

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, July 21, 2022

Present: Ms. Debin Bruce, Mr. Russell Carrier, Ms. Lisa Downing, Ms. Molly Moss, Mr. David Pascucci, Ms. Emily Prabhaker, Ms. Elizabeth Sheirer, Mr. Joseph Twarog. **Also Present:** Dylan Gaffney; Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA). **Present via Zoom:** Katy Wight. **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 for some participants as indicated.

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 PM.

Bills & Warrants

Mr. Twarog moved to approve the two warrants dated July 21, 2022, one for the end of FY22 and the first warrant for FY23. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

The trustees signed the warrants. Mr. Pascucci will write the checks.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Bruce moved that the Secretary's reports of June 16, 2022 and the Executive Session of June 16, 2022 be accepted and placed on file with a few minor corrections. 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

Mr. Pascucci presented the preliminary Treasurer's report of June 30, 2022. The General Aid Fund had negative net activity for the month of \$70,081 and has a balance of \$12,776. Various underspending and overspending resulted in overall expenditures being \$16,391 less than budgeted with a large payroll surplus of \$46,612. This payroll surplus offset overspending in other areas such as Electricity of \$19,817 and Labor & Repairs of \$12,314. There are additional adjustments that need to be recorded such as the expense accrual of utilities and payroll payouts adjustment which will reduce the current surplus. The Book & Media Fund had negative net activity of \$16,222 and has a deficit of \$3,671. The Auxiliary Fund has a deficit of \$165. The BIPOC Fund has a balance of \$2,500. The Community Webs Fund has a balance of \$1,287. The balance in the COVID Fund was transferred to the Aid Fund and now has a zero balance. The Digital Capacity Grant has a balance of \$731. The Doland Reference Room Fund has a deficit of \$127, which is expected to be covered by the FY23 distribution from the endowment. The Externally Financed Transactions Fund has a balance of \$4,208. The Gertrude P. Smith Book Fund was transferred to the endowment and now has a zero balance. The Google Ads Grant has a zero balance. The Halberstadt Technology Fund has a deficit of \$302. The Morin Fund has a balance of \$81,715. The Moving Memories IMLS Grant Fund has a zero balance. The Programming-Adult Fund has a balance of \$4,486. The Staff Development Fund has a balance of \$4,200. The balance in the Watson Copier Fund was transferred to the Aid Fund and now has a zero balance. The value of the endowment as of June 30, 2022 was \$5,796,818.84.

7/21/2022

Treasurer's Report (continued)

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Mr. Pascucci said that Ms. Buckhout had helped quite a bit in preparing the report and that it will take him some time to master the many Excel spreadsheets required to generate the report and to become familiar with the library's many funds.

Ms. Downing said the FY22 numbers are preliminary and she is still expecting a few more bills from FY22 including a utility bill for \$2,500, which will cause the small surplus to decrease further. She is hoping to use whatever surplus is left for summer expenditures. She said that Personnel costs had come in under budget largely because COVID Payroll Protection Program (PPP) funds were used for intermittent part-time (IPT) workers, however electricity was \$20,000 over budget. In response to a question from Ms. Bruce, Ms. Downing said that Forbes is on the list of "cooling centers" for Northampton during the current heat wave.

Ms. Moss said that she had budgeted for a 12% Municipal Appropriations Requirement (MAR) this year, but adjusted that upwards to 13% and after a few adjustments will come in just about on target. Ms. Moss said that about \$1,000 in expenses in the Book & Media fund need to be reclassified to the Watson Copier Fund, and that a transfer is needed from the Aid Fund to the Watson Copier Fund to zero it out again. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that it makes sense to get rid of the Watson Copier Fund for FY24 and she will prepare and plan for that.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve the preliminary Treasurer's Report of June 30, 2022 and place it 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.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to transfer \$1,000 from the Aid Fund to the Watson Copier Fund to cover the anticipated FY22 deficit. 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.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

Ms. Downing submitted a list of undesignated gifts received from several donors since the last trustees' meeting totaling \$180.49 to the Morin Fund and designated gifts totaling \$40 to the Lyman Special Collections Fund and \$25.75 to the Staff Development Fund.

There were no receipts from sales/rents this month.

