

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, June 16, 2022

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

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 4:01 PM.

Bills & Warrants

Ms. Wight moved to approve the warrant dated June 16, 2022. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The trustees signed the warrant.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Bruce moved to approve the Secretary's reports of May 19, 2022 and the Executive Session of May 19, 2022. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Buckhout presented the Treasurer's report of May 31, 2022. The General Aid Fund had positive net activity for the month of \$5,738 and closed with a balance of \$77,614. The Book & Media Fund had negative net activity of \$1,487 and closed with a balance of \$10,542. The Auxiliary Fund closed with negative net activity of \$942 and has a balance of \$118. The BIPOC Art Fund closed with negative net activity of \$5,850 and has a balance of \$5,590. The COVID fund had negative net activity of \$365 and has a deficit of \$3,342. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$559 and has a balance of \$86,593. The Staff Development Fund had negative net activity of \$935 and has a deficit of \$185. The Watson Copier Fund had positive net activity of \$125 and has a deficit of \$1,669. The balance in the endowment as of May 31, 2022 was \$6,076,207.35.

Ms. Buckhout said that the surplus in the Aid Fund will be expended by the end of the month. She said there will be some changes in how gifts are reported and posted which will be reflected on the June report. The Book & Media Fund will be fully expended. There are two funds now with deficits, the Watson Copier Fund with a negative \$1,700 balance and the COVID Fund. Ms. Downing said that the city approved paying \$2,400 of the \$3,400 deficit in the COVID fund so there will still be a small deficit remaining. The deficit in the Watson Copier Fund is related to the transition from staff desktop printing to the use of the public printers and is fully incorporated into the Aid Fund budget for FY2023.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to move the deficit balances in the Watson Copier Fund and COVID Fund into the General Aid Fund at the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, and Ms. Wight voting in favor.

Treasurer's Report (continued)

Ms. Downing said that the fiscal year will end very close and she is hoping for a small surplus going into next year. Ms. Buckhout said the deficit balance in the Halberstadt Fund will be charged to a grant and that the Moving Memories Grant will receive additional funds and end with a zero balance.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report of May 31, 2022 and place it on file. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, 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: \$4,406.20 to be deposited in the Morin Fund and \$25 to the Special Collections Fund.

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

The following donation was received since the last trustees' meeting: 2 copies of Marvin Ward's new book on Easthampton Massachusetts' home grown industries.

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

Ms. Buckhout said that the transition to the new Treasurer David Pascucci, is going smoothly, although there is a lot of information and nuances to pass along. Mr. Pascucci said that it is more complex than he thought it would be and he is grateful to Ms. Buckhout for her help. Ms. Buckhout will continue to help through the end of year wrapping up and reports.

Financial Report

There was no financial report this month.

Communications

The trustees received a letter dated May 27, 2022 from the auditors, Downey, Pieciak, Fitzgerald & Co., P.C. confirming their understanding of the services they are to provide for the Trustees of the Forbes Library for the year ended June 30, 2022 for a cost of \$11,200 including the audit and preparation of the Form 990 tax return. Ms. Downing said this represents just over a 4% increase. The cost has risen steadily over the last five years, up from \$3,500 in 2019. Since the library received only a 3% increase from the city, the additional funds must be taken from another line item. The plan is that Mr. Pascucci will sign the letter of intent after he officially takes over as Treasurer on July 1, and Ms. Buckhout is waiting to hear back from the auditors if this is acceptable. The trustees agreed that they will consider putting the audit out to bid next year in an effort to keep the cost down, though Mr. Carrier said he wants to be sure that Mr. Pascucci is comfortable before making any big changes.

The trustees received a letter from the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA) officers requesting another meeting with the trustees' negotiating sub-committee.

Friends of Forbes

Mr. Carrier attended the June 1 meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that there was little movement in any of the balances this month. The Florence Bank Ballots award was over \$3,500 & was the largest income received this month. However, the Friends of Forbes came in seventh which is considerably lower than in the past. More effort on this is needed in the future. Garden ticket money continues to come in but it is not sure if it is better or worse than previous years at this point. The Staff Development Core Fund is now fully funded at \$5,000. The budget is in good shape. The Garden Tour revenues are projected to exceed the amount budgeted. The Special Events committee reported that they are working on detailed planning for the Fall Artisans Fair planned for October 2 from 10-3 at Forbes, rain or shine. They are looking for artisans for a \$50 fee and there will be room for 40. They are also looking for volunteers and sponsors. The Friends approved Ms. Moss's request for \$200 to add a pass for the Massachusetts Trustees of Reservations to the library's offerings. They also approved a funding request for a picnic table and benches with backs for the west lawn for up to \$3,200 from Tree Top Products. They agreed to fund two additional Adirondack chairs for the lawn.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that Forbes will be participating in Northampton Neighbors' first DoozyDo parade. It is described as a "joyful, inclusive, unconventional celebration" with a goal to raise awareness and financial support for Northampton Neighbors, a volunteer-based organization providing free programs and services to help seniors live independent, engaged lives in their homes and communities. The parade will take place on Saturday, September 17, 2022, rain or shine at 11 AM. The trustees were asked to reach out to Ms. Downing if they are interested in participating in the library's contingent. The chosen theme is "Flights of Literature".

