

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, October 19, 2023

Present: Ms. Debin Bruce, Mr. Russell Carrier, Ms. Lisa Downing, Ms. Molly Moss, Ms. Emily Prabhaker, Ms. Katy Wight. **Also Present:** Faith Kaufmann, Head of Arts & Music department; JoEllen MacKenzie, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Alexander George, candidate for trustee; Ruth Francis, candidate for trustee. **Present via Zoom:** Ms. Kyle Hamilton, Ms. Elizabeth Sheirer, Ms. Katy Wight; Anne Teschner, candidate for trustee. **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 4:00 PM.

Bills & Warrants

The trustees signed the warrant dated October 19, 2023.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Prabhaker moved that the Secretary's report of September 21, 2023 be accepted and placed on file. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Hamilton presented the Treasurer's Report for the quarter ending September 30, 2023. The Aid Fund had positive net activity of \$57,728. The Book & Media Fund had positive net activity of \$4,036. The Community Engagement Fund had negative net activity of \$810 due to membership expenses of \$715 and supplies and staff development costs of \$95. The Community Webs Fund had negative net activity of \$22. The Doland Reference Room Fund shows net negative activity of \$7,779 based on expenses of \$7,046 for ten computers, \$350 in legal fees and \$383 in supplies and software costs. The Find Your Voice Festival Grant showed activity that included receipt of grant funding in the amount of \$2,500 from the City of Northampton. The Garvey Book and Media Fund had positive net activity of \$942 comprised of revenue from donations of \$200 and parking meter income of \$742. The Google Ads Grant fund had net neutral activity reflecting \$4,342 in revenue offset by \$4,342 in expenditures due to the quarterly recognition of grant revenue and advertising expense. The Halberstadt Technology Fund had positive net activity of \$9,763. The Harding Fund for Local History had positive net activity of \$1,000. The Hosmer Art Gallery Fund had negative net activity of \$790 due to purchases of library supplies and microfilm. The Lyman Special Collection Fund had positive net activity of \$3,588. The Managing Fine & Decorative Arts Grant showed \$3,000 in grant expenses comprised of supplies, professional services, program talks and an allocation of staff time related to the grant. As of September 30, this grant has been fully spent down. The Morin Fund had negative net activity of \$9,317. The Performance Stage Fund had negative net activity of \$750 comprised of a \$1,000 donation offset by expenditures of \$1,000 for labor and repairs and \$750 in professional services. The Pris Pike Fund had positive net activity \$2,819. The Programming Fund - Adult had negative net activity of \$1,113. The Programming

Treasurer's Report (continued)

Fund - Children had negative net activity of \$722. The Rosamond Chester Coolidge (RCCR) Fund had positive net activity of \$539. The Staff Development Fund had positive net activity of \$930. The Watson Copier Fund had negative net activity of \$2,851. The balance in the endowment as September 30 was \$5,835,283.14.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for the quarter ending September 30, 2023 and place it on file. Ms. Bruce 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 multiple donors in September with \$2,296.20 going to the Book and Media Fund, \$150 to the Garvey Book & Media Fund, and \$25 to the Lyman Special Collections Fund.

There were no designated gifts, receipts from sales/rents, or donations in July and August.

Ms. Moss said that as of today, 69 gifts totaling \$7,576 have been received from the annual appeal.

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

Bartholomew Account for Acquiring Treasuries

Mr. Carrier said that Bartholomew Inc. has requested that the account created in anticipation of short term investments in treasuries be closed if the library does not plan to use it. Ms. Hamilton and Ms. Downing said it could be closed and reopened at a later date should Forbes decide in the future to invest.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to close the account created at Bartholomew for investments in treasuries. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Hamilton will let Bartholomew Inc. know of the decision.

Fund Transfers

Ms. Downing said there are a couple of year-end transfers to make. She suggested that the \$1,200 remaining in the BIPOC Art Fund be transferred to the Hosmer Gallery Fund, the \$236 left in the Baystate Hotel Music History grant fund be transferred to the Lyman Special Collections Fund, and that \$60 be transferred from the Morin Fund to the Go Local (Outside Voices) grant fund to zero out the deficit in that fund.

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to make the fund transfers as recommended by Ms. Downing. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Financial Report: Final FY2023 Report

Ms. Hamilton said that the Final FY2023 report is getting close to being done, but there are a few things left to account for from the auditors. It should be ready for next month's meeting.

Department Report: Arts & Music

Faith Kaufmann presented the Arts & Music department report. Accomplishments include two grants - "Art for All: Expanding Access" and the Digital Capacity Grant for a hybrid livestreaming programming system in the Coolidge Museum. She also reported on the professional development activities of members of the department. The new, more accessible, website theme was launched concurrently with the new branding. In-person programming included a reception celebrating new works in the Forbes' permanent collection, culminating a year's work by the BIPOC Art Committee, selecting and acquiring local artists' work to make the art collection better represent the whole community. Flywheel Arts Collaborative returned in the summers of 2022 and 2023 with two concerts each season. In September 2023, Forbes co-presented "I Could Write a Book," an outdoor jazz concert and sing-along with the Northampton Jazz Festival. Virtual and hybrid programming included a screening of Stan Sherer's new documentary "The Mill River." Exhibits include hosting the first JFK Middle School student art exhibit in May 2023. Programs include hands-on art making workshops for adults this fall, curation and selection of artwork for the 2024-2025 season in the Hosmer Gallery, and curation of an exhibit of art by Forbes Library staff for January 2024. Future plans and projects include programming for the proposed performance stage and staff training in language learning. Needs and requests include electricity in the Hosmer Gallery for track lighting, and sound system upgrades (microphone setup for streaming unamplified programs) in the Coolidge Museum.

