

**TRUSTEES OF FORBES LIBRARY**  
**Meeting of February 14, 2005**

**Present:** Mr. Bloomberg, Mr. Carrier, Ms. Downing, Ms. Harding, Mr. Morin, Ms. Moulding, Ms. Barone. **Also Present:** Sally Edelstein, observer for the Friends of Forbes Library; Elizabeth Maguire, observer for the Forbes Library Employee Association; Jude McGowan, Marjorie Hess; Diane Welter, Kerry Buckley, Julie Bartlett. **Absent:** None.

The meeting was called to order at 4:08 PM in the Watson Room.

**Secretary's Report**

Mr. Bloomberg moved that the minutes of the January 17, 2005 meeting be accepted with 2 changes. Ms. Harding seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

**Stahl Bequest**

Mr. Bloomberg reported that he has spoken again with Attorney Lisa Halbert, a representative of the law firm handling the Dorothy Stahl estate, about the status of the bequest to Forbes Library. The closing on the property occurred prior to the current litigation, so the buyer owns the house. The proceeds from the sale are being held frozen in an account pending the resolution of the dispute. Since the house is in the buyer's name, the estate does not have the responsibility to maintain the house.

**Treasurer's Report**

Mr. Morin presented the Treasurer's Report noting that while the General Supplies Line of the Aid fund appears to be \$1,700 over budget, in fact some of the expenses attributed to the fund should have been applied against other funds. He intends to reconcile the payments before the next Trustees' meeting, and the fund will no longer be over budget. Mr. Morin also noted that the deficit of approximately \$14,000 last month, which was due to December being a 3-pay period month, has already been reduced to \$7,386. He also said that the sales tax on items sold by Forbes Library was now due quarterly instead of yearly.

Ms. Harding moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted and placed on file. Mr. Bloomberg seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

**Director's Report**

Mr. Bloomberg moved that the Director's Report be accepted and placed on file. Ms. Harding seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

**Friends of Forbes Meeting**

Mr. Carrier attended the Friends of Forbes meeting of February 2, and reported that there was good discussion of both the paid parking and plans for the CCPLM. The Friends are currently planning for the yearly garden tour, and are looking for suggestions for articles for their newsletter, which they would like to go out before the garden tour to help publicize the event. Mr. Carrier said that the Friends are looking into funding plastic bags to use on days when there is inclement weather, and Ms. Downing is exploring the options.

**Next Meetings**

The next regular meeting of the Trustees was scheduled for Monday, March 21, 2005 at 3:45 PM in the Watson Room. Since Bank North was unable to attend the February meeting, they will attend and report at the March meeting.

**Next Meetings** (continued)

The next meeting of the Friends of Forbes Library will be March 2, 2005 at 7:00 PM. Ms. Harding agreed to attend this meeting on behalf of the Trustees.

**Communications**

Ms. Moulding submitted a letter from the Northampton Center for the Arts thanking supporters of First Night. She also submitted a letter from Mr. George Zimmerman, City Treasurer, on the Clarke and Earle funds. The library received the first \$3,000 of the projected \$6,000 distribution from the funds for FY2005, which Mr. Zimmerman projects to be reduced to \$4,000 for FY 2006. He feels that \$4,000 is a more realistic projection. The current balances in the funds are, Clarke \$93,000 and Earle \$91,000. Ms. Moulding also reported that Mr. Zimmerman offered to come and speak to the Trustees about the funds. Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Moulding to invite Mr. Zimmerman to the April Trustees' meeting.

**Forbes Library Employee Association**

Jude McGowan was invited to join the meeting at 4:20 to present and discuss a request from the Forbes Library Employee Association. The officers of FLEA feel that there is a violation of their contract with the Trustees regarding the position of Clerk of the Works. In the past, this position was always assigned to the Facilities Manager, but is now being filled by Mr. Donald Finn, the former Facilities Manager, who is now retired from Forbes Library. Under Article X of their contract, FLEA feels that the position of Clerk of the Works should be posted, so that other Forbes employees may apply for the position. Ms. Moulding said that there is no contract for the Clerk of the Works position, and that the Trustees may hire independent contractors "at will". Mr. Bloomberg questioned whether the position of Clerk of the Works is covered under the FLEA bargaining unit since it is an independent contractor. Ms. McGowan said that FLEA plans on proposing changes to the wording of Article X to make it more clear that all "vacant or newly created positions shall be posted", which would include the Clerk of the Works position. Ms. Moulding said that she felt it would be more cost-effective if a library employee filled the Clerk of the Works position, as they would be more available to meet with workmen and contractors, and would be more up-to-date on the details of the on-going projects.

