Mike Curato for \$3,000 - 11 x 17 pencil drawing. Mr. Curato is an author and illustrator of children's books including *Little Elliot, Big city*. It is a landscape reminiscent of the local area, and encourages conversation about where are the figures going, where are they coming from. "Bringing in the New Year-Pop!" by Grade Lin for \$3,500. Ms. Lin is a local book illustrator. This image is from one of her books and is representative of her style with her use of color and vibrancy. "Where the Mountain Meets the Moon" also by Grace Lin for \$350 - archival pigment print with limited edition run. It is an interesting shape and beautiful approach, with her representative patterning in background.



**BIPOC Art Committee Purchase Recommendations** (continued)

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the purchase of the artworks as proposed by the BIPOC art committee for a total of \$9,810. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Downing will apprise the anonymous donor of the decision.

**Discussion Topic: Trustee Appointed Committees and Assignments**

Ms. Downing stated that the President of the Board of Trustees forms committees as needed and appoints members of the board to committees. Committee work has increased over the past few years and the roles and responsibilities need to be clarified. Ms. Downing proposed that a trustee chair all trustee appointed committees and be responsible for setting the agenda in conjunction with library staff. The trustee chair will verbally present a brief summary of highlights at the full board meetings and bring forward recommendations as needed. For ad hoc committees, and other committees where a secretary has not been appointed, the trustee chair should also summarize the meeting in writing and submit it to the director to be included in the board's next packet. Ms. Downing proposed that the staff on committees be responsible for arranging in person or online space for meetings and posting agendas on the library website and with the city according to open meeting law. Staff should also distribute agendas, post minutes and any other meeting materials to committee members in a timely manner. She further recommended that short term and long term goals be set for each committee and that committee assignments be reviewed annually and that meeting frequency be determined by necessity of the work of the committee. Trustee observers to the Friends of Forbes meetings should submit a brief written summary to be included in the monthly packet with select highlights shared verbally at the meeting. Ms. Downing distributed a list of current assignments, committees and their members.

Mr. Carrier said that these changes are necessary so that Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss have time to focus on the important issues facing the library. He said these recommendations are best practices to make all the committees work more smoothly. The trustees said that they are happy to help by adopting these practices. Ms. Prabhaker asked about the Children's & Young Adult redesign committee, and Ms. Downing said that is on hold for now since the timeline has been pushed out. Ms. Wight agreed to step off the Landscaping Committee so that Ms. Bruce can join. Ms. Bruce is also joining the Development Committee. Mr. Twarog suggested possibly combining the Landscaping Committee and the Facilities committees. In response to a question from Ms. Wight, Ms. Downing said that there have not been any applicants for the secretary position to the Coolidge Committee. Ms. Moss suggested letting work-study students know about it. The trustees agreed by consensus to adopt the practices as proposed by Ms. Downing.

**Discussion Topic: Racial & Social Justice Committee and Advisory Group**

Ms. Downing reported that the trustees formed two committees to support the vision set forth in the racial and social justice statement issued in 2020. Currently there is the trustee appointed Racial & Social Justice Committee composed of trustees and staff and the Racial & Social Justice Advisory Group composed of staff, a trustee, and community members. Topics have been brought back and forth between the two groups before being brought to the trustees. This has worked in some instances but at other times, it has added a layer of communication complexity that slows the discussion and recommendation process down. Ms. Downing proposed that the two committees be merged. This change

**Discussion Topic: Racial & Social Justice Committee and Advisory Group** (continued)

would mean that the recommendations and discussion topics from the advisory group would go to the leadership team and then onto the trustees instead of first going through the standing committee. She believes this streamlined process will be more effective at advancing the library's commitment to being an antiracist library.

Ms. Downing said that she proposed this idea to the Advisory Group so they can provide anonymous feedback, and they will also discuss it at their March meeting. Mr. Twarog said that the roles of the two groups were never clearly defined and that he thought the Advisory Group should be folded into the Committee. There is some concern that this might change the diversity make up of the group if white faces predominate. The trustees discussed the membership of the revised Committee. The chair would not necessarily have to be a trustee and could be a community member. For example, Ms. Wight is on the Coolidge Committee which is not chaired by a trustee. Ms. Downing said that the Advisory Group is starting to find its way and build some momentum and she would like to it continue to move forward. She will gather feedback from the Advisory Group and report back to the trustees in April.

**Report on Prior Year's Goals**

Ms. Downing reported that progress has been made on both the trustees and administration's goals during another very disrupted year due to the ongoing pandemic. A summary was distributed to the trustees. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss didn't feel quite prepared to submit annual goals at this month's meeting and their plan is to bring draft administration goals and to hold a discussion about the trustees' goals for the year at next month's meeting.

