Present: Ms. Debin Bruce, Mr. Russell Carrier, Ms. Lisa Downing, Ms. Molly Moss, Mr. David Pascucci, Ms. Emily Prabhaker, Ms. Elizabeth Sheirer, Ms. Katy Wight. Also Present: Mr. Charles Patterson, representative of Bartholomew Inc.; Martha McCormick, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Eli Porth. Present via Zoom: Ms. Kathleen Glowacki, representative of Bartholomew Inc.; Beth Myers, Director of Special Collections at Smith College; Alene Moroni, Head of Reference Services. Absent: 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 3:48 PM.

Bills & Warrants
The trustees signed the warrant dated October 20, 2022.

Public Comments
There were no public comments.

Bartholomew Quarterly Report
Mr. Patterson and Ms. Glowacki presented a review of the endowment portfolio. The balance as of September 30, 2022 was $5,419,156.53. Mr. Patterson discussed market conditions, noting that unemployment was at record lows before the pandemic, shot up during the pandemic years, and is now at 3.6%. Participation in the employment market shows a similar trajectory. The quitting rate has been high indicating that workers are not afraid to leave their current job to find another. While wages have gone up, inflation has wiped out those gains and people have less disposal income. Inflation was at near zero before the pandemic and is now at about 9% for the last year. The federal reserve’s target rate for inflation is about 2%. Looking at commodities, there was an 81% jump in the price of crude oil and a 60% jump in corn and wheat in 2022 due to the war in Ukraine.

Ms. Glowacki said that consumer sentiment is the worst it’s been in a long time and could slow consumer spending and GDP. In the housing sector, interest rates have risen from 3% to now over 7%. The value of bonds and the bond market have decreased significantly this year and there’s been no place to hide in this market. She said that only sector that saw significant growth was the energy market, although Forbes’ ESG (Energy Social Governance) mandate means Forbes has no investments in fossil fuels. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Glowacki said that the ESG approach has not significantly hurt the Forbes portfolio and they have used other ways to diversify the portfolio through real estate and other alternatives. She said that the Forbes portfolio compares similarly to benchmark portfolios that include energy funds. Mr. Patterson said that some portfolios without the ESG mandate have fared far worse than Forbes. Ms. Glowacki recommended no drastic changes, to hold the course, and to make changes on the margins. She said they are looking to divest low quality bonds and move to higher quality bonds. They are also considering focusing more on domestic securities over international companies who are faring worse under the global economy, although no decision has yet been made.
Bartholomew Quarterly Report (continued)

Mr. Carrier asked, if with current market conditions, it makes sense for Forbes to continue to send funds to the endowment with the risk of recession and a bear market. Ms. Glowacki and Mr. Patterson both said that although there is indeed the risk that the market could go lower, now is actually a good time to enter the market when it is at a low point and securities are "on sale." Mr. Patterson said that some of their clients are investing in short-term Treasury bills with guaranteed interest rates of 3-4%, though he recommended doing this with cash while continuing to invest funds intended for the endowment in the endowment. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Mr. Patterson said that he believes interest rates will settle at a more normalized rate, as opposed to the very low rates of the recent past. In response to a question from Ms. Bruce, he said that long-term expectations on portfolio returns are being adjusted downward from 8% to 7%. In response to a question from Ms. Moss, Ms. Glowacki said it was still okay for Forbes to plan on a 3-4% withdrawal rate from the endowment.

The trustees thanked Mr. Patterson and Ms. Glowacki for their presentation and they left the meeting at 4:30 PM.

