

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, September 22, 2022

Present: Ms. Debin Bruce, Mr. Russell Carrier, Ms. Lisa Downing, Ms. Molly Moss, Mr. David Pascucci, Ms. Elizabeth Sheirer, Mr. Joseph Twarog. **Also Present:** Dylan Gaffney, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA); Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA). **Present via Zoom:** Ms. Emily Prabhaker; Ms. Katy Wight; Paula Elliott, Head of Technical Services; Christine Hannon, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; **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 4:00 PM.

Bills & Warrants

The trustees signed the warrant dated September 22, 2022.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Bruce moved that the Secretary's reports of July 21, 2022, the Executive Session of July 21, 2022, and the Special Meeting of August 25, 2022 be accepted and placed on file with a few minor corrections. 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.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Pascucci presented the Treasurer's Report for the two months ending August 31, 2022. Fund balances for FY22 have not yet been determined. The FY22 audit should occur soon and the preparation of QuickBooks general ledger is occurring in preparation of the audit. Fund balances will then be determined. The General Aid Fund had positive net activity of \$18,387. The Book & Media Fund had negative net activity of \$15,044. The Auxiliary Fund had positive net activity of \$395. The Doland Reference Room Fund had negative net activity of \$357. The Externally Financed Transaction Fund (EFT) had negative net activity of \$3,356. The Go Local (Outside Voices) Grant had negative net activity of \$1,141. The Halberstadt Technology Fund had positive net activity of \$9,848. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$4,560. The Programming Fund-Adult had negative net activity of \$810. The Staff Development Fund had positive net activity of \$672. The Watson Copier Fund had positive activity of \$968. The balance in the endowment as of August 31, 2022 was \$5,825,230.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for the two months ending August 31, 2022 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.

Ms. Downing submitted a list of undesignated gifts received from several donors since the last trustees' meeting totaling \$3,711.15 to the Morin Fund and \$125 to the Lyman Special Collection Fund; and a designated gift of \$50

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

to the Lyman Special Collection Fund. A donation of \$10,000 was received from Mary Ellen Osgood of North Andover, MA to establish the Keogh Family Fund.

The following receipt from sales/rents was received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$3,000 lease payment for FY22 and FY23 from the Old School Commons Condominium Trust to the Morin Fund.

There were no donations received since the last Trustees' meeting.

Ms. Downing said there was a \$2,000 gift to help with the water bottle filler station on first floor as well as the \$10,000 gift from Mary Ellen Osgood, who grew up in this area. Ms. Downing is preparing a thank you packet that will include a photograph of her grandfather.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to create the Keogh Family Fund with the \$10,000 gift from Mary Ellen Osgood, with the purpose of the fund to be decided at a later 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.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the designated and undesignated gifts and the receipt from sales/rents as proposed by Ms. Downing. 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.

Financial Report

Ms. Downing said that it is anticipated that there may be final adjustments due to the audit. Additionally it is anticipated that there will be additional expenses to be charged to FY22 including over \$3,000 in custodial supplies for an order that was billed very late as well as over \$6,000 in personnel expenses for IRS covid related tax credits that were denied due to Forbes' relationship with the city. Ms. Downing expects that the final FY22 report will be ready in October. She said it is likely the final budget will be on target. Mr. Pascucci said he is working with Keith Purcell to see if he's aware of any way to save the tax credit.

Department Report: Technical Services

Ms. Downing welcomed Paula Elliott and congratulated her on her 40th anniversary with Forbes. She said that she hears from staff frequently about how supportive Ms. Elliott is and wanted to acknowledge before the board how many projects Ms. Elliott is involved with.