The Trustees agreed by consensus that Ms. Moulding, in consultation with Mr. Bloomberg, should write a letter to Mr. Finn outlining the Libraries' concerns about the Clerk of the Works position. Mr. Finn will be offered the opportunity of speaking with the Trustees at the March meeting if he desires. Mr. Bloomberg reiterated the Library's position that it is not required to post the Clerk of the Works position, but that it is in the best interest of the Library to do so in order to get the most qualified candidate, and to help reduce the costs incurred by the position. Ms. McGowan left the meeting at 5:05 p.m. following this discussion.

**CCPLM and Historic Northampton**

Kerry Buckley of Historic Northampton and Julie Bartlett of the CCPLM joined the meeting at 5:05 p.m. Mr. Buckley talked about the uniqueness of the Library's Coolidge Collection, and some of the challenges the Library faces in support of the collection. He presented Historic Northampton's plan for a new facility composed of two wings, one for the current Historic Northampton collection including exhibit space, storage space, workspace, and office space, and a second wing for archival materials that would include the Calvin Coolidge collection. The Coolidge collection would include interactive

**CCPLM and Historic Northampton** (continued)

exhibits, an educational component, and other exhibits of the Coolidge era that would help put the Coolidge collection in historical context. Mr. Buckley suggested that there is a window of opportunity to receive a congressional appropriation for the new facility, which is projected to cost \$7 million. A memorandum of understanding between Forbes Library and Historic Northampton would be instrumental in obtaining congressional funding. The memo should include all of the Libraries' stipulations about the collection, and conditions for transferring the collection from Forbes to the new facility. Mr. Carrier said that he was unsure if the Trustees have the legal authority to transfer ownership of the collection, and inquired if a long-term loan arrangement could be worked out. Mr. Buckley replied that there would be benefits to the transfer of ownership, and that if Historic Northampton were to become financially responsible for the care and development of the collection, ownership would be desirable, but not definitively necessary. He said that Forbes could make stipulations about the future of the collection, for example, that the collection never leave Northampton, or that Northampton residents not be charged a fee to visit the collection. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Mr. Buckley said that he would like to exchange drafts on the memo of understanding as soon as possible, as he sees a current window of opportunity for requesting a congressional appropriation, and the memo is essential to moving forward. In response to a question from Mr. Bloomberg, Mr. Buckley said that he envisions a wing of the new facility devoted to Calvin Coolidge, with permanent and rotating exhibits, as well as an educational component. Mr. Carrier thanked Mr. Buckley for attending the Trustees meeting, and said that the Trustees would need to discuss the proposal amongst them, and gather more information and feedback before proceeding. Mr. Buckley left the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

The Trustees continued the discussion. In response to a question from Mr. Carrier, Ms. Moulding said that she was in favor of pursuing the proposal, and that she believed it would be a disservice to the collection not to explore this option. She said it was a very exciting proposal, especially the educational component and outreach into the schools, and that grant money is more available for collaborative efforts such as this. Ms. Bartlett agreed, and said that the conditions in the memorandum should be as specific as possible. Mr. Bloomberg expressed concern over community reaction to the proposed move of the collection, especially if the funding of a congressional appropriation is unlikely. Ms. Harding said she would like more information, and that the Trustees should solicit input from the CCPLM Advisory Board and the Friends of Forbes. Ms. Bartlett will ask for a written proposal from Mr. Buckley that can be used in communications with various constituent groups.

**CCPLM Status Report**

Ms. Bartlett submitted a CCPLM progress report, and the Trustees thanked her for her continued work on the collection. Ms. Bartlett left the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

**Finances**

Ms. Moulding submitted reports on the Parking Fund, and FY05 budget, which are both on track. She also submitted a proposed FY06 budget plan for a level-funded budget, which would require cutting \$49,000. The proposed cuts to be supplied informationally to the mayor include reducing COLA to 1% (\$8,000), cutting outreach services in half (\$10,000), cutting Coolidge services in half (\$13,500), cutting the Hampshire Room services in half (\$8,000), closing the Children's Room Monday morning (\$2,500), eliminating technology line item (\$7,000), and reducing supplies line item (\$3,000).

**Finances (continued)**

Mr. Carrier noted that these cuts are suggestions only, and that the Trustees could change the actual cuts. Ms. Moulding noted that the library was at its minimum number of hours of service, so that no further cuts in hours can be made, which means that no staff cuts in public service areas can be made.

**Japanese Prints**

Ms. Moulding reported that Paul Scofield of Eldred Auctioneers visited the Library on February 4<sup>th</sup>, examined the collection of Japanese prints, and estimated selling prices for each print. Most of the prints are in poor condition due to their glued backings and some light damage. His estimates ranged from \$50 to \$2,500 with a collection total of \$35,370. Restoration costs for the prints would vary greatly depending on the individual print, and he offered to talk to a restorer to get a rough estimate. Mr. Scofield's firm holds 3 Oriental sales a year in August, May, and December. The December sale is the largest and to be included in that sale, he would need to be notified by mid-April. Eldred offers a reduced 10% commission rate for non-profits, and Mr. Scofield did not charge for his time on February 4<sup>th</sup>. When asked which prints the library should keep, Mr. Scofield suggested keeping the most valuable prints, as they are likely to hold their value. Beyond that, it is a matter of personal preference.