Calvin Coolidge Presidential Museum Exhibition Renovation Program

Ms. Wight introduced Beth Myers, Director of Special Collections at the Smith College Libraries. Ms. Myers is on the CCPLM standing committee and has been working on a program to renovate the exhibit space in the CCPLM. She presented a draft proposal outlining the process, identifying exhibition principles, the renovation intent, core museum room characteristics, adjacencies, room specifications and limitations, and future cases and specifications. The priority recommendations for the museum include improving signage, projecting the museum’s identity, creating interactive exhibits that engage and educate, removing and replacing the existing exhibition cases, embedding accessibility features throughout the museum, bringing color into the space, offering seating for visiting patrons, and providing flexibility in center-floor exhibits that can be moved to accommodate events. The recommendations for the office include completing several enabling projects before the room can be used as storage or expanded museum space and removing the existing wall cabinetry and replacing it with modern, space-saving storage. The recommendations for the exhibition content include displays that reach all ages (K-12+), contextualization and humanization (indigenous peoples; National Republican Party of the Coolidge era; United States policies, societies, culture; Coolidges as part of local history), 3D content (purposefully situated), increased vitality (life of the 1920s, clothes, music, radio, etc.), inclusion of important items (portraits, mechanical horse, indigenous headdress), and the inclusion of different access and discovery technologies (visual and audio). While some cases may be reserved for temporary displays, there needs to be a single and significant thesis to the permanent exhibition. Secondary recommendations include generating or updating documentation with a style and materials guide (labels and handouts), and operational imperatives including a volunteer docent, consistent docent for advertised hours, informational materials in multiple formats and languages (maps, directions, descriptions), and a calendar for temporary displays.

Ms. Myers said that the proposal was greatly informed by her work on the Neilson Library renovation and she believes in it whole-heartedly. The plan is ambitious, but in keeping with future needs. The subcommittee has identified contractors and has prepared a draft letter to send them. She presented a timeline with a realistic sense of how long it will take with an
Calvin Coolidge Presidential Museum Exhibition Renovation Program (continued)

RFP going out in early 2023. She recommended that by July 2023 grant funding be sought, a fundraising committee be formed, and that early steps are begun to working with a consultant. She said that there are grantors interested in funding this type of project, but that additional funds will be required. She said that the grants are typically for $75,000 over 12-18 months. The timeline calls for the project to be completed with a grand event or festivity in 2027.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve moving forward with the proposal presented by Ms. Myers. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to authorize the Coolidge Standing Committee to seek a $75,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for a consultant and planning with an application due July 2023. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Wight made a motion to urge the Coolidge Standing Committee to activate a development committee as authorized in their by-laws. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Mr. Porth left the meeting at 4:45 PM.

The trustees briefly discussed the content and narrative of the exhibits and Ms. Myers said 2 years have been allotted for research to dig into the story to be told as well as the audience, and that an external third-party will review the narrative. She said the content is complicated and will include viewpoints on women, indigenous peoples, and immigration. Mr. Carrier said that what is presented will be authentic, while preserving the area as a public meeting space. It is a complicated project that will come together over a long period of time. Ms. Downing said that Forbes is fortunate to have Ms. Myers working with the library and that her expertise and relevant experience with the Neilson Library construction is very helpful. The trustees thanked Ms. Myers for all her work and Ms. Myers thanked the trustees’ for their support. She left the meeting at 4:50 PM.

Secretary’s Report

Ms. Bruce moved that the Secretary’s reports of September 22, 2022 and the Executive Session of September 22, 2022 be accepted and placed on file. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Treasurer’s Report

Mr. Pascucci presented the Treasurer’s Report for the month ending September 30, 2022. The Aid Fund had positive net activity for September of $31,966 and ended with a balance of $53,794. The Book & Media Fund had positive net activity of $23,227 and ended with a balance of $8,584. The Aldrich Accessibility Fund had negative activity of $5,985 and has a balance of $6,793. The Community Engagement Fund had negative net activity of $1,017 and has a balance of $650. The Community Webs Fund had negative net activity of $1,111 and has a deficit of $263. The Externally Financed Transaction Fund (EFT) had positive net activity of $500 and has a balance of $1,352. The Go
Treasurer’s Report (continued)
Local (Outside Voices) Grant had negative net activity of $1,368 and has a balance of $2,991. The Google Grant had zero net activity and has a zero balance. The Lyman Special Collection fund had positive activity of $1,001. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of $3,553 and has a balance of $77,246. The Programming-Adult Fund had negative net activity of $81 and has a balance of $2,826. The Watson Copier Fund had negative net activity of $616 and has a balance of $352.

Mr. Pascucci suggested using cash on hand and forgoing distributions from the endowment when possible. The trustees said this would be okay as long as there was enough cash to pay bills. Mr. Pascucci will come back to the trustees with a more formed proposal.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report for the month ending September 30, 2022 and place it on file. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, 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 $5,800.33 to the Book and Media Fund; $25,100.00 to establish the Harding Local History and Special Collections Fund; $6,164.38 to the Rosamond Chester Coolidge Fund; $2,575.00 to the Morin Fund; and $425 to the Lyman fund.

There were no designated gifts, receipts from sales/rents, or donations received since the last Trustees’ meeting.