Ms. Elliott presented the Technical Services department report. Projects completed in the last year include all periodical subscriptions being restarted, revision of the standing order program for fiction, moving the Arts & Music New Graphic Collection to the main floor, creation of new codes for the Children's Room Graphic Book collections, reclassification of the Easy Readers Series collection, establishing the Library of Things for the Children's Room, moving the Parenting Collection to the main floor. In addition, Brian Marchese completed a course offered by the Massachusetts Library System, Steven Stover attended De-Escalation Training, Kathy Mizula helped the Children's Room with the Storywalk and also completed moving the gift books used for replacement copies. Ms. Elliott and Kathy Mizula completed cataloging a large donation of graphic materials for the Arts & Music Department and the Children's Department. Ongoing projects include weeding the collection, working with the Reference Department as they move

Department Report: Technical Services (continued)

materials from the department into the circulating collection, working on editing the Cutter Classification Tables, participating in cybersecurity training, and continuing the inventory of the Hampshire Room with the assistance of Portia Henle. Brian Marchese is maintaining the ongoing book sale and working on weeding back issues of periodicals in the Arts & Music Department. New projects include: Brian Marchese creating monthly displays for the circulation department. Ongoing issues include occasional flooding in the closet due to an open pipe. Three new computers are needed and two of the office chairs need to be replaced.

Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Elliott to extend the trustees' thanks to Ms. Henle for her assistance. In response to a question from the trustees, Mr. Petcen said that the open pipe in the basement is required to provide an air brake so the pipes do not back up into the building. Ms. Moss said that the computers are scheduled to be replaced this fiscal year. Mr. Carrier said that the chairs will also be replaced this year. The trustees thanked Ms. Elliott for her report and for all the work she and her department have accomplished.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve the Technical Services Department Report 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.

Ms. Elliott left the meeting at 4:19 PM.

Renaming Funds

Ms. Downing proposed that the following funds be renamed for clarity and consistency with the other fund names. The intent of the funds will remain the same. She suggested renaming the RCCR (Rosamond Chester Coolidge Room) Fund to the Rosamond Chester Coolidge Fund with the following description: Established by the Trustees in 1997 with a portion of the bequest left to the Friends of Forbes by Rosamond Chester, to support the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum. She also suggested renaming the Pris Pike Fund to the Pris Pike Coolidge Fund 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 support the needs of the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum and other operating expenditures as needed or desired by the board.

Ms. Wight made a motion to rename the RCCR Fund and the Pris Pike Fund as proposed by Ms. Downing. 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.

Mr. Pascucci left the meeting at 4:22 PM

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Bruce attended the September 7 meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that the garden tour raised \$24,500 about twice what was projected. The Director's fund has \$34,748 and the ending balance in the endowment is \$438,500. The membership committee is planning a December mailing. The Friends are planning a Craft's Fair on October 2 from 10 AM-2 PM. Thirty-five artists have been selected and each one is donating an item to the raffle. The Friends' board is looking to recruit two to three new board members and

Friends of Forbes (continued)

financial expertise would be helpful. Ms. Downing gave an update on Library news.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the Friends of Forbes report 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.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that she is very pleased to announce Mary Biddle as the next Head of Borrower Services. She comes to Forbes most recently from the Smith College libraries where she coordinated moving their special collections for the Neilson renovation and served for 5 years as the special collections reading room supervisor. She impressed the search committee with her commitment to access, community mindedness, language skills, organizational and leadership skills, and her deep commitment and love of libraries and the Northampton community. She will begin on September 26th.

Summer reading was a great success. Ms. Downing asked the trustees to email her a list of five or so books that they have enjoyed reading in the last few years for a display of books recommended by the trustees. A profile of each trustee with a picture and a brief statement about why Forbes Library is important will also be included in the display. The trustees should send their selections, picture and statement by the October board meeting so it can be shared with the October packet. The display is planned for November.

One of the panes of glass in the front doors was smashed overnight on July 25th. A police report was filed and it is expected to be repaired at the end of October when the special safety glass is available.

There are two new benches out on the west lawn thanks to the Friends of Forbes. They are made of recycled plastic from milk jugs and guaranteed for 50 years against breakage. Patrons have already been using them and it is hoped that they get used for the next 50 years.

Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss were very sorry to learn about Ellen Dugal's passing. She worked at the library for many years in the Business Office, <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/gazettenet/name/ellen-dugal-obituary?id=36197812>.

Forbes is celebrating Welcoming Week again this month in partnership with the Center for New Americans and International Language Institute. Several new oral histories of students are being recorded that will be preserved in the digital archives.

Ms. Downing offered congratulations to Paula Elliott on her 40th anniversary at Forbes. She came to Forbes in 1982 and has cataloged an unimaginable number of items over the years. Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss are so grateful for her ongoing dedication and hard work to support the staff, collection, and patrons. Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to congratulate Ms. Elliott on behalf of the trustees.

The Franklin Hampshire MassHire Career Center is back on the Mezzanine on Monday mornings for Career Center Registration & Job Search Assistance. This is in addition to the workshops they offer job seekers on Wednesday afternoons.

Administrative Report (continued)

Ms. Downing said that everyone had a blast at the DoozyDo parade. Kudos to Ms. Bruce and others affiliated with Northampton Neighbors for putting on such a fantastic community event. Special thanks to Abigail Weaver for doing such a great job conceiving of the "flights of literature" theme and the amazing flying book butterflies that wowed the crowd. Ms. Bruce said it was a lot of work, but raised \$20,000 so was very successful.

Covid Safety Update

Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss reported that staff have already started receiving the new covid boosters which they can get on work time. CO₂ monitors have been added to service desk areas and they are all reading within the acceptable level which is fantastic. Meeting room capacity limits have been increased to two thirds and continue to see an increase in use.

Mr. Twarog 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, October 20 at 3:45 PM. Mr. Twarog will not be able to attend. Mr. Pascucci will invite the representatives from Bartholomew Inc. to attend. The following meetings for the rest of 2022 were previously scheduled: Thursday, November 17 at 4 PM; Tuesday, December 20 at 4 PM.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held on Wednesday, October 5 at 6:30 PM. It will be a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting. Mr. Twarog will attend on behalf of the trustees.

Communications

Ms. Downing and Dylan Gaffney received a thank you letter from the President of the Rotary Club thanking them for taking the time to share the programs and needs of Forbes Library.

Discussion Topic: Remaining Relevant

Ms. Downing framed the discussion by asking "How does the library remain of value and importance to our community?" This question has been around for decades as libraries have had to answer this in response to the rise of the internet and digital content. Now with the changes and cultural shifts as a result of the pandemic, this question arises anew. Ms. Downing distributed links to several sources include "Welcome to the library of the 21st century," a 7 minute CBS Sunday Morning segment; a link to "Center for the Future of Libraries" (referenced in the segment); "The Public Library of 2027" by Prateek Vasisht published on medium.com on October 21, 2017; and "Community Led Planning," a WebJunction Webinar presented by Audrey Barbakoff from September 2022. Ms. Downing suggested the following prompts for discussion: What strategies or ways of thinking stood out to you about library relevancy after reviewing these resources? How do you think Forbes is doing in remaining relevant? What concerns to you have? What makes you hopeful? What existing resources can we leverage to achieve/maintain relevance? What additional resources might be necessary? How can Forbes use strategic planning to help us remain relevant?

The trustees discussed their reactions to the video and readings. Mr. Carrier said that the video made him think more about what new things the library

