

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, July 20, 2023

Present: Ms. Debin Bruce, Mr. Russell Carrier, Ms. Lisa Downing, Ms. Kyle Hamilton, Ms. Molly Moss, Mr. Joseph Twarog, Ms. Katy Wight. **Also Present:** Mr. Brian Jamros, representative of Bartholomew Inc.; Eli Porth, Friends of Forbes Library; Jason Petcen, representative of the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA); Ruth Francis and Alexander George. **Present via Zoom:** Kathleen Glowacki, representatives of Bartholomew Inc.; Serena Smith, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Anne Teschner. **Absent:** Ms. Emily Prabhaker, Ms. Elizabeth Sheirer

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 3:47 PM.

Bills & Warrants

The trustees signed the warrants dated June 30, 2023 and July 20, 2023. In response to a question from Ms. Hamilton, Ms. Moss said that it is helpful to have 2 separate warrants for July so she can see what is attributed to the different fiscal years. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Moss said that several people have looked the warrants over before they are brought to the trustees to sign.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Bartholomew Inc. Quarterly Report

Mr. Brian Jamros and Kathleen Glowacki presented a review of the endowment portfolio as of June 30, 2023. Bartholomew has been managing the money since 2009 and reports quarterly to the board. Mr. Jamros gave an overview of the history of the company and their relationship with the library. The library pays 20 basis points based on the cumulation of the funds from the city, Friends of Forbes and the library, which are all kept entirely separate. The economy is now past debt ceiling issues and inflation is slowing. The Federal reserve is likely to raise rates once or twice more. The employment picture is positive. If there is a recession it will be mild and short-lived. The library portfolio is just over \$6.1 million at end of last month, and just over \$6.2 million as of last night. The asset allocation in the portfolio has changed over the years, and is now 50/50 with equity and bonds. It is ESG with no fossil fuels. The annualized rate of return is 6.31% since they took over management of the portfolio in 2009. It is just below 7% for the past fiscal year, which is right in line with a more traditional (fossil fuel) portfolio. Once a year they look at all the funds and remove those that have exposure to any companies that have connections to fossil fuels. Two funds have been switched because of this with really good alternatives. They are always rebalancing to maintain the 50/50 mandate and the trustees said they were still comfortable with that mix. Overall they've increased the credit quality, and if there is a short mild recession, are prepared for that. The portfolio includes alternatives including gold and real estate, which have added quite a bit of value. Alternatives help smooth out the ride in a down market, but take longer to price so they are a month and half behind in reporting. They would like to include more alternatives in the portfolio.

Bartholomew Inc. Quarterly Report (continued)

The trustees then discussed the spending/draw rate with Mr. Jamros and Ms. Glowacki. We are currently withdrawing approximately 3.8% for the book funds and 4% for special collections funds. Our growth rate is 6.31, but we should consider increasing that. Mr. Jamros and Ms. Glowacki suggested that the library might want to adjust the mix of stocks and bonds to 60/40 or even 65/35. The interest rate environment has changed. With lower interest rates, the draw should be no more than 4%. In a higher interest rate environment, it could go higher. They will get back to Ms. Hamilton with real numbers and a recommendation for a withdrawal rate.

The trustees discussed investing in treasuries, but are not sure what to do right now and will let Bartholomew Inc. know when they have a better idea of the library's cash flow and have made a decision. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Mr. Jamros said that attacks on fossil fuel free accounts in the federal budget have not had much effect on ESG funds. In response to a question from Mr. George, Mr. Carrier said that the trustees determine the library's investment policies.