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

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Moss said that the goal for the Book & Media fund has almost been met. She said that 67 gifts have been received totaling $9,709 from the annual appeal.

Department Report: Reference Department
Ms. Alene Moroni presented the Reference Department report. Accomplishments include returning to in-person services while maintaining an array of remote services; scheduling to improve patron services; reorganizing, consolidating, and moving print reference materials to the circulating collection; rearranging public computers to maximize social distancing; updating computer use rules and procedures; adjusting social media service; implementation of circulating wi-fi hotspots and patron support; and taking over book group coordination. Several grants were completed including the LSTA “Outside Voices” grant and the “Moving Memories” grant. In addition, Forbes collaborated with Smith College on the Northampton Pride & Liberation oral history project including an online exhibit. Ongoing projects include providing remote services as needed; introducing LibraryH3lp online chat; outreach support including exam proctoring, notary service, and computer help; prioritizing efforts to increase inclusivity, access, and circulation; allocating reference funds to support collection refreshment; maintenance and refreshment of adult fiction and nonfiction; maintenance of displays; revision and reclassification of the Reference collection; migrating book groups back to in-building meetings; and administration of the adult summer reading program. Ms. Moroni highlighted accomplishments of individual staff.
Department Report: Reference Department (continued)
She identified challenges and opportunities for improved access including pandemic safety measures; staffing for increased hours with a small pool of IPT workers; restoring, evaluating, and improving existing library services; staff turnover and position vacancies; implementing “pay what you can” public printing; public computers out of service for extended periods of time; and the continuing effect of the pandemic in general on everyone.

Ms. Moroni said that the department has spent a full year operating beyond what staffing can comfortably accommodate, which has been very challenging. She’s been working on the whole library schedule and trying to stretch staffing to accomplish what needs to be done. She said that there are nineteen computers in the reference area and that seven have been out of order. They were removed from the area and are waiting to be looked at to see if they can be resuscitated. Even though they are only a few years old, they do not have the current version of windows and do not function to the level that users expect. Ms. Moss said she is reluctant to purchase new computers until the computers purchased almost a year ago are configured for use in other areas of the library. A lack of staffing capacity has slowed down the process. Mr. Carrier said that the library’s high energy costs have hindered the ability to hire and pay staff competitively and that there are staffing shortages throughout the area. He said that the trustees understand the stress this creates and appreciate all the staff’s efforts. Ms. Prabhaker said that she is so impressed with all the department’s accomplishments including all the efforts for inclusivity. She said it is very meaningful with all the obstacles the department faces and she is personally very moved. In response to a question from Ms. Wight, Ms. Downing said that the City does not have enough IT staff to help Forbes, and that Smith College has said in the past that this is an area where they are not able to provide support. In response to a question from Ms. Bruce, Ms. Moroni said that right now staff will cheerfully release print jobs for patrons who are unable to pay, but that she would like to have a system in place where patrons do not need to ask for staff intervention. Ms. Moss said the money from printing goes to the Watson Copier Fund and helps subsidize printing costs. Ms. Downing said that she is hoping to reduce the line item for printing by negotiating a better contract for printing when the current contract expires.

The trustees thanked Ms. Moroni for her report and she left the meeting at 5:20 PM.

Friends of Forbes
Ms. Downing attended the October 5 meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that the Friends are feeling the effects of the market turmoil on their endowment, but their budget looks good and expenses are on target. They are working on preparing their fall newsletter and appeal. The fall Artisans Fair was very successful despite the cool weather and positive feedback was received from both the artisans and attendees. They plan to do it again next year instead of the wine tasting. More people are needed to help staff the tables. They discussed the upcoming “Arrive@5” event to be held November 2, 5-7 PM in the reading room. Smith College gave a $1,500 sponsorship to provide refreshments and 100 participants are expected. This week is “Friends of Library Week” and a raffle is planned for the lobby. The Friends are working on adding people to join their board.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Friends of Forbes report and place it on file. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.
**Administrative Report**

Ms. Downing reported that Forbes has wrapped up a two year $15,000 IMLS grant called “Outside Voices: Oral History and Community Collections” that was intended to deepen and complicate the local history collection through oral history, community digitization, and the recording of library programming, including a focus on turn-of-the-twenty-first-century music history in Northampton and the Northampton Pride Parade. This grant application was written pre-pandemic and called for lots of in person activities and it was written by a staff member who left prior to the start of the grant. Despite these challenges, staff were able to successfully complete most of the grant objectives including recording many oral histories like the recent collaboration with the Center for New Americans. Stories of recent immigrants were recorded and are now part of the permanent archives. Dylan Gaffney and Heather Diaz, who both worked very hard on this grant, are to be commended. Ms. Downing said that the oral histories are to be featured on the program Connecting Point on public television this evening and she will share it with the board.