Discussion Topic: Remaining Relevant (continued)

could be doing. Ms. Downing agreed that the Seattle Library featured in the video was doing some amazing and innovative things, however they are a much larger city, with more staff and a bigger budget. She said Forbes has been working hard to focus on the impacts of the pandemic on services and maintenance of the very valuable collection. She said Forbes cannot do it alone and has made great strides in the last four or five years in partnering with other community organizations. She felt inspired by the community-led planning and said that the strategic planning committee is listening very carefully to the community feedback to help determine future directions. Ms. Moss agreed and said there are issues of capacity that determine how much more Forbes can do. Ms. Prabhaker said that she has asked her sixth-grade students what they need from the library and what would make them comfortable. Often the answer is something simple like a place to read with enough light. Ms. Wight said that the strategic planning process is asking community members to name three things that they would like from the library to try to hone in on what people really want. She noted that libraries with bigger budgets are able to do more with marketing their programs and services. Ms. Bruce said that corporate sponsorships could help but there are very limited opportunities in this area for that. Mr. Carrier said there may be opportunities the trustees are not aware of. Mr. Twarog agreed with what was said and also felt inspired by the Seattle Library, but that Forbes' reality is different. He also said that the library is founded on books and shouldn't lose sight of that. He said that things like the proposed performance stage would be a magnet to the community. Mr. Carrier said the trustees should think big and that this discussion will be useful when meeting with Beth Myers next month to hear her ideas for the CCPLM. Mr. Carrier thanked Ms. Downing for putting together the readings and asked the trustees to let him know if they have another topic for discussion.

Advisory Group Stipends

After consulting with Mr. Pascucci, Ms. Downing said that it seems like there is a simple process that can be followed to offer stipends to advisory group members that will allow for tax law compliance. The following proposal has been created with those parameters in mind. It was decided to focus stipends on the two working advisory groups; Racial and Social Justice and Disabilities. Both of these groups are composed largely of community members who have been asked to contribute their wisdom to advise the library on policies, services, and collections based on their lived experience. Offering stipends compensates individuals for sharing their expertise and is given in acknowledgement and as a way to remove barriers which may limit participation. The board is asked to approve the following recommendation with funding of up to \$5,000 from the Morin Fund to support stipends for members of the two advisory groups for the coming year: "All members participating in advisory group meetings will receive a \$40 stipend for each meeting attended upon completion of a W-9. Members may opt out of the stipends." Ms. Downing said that advisory committee members could opt out by not filling out the W-9.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the use of stipends for the two advisory groups. 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.

Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to report on the use and effect of the stipends in about a year.

CCPLM Standing Committee Reappointments

Ms. Downing reported that the following names were put forth for reappointment to the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum standing committee until October 2024: Blaise Bisailon, Dylan Gaffney, J.R. Greene, Jo Ellen Mackenzie, Beth Myers, William Scher, Rich Szlosek, Rob Weir, and Katy Wight. She said that she is pleased that these nine people have been working with the committee for almost two years and wish to continue. According to the trustees' by-laws, Mr. Carrier appoints committee members, and will re-appoint the proposed names.

Mezzanine Carpet

Ms. Downing showed a sample of a carpet tile to be installed on the Mezzanine. It is sturdy and will not show soil. The original estimate was for \$3,500, but the price has now come in at \$8,125. She said the current carpet is coming loose, has become a tripping hazard, and needs to be replaced.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve \$8,125 from the Morin Fund for new carpet installation on the Mezzanine. 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.

Increasing the Size of the Board of Trustees

Ms. Downing distributed copies of a draft of a nonjudicial settlement agreement between the trustees and the attorney general's office drafted by the library's lawyers. The Lucentinis requests that the trustees approve the draft without signing it. They want to be able to represent to the AG's office that they have the trustees' approval to move forward using this version of the agreement. Mr. Carrier said there are basically three options: 1) A nonjudicial settlement with the Attorney General, 2) A negotiated nonjudicial settlement with minor concerns that are worked out with the Attorney General, and 3) Petitioning the Probate Court to change the will of Judge Forbes. Attorney Lucentini is recommending trying the nonjudicial settlement first. If that is rejected, they can move to petitioning the Probate Court. Either way it will require a special act of the legislature. The City of Northampton must also approve the request and a local senator or representative will need to sponsor it. Ms. Wight said that the city has already reviewed and agreed with the change. Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to keep this item on the agenda to ensure that it continues to move forward.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the draft of a nonjudicial settlement agreement between the trustees and the attorney general's office as drafted by Attorney Lucentini. 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.

