

**TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY**  
**Wednesday, April 26, 2023**

**Present:** Ms. Debin Bruce, Mr. Russell Carrier, Ms. Lisa Downing, Ms. Kyle Hamilton, Ms. Molly Moss, Ms. Emily Prabhaker, Ms. Elizabeth Sheirer, Mr. Joseph Twarog, Ms. Katy Wight. **Present via Zoom:** Mr. Brian Jamros, representative of Bartholomew Inc.; Joellen Mackenzie, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Heather Diaz, observer for the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA). **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 3:48 PM in the Watson Room.

**Bills & Warrants**

The trustees signed the warrant dated April 26, 2023.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**Secretary's Report**

Ms. Bruce moved that the Secretary's report of March 23, 2023 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.

**Bartholomew Inc. Quarterly Report**

Mr. Carrier introduced Kyle Hamilton, Forbes' new treasurer and asked her how it was going. Ms. Hamilton said that the transition had been slowed by a death in her family, but that she was now on track and was becoming more comfortable.

Mr. Brian Jamros introduced himself and gave some background on Bartholomew Inc. They focus on municipalities, representing 230 cities and towns, and they have 4 advisors who rotate amongst territories. He then presented a review of the endowment portfolio. The balance as of March 31, 2023 was \$5,963,181.23. The portfolio is up 4.48% this fiscal year and 6.26% since inception. The portfolio is currently roughly allocated as 50/50 between stocks and bonds, and has performed well when measured against benchmarks. Last year the portfolio was down 17.33%, which was an anomaly with both stocks and bonds performing poorly. The focus of the portfolio is long-term in perpetuity, rather than tied to the life of an individual. He then discussed changes in holdings including the addition of a new alternative, the CBOE bond fund, which is a hedge fund.

The trustees said that Ms. Buckhout and Ms. Hamilton will be making a recommendation to the board next month about short term investment of the library's general reserves funds in treasuries. The trustees thanked Mr. Jamros, who left the meeting at 4:06 PM.

**Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Hamilton presented the Treasurer's Report for the month ending March 31, 2023. The General Aid Fund had negative net activity for the month of \$962

**Treasurer's Report** (continued)

and closed with a balance of \$61,473. The Book & Media Fund had positive net activity of \$45,601 and has a balance of \$18,066. The BIPOC Art Fund had negative net activity of \$800 due to the purchase of a print entitled *A Call to Our Ancestors* from Falcon Fontanez Foto, and now has a balance of \$1,232. The Commonwealth Places Program Grant had negative net activity of \$2,500 and has a deficit of \$10. The Community Webs fund closed with positive activity of \$1,000 and has a balance of \$2,237. The Doland Reference Room Fund had positive net activity of \$12,231 and has a balance of \$3,264. The Externally Financed Transaction Fund had negative net activity of \$1,284 and has a balance of \$1,397. The Garvey Book & Media Fund had negative net activity of \$1,001 and has zero net activity for the year to date. The Halberstadt Technology Fund had negative net activity of \$6,135 and has a balance of \$8,108. The Lyman Special Collections Fund had negative activity of \$525 and has a deficit of \$38. The Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Childrens Book Fund had negative net activity of \$2,445 and has zero net activity for the year to date. The Morin Fund had positive net activity of \$2,711 and has a balance of \$110,910. The Programming Fund-Adult had positive net activity of \$1,319 and has a balance of \$4,882. The Staff Development Fund had negative net activity of \$1,613 and has a balance of \$906. The Watson Copier Fund had positive net activity of \$281 and has a balance of \$3,462.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month ending March 31, 2023 and place it on file. 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.

Ms. Wight made a motion to transfer \$10 from the Morin Fund to the Commonwealth Places Program Fund, and \$38 from the Morin Fund to the Lyman Special Collections Fund to remove their deficits and bring their balances to zero. 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.

**Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.**

Ms. Downing reported that 225 gifts totaling \$24,180.78 were received on Library Giving Day. She submitted a list of undesignated gifts received from multiple donors with \$11,404.77 going to the Morin Fund, \$5,563.87 to the Adult Programming Fund; \$5,677.50 to the Children's Programming Fund; and \$200 to the Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund.

The following designated gifts were received since the last trustees' meeting: \$250 to the Performance Stage Fund, \$206 to the Lyman Special Collections Fund, and \$163 to the Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund.

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

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

Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Downing to send a note to Dr. Hershkowitz letting him know that people are continuing to contribute to the fund he started in memory of his daughter, Marie Hershkowitz.

### **Short Term Investments**

Ms. Downing reported that Ms. Buckhout has been in touch with Bartholomew Inc. about short term investments and that there are two parts to this. First, Bartholomew Inc. suggests investing in Treasuries in a ladder system, so that funds become available every 3 months. Ms. Buckhout proposes investing smaller amounts every month so that funds become available more frequently. Secondly, she proposes to do some research to see if Forbes is a public entity or private. If Forbes is public, then there is no other short-term investment option. If private, then Forbes can invest in things like mutual funds which could be contributed to and distributed from daily. She has asked Bartholomew Inc. to start the paperwork for the first part. She and Ms. Hamilton will do an analysis as to how much Forbes can invest, and create a conservative schedule, which they will bring to the board in May.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report**

Ms. Downing reported that there is a small surplus in the General Aid Fund that she expects will diminish by fiscal year-end, as there are several expected 4<sup>th</sup> quarter expenses.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hamilton said that Ms. Buckhout is continuing to work on providing the auditor with information, and that the audit is expected to be completed by the end of the fiscal year. The library's tax return is due May 15, so it may need to be filed before the audit is complete.

### **Creation of Performance Stage Fund**

Ms. Downing said that with the ARPA grant, additional fundraising, and the possibility of another grant, she proposes that the trustees create a local fund for the performance stage to make it easier to track and report on budgetary matters.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to create the Performance Stage Fund to track and report on budgetary matters with a \$40,000 transfer from the Morin Fund, which includes a \$25,000 bequest, a \$250 gift, and an additional \$14,750. 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.

### **Department Report**

There was no department report this month.

### **Friends of Forbes**

Ms. Bruce attended the April 12 meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that the membership committee reported that assignments for articles for the newsletters were underway. The Events committee reported that a wine and cheese special offered by Provisions is in progress. The combination costs \$75 and a thank you session will be held Saturday, April 29. Planning for the Craft Fair has already secured a couple of sponsors. The September date offers an opportunity to sell pumpkins. Most of the arrangements for the Garden Tour are complete. A gift basket for National Library Week has been assembled and will be raffled. The Friends approved \$2,000 for maintenance of Paco's fish tank. The Friends voted to approve Serena Smith as a returning Board Member.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve the Friends of Forbes 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.

**Administrative Report**

Ms. Downing reported that the library's website had a major behind the scenes update this month. Faith Kaufmann and Ben Kalish orchestrated this change after months of planning without any hiccups or disruptions. The change makes the site easier to update and improves accessibility.

Ms. Downing gave a quick reminder that the library has a contingent in the May 6th Hampshire Pride parade and would love to have the board join them.

Forbes has been awarded a Festivals & Projects grant from the Mass Cultural Council of \$2,500 to hold three family-oriented concerts on June 3, 10, and 17. Sarah Johnson wrote this grant and is excited to bring these concerts to the community.

Forbes has added a new Spanish option to the main phone menu. Callers who press 8 will now hear the following message in Spanish:

Thank you for calling the Forbes Library. For information in Spanish, please visit [forbeslibrary.org/espanol](http://forbeslibrary.org/espanol). The library is open Monday through Thursday, 10 AM to 8 PM, Friday and Saturday, 10 AM to 6 PM, and closed on Sundays. Anyone living in Massachusetts can get a free library card. Bring a photo ID and a self-addressed piece of mail to get a library card for you and your family. We have bilingual staff who will be happy to answer your questions. Please email your question to [info@forbeslibrary.org](mailto:info@forbeslibrary.org) or via text message to 413-570-0444.

