

TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY
Thursday, March 21, 2024

Present: Ms. Debin Bruce, Mr. Russell Carrier, Ms. Lisa Downing, Ms. Ruth Francis, Ms. Molly Moss, Ms. Elizabeth Sheirer, Ms. Katy Wight. **Also Present:** Mr. Dylan Gaffney; Mr. Jason Petcen, observer for the Forbes Library Employee Association (FLEA); Ms. Shelly Roucco. **Present via Zoom:** Ms. Molly Moss; Ms. Anne Teschner; Ms. Chris Hannon, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Ms. Kyle Hamilton, Treasurer; Ms. Rebekah Anderson. **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 4:03 PM.

Bills & Warrants

The trustees signed the warrant dated March 21, 2024.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Bruce moved that the Secretary's reports of February 22, 2024 and the special meeting of March 14, 2024 be accepted and placed on file with a minor correction. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Hamilton presented the Treasurer's Report for the month ending February 29, 2024. The Aid Fund has a balance of \$57,017.47 and the Book & Media Fund has a balance of \$9,506.87. The library's total cash balance at the end of February was \$349,789.56 with \$190,228.19 in the operating checking account including a \$108,000 bequest which has subsequently been transferred to the endowment; \$38,483.21 in the ACH checking account (which was established to receive electronic transfers from donations and grantors, and which will be swept at the end of each month to maintain a \$500 balance); \$75,984.75 in the savings account; \$34,908.98 in a 7-month CD maturing on May 29; and \$10,184.43 in a 10-month CD maturing on August 12. The balance in the endowment as of January 31, 2024 was \$6,530,847.02.

Ms. Hamilton said there are seasonal variances that she plans to work out with Ms. Moss and Ms. Downing. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Hamilton said that the Janet Moulding Technology Fund has a balance of \$60,000. Ms. Hamilton said that the savings account which has a balance of approximately \$150,000 earned about \$2 in interest last month. She said she would like to look into other options such as a high yield online savings account that would give her the flexibility to move the money in and out of savings as needed. Laddering CDs was previously discussed as an option, but does not have as much flexibility. Mr. Carrier said that historically the trustees have tried to keep the money in a local bank, but would consider other options. Ms. Hamilton said that she will look into options, including what other options might be available at Florence Bank.

Treasurer's Report (continued)

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month ending February 29, 2024 and place it on file. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Wight made a motion to transfer the remaining \$164.59 in the Find Your Voice Grant Fund to the Morin Fund to zero it out, and \$157.57 from the Morin Fund to the Managing Film & Decorative Arts Fund to eliminate the deficit and zero it out. Ms. Francis seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, 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 February with \$1,011.62 going to the Morin Fund; \$3,075 going to the Performance Stage Fund; \$100 to the David W. Shearer Memorial Periodicals Endowment Fund; \$50 to the Lyman Special Collections Endowment Fund; and a \$108,463.41 bequest from Peter Rowe to establish the Peter Rowe Coolidge Endowment Fund. There were no designated gifts, receipts from sales/rents, or donations in February.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to establish the Peter Rowe Coolidge Endowment Fund with the \$108,463.41 bequest from the estate of Peter Rowe along with \$1,536.59 from the Morin Fund to equal \$110,000. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

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

Mr. Carrier told Ms. Hamilton that the trustees have previously authorized transferring the balance in the Garvey Book & Media Fund in the operating account (funded by the money collected from the parking meters) to the endowment whenever the balance reaches \$5,000.

Financial Report

There was no financial report this month.

Department Report: Hampshire Room for Local History

Mr. Dylan Gaffney presented a report on the activities of the Hampshire Room for Local History. In the last 12 months, the Hampshire Room has seen a dramatic increase in questions and research inquiries both in person and online. Physical materials have been rearranged, a wealth of materials have been digitized, and important new acquisitions have been added. Mr. Gaffney has expanded opportunities for access by creating Shelf Lists and Finding Aids for all Manuscript Collections. Extensive new digitization projects have been completed to increase the diversity of materials available online and new collections have been added to revitalize the archives. Mr. Gaffney then reported on the Judd Manuscript Collection digitization project. The Judd Manuscript Collection is one of the most valuable historical resources in the Hampshire Room. It consists of a collection of 60+ volumes created by local newspaper editor and historian Sylvester Judd in the 1840s. It features content documenting Indigenous lives, enslaved people, and free Black people in New England. The library was awarded a National Historical Publications &

Department Report: Hampshire Room for Local History (continued)

Records Commission grant to digitize these materials in their entirety, which was completed in October 2023, making the materials fully available online.