Ms. Downing reported that Senator Jo Comerford will be visiting Forbes Library on Wednesday, July 13 between 5-6. "This tour will celebrate the vibrancy of the region's libraries and the critical role they play in our communities, as gathering places, resources, introductions to literacy, and so much more, as well as the resilience of our librarians and library staff who have worked to support our communities throughout the pandemic." The trustees are encouraged to attend if they are available.

Heather Diaz and Alene Moroni gave a presentations at the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) conference this month. Ms. Diaz spoke about the "living library" program Forbes held a few years back and Ms. Moroni spoke about reader's advisory.

Heather Diaz was congratulated on completing the 2-year IMLS grant focused on building and preserving community memory. The objectives of the grant were complex and made even more so as a result of the pandemic. Ms. Diaz did a fantastic job keeping the grant on track including all of the reporting with the city and the federal agency administering the grant. One of the outcomes is a collection of oral histories related to Noho Pride.

Ms. Downing and the trustees were very saddened to learn of Marcia Burick's passing. She was a longtime supporter of the library and the recipient of the trustees' award in 1985.

The garden tour was an amazing success. The weather cooperated and all of the countless hours of volunteer time paid off in a wonderfully organized and

Administrative Report (continued)

well run event with great attendance. Mr. Carrier said that so much work goes into organizing the many fine details of this event.

Brian Tabor's retirement gathering is coming up on Tuesday, July 19 at 2 PM. The trustees were invited to join in the celebration of his long career at Forbes Library. Ms. Downing said that his position will be posted internally very soon. Staff vacancies have been a strain on staff in the past and it is hoped this position will be filled quickly. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said the job description will be brought in line with the library's current values including technology skills, community focus, and a preference for a second language qualification. The job will require a bachelor's degree and library experience.

Covid Safety Update

Ms. Downing said that she has been very pleased to watch cases decreasing. The community has remained steady in yellow so no changes have had to be made to the current service model. There have been several staff out due to COVID personally or in their families and this has impacted staffing levels. Luckily, everyone has recovered and is doing well. The city will reimburse Forbes for PPE related expenses this year totaling about \$1,800.

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

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, July 21 at 4:00 PM. The following meetings for the rest of 2022 were previously scheduled: 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.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Buckhout said that a draft year end report would be ready in August with minor changes expected from the auditors. The final approved year-end report should be ready to send to the city after the September trustees' meeting.

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.

Discussion Topic

There was no discussion topic this month.

Coolidge Committee Budget

Ms. Downing reported that the bylaws for the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library & Museum (CCPLM) specify that an annual budget should be presented for approval. This year funds have been identified outside of the library's operating budget to support the creation of this budget. She recommends taking a sustainable yield from the Rosamond Chester Coolidge Room (RCCR) Fund of \$500 as well as \$2,500 from the recently established Pris Pike Fund for a total of \$3,000. The CCPLM standing committee recommends spending \$750 for Marketing and Outreach, \$750 for Exhibits, and \$1,000 for Coolidge Centennial programming, exhibits or marketing as 2023 begins 6 years of 100th anniversary milestones. Ms. Downing said the committee is grateful to have a budget, which is fairly modest, but more than they've had before.

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Coolidge Committee Budget (continued)

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve the Coolidge Committee budget of \$3,000 as presented by Ms. Downing. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

BIPOC Art Recommendation

Ms. Downing reported that the BIPOC Art Committee unanimously recommends the purchase of two photographic prints by Julius Lester. Julius Lester was a longtime Forbes patron who spent a lot of time at the library during his retirement. He spent his career as a professor of African-American and Judaic studies at the University of Massachusetts and is the author of nearly four dozen books, including children's books and adult fiction and nonfiction, plus hundreds of essays and reviews. The committee was struck by the beauty and narrative power of his photographic images. The BIPOC Art Committee recommends purchasing *Ancestors* (\$1,000) and *UMASS Clouds* (\$400) from the BIPOC Art Fund. They each measure about 18x20".

Ms. Wight made a motion to purchase two photographic prints by Julius Lester for a total of \$1,400 from the BIPOC Art Fund. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Department Report: Facilities & FY2023 Projects

Ms. Downing presented the recommendations of the Facility Committee in consultation with the Landscaping Committee for FY2023 facilities projects. The projects, cost (where available), and recommended fund was included in the list. Ms. Downing said that she continues to work with the city and is looking forward to building a relationship with Pat McCarthy, the new head of Central Services. Among the projects that Forbes is working on with him are the forthcoming children's programming room and teen space renovation. That project also includes the replacement of the HVAC system for the ground floor. The committee is looking at moving the basement staff lighting projects out of that project so that they can be done sooner than that work is scheduled for (FY2025). They are also working with him on the bathroom improvements - accessibility improvements with CDBG funds and improved ventilation as a Central Services project. They also are expecting the DPW to repair a damaged piece of sidewalk near the crosswalk over to Green Street as well as painting in the parking lot.