Pam Acosta translated and recorded the message for the library. A voicemail option is being planned as well.

Library Giving Day was a tremendous success! The goal was exceeded and there were a record number of donors and donation totals. There were 225 gifts made totaling \$24,180.78. Ms. Downing thanked Ms. Moss for all her work on this.

The Lions Club of Northampton offered to purchase the library an AED (defibrillator) which is on the trustees 2023 goals. The library responded with an enthusiastic "yes" and is now waiting to hear back from them for next steps.

Jason Petcen and Frank Gessing restriped the parking lot which really needed to be done. They did a very nice job.

The Friends are partnering with Provisions for a fundraising event again this year that should be as scrumptious as always.

The Friends annual meeting was a huge success in all ways except that the live streaming technology failed. It was not transmitting sound, but the problem has since been resolved. The good news is that Dylan Gaffney gave a wonderful photographic history of downtown Northampton following a wonderful Friends annual meeting and he has agreed to record his presentation so that people who missed it that night can still see it.

Mr. Carrier asked for the record to reflect the trustees' appreciation for Forbes staff including Ms. Moss, Dylan Gaffney, Faith Kaufmann, Ben Kalish, Sarah Johnson, Pam Acosta, Jason Petcen, and Frank Gessing for the work they do for the library.

**Covid Safety Update**

Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss had no changes to report this month.

Ms. Wight 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, May 25 at 4 PM. The trustees previously scheduled the following meetings for the remainder of 2022: Thursday, June 22; Thursday, July 20; Thursday, September 21; Thursday, October 19; Thursday, November 16; and Thursday, December 21. Meetings will convene at 4 PM, unless the representatives of Bartholomew Inc. are invited, in which case the meeting will begin at 3:45 PM.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held on Wednesday, May 3 at 6:30 PM. It will be a hybrid in-person and virtual Zoom meeting. Mr. Twarog will attend on behalf of the trustees.

**Communications**

Forbes Library received a letter dated April 5, 2023 from Representative Lindsay Sabadosa congratulating the library on receiving a \$2,500 Mass Cultural Council FY23 Festivals & Projects grant.

Faith Kaufmann received an email on March 27 from the Northampton Arts Council apologizing to all those impacted by the cancellation of the 2021 Northampton Biennial art show.

**Endorsement of New Branding**

Ms. Downing distributed copies of the new strategic branding for the library. She said the strategic planning committee is very pleased with the look, symbolism, heritage, and most importantly the functionality of the new brand. With the trustees endorsement and approval, the process of transitioning to the new brand can begin. A public announcement will be made around June 1.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve the new branding for the library as presented by the Strategic Planning Committee. 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.

**Branded Merchandise**

Ms. Downing said that one of the best ways to make a smooth transition to the new branding, and to capitalize on the spotlight it will shine on the library is to have the new look front and center once it goes live. An initial list of products has been developed that includes new staff nametags and lanyards, new t-shirts for staff and board members, new banners to replace the ones that hung for years on the front lampposts, and a variety of smaller items including pens and pencils to have in the library and to give away at outreach events. Ms. Downing is seeking a budget of \$2,000 from the Morin Fund to supplement funds from the Friends to purchase this new merchandise. She said that the banners will likely cost between \$1,200-\$1,500. She plans on asking the Friends for \$2,000.

**Branded Merchandise** (continued)

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve spending up to \$2,000 from the Morin Fund for new branded merchandise. 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.

**Jenny Silver Proposal**

Ms. Downing brought forward a proposal from executive coach, Jenny Silver, to work with her for six coaching sessions. She comes highly recommended from nonprofit organization leaders that Ms. Downing respects. She is seeking to work with her to grow her leadership skills and effectiveness. She is requesting \$1,500 from the Morin Fund to cover this proposal.