Mr. Carrier thanked Ms. Kaufmann for her report and said the trustees appreciate all the work of the Arts & Music department. He asked if Ms. Kaufmann had identified any artwork or items that could be deaccessioned and sold. Ms. Kaufmann said she does not believe there will be a significant number of things in that category. Ms. Downing said she was starting to put together a wish list for 2024 and would add the Hosmer Gallery lighting and sound systems upgrades to the list, and will begin to figure out next steps. Mr. Carrier said there will be a proposal for a potential sculpture acquisition at the November trustees' meeting.

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Bruce attended the October meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that they discussed approval of the Strategic Plan, the city council resolution on anti-censorship, the Coolidge Standing Committee statement on "Democracy Holds Us Together", the status of increasing the number of trustees, and funding for a leadership coach and matching funds for water filling stations. The endowment balance is \$527,245. There was no Director's Fund activity, and income and expenses are on target. They discussed the year-end newsletter and story ideas. The Special Events committee reported on the success of the Artisans Fair with an unofficial estimate of \$5,800 raised. Advance planning for the Garden Tour has begun. The Friends approved a new funding request for two book carts for \$2,500. They also discussed supporting the Coolidge Committee Annual Meeting with a suggestion to provide refreshments at the October 13 event.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that staff were able to participate in the flu and COVID clinic sponsored by the Health Department. A large portion of the staff went to receive vaccinations.

Forbes has signed a gift agreement with Jordi Heroldson for the transfer of Iron Horse materials to Special Collections. These collections will be of

Administrative Report (continued)

great value and interest. Dylan Gaffney will talk more about it when he visits next month to give an annual update.

Chalk artists Steph Gerolimatos and Mark Bodah drew a whimsical scene featuring aliens on the pavement outside of the Children's entrance during the citywide chalk festival last week. Patrons enjoyed watching it be created and the finished product that will last until there is a soaking rain.

Ms. Downing and Mr. Carrier attended Smith College's community breakfast last week. The new college president, Sarah Willie-LeBreton, mentioned the library's recent card sign up event for first year students in her remarks. She also spoke about Smith's commitment to being a good neighbor to the city including contributing to the city's carbon neutrality goal.

Heather Diaz spoke this week at the New England Library Association conference about the library's participation in this year's Reading Challenge by the MA Center for the Book. The conference was held in Springfield and a couple of other staff members were also able to attend.

Forbes' annual fund appeal has begun as can be seen in this month's gifts report. This year's message is about the library being for everyone, "The library is a unique public space expressly designed for inclusion." There has been a strong initial response and the committee appreciates the board's support in this effort.

The Friends held their second annual artisan's fair the first Sunday in October on a beautiful day. The event was very successful and vendors remarked at how well organized it was and how great the attendance was. Martha McCormick and others on the board worked very hard to make this event such a success.

Ms. Downing said it is National Friends of Libraries week and the Friends are soliciting for new members in the Lobby this week along with a raffle book and basket. She said that Forbes is so lucky and grateful to have such an amazing group of Friends, and she acknowledged all they do for the library.

Ms. Prabhaker 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, Ms. Prabhaker, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, November 16 at 3:45 PM. The trustees previously scheduled the following meeting for the remainder of 2023: Thursday, December 21. Ms. Hamilton will invite the representatives from Bartholomew Inc. to the November meeting and the auditors to the December meeting. Ms. Bruce is unable to attend the November meeting.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held on Wednesday, November 1 at 6:30 PM. The meeting is hybrid, and Ms. Wight will attend on behalf of the trustees.

The Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum (CCPLM) annual meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 15 at 6:30 PM.

Communications

Forbes received a letter dated October 3, 2023 from Representative Lindsay Sabadosa congratulating the library on receiving a \$2,500 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council for the Coolidge Centennial Celebrations.

Discussion Topic

There was no discussion topic this month.

City Council resolution in support of Intellectual Freedom

Ms. Downing reported that in a follow up from last month, Ms. Wight would like to ask the City Council to pass a resolution in support of intellectual freedom and, in particular, Massachusetts House Bills S.2447 and SD.267. Ms. Wight will be meeting with Ward 4 City Councilor Garrick Perry who has expressed interest in sponsoring a resolution. An additional Councilor will be sought to co-sponsor the resolution and the Mayor has already agreed to support it. Jo Comerford is a co-sponsor on both house bills.