The library’s Disability Advisory Group has been renamed the Accessibility Advisory Group to reflect the main objective of the group, to improve accessibility to the library and its services regardless of ability.

The library will field a team in the Northampton Education Foundation’s spelling bee. Team members are Alene Moroni, Serena Smith, and Molly Moss and they will be competing as the “Reading Bees”.

Forbes will be hosting the Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce’s networking event, Arrive@5, on Wednesday, November 2. The event is possible because of support by Smith College, Straw Dog Writers Guild, State Street Fruit Store, Artifact Cider, and the Friends of Forbes.

**Covid Safety Update**

Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss reported that there haven’t been any changes to the library’s protocols this month. Several staff were able to obtain COVID boosters at the clinic held by the Health Department. There continue to be staff outages due to COVID cases although thankfully none have been traced back to workplace spread thanks to diligent masking by the staff.

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, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

**Next Meetings**

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, November 17 at 4 PM. The following meeting was previously scheduled: Tuesday, December 20 at 4 PM.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held via Zoom on Thursday, November 3 at 6:30 PM. It will be a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting. Ms. Prabhaker will attend on behalf of the trustees.

**Communications**

There were no communications this month.

**Discussion Topic**

There was no discussion topic this month.
Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA) FY2023 Contract

Ms. Downing reported that FLEA accepted the trustees’ offer of a 2% contractual increase, step raises for eligible employees, and a one-time bonus of $1,050 (pro-rated based on salaried hours per week) in December 2022 to all current FLEA members who were working as of June 2022. She has reached out to the city to let them know that Forbes would like to accept their offer of $27,300 in ARPA funds to cover this one-time payout.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to approve and sign the contract with FLEA. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. The trustees signed the FY2023 contract.

Harding Local History and Special Collections Fund

Ms. Downing reported that Forbes received a generous gift from Mary Harding’s estate. The trustees were asked to approve the establishment of the Harding Local History and Special Collections Fund with the following fund description: Established by the Trustees in 2022 with an unrestricted bequest of $25,100 by Mary J. Harding, Trustee from 2002-2009. Ms. Harding earned the Trustees Award in 2010 for her exceptional contributions and generosity. The income from the fund is to be used to support the purchase, care, preservation, and restoration of the library’s special collections and works of art. It also supports the needs of the rooms that house the collections as well as programming, other initiatives focused on local history, and other operating expenditures as needed or desired by the board.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to establish the Harding Local History and Special Collections Fund with the description as proposed by Ms. Downing. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Keogh Family Fund

Ms. Downing reported that the trustees approved establishing the Keogh Family Fund at last month’s meeting. She asked that they now approve the following fund description: Established with an unrestricted gift by Mary Ellen Osgood (1941-) in 2022 that she intends to grow with additional gifts. Ms. Osgood grew up in Northampton and spent lots of time reading at the library as a little girl, especially after her father passed away when she was eight. Her family has long ties to Northampton including her grandfather, John J. Kennedy, who beat Calvin Coolidge in a local school committee race, the only election that Coolidge ever lost. It supports the funding needs and priorities of the library as desired by the board.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the proposed fund description for the Keogh Family Fund. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

Fund Transfers

The trustees discussed what to do with the new funds in light of the conversation with the representatives of Bartholomew Inc. earlier in the meeting. They agreed that the $6,114.38 Marcia Burick donation should be combined with $3,885.62 from the Morin Fund to total $10,000 and go to the Rosamond Chester Coolidge (RCCR) Fund. The $10,000 in the RCCR Fund along with the $25,100 in the Harding Local History and Special Collections Fund and the $10,000 in the Keogh Family Fund should be sent to Bartholomew Inc. with instructions to invest them in Treasury investments. Mr. Pascucci will ask Bartholomew Inc. to add the two new funds (Harding and Keogh) to the endowment report as trust funds.
Increasing Board Size Update
Ms. Downing reported that Eric and Sandra Lucentini provided an update on the process to increase the size of the board. Attorney Carriker concurs that Forbes is on solid ground with their request to enlarge the board by non-judicial settlement agreement (NJSA) and is going to recommend that his office proceed accordingly. However, the process is not likely to move quickly. Mr. Carriker will draft a memo, which will need to be reviewed/approved internally. The Lucentinis will keep the trustees informed and follow up when needed.