Ms. Harding moved that the Japanese prints be sold through Eldred Auctioneers, and that Faith Kaufmann, Ms. Moulding, Mr. Carrier, and Ms. Harding review the prints to decide which ones to keep and restore. Mr. Bloomberg seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

**Funding Request to Friends for Learning Express**

Ms. Moulding submitted a funding request to the Friends of Forbes for a subscription to Learning Express, an online test preparation database, for \$2,625 annually. Ms. Harding moved that the Trustees approve the funding request. Mr. Bloomberg seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously. After the initial year, the database will be evaluated for continued support by the Friends.

**Parking Project**

Mr. Carrier and Ms. Moulding attended the Ordinance Committee meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup>, which voted to recommend to the full City Council that Forbes be allowed to have metered parking in its lot. The committee members were convinced by a letter sent to them by Mr. Carrier that explained the reasons for paid parking at Forbes. The City Council will vote on the matter at its meetings on Thursday, February 17, and Thursday, March 3. It is possible that there will be opposition at those meeting.

**Repointing Project**

Three bids for the repointing project were received and opened today. One of the bids was for \$189,000, which falls within the \$190,000 budgeted for the project. This bid was from Monaco in Southbridge, MA. Ron Alex will check their references and send a letter to Joe Cook, who will draw up the contract. The other 2 bids were much higher.

Ms. Moulding also reported that the City Council voted to fund completely the final phase of the repointing project, which will be done in the fall of 2005 if all goes smoothly. Ron Alex was hired for the entire project and it was phased after that, so it is not necessary to go out to bid for the project's architect. Also, Forbes can request funds from CIP in FY07 for the project of replacing the windows based on Ron Alex's original estimate of \$300,000.

### **Planned Giving**

Prior to the meeting, Ms. Downing compiled and distributed information to the Trustees about planned giving, an email from Bonnie Isman of Jones Library, and information about Melody Foti of Salomon Smith Barney who has offered to come and speak with the Trustees about planned giving. Ms. Harding suggested that Ms. Downing invite Ms. Foti to the April Trustees' meeting.

Ms. Harding also reported that she had another financial advisor review Bank North's performance, and while he found no major problems, he thought the portfolio was under-represented in 3 areas. Mr. Morin will share this information with his father, make copies of the proposal for the Trustees, and report at the next Trustees' meeting.

### **Circulation Consolidation**

Ms. Downing submitted a report on the consolidation of circulation services of the Arts & Music Department with the main circulation functions. The merger is going well, and has freed up Arts & Music staff to devote more time to detailed inquiries from patrons and special collections work. While lines at the main circulation desk are longer at busy times, other staff members can pitch in and help if the lines grow excessively because there are now more terminals on the desk. One of the major concerns of eliminating circulation in Arts & Music was the risk for more temptation to steal. This is something that Faith Kaufmann will continue to monitor.

### **Trustees' Award 2005**

Joe Donohue has agreed to be the recipient of this year's Trustees' Award to be presented Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. in the Coolidge Museum.

### **Election of Trustees 2005**

Papers will be available from the City Clerk of Northampton on March 25<sup>th</sup> for applicants to be placed on the ballot for election as Forbes Library Trustees in November 2005. There are currently two vacancies, which will be filled for the remaining two years of those terms. Also two incumbent Trustees are up for re-election for their full four-year terms. Applicants must have their papers signed by at least 50 Northampton registered voters and then turn them into the Registrar's Office in City Hall by July 26, 2005.

### **Gifts, Sales, Bequests**

The following gifts were received since the last Trustees' meeting: \$100 gift certificate to Broadside Books from Michele Aldrich, gift subscription to The Christian Science Monitor from Margaret McClamroch, \$40 from Lois I. Grigely in memory of Anne Marie Arnold to Book Fund, \$50 from John & Karen Bobala in memory of Anne Marie Arnold to Book Fund, \$25 from John & Ruthann Ryan in memory of Anne Marie Arnold to Book Fund, and \$100 from Webber & Grinnell to Book Fund.

### **Snow Day Policy**

Ms. Harding inquired if there was a snow day policy for Forbes. Ms. Moulding replied that she decides whether or not to close the library based on the safety of the staff. In the case of the storm last week, that decision had to be made earlier than usual because 14 contractors from various parts of New England were due to tour the library the next day, and had to be notified in a timely way if the library were closing. Mr. Carrier asked Ms. Moulding to write up a snow closing policy for the library.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.