**Trustee Resources Page**

Ms. Downing said that this is an annual reminder that there is a resource page for trustees and the link to access it is: <http://bit.ly/39EkVCs>

**Treasurer's Search Update**

Ms. Downing reported that the committee met five times during January. The purpose of the first four meetings was to interview the top candidates. At the conclusion of the fourth meeting the committee unanimously concluded that there were two candidates that stood out. Of these two, they unanimously decided to interview only one of the candidates and that if they were not satisfied with the results of that interview, they would meet with the second choice. At the conclusion of the fifth interview, the committee unanimously decided to recommend the top candidate for full board approval at the next trustees' meeting pending reference checks by the director. Ms. Downing distributed copies of the candidate's resume, references, and the Treasurer's job description. She also distributed a list of goals and challenges for the Treasurer in the coming year.

The search committee recommends David E. Pascucci (MSBA, CPA/ABV, CVA) for the position of Treasurer. He has both the necessary experience and the commitment to stay up with current practices and technology. His references said he has good communication skills and is able to convey information effectively to a variety of people. He is comfortable with tackling the items on the list of goals and challenges prepared by Ms. Buckhout. Mr. Carrier suggested that he be appointed to the position in February after the meeting with the auditors on February 17. Ms. Buckhout will continue for a time at an hourly rate to help with the transition.

**Treasurer's Search Update** (continued)

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the Director and search committee's recommendation to hire David Pascucci as the Forbes Treasurer beginning February 17, 2022. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

**Community Block Grant Application**

Ms. Downing reported that an application was submitted to improve accessibility of the restrooms totaling \$37,250 that will remove the threshold lips and add automatic door openers. Improving the ventilation will require an engineering study to determine a course of action and a budget and it did not seem like a good match for the grant so other sources of funding will need to be found for that piece of the project. Ms. Bruce recommended another source of possible funding.

**Children's & Young Adult Renovation Update**

Ms. Downing reported that the Central Services request for \$300,000 in Capital Funds for the Forbes "Lower Level Ventilation and Space Upgrades" has been pushed out to FY2025. Unless something changes, this money will not be available until July 1, 2024. Design work is nearly complete.

**Library Use Statistics**

Ms. Moss distributed circulation and door count statistics. The door count in December was about 50% lower than December 2019. Circulation is still down about 24% compared to pre-pandemic levels. Circulation is recovering faster than door count, and doesn't include ebooks. CW MARS continues to see increases in usage of electronic content. 2021 reached a record-breaking two million digital book checkouts. For CW MARS, this milestone illustrates the continued growth and importance of library digital lending of ebooks and audiobooks, especially after a prolonged period of building closures due to the global pandemic. Forbes has the 4th highest Overdrive circulation in CW MARS.

**Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings**

Development Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the fundraising committee met on January 12 and welcomed Ms. Bruce to the committee. They began planning for Library Giving Day on April 6 with hopes of increasing the amount raised annually. They reviewed fundraising statistics from 2017-2021. The good news is that there has been constant improvement in most categories during this period. In addition, Forbes was able to add \$330,000 to the Endowment in fiscal year 2021 and \$318,000 so far this fiscal year. They also began discussing how the library might increase the number of individuals who contribute annually as well as those who remember the library when they make end of life financial decisions. As always, there is still a need for folks to make thank you calls to past donors. The committee decided to try meeting every other month in the coming year.

Landscape & Grounds Committee - Mr. Twarog reported that the committee reviewed a preliminary request for proposals for designs for the bandshell project based on the concept of a design challenge that the Planning Committee has used with success in the past.

Racial & Social Justice Advisory Group - Ms. Prabhaker reported that the group met on Monday. They met with Sean Donovan who is the interim director of the Department of Community Care. Ms. Prabhaker said that he is very open and eager to work with the library and they had a good discussion about what

**Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings** (continued)

is considered disruptive behavior. Faith Kaufmann is working on procedures for objections to displays and exhibits.

BIPOC Art Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the committee met twice since the last trustees' meeting. The committee unanimously recommended the purchase of four pieces of art from three different artists for the children's department totaling close to \$10,000 which is almost half of the budget. The committee is currently looking at pieces appropriate for placement in the rest of the library and hopes to have purchase recommendations at the February or March trustees' meetings.

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the committee did not meet in January. A subcommittee met a couple of times to reassess goals for the coming year and will be recommending these along with some housekeeping changes to the full board when they meet again next month.

**Other Business**

None

At 6:13 PM, Ms. Wight moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:13 PM.