Another digitization project is the Alternative Press Collection, a collection of alternative, independent, and underground press publications published in Western Massachusetts and housed in the Forbes Library archives. New collections include the Iron Horse Collection, donated by Jordi Herold of the Iron Horse Coffee House & Music Hall Archives, which preserves the history of the iconic venue which stood at the heart of Northampton's 'cultural renaissance' since its opening in 1979. In 2020, Forbes began a collaboration with Smith College, Simmons College, Lilly Library and an organization then called Noho Pride to create a series of Oral History interviews and a digital exhibit centered on the early history of the Northampton Gay Liberation March and Pride Parade. Over the last year, significant donations of materials have brought the library closer to its goal of having a research collection worthy of this vital chapter in Northampton's history. In November 2023, the library was given a collection of 200+ glass plate negatives and 10 photo albums by the Florence Civic and Business Association. The collection covers Florence history and Florence families from the late 19th and early 20th century. Mr. Gaffney's report included information on presentations, programming, and outreach highlights. He reported on the activities of volunteers, work study students, staff and interns.

Mr. Carrier welcomed Mr. Gaffney in his new role in the Hampshire Room, and thanked him for his detailed and terrific report. Mr. Gaffney discussed a few highlights from the report including his focus on access through digitization of the Judd Manuscript and Alternative Press Collection and also by making the public aware of the wealth of material in the Hampshire room. He's been working with students to create a complete inventory which can be put on the website. He is also excited about curating new collections including the Iron Horse collection and Northampton's LGBTQ+ history collection.

In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Mr. Gaffney said that departmental needs include additional space for storage of materials, updated shelving, processing space for staff, and perhaps a separate reading room for researchers. Additionally, new computers for local history staff and a computer/index card scanner are needed. The larger space issues for storage and researchers may be addressed in the renovation of the Coolidge Museum. Mr. Carrier said to work with Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss on sources and a budget for the other requests and Ms. Downing will bring them back to the trustees. In response to a question about staffing, Mr. Gaffney said that additional funding for temporary staffing to complete the inventory of the Iron Horse Collection may be needed. Mr. Carrier said that the goal to expand the space can be explored once all of the collection has been organized and inventoried. Mr. Gaffney said that should be completed soon. Lesser used collections may be moved into storage to create more space. The trustees thanked Mr. Gaffney for his report and all his work in the Hampshire Room.

Mr. Gaffney left the meeting at 4:35 PM.

Friends of Forbes

Ms. Bruce attended the March 6 meeting of the Friends of Forbes and reported that Mr. Gaffney gave his report on the Hampshire Room for Local History and Special Collections. He also brought several notable items from the

Friends of Forbes (continued)

collection to show the Friend's Board. He and Elise Bernier-Feeley have been giving presentations about the collections. The Board asked if Ms. Bernier-Feeley would give a presentation on local early Black lives at the Annual Meeting. The Friends endowment balance was reported as \$568,846 and the Greenfield cash account had an ending balance of \$56,723. The Special Events Committee has arranged food trucks for the craft fair in October. The Garden Tour is set for June 8, and the committee is working on sponsorships. Ms. Downing gave an update summarizing the twelve areas of funding she will request in the coming year totaling \$34,280. Ms. Downing discussed the library's FY2025 budget. Energy costs have had a big effect on the budget. The library's catalog has a new smart search function that will improve the user experience. The Coolidge Committee is looking for ways to fund renovations of the presidential museum. Funding appeals in the summer would seem to fit well around other campaigns and there will be a concerted effort not to draw from existing donors. Library Giving Day is the same day as the Friend's Annual Meeting, April 3. Ms. Downing asked for comments about the donor/volunteer party. All of the feedback was positive and she received some suggestions. The Friends need to review their by-laws before the next meeting. The board meeting will precede the Annual Meeting on April 3. A slate of officers will be voted on at that meeting. Anyone interested in running for the Board President should contact Ms. Sibley directly. Ms. MacKenzie has reached a term limit timeframe but suggested that a new president could co-chair with her for a year.