S.2447 "An Act protecting against attempts to ban, remove, or restrict library access to materials" would require public libraries in Massachusetts to adopt the ALA Bill of Rights to be eligible for State Aid from the MBLC.

SD.2673 "An Act regarding free expression" would ensure that school libraries can offer diverse and inclusive books, media, and materials without political interference. (still in Committee)

Ms. Prabhaker made a motion to endorse Ms. Wight pursuing this and to be named as supporters of a City Council Resolution in support of Intellectual Freedom. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Prabhaker, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Wight will represent the trustees at the City Council meeting.

FY 2023 Annual Statistical Report

Ms. Moss reported that the complete ARIS Statistics are available online. They include charts that give a snapshot of some of the data that is included in the report. The library is not yet back at pre-COVID levels for door count, but has surpassed pre-COVID levels in circulation, with e-book and e-audio circulation continuing to increase. Programming has more than doubled since the previous year.

Increasing Board Size Update

Ms. Downing said there is nothing new to report this month. The petition is still in a holding pattern in the legislative process. The library received a letter of support from the mayor's office. Mr. Carrier and Ms. Downing also submitted letters in support of the petition.

Trustees Election Update

Ms. Downing reported that each of the four trustee candidates recorded brief video statements that are linked from the library's homepage. She encouraged all to please remember to vote on Tuesday, November 7. Ms. Bruce thanked the candidates for their statements and thanked all who serve and want to serve. Ms. Downing said there will be plenty of opportunities and ways to serve in the future especially once the board is expanded.

Building Projects Update

Ms. Downing reported that the new boiler work is almost complete and the library should have access to heat very soon. The project has gone fairly

Building Projects Update (continued)

well and she is very grateful for the quick response from Central Services and the City to get this project done. The HVAC system has not been running correctly, and the programmers will adjust that when they are here to complete the boiler setup.

Ms. Downing reported that there is an updated cost estimate for the bathroom ventilation work and accessibility improvements of about \$230,000. Right now the library has about \$120,000 in hand with the largest amounts from CPA and CDBG. The increase is attributable to inflation as the project has been sitting idle for over a year. The city wanted an architect to review the plans and that increased the cost as well. There will be a meeting with Central Services in the coming weeks to figure out next steps. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that the CDBG fund were supposed to be used in FY2023, and the library has received an extension. The CPA Funds come from the city so should have more flexibility. Ms. Downing talked about the two main goals of the project, to improve the ventilation in the bathrooms, and to make them accessible. The original design for the bathrooms did not include any air exchange and instead relied on the door opening, however that has proven to be insufficient and has resulted in odors in the bathroom. The doors are very heavy and difficult to open and to hold open for anyone with physical limitations. The trustees discussed if perhaps the project could be phased. Mr. Carrier said this was clearly a project that falls under the city's responsibilities.

Ms. Downing also reported that Forbes did not receive the \$50,000 One Stop for Growth state grant that was sought towards the cost of the performance stage. The library has about \$120,000 in hand, but the project is expected to cost significantly more than that. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that the ARCA funds have a deadline of 2025. Ms. Bruce said that there is a wide range of possible costs depending on the type of stage, features, landscaping, etc., but that \$200,000 is a realistic target. Perhaps the project could be done in phases, but the trustees expressed concerns that the project might stagnate. Mr. Carrier suggested publicity that might elicit help from the community. He also suggested approaching the Friends for help with funding. The committee will reconvene and figure out next steps. The trustees agreed by consensus that the boiler and bathroom projects were the priorities.

Reports from Subcommittees and Other Meetings

Development Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that they discussed the results of the annual appeal so far and concluded it was a bit early to determine how the campaign was going overall. They also decided to host a donor thank you event at the library in February. They will meet again on December 14 to make further plans for this event.

Trustee Committees Review - Mr. Carrier reported that the committee held their first meeting on October 5. They began the process of determining which standing and ad hoc committees should be kept, eliminated, added, or merged. At their next meeting they hope to begin the process of determining what the duties and responsibilities of each standing and ad hoc committee will be. The goal is to be done with their work well before the end of the calendar year so the trustees can vote on the recommendations and whatever is approved can be implemented in a timely manner in the new year when there are officially seven trustees on the board.

Reports from Subcommittees and Other Meetings (continued)

Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Wight reported that they have scheduled their annual meeting for November 15 at 6:30 PM that will include a screening of the Coolidge documentary followed by a Q&A with film producer Stan Sherer. The evening will also include a live musical performance of the 1924 campaign song, "Stay Cool with Coolidge". They discussed procedures for handling unwanted gifts that Archivist Julie Nelson and others on staff will further develop as well as reviving the Exhibits Committee to think about a scaled down project that still meets as many of the objectives as possible.

Other Business

Mr. Carrier asked about the status of the ad to be run in the Daily Hampshire Gazette about the trustees and the Coolidge Committee signing on to the "Democracy Holds Us Together" statement put out by the federally funded presidential libraries. Ms. Downing said she would check on it, especially now with the Coolidge Committee annual meeting coming up as a way to engage people to attend.

At 5:11 PM Ms. Prabhaker moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bruce 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 5:11 PM.