

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

The Town of Amherst and the Jones Library, Inc.

February 19, 2008

Jones Library's Trustees' Room

Present: Trustee Wang, Trustee Holland, Trustee Grose, Trustee Page, Trustee Turner, Trustee Greenbaum. Also Present: Library Director Bonnie Isman, Tina Swift, staff. Also present: Five members of the general public.

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Motion: To approve the January 17, 2008 Minutes. Motion by: Molly Turner. Second by: Ann Grose. **Vote:** Unanimous.

There was no President's report.

Treasurer's Report. As of Feb. 1st, the endowment is \$8,752,275.80. The Building Expansion and Renovations (BE & R) checking account will be relocated to the TD Bank North from the Bank of America.

Director's Report. The Jones has received \$51,984.80 from the estate of Ms. Thelma Isaacs. She was a most accomplished lady, as recounted in her obituary. She designated the Jones Library and the Munson Memorial Library to each receive 3.33% of her estate. Ms. Isman noted that this brings up the idea of consideration of the kind of recognition needed for people who participate in planned giving. All gifts to any Town library go to the Jones, Inc. This money has been put into a Vanguard money market account because the Board of Trustees has not decided on its disposition. Ms. Isaacs also offered any of her books and cd's, which the Library did not take.

Ms. Isman and Ms. Swift will prepare a list of donors who have given \$10,000 or more.

Motion: To accept the generous bequest of Thelma Isaacs. Motion by Ms. Page. Second by Ms. Wang. **Vote:** Unanimous.

Motion: To place Ms. Isaacs' bequest into the Vanguard invested funds in accordance with her stated wishes. Motion by Ms. Page. Second by Ms. Wang. **Vote:** Unanimous.

Ms. Isman discussed the summary FY2008 budget report, recounting expenses. In looking over the expenses, the Trustees discussed requesting a reduction in rent for the Munson Memorial Library, noting that LSSE does not pay rent to use the Munson Memorial Library hall.

Discussion of Fines: Ms. Isman was not able to speak with the Town Manager today regarding this issue. The Finance Committee is clear in seeing these fines as general revenue. Ms. Isman would like to have the Town Manager on the Trustees' side in retaining the fines. She stated that the retention of fines is "a local decision" and she was

delaying in contacting the Attorney General to see if local resolution would take precedence over standard practice.

Mr. Greenbaum asked for legal clarification of the fine issue. Mr. Greenbaum quoted a person from the Trustees' public forum who alleged that the fines must remain with the Library. This member of the public spoke of 'assurances' which were not recognized nor remembered by anyone present.

Ms. Wang clarified that the books and materials have been purchased by private, not public funds. Ms. Wang favored inviting the Town Manager to the next Trustees' meeting. Ms. Holland suggested getting legal counsel from Town Counsel. By consensus, the Trustees asked Ms. Isman to send a letter of inquiry.

Motion: Ms. Isman will send a letter to Town Counsel asking for a legal opinion, as stated in the last minutes. Motion by Ms.Holland. Second by Ms.Grose.

Vote: Unanimous.

Discussion of the Feb. 11th meeting: One member of the public wanted to know the usage of the North Amherst Library. Ms. Isman suggested posting information on what the branches are and what they do. Ms. Page said she wants to know what it costs to run each branch. She had questions about staffing at the branches.

Ms. Isman distributed summary information from the FY08 Library Program Budget.

Ms. Turner recounted a presentation on municipal finance by the League of Women Voters, saying that it was very clear. She continued, pointing out that the Jones