Ms. Glowacki and Mr. Jamros left the meeting at 4:15 PM.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Bruce moved that the Secretary's report of June 22, 2023 be accepted and placed on file with a few minor corrections. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Hamilton presented the Treasurer's Report for the month ending June 30, 2023. The General Aid Fund had negative net activity for the month of \$117,790 and has a deficit of \$20,553 which will be offset by an expected reimbursement from the city of \$30,949 for a sick leave payout of a long-time employee who retired. The Book & Media fund had negative net activity of \$10,364 and has a balance of \$9,005. The Doland Reference Room Fund had negative net activity of \$2,769 and has a balance of \$469. The Externally Financed Transactions Fund had positive net activity of \$688 and has a balance of \$1,461. The Garvey Book & Media Fund had negative net activity of \$1,091 and has a deficit of \$1,091, which Ms. Hamilton believes is overstated requiring a year-end transfer to bring the fund to zero. The Halberstadt Technology Fund had negative net activity of \$3,908 and has a balance of \$4,039. The Hosmer Art Gallery Fund had positive net activity of \$600 and has a balance of \$3,094. The Lyman Special Collections Fund had negative net activity of \$404 and has a deficit of \$722. The Marie Hershkowitz Memorial Children's Book Fund had negative net activity of \$2,110 due to transfers to the endowment and has a balance of zero. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$19,668 and has a balance of \$62,579. The Outreach Fund had positive net activity of \$374 and has a balance of \$374. The Programming Fund-Adult had negative net activity of \$981 and has a balance of \$6,351. The Programming Fund-Children had negative net activity of \$417 and has a balance of \$6,194. The Rosamond Chester Coolidge (RCCR) Fund had negative net activity of \$692 and has a balance of \$1,356. The Rowe Special Collections Fund has a balance of \$1,900 which Ms. Hamilton believes is incorrect and will be updated on future reports. The Staff Development Fund had negative net activity of \$1,590 and has a balance of \$2,885. The Watson Copier Fund had positive net activity of \$421 and has a balance of \$5,148.

Treasurer's Report (continued)

There are things that still need to be reviewed by Ms. Hamilton, but she will have a good handle on this by September. Mr. Carrier said that this is one of the best monthly reports he has read and that Ms. Hamilton has just taken over from the previous long-term treasurer. He said the trustees appreciate what she is doing, and to please bear with them as they try to best support her.

Preliminarily, it appears that there might be a \$10,000 surplus for FY23, but there are still some final numbers to be worked out. A reimbursement check for a large sick leave payout is expected from the city. Electricity was much higher than budgeted, but personnel was pretty close. The surplus will be used for the children's department roof repair. An estimate will be obtained in September, and is expected to be at least \$10,000, which is equal to the entire labor and repairs budget.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve the Preliminary Treasurer's Report for the year ending June 30, 2023 and place it on file. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Downing requested FY24 funding for Coolidge and Special Collections based on a rounding of 4% from the December 2022 twenty quarters.

Ms. Wight made a motion to transfer \$1,000 from the Rosamond Chester Coolidge Endowment Fund and \$3,000 from the Pris Pike Coolidge Endowment Fund, as well as \$2,500 from Lyman Special Collections Endowment Fund and \$1,000 from Harding Local History and Special Collections Endowment Fund for use in FY24. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Gifts, Donations, and Bequests, etc.

Ms. Downing submitted a list of undesignated gifts received from multiple donors in June with \$251.45 going to the Morin Fund, and \$596 going to the Garvey Book & Media Endowment Fund. Ms. Downing reported that a designated gift of \$100 was received for the Garvey Book & Media Endowment Fund.

There were no receipts from sales/rents or donations in June.

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

Short Term Investments Update

Ms. Downing reported that she, Ms. Hamilton, Mr. Carrier, and Ms. Moss met to review two suggested proposals. They determined that Ms. Hamilton needs more time to get an overall understanding of cash flow and operations before moving forward. They will revisit this again in the coming months.

Mr. Carrier said the trustees are looking at this because of the high level of cash held locally at Florence Bank at times, and are considering flexibility vs. return, and adequate cash flow to meet the library's needs. A 6-month CD at Florence Bank is now earning 5%, so the short-term investments might not need to go to Bartholomew Inc., who will charge additional fees. Mr. Carrier said that moving the short-term investments only makes sense if it brings in enough money to warrant the time and effort of the treasurer. Mr. Carrier

Short Term Investments Update (continued)

noted that the trustees usually don't spend this much time talking about money, but it is the end of the fiscal year.

Department Report: Arts & Music

The Arts & Music department report was postponed until the September meeting.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that Ms. Moss has been appointed the treasurer of the CW MARS consortium. Their budget is largely derived from membership assessments and their expenditures cover many of the critical components of modern library operation including the shared catalog and e-book/e-audiobook collections.

For the second time, Forbes hosted the Center for New Americans annual end-of-school-year celebrations. One is held in the morning and the other in the evening. The weather cooperated and both events were well attended and inspiring events. Ms. Downing recognized Mr. Petcen and his staff for all of their support with these events.

The city has committed to reimbursing the library for the final anticipated large sick leave payout for a recent retiree. Anyone hired after 1986 has a cap of \$5,500.

The library has been alerted of significant rusting out of the boiler that was discovered on the backside when it was being serviced by Clark. They will be back on site soon to do a more thorough inspection to see if a repair is possible. Ms. Downing has alerted Central Services, and will share out news as she gets it.