Mr. Carrier said that he is pleased that Ms. Downing is reaching out for this type of professional development around human resources and management. He asked about the possibility of including Ms. Moss. Ms. Downing will discuss it with Ms. Moss and Jenny Silver.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve spending \$1,500 from the Morin Fund for leadership coaching for Ms. Downing. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

**Increasing Board Size Update**

Ms. Downing reported that Eric and Sandra Lucentini, the library's attorneys, have filed the petition with the Attorney General's office to increase the number of trustees from 5 to 7. She distributed an email update from the Lucentinis with more detail. They are preparing to file a motion supported by a concise memo of law, a couple of affidavits, proposed findings of fact, and a proposed judgment/decreed.

**Trustees Election**

Ms. Downing reported that Ms. Prabhaker and Mr. Twarog have decided not to run for reelection in the fall. Ms. Wight will seek another term. Ms. Downing plans to start spreading the word about the election starting in May. She distributed a draft press release and welcomed suggestions as well as ideas of where to get the word out. Mr. Carrier suggested adding Human Resource as an area of desired skills.

**Reports from Subcommittees and Other Meetings**

Strategic Planning Committee - Ms. Wight reported that once the trustees have endorsed the new branding, it will be announced internally and then designing and printing materials/merchandise/t-shirts/etc. will begin. It will be rolled out publicly on June 1 and a press release will be distributed. She also said that all the data has been analyzed and the various parts of the strategic plan are being written. There is a meeting on May 2 to review the action plan and they are aiming to have the full plan ready to share later in May.

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the first Centennial event is scheduled for June 7, a panel discussion on Presidential transitions, When a President Dies. In August there will be a celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Coolidge's Inauguration with a party on the library lawn including Grace and Calvin's favorite foods and 1920s style music. Additional panels are planned for 2024 highlighting key themes from

**Reports from Subcommittees and Other Meetings** (continued)

Coolidge's presidency. The Presidents book club has reached Clinton and will wrap up before the end of 2023. The programming committee is discussing potential future book club themes. The nominations committee has been reaching out to key people they've identified as potential new members. There is a plan to have some life-sized cut-outs of Calvin and Grace printed to have in the museum and at the centennial events being planned.

Development Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that the committee met on April 11 and reviewed the very successful preliminary Library Giving Day results, discussed ways to improve community outreach efforts, and established a subcommittee to draft a major gift acceptance policy.

Racial and Social Justice Advisory Group - Ms. Prabhaker reported that the group brainstormed programming with a diversity, equity, and inclusion focus that could help raise awareness of the group. They also reviewed the draft strategic action plan.

Barriers to Committee Work - Ms. Bruce reported on the Zoom meeting held by the city on "Barriers to Committee Work" which heard from about 7 people about their experiences serving on city committees. Ms. Bruce's takeaways for the trustees include: stipends were mentioned, but acknowledged to be difficult to execute; discussion around technology access as a financial challenge; recruitment being an active process; mentoring and orientation to help integrate new members; and bringing on more than one new member at a time, particularly if a member is the first person of color to join a board, can help new members feel welcome. Ms. Downing said these comments are on target with Forbes' experience.

**Other Business**

Mr. Twarog asked about follow-up to last month's discussion about meeting room use. Ms. Downing said that she reached out to the ACLU, and that the library's attorneys are looking further into it. She hopes to bring it back to the board soon.

**FLEA Contract Negotiations: Executive Session**

At 4:53 PM, Ms. Wight moved that the trustees go into executive session to discuss contract negotiations with the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA) because negotiation in open session would be detrimental to the library's bargaining position. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously, with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The trustees invited Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss and Ms. Sheirer to remain as guests at the executive session. Ms. Mackenzie and Ms. Diaz left the Zoom meeting at 4:53 PM and Zoom was turned off. 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 5:33 PM, Mr. Twarog 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.

At 5:34 PM Ms. Prabhaker moved to adjourn the meeting. 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. The meeting was adjourned at 5:34 PM.