Administrative Report

Ms. Downing reported that the first of what she hopes to be an annual volunteer and donor recognition event was a huge success. Everyone had a great time and is already looking forward to next year. She thanked all who were involved for being a part of it.

Ms. Downing gave a quick reminder that Library Giving Day is April 3. The goal is to match the Friends \$25,000 gift towards the performance stage. A postcard mailing will be going out soon. Ms. Downing distributed a letter written by Mr. Carrier encouraging donations on Library Giving Day. The trustees may use this as inspiration to write their own letters to potential donors. Mr. Carrier recognized and thanked Ms. Moss for discovering and suggesting that Forbes participate in Library Giving Day after the dissolution of Valley Gives Day several years ago.

April 3 is also the date of the Friends Annual Meeting at 6:45 in the Coolidge Museum. After their business meeting, Dylan Gaffney will be speaking about the digitization of the Judd Manuscript and how it can be used to learn more about the area's diverse history and people.

The All Hamptons Read of Master Slave Husband Wife is happening soon. The event will include book discussions, an author and costume historian talk, and a talk about the underground railroad. For more info, see: <https://forbeslibrary.org/allhamptons>

Ms. Downing and Ms. Moss fell in love with the Birds & Desserts art show in the gallery last month and have purchased a framed print called "Flamingo/Key Lime Pie" for the collection by Don Carter and Dora Dylanne Reyes. It is an homage to Audubon prints and the new piece will hang next to one of the

Administrative Report (continued)

historic prints in the library's collection. Ms. Downing brought the print to the meeting to show to the trustees.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve \$250 from the Rowe Special Collections Fund to purchase the "Flamingo/Key Lime Pie" print. Ms. Francis seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

The oil painting of abolitionist Charles Burleigh is back from restoration and is on view in the Hampshire Room. It looks fantastic.

There are a couple of programs coming up in honor of the solar eclipse where glasses will be distributed: April 6, 4:00 PM: family-friendly eclipse party with a UV color-changing bracelet activity and a UMass astronomer and April 8, 3-4:00 PM: viewing party on the lawn with a UMass astronomer.

The budget meeting with the mayor is coming up next week and there will be a report at next month's meeting.

Forbes has been asked by members of the local academic community with indigenous ancestry to cover the Sioux headdress in the Coolidge Museum until the tribal consent process that Ms. Julie Bartlett Nelson discussed last month is completed. Ms. Wight said that an additional concern is that the headdress may contain eagle feathers which have additional regulations. The waiting list for consultations is long and Forbes is lower priority because of the nature of the items in the collection. The people that requested the covering of the headdress are speaking at the panel on the legacy of the Indian Citizenship Act in the museum on Thursday, March 28 at 6:30 PM. It can be attended in person or online, and the recording will be available afterwards.

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

Next Meetings

The next regular meeting of the trustees is scheduled for Thursday, April 25 at 4:00 PM. The trustees scheduled the following meetings for the remainder of 2024: Thursday, May 23; Thursday, June 20; Thursday, July 25; Thursday, September 19; Thursday, October 24; Thursday, November 21; and Thursday, December 19. Meetings will convene at 4:00 PM, unless the representatives of Bartholomew Inc. are invited, in which case the meeting will begin at 3:45 PM.

A special meeting to interview trustee candidates to fill the two vacancies is scheduled for April 10 at 5:30 PM in the Coolidge Museum.

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be held on Wednesday, April 3, 2024. The annual meeting begins at 6:45 followed by a program at 7:00 PM. The regular business meeting will be held prior to the annual meeting. Ms. Bruce will attend on behalf of the trustees. Ms. Downing will let her know the time.