The following donation was received since the last trustees' meeting: oil portrait of Charles Burleigh from the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence, color slides of 1954 Tercentenary Parade from Paul Craig, and Grace Coolidge blanket from Lynne Bassett.

Dylan Gaffney said that Charles C. Burleigh (1810-1878) was an ardent abolitionist, journalist, early advocate of women's rights and liberalism in religion, and renowned orator, who was the first resident speaker at the Free Congregational Society of Florence upon its founding in 1863. That society continued the vision of the 1840's utopian community called "The Northampton Association for Education and Industry," an extraordinary experiment in radical social change that attracted intellectual activists from around the United States. In November 2021, the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence donated to Forbes a collection of historical documents relating to

7/21/2022

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

the Free Congregational Society of Florence, including meeting minutes, membership records and other materials from the nearly fifteen years Burleigh served as speaker. Forbes is now accepting this oil painting with a gold gilded frame of Burleigh painted by his son, Charles C. Burleigh Jr. given to the library by the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence. This gift was ushered by Mr. Carrier with support from Mr. Gaffney when the Society decided they wanted the painting to be in a more visible and climate controlled location. Forbes accepted knowing that researchers coming to Forbes to use the newly acquired collection of historical documents would appreciate having his portrait on display. He also is an important figure in local history.

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

Financial Report

Ms. Downing said that she did not have a written report and her earlier remarks during the previous discussion of the June 30 Treasurer's report were sufficient.

Department Report

There was no department report this month.

Friends of Forbes

There was no Friends of Forbes meeting this month.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that Forbes will be participating in Northampton Neighbor's first DoozyDo parade on September 17th. The parade is intended to be a joyous community celebration and the library's contingent will be called "Flights of Literature" and will include flying books.

Ms. Moss, Steven Stover, and Josh Vrysen participated in a training provided by the new Department of Community Care about de-escalation. This new department intends to offer training opportunities in addition to responding to calls once they are fully up and running next year.

Ms. Downing said that this is Brian Tabor's last month with Forbes and a celebration for him was held on Tuesday. He requested a framed photograph taken of him at the Arts and Music desk in 1983 by photographer Lionel Delevigne. Ms. Downing said that the celebration was a smashing success and that Mr. Tabor will return in the fall offering a beginning genealogy workshop and will continue on the Coolidge Advisory Committee.

Ms. Moss has been elected to the CW MARS Executive Committee. This body recommends policy and the budget to the membership and it is wonderful to have representation from Forbes on this governing body.

Josh Vrysen and Madison Bishop are the latest staff members to become notaries. This is a very popular patron service and the library is grateful to them, along with Faith Kaufmann, Alene Moroni, Ben Kalish, and Dylan Gaffney for stepping up to provide this service.

7/21/2022

Administrative Report (continued)

Forbes will begin offering Spanish/English bilingual story times later this month. Julia Cornick will be presenting them and is working on spreading the word about this new program.

There are delightful felted animals on display by local author Jane Dyer who created them using wool from her sheep. She will be doing a story time and talking about felting at an upcoming program.

Forbes hosted the end of year student celebrations for the Center for New Americans in mid-June. The events were joyous and well attended and the director, Laurie Millman wrote, "What a tremendous gift you gave us! Your staff were so helpful and accommodating. The evening celebration went off as smoothly as the morning. The joy was so palpable at being together in person. No one wanted to leave last night -- children were chasing each other, parents and others were sitting and chatting. Both celebrations were just what we needed after this year and you made it possible."

Forbes Library is a community partner to Northampton Neighbors. That arrangement has fostered multigenerational use of the library, for example, grandparents attending children's programs with their grandchildren. One of Northampton Neighbor's interest groups, Trashwalkers, recently met at Forbes for one of their two monthly neighborhood clean-up activities. The grounds of the library are well maintained, but the surrounding streets had bags of discarded masks, cigarette butts, and discarded paper. One Trashwalker scored a bucket-full between Forbes driveway and Pulaski Park.