Trustees Book Recommendations
Ms. Downing thanked the trustees for submitting their book recommendations. She said that they were amazing and will be put together on a page on the library’s website along with a book display in the library. She will alert the board when they are complete.

ARPA Community Recovery Fund Grant Application
Ms. Downing reported that a large project proposal has been submitted to build a performance stage with electrical service on the west lawn. Ms. Bruce gets huge kudos for her diligence and timeliness in putting together a strong application under a tight deadline. Ms. Downing said that the $2,500 Mass Development Grant received from the state will help defray some of the cost. These are matching funds and she will ask the Friends to match them.

Collections Assessment for Preservation Grant
Ms. Downing reported that a grant to the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation for the 2022 Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP) program for the Coolidge Museum collection has been approved. Forbes will be allocated $4,000 to hire a collections assessor plus $4,000 to hire a building assessor to complete a general conservation assessment.

Mr. Pascucci left the meeting at 5:43 PM

Annual Statistical Report
Ms. Moss submitted an FY22 ARIS Summary which was distributed to the trustees. The statistics continue to be affected by the pandemic. Forbes was open for 2,751 public service hours in FY22 compared to 2,409 in FY19, 1,900 in FY20, and 97 in FY21. Staffing continues to be affected by the pandemic and unfortunately having a number of people out due to COVID. Three new people were hired in FY22 and one since. The collection size has increased overall with print holding remaining steady with an increase of 2,726. The largest increases were in eAudio which increased 31% and ebooks which increased by 3.9%. Total circulation increased dramatically in all areas except in electronic content, which also increased, but not as dramatically. There was a slight decrease in the use of downloadable video. Interlibrary loan had a slight increase in materials received and a 5% decrease in materials loaned to other libraries. Attendance in the library increased dramatically by 210% to 135,542, but is still significantly below FY19. The meeting rooms were used 729 times in FY22. Registered borrowers decreased slightly by 3.9%. Ms. Moss said that she would be happy to provide more detail if desired.

Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings
Racial and Social Justice Advisory Group - Ms. Prabhaker reported that the committee reviewed its charge and structure and agreed that it should find ways to encourage and support participation from BIPOC members of the community. The committee also participated in a brainstorming session for the
Reports on Subcommittee and Other Meetings (continued)

strategic plan. Ms. Prabhaker said the group is in the beginning stages of coming together and thinking about ways to have more participants, listening to the community and hearing their top concerns.

Development Committee – Mr. Carrier reported that the early returns from the recent Annual Fund appeal are encouraging. A decision was made to send a general email of thanks and appreciation to the folks who have donated to the library during the past two years which will also give them a sense of what the funds were used for. The next meeting will be in January of 2023.

Strategic Planning Committee – Ms. Wight reported that thanks to the help of community partners, the community survey has received 4,212 surveys to date surpassing the goal to reach 1,100. The stakeholder interviews are underway and focus groups will be scheduled with community members soon. They have also begun working on strategic branding with Seth Gregory.

Coolidge Standing Committee – Ms. Wight reported that the annual meeting was originally scheduled for this month but has been postponed in hopes that the camera to record and stream programs will be available in the near future. The committee also discussed how to proceed with programming for the centennial anniversary years (2023-2027) and will be developing a timeline. Thanks to the Friends of Forbes, new Coolidge t-shirts with a “I do not choose to run” quote by Coolidge and his image are now available for sale in the library and in the library’s store.

Personnel Matter: Executive Session

At 6:03 PM, Ms. Bruce moved that the trustees go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously, with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, 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. Ms. McCormick left the meeting at 6:03 PM. Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss, Ms. Prabhaker, Ms. Sheirer, and Ms. Wight were present during the executive session. No votes were taken during the executive session.

At 6:10 PM, Ms. Prabhaker moved that the executive session be ended and the regular meeting reconvened. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously, with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Other Business

There was no other business.

At 6:10 PM Ms. Wight moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Prabhaker seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 PM.