Communications

There were no communications received this month.

Discussion Topic: New Aspen Discovery Layer

Ms. Moss presented an overview and demonstration of the new CW MARS catalog interface (northampton.cwmars.org) which provides a streamlined experience with many modern touches, including search suggestions and spellcheck; grouped search results (different editions and formats of the same title are grouped together so that they can be found more easily); support for multiple languages; customized branding for Forbes library; "help" guides available from within the catalog; and many other customizations that staff will be exploring. Ms. Moss said that Ben Kalish added the Forbes branding and customizations. The new interface integrates Libby more seamlessly. Additional customization and integration is possible including the event calendar, staff picks, community reads etc. Images will be added to items in the Library of Things. Ms. Downing said that the new interface is provided through CWMARS at no additional cost. It is designed to help libraries remain competitive with commercial operations by providing some of the same features that users have come to expect.

Tech Services Lighting Proposal

Ms. Downing said that improving the quantity and quality of the light in the Technical Services office has been on the Facilities Plan for a couple of years and there is now a viable cost estimate from Wm. Roberts Electric Co., Inc. for high quality LED lighting. She proposed moving forward with the estimate that includes dimmers to provide the maximum comfort and flexibility for current and future staff. She asked for approval of \$13,715 from the Morin Fund. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing said that the area was recently upgraded with new furniture and computers and that the air-flow will be addressed with the basement renovation. Mr. Petcen said that the carpet while considered unattractive by staff is in good condition, and that replacing it would cost about \$5-6,000. Mr. Carrier said that it could be considered in the future.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve \$13,715 from the Morin Fund for lighting improvements to the Technical Services office. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Ms. Teschner joined the meeting via Zoom at 5:00 PM.

Athena Garden Bed Design Proposal

Ms. Downing reported that Eileen Travis, professional landscape architect and donor of the Athena sculpture, has developed a garden bed and planting design. Ms. Travis met with Ms. Downing, Ms. Moss, and Mr. Petcen to review their concerns and suggestions. Her plan prioritizes low maintenance plants, native plants, and plants that would have been found in a Victorian era garden. There is a center bluestone path up and around a pedestal that the sculpture will sit on. Ms. Travis is generously offering to donate her design time, the plants, and the installation along with the previously approved gift of the Brian McQuillan sculpture. The proposed installation timeframe is late April into May. The trustees and members of the Buildings and Grounds committee approve of the plan, but have some concerns about the height of the pedestal the statue will stand on. The plan for the pedestal is 3 feet high, and the sculpture is 5 feet high, so the total height will be 8 feet. There is some concern that it will create a lack of symmetry at the front of the building, and make it difficult to see the detail at the top of the statue when standing close to it.

Athena Garden Bed Design Proposal (continued)

Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve the garden bed design proposal prepared by Eileen Travis with the caveat that the trustees have concerns about the height of the pedestal. Ms. Wight seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, Ms. Teschner, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Full Day Staff Training

Ms. Downing said that a couple of years ago, the trustees authorized her to close the library for 2 half days a year and this has worked out wonderfully to allow staff to gather and focus on professional development and offer time for the whole staff to socialize. She is coming today with a special request to close the library for a full day in place of a half day later this year. The plan is to combine staff development with a winter holiday themed luncheon and gathering. She asked that the trustees approve a full day closure on Friday, December 6. Mr. Carrier said to consider an offsite luncheon as well and to make it a nice event. Ms. Downing said that she plans to bring in someone for American Sign Language training as well.