Covid Safety Update

Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss reported that with the rise of the highly contagious BA.5 variant, there is an increase in cases in the community with the expectation that it could get worse before it gets better. The library is in a holding pattern with services as a wait and see approach is taken. The library has a standing policy that masks will be required when the community transmission rate is "high." The summer months have provided many beautiful days for outdoor library programming for all ages for which all are very grateful. Community members and groups have been allowed to use the OWL for hybrid meetings outside of the meeting rooms and that has been very well received.

Ms. Prabhaker moved that the Administrative Report including the COVID Safety Update 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.

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, September 22 at 4 PM. The following meetings for the rest of 2022 were previously scheduled: 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 via Zoom on Wednesday, September 7 at 6:30 PM. Ms. Wight will attend on behalf of the trustees.

Ms. Downing and Ms. Wight said that a meeting with the trustees is needed for a brainstorming session about the strategic plan. Ms. Wight said that it will be an exercise similar to last time the strategic plan was done, asking the

7/21/2022

Next Meetings (continued)

trustees for their assessments about the libraries' strengths and weaknesses. The meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 25, at 4:00 PM via Zoom. It will be a public meeting that needs to be posted. The meeting will be recorded to facilitate notetaking by Ms. Moss.

Communications

Ms. Downing received an email on July 11 from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) about access to United for Libraries, a learning and training website that Ms. Downing said is very useful and well done.

Ms. Downing received an email on July 11 from the MA Library Trustees Association about their upcoming annual meeting on October 22, 2022. The trustees should let Ms. Downing know if they are interested in attending.

Discussion Topic

There was no discussion topic this month. Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to start gathering articles about the future direction of public libraries for an upcoming discussion. He asked the trustees to let Ms. Downing know if they have suggestions for other discussion topics.

Restoration of Charles Burleigh Painting

Ms. Downing asked for approval to send the Charles Burleigh painting to the Williamstown Conservation Center for examination. There are some visible repairs that need to be done on the frame and it is assumed that the painting needs to be cleaned. The trustees were asked to approve the recommendation with funding coming from the Lyman Special Collections fund. An estimate for restoration will be provided hopefully at the September meeting. In response to a question from Mr. Twarog, Ms. Downing said that restorations have ranged from \$1,000 to \$5,000 in the past depending on the size of the painting and its condition.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to send the Charles Burleigh painting to the Williamstown Conservation Center for evaluation with funding from the Lyman Special Collections Fund. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Letter to Smith College about Electric Line

Ms. Downing reported that there is a telephone pole on the edge of the west lawn with a low hanging wire across that lawn that supplies power to Smith College. The Landscaping and Grounds committee seeks permission to send a letter to Smith about the library's intention to add a performance stage to the lawn and the negative impact of this electrical line to the siting options. Ms. Bruce and Ms. Downing have drafted a letter and they are waiting on information from Smith to determine the best person to address the letter to. Ms. Downing said that Forbes' liaison with Smith College is leaving and that there is a new Vice President of Community Relations. Mr. Carrier asked that Ms. Downing set up a meeting with them to bring them up to speed on Forbes' long history and relationship with Smith College. Ms. Downing will find the document created several years ago outlining a series of topics and areas of cooperation between Forbes and Smith.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the letter to Smith College drafted by Ms. Bruce and Ms. Downing. 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.

7/21/2022

Facilities: Additional Curb Cut

Ms. Downing said that a curb cut is needed opposite the one on the driveway to make it more accessible for strollers and wheel chairs from the parking lot, and also to come down from the sidewalk on the building side of the driveway and cross over to the curb cut on the opposite side of the driveway to access the west lawn. The library received an estimate of \$6,000 from Duffy & Willard, and Ms. Downing suggested funding from the Aldrich Fund.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve \$6,000 from the Aldrich Fund for a curb cut on the east side of the driveway. 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.

Ms. Moss said there will still be \$6,000 remaining in the Aldrich Fund after this project. Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to let Mark Aldrich know how the funds are being used and to offer to show him the projects including the curb cuts and book drops.