Ms. Buckhout has resigned as of July 6. She and the administrative team are continuing to work through the transition so that Ms. Hamilton has access to accounts and other information that she needs. Ms. Downing recommended a gift of \$250 to Chewy.com as a thank you to Ms. Buckhout. Ms. Wight moved that a \$250 gift certificate to Chewy.com be purchased for Ms. Buckhout. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Downing reported that Forbes is fortunate to have a Praxis student from Smith College assigned to the library this summer. Ruby Shea is working 200 hours on site and helping out in a variety of ways.

The Coolidge Standing Committee has invited the trustees to a special sneak peek viewing of a new Coolidge Museum film by Stan Sherer at 6 PM following this meeting in the museum. This will kick off the commemoration of the centennial of the Coolidge Presidency with introductory remarks of this historic year.

The search for the Head of Adult Services is proceeding and it is anticipated that candidates will be interviewed by the end of July.

The reporting structure has been revised to dissolve the collaborative supervisory structure of Information Services and now staff are assigned a direct supervisor. This change will simplify and clarify staff supervision in this area, but keep the team-based approach. Julie Bartlett-Nelson's job description has been modified to focus her duties primarily on the Coolidge Museum and as a result, Dylan Gaffney's, Local History Specialist, job

Administrative Report (continued)

description has been modified to increase his responsibility for the Hampshire Room for Local History including collection maintenance and staff and volunteer supervision. Mr. Gaffney will be added to the rotation of staff that report to the trustees with a department report and needs. In response to a question from Mr. Twarog, Ms. Downing said that Mr. Gaffney will receive a salary increase, and that Ms. Bartlett-Nelson is at the top of her grade.

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

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, September 21 at 4 PM. The trustees previously scheduled the following meetings for the remainder of 2023: 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, September 6 at 6:30 PM. 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.

Copier Purchase

Ms. Downing reported that Forbes is coming to the end of a five year contract with Canon Solutions for four copiers and one printer. These machines have lots of life on them (largely due to reduced usage during the pandemic) and it makes financial sense to purchase these machines outright. Forbes will continue to have a service contract that will cover supplies and repair on these machines. The total purchase price is \$3,449 and Ms. Downing recommends purchasing them from the Watson Copier Fund that receives income from copier fees.

Mr. Twarog made a motion to approve purchasing the four copiers and printer from Canon Solutions for \$3,449 from the Watson Copier Fund. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

In response to questions from Ms. Wight, Ms. Downing said that the machines will become obsolete in about 5 years. She does not know the disposal cost, but will ask.

Hosmer Gallery Exhibit

Local book artist Judy Messner will have work on view in the Hosmer Gallery in September 2023 focused on local book arts. The library currently has a print of hers of Paradise Pond located just outside the elevator on the second floor. She has offered to sell the library a few of her prints. The prints are 18"x24", and matted and framed. She is asking between \$500-\$700 each. Ms. Downing and Ms. Kaufmann are recommending the board purchase 3 pieces.

Hosmer Gallery Exhibit (continued)

Ms. Bruce made a motion to purchase up to 5 prints by Judy Messner to be paid from the Morin Fund. Mr. Twarog seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Increasing Board Size Update

Ms. Downing reported that Ms. Wight spoke on behalf of the need for additional trustees to spread the workload and make the opportunity to serve more accessible for a wider range of people. The city council approved the order sponsored by Mayor Sciarra supporting the change from five to seven trustees at the second reading on July 13. The next step will be for the probate court to take action on the motion. Mr. Carrier reviewed the many steps still left to go.

Trustees Election Update

Ms. Downing reported at this time, six people have taken out nomination papers. Papers need to be returned by July 24. Ms. Downing had conversations with more people who are supportive of the library but it is not the right time for them to take this on. She is hoping to know more by the September meeting on how to get the news out about the candidates. Mr. Carrier suggested that all of the trustees be open to being contacted by candidates. Ms. Bruce suggested the candidates be included in the Northampton Open Media candidate statements.

Reports from Subcommittees and Other Meetings

Development Committee - Mr. Carrier said that they met on July 19. They analyzed the number of gifts and donors, and both numbers are higher this fiscal year over last fiscal year. Goals will now be set by fiscal year instead of calendar year. The annual fund appeal will go out in October. They are working on a major gift acceptance policy, and also on getting the information out about major gifts. Mr. Twarog said that he loves the new branding.

Other Business

Mr. Twarog asked about the status of the AED that the Lion's Club has offered to Forbes. Ms. Downing said she would reach out and see what is happening with this.

Ms. Bruce moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Twarog, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 PM.