Ms. Downing reported that completed projects in FY2022 include the new book drops, which are now functioning well, lighting upgrades to the main stair case and front entrance, and new programming chairs. Projects in process include the HVAC system in the Children's department, which has now been pushed out to FY2025, a new hybrid camera which can be used for live streaming, and which is now up and running.

Ms. Downing said that there are a couple of expensive and high priority projects that will eat up much of the Labor & Repairs budget early in the next fiscal year including HVAC work on the first floor system and roofing repairs. An additional curb cut is planned for the end of the sidewalk by the parking lot, which will be useful for people accessing both the parking lot and the west lawn, and will be paid from the Aldrich Fund. She proposed using the Morin Fund for several projects including continuing to clean and replace pads on the oriental carpets as well as funding a new community room rug, mezzanine floor carpeting, and new chairs for the children's craft area, all projects that were approved but not yet accomplished last year. Additionally either a new shed or a second shed will be need outdoors for storage of the

Department Report: Facilities & FY2023 Projects (continued)

proposed new book bike and trailer. Upgrades to the CCPLM are planned to improve the exhibit space, and also to the Hampshire Room. There is a lot going on and the Landscape and Building sub-committee has decided to meet twice a year, but may need to meet quarterly.

Ms. Downing said that the Friends continue to be generous supporters of the library and have recently purchased additional outdoor furnishings. Assistance will also be sought for furnishings for the children's and teen projects and to ask for a new storage shed that will be necessary to house the bicycle and trailer that grant funding is being sought for.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve the proposed projects as recommended by the Facility and Landscaping committees with the costs and funding sources indicated. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Mr. Petcen said that he can improve the sconce lighting on the main stair case so that it is not so blinding.

Library Use Statistics

Ms. Downing reported that in-house circulations are down 9% from the baseline year comparison (2019) while circulation of e-materials continues to grow, up 89% from May 2019, putting total circulations down a mere 0.4% from 2019. Comparing January to May of 2019 to the same period in 2022, total circulations are up 1.6% for the five month period. Door counts hover around 3,000 for the month of May, holding steady from April numbers. Fewer new patrons were added this month, understandably with the end of the academic year and the departure of much of the area's student population.

CDBG Grant

Ms. Downing reported that Forbes was notified that they have received the CDBG grant for bathroom accessibility improvements - to remove the threshold lips and to add automatic opener buttons. The cost estimate the grant was based on totaled \$37,250 although with inflation this number will increase. Luckily it seems that the CDBG funds can absorb this increase and she is working on getting an updated number. The grant funds will be available after July 1. All are very excited to see this project move forward.

Children's and Young Adult/HVAC Project Update

Ms. Downing reported that Dietz Architects visited to review the Children's and Young Adult/HVAC project and to discuss the possibility of moving forward with the improvements to the staff task lighting before the rest of the project which is currently scheduled for FY2025. An estimate was received of \$41,000 for this portion of the work which probably puts it into the category of a Capital Improvement that will need to be scheduled and budgeted for in collaboration with Central Services. It is hoped that the overall project estimate will be received soon so that planning can continue.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings

BIPOC Art Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the committee met on June 9 and voted unanimously to recommend the purchase of two photographs by Julius Lester totaling \$1,400. The committee felt they had fulfilled the charge given to it by the trustees and that their work was done. However, the committee hopes the trustees will approve holding a reception sometime in the fall or later to celebrate and showcase the new additions to the collection.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings (continued)

If approved, the members of the committee and other interested parties would meet again later in the year to plan for the event.

Facilities Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that in addition to preparing the facilities project list, the committee agreed to meet twice a year so that they can better track progress and new projects as they emerge.

Landscaping Committee - Ms. Bruce reported that they did a ground review including the siting of the performance stage. They are now back to trying to pursue a design for a permanent stage. Ms. Bruce has been attending development training and is working on a grant proposal for seed money for the project to augment the funding received from the Friends.

Strategic Planning Committee - Ms. Wight reported that they are nearing the completion of the survey and hope to make it live by the end of the month. They will continue with 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 Standing Committee - Ms. Wight said that they discussed the ideas of the Exhibits sub-committee and are getting ready to re-envision the current space in the CCPLM with modular cases that can be easily moved. Ms. Downing said the goal is to make the CCPLM a visually exciting and interesting destination for visitors.

FLEA Contract Negotiations: Executive Session

At 5:09 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. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously, with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The trustees invited Ms. Buckhout, Ms. Downing, Mr. Pascucci, and Ms. Sheirer to remain as guests at the executive session. Mr. Petcen left the meeting at 5:09 PM. Ms. Bruce, Ms. Buckhout, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Mr. Pascucci, Ms. Sheirer, and Ms. Wight were present during the executive session. No votes were taken during the executive session.

At 5:32 PM, Ms. Wight moved that the executive session be ended and the regular meeting reconvened. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously, with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Mr. Carrier said the trustees will schedule a follow-up meeting with FLEA.

Other Business

There was no other business.

At 5:32 PM Ms. Bruce moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 PM.