Building Repairs and Updates

Ms. Downing reported that Pat McCarthy, the new Director of Central Services for the city of Northampton, coordinated a repair to the HVAC system that required bringing in both mechanical and programming contractors. Ms. Downing was very pleased with how responsive the city was to the library's needs. Mr. McCarthy also came out with Warren Jones from the city to review the bathroom accessibility upgrades and recommended that the library hire an architect to do a study to make sure that everything will be up to code. This is a CDBG grant funded project and they have approved modifying the grant parameters to include this study and reduce the number of bathrooms modified from 7 to 4 (one per floor) so that the study can be covered with grant funds. Thanks to an inquiry by Ms. Bruce, the parking department added directional arrows down by the street. This should help reduce the number of cars that enter from the wrong direction. The first hybrid program was attempted in the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum (CCPLM), and it did not work despite it working earlier in the day during a dry run. Northampton Open Media is assisting in troubleshooting the problem which will probably involve replacing existing equipment that is proving incompatible. Consideration is being given to adding an access panel to the equipment near the base of the wall under where the Grace Coolidge portrait hangs. This would greatly improve the situation. Ms. Downing said that yesterday there was a pipe back-up and flood that hopefully will not result in too large a bill, but already the library is dipping into the FY23 Labor & Repairs budget.

Managing Fine and Decorative Arts Grant Awarded

Ms. Moss reported that Forbes has been notified that it received an LSTA grant from the MBLC of \$7,500 that was submitted by Faith Kaufmann. The grant will allow the library to professionally photograph new acquisitions since the last time this was done was several years ago, including the newest works purchased with the BIPOC Art Fund. It will also provide funding to improve the accessibility of artwork labeling. This will include audio descriptions of a select number of pieces. The grant will begin in October. Mr. Carrier said to be sure to include the new Charles Burleigh portrait in the project.

Summer Reading

Ms. Moss reported that this year's summer reading program's theme is "Camp Read S'More" and the materials are adorable. There are customized programs for 0-5, 6-11, 12-17 and adults and they all are available in English and

Summer Reading (continued)

Spanish. The summer kicked off with a sign up event on the lawn at the end of June with over 150 people in attendance.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings

Landscaping Committee - Ms. Bruce reported that the committee met on July 14 and reviewed the approved landscaping projects from the FY23 facilities plan. They also discussed the performance stage and recommended a letter to Smith College about the electric line crossing the west lawn.

Strategic Planning Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the committee is nearing the completion of the survey and hope to make it live by the end of the month. They will continue their community assessment work with stakeholder interviews that they would like to invite the board to be involved in. They would also like to schedule a separate board meeting for the board to participate in a brainstorming session.

Coolidge Advisory Committee - Ms. Wight said that they are still working on making plans for the space. The Marketing and Communications committee met and discussed items to sell to visitors. The Programming committee is working on planning for anniversary events.

Other Business

Mr. Carrier said that he wonders when he drives by the new River Valley Co-op store in Easthampton if Forbes could do something similar with its parking lot, i.e. covering it and installing solar panels. This would greatly help with the library's very large electric bill that keeps growing. It would also be beneficial to protect patrons and cars from rain and snow. The trustees agreed that this was a very good idea both for the library and for the planet. Ms. Downing will look into this possibility with someone she knows who helps non-profits with solar projects. Ms. Prabhaker will also ask her contact at Smith College for information and possible funding sources.

FLEA Contract Negotiations: Executive Session

At 5:07 PM, Ms. Bruce moved that the trustees go into executive session to discuss contract negotiations with FLEA because negotiation in open session would be detrimental to the library's bargaining position. 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 trustees invited Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss and Ms. Sheirer to remain as guests at the executive session. Mr. Gaffney, Mr. Pascucci, and Mr. Petcen left the meeting at 5:07 PM. Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss, Ms. Prabhaker, Ms. Sheirer, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight were present during the executive session. No votes were taken during the executive session.

At 5:48 PM, Ms. Bruce moved that the executive session be ended and the regular meeting reconvened. 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 trustees authorized Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker (with Mr. Twarog as backup), Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss to meet with the Mayor and City Finance Director to discuss issues that have come up in regards to the contract negotiations with FLEA. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss will prepare a presentation for the meeting.

7/21/2022

FLEA Contract Negotiations: Executive Session (continued)

Ms. Wight provided feedback on the use of the OWL technology, and suggested adding a few more microphones in strategic locations in the roomV.

At 5:53 PM Ms. Prabhaker moved to adjourn the meeting. 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 meeting was adjourned at 5:53 PM.