Building Repairs and Updates

Ms. Downing reported that Pat McCarthy coordinated a visit that included the HVAC engineer that Forbes has been working with, the city's energy coordinator, and a building science professor from UMASS to discuss approaches to replacing a large chiller that is part of the HVAC system that is in failure. It is hoped to secure capital improvements funding for a study to design an energy efficient replacement system. Kevin Riordan from Dietz Architects shared a lighting design for the tech services office. Mr. Petcen is going to seek quotes from electrical contractors for the project and it is hoped to have numbers later this fall. Duffy Willard Paving & Excavating added a curb cut to the sidewalk heading to the back parking lot. It will greatly enhance accessibility for people using the sidewalk as well as

Building Repairs and Updates (continued)

navigating across to the west lawn. National Grid has informed the library that they need to add a brace to the pole at the edge of the property closest to Garrison Hall near the sidewalk. This is because it is currently being braced by a wire to a tree across the street that is coming down. They believe they already have an easement to do this work but if not, they will be back in touch.

Update on Trustees 2022 Goals

Ms. Downing reported that heading into the last quarter of the year it seems like a good time to check in on goals the board set at the beginning of the year. A quick scan reveals that progress is being made in many areas. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier about goal #8 "Increase the personnel hours in the Coolidge Museum and hire a consultant to redesign the permanent exhibit in the Coolidge Museum," Ms. Downing said it comes down to budget and she hopes to make that happen in the next budget year.

ARPA Community Recovery Fund Grant Application

Ms. Downing reported that the Landscaping and Grounds committee under Ms. Bruce's leadership is working on a grant application for the October 14th deadline for a performance stage for the west lawn. "Funding is intended for projects which are designed to aid the community in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, including supporting recovery, reconnecting community, and building resilience." It is believed that the stage project is closely aligned with these goals. Ms. Bruce said that she needs some numbers to put together a budget for the project. She is envisioning a smaller project than originally planned with a simple platform with electricity. She will work with Mr. Petcen on getting an estimate for the electrical work and contact a few other companies to put together an estimate for the platform construction.

Library Use Statistics

Ms. Moss reported that the ARIS reporting was delayed due to a ransomware attack on Baker & Taylor, but has now been submitted and will be reported on more fully next month.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings

Development Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the committee focused on ideas and logistics for the upcoming fall Annual Fund Appeal. In addition, they received an update on fundraising results so far this year. Committee and trustee help is still needed for thank you calls and and/or emails to the most recent donors.

Strategic Planning Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the community survey was launched mid-month. She asked the trustees to please complete the survey if they haven't already and to share it with their networks. There will be a focus group with the staff later this month and a group of community leaders next month.

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the annual meeting will be a talk by Ken O'Brien called "The Friendship of Calvin Coolidge and James Lucey" who was a local shoemaker on Oct 18, 2022 at 6 PM. The Friends are producing some new Coolidge themed merchandise to sell. The President's Book Club is coming into their final year and will be reading about Kennedy this month. Beth Myers and the exhibit renovation subcommittee presented an overview of the project that calls for an extensive renovation of the museum that the committee approved for recommendation to the trustees. Ms. Myers

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings (continued)

will join the trustees next month to present an overview of the program plan and to answer any questions.

United for Libraries Conference - Ms. Bruce reported that because she is new to the board, she is spending extra time going to meetings to learn how to be a good trustee. This conference was run by a someone from California's equivalent to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC), who discussed working boards vs. administrative boards, and illustrated the problems boards can cause to library administration and management.

Executive Session

At 5:20 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, Ms. Hannon, and Mr. Petcen left the meeting at 5:20 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 5:39 PM, Ms. Bruce moved that the executive session be ended and the regular meeting reconvened. 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.

Other Business

There was no other business.

At 5:40 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 5:40 PM.