Ms. Bruce made a motion to close the library on Friday, December 6 for staff development and a winter themed holiday luncheon. Ms. Francis seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, Ms. Teschner, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Committee Selection Procedures

Ms. Downing reported that the Personnel Committee has developed a process for committee selection that she believes will be simple and fair. The proposed procedure is: "In the January following the city's biannual elections, board members should submit a form with ranked subcommittee requests to the president and library director. The president, in consultation with the Personnel Committee, will make selections based on areas of expertise, seniority, and the best interests of the library. Each trustee will be assigned to two or more standing committees. When ad hoc committees are formed, trustees should express interest to the president." Mr. Carrier added that the Coolidge Standing Committee has several sub-committees and that trustees could serve on one of those without serving on the standing committee. Ms. Moss is putting together a form where trustees can indicate their preferences. She will add a box for comments where trustees can indicate why they want to be on a particular committee or any pertinent experience or expertise they may have. The form will go to the members of the Personnel Committee. Mr. Carrier said that the number of committees and related committee work is one of the reasons the trustees have increased their number from five to seven.

Ms. Wight made a motion to approve the committee selection procedure as proposed by the Personnel Committee. Ms. Francis seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, Ms. Teschner, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor.

Once the committee members are appointed, they will choose a chair to run their meetings and provide short summaries for the trustees' meetings each month. The chairs should be a trustee, but it is possible to have co-chairs who are not trustees.

Board Appointments Update

Ms. Downing said that the announcement about the trustee vacancies has gone out and so far, she has heard from five interested candidates including Rebekah Anderson and Shelly Roucco attending today's meeting. Ms. Downing suggested that interested candidates should spend about 15 to 30 minutes talking with her or another trustee to get a better idea of what the position entails before the meeting on April 10 to fill the vacancies.

Performance Stage Update

Ms. Downing reported that Pat McCarthy in consultation with the city's procurement officer has developed a process for a "House Doctor RFQ" as described below:

Central Services experiences project time delays due to the procurement requirement (M.G.L. c. Chapter 7C) requiring a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process for design consultants for projects. The typical RFQ process can take up to 3 or 4 months just to select a design consultant to start one project. Because of this lengthy process and the number of projects we do in a year, Central Services has been working with the city procurement officer, Will Coffey, to draft what is called a House Doctor RFQ or HDRFQ. The HDRFQ process allows the city to hire from a group of already pre-qualified architects and their engineers as "on-call" design consultants for any project (up to 10 mil) for a period up to 3 years without the lengthy 7C RFQ hiring process. This process drastically cuts down the 7C RFQ related project delays for hiring qualified architectural firms and their consultants (landscape architect, civil engineer, MEPs, Geotech, interior design, etc.) for city projects. The House Doctor design consultant "group" of 4 or 5 "on-call" architectural firms are selected based their Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) response to the HDRFQ. We will be issuing the HDRFQ within the next two weeks. If you desire, we will include reaching out to any architectural firms you want to include. Again, the HDRFQ process will meet the M.G.L. c. 7C design consultant due diligence hiring requirements. If you're interested, we will send the HDRFQ to the firms you're interested in. Let us know.

Ms. Bruce has submitted a list of architects and Pat McCarthy will invite them to apply to be on the city's HDRFQ list. It makes sense not to try and develop the library's own RFQ for the stage design project and instead wait until this list is ready which should be later this spring. Forbes will then be able to select an architect from the list to work with.

Roof Repair Estimate

Ms. Downing reported that Forbes has received a proposal from Mahan roofing to replace broken slates later this year totaling \$8,200. This is necessary to do every few years so that the building doesn't develop water infiltration issues. This work is on the approved facilities project list with funding to come from the surplus from FY2023. Ms. Downing was also hoping that Mahan would repair the Children's Room roof entrance that has drainage issues but they have declined that project. Mr. Petcen is seeking proposals from other contractors for that project.

Reports from Subcommittees and Other Meetings

Personnel Committee - Mr. Carrier reported that in addition to preparing draft documents related to the trustee committee appointments, they developed a procedure for committee assignments.

Reports from Subcommittees and Other Meetings (continued)

The Coolidge Standing Committee - Ms. Wight reported that the committee set a date for their first development meeting. They also reviewed plans for upcoming centennial programming. Mr. Carrier said they set up their Development sub-committee and have new members with good ideas for fundraising.

Other Business

There was no other business this month.

At 5:22 PM, Ms. Francis moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bruce seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously with Ms. Bruce, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Francis, Ms. Teschner, and Ms. Wight all voting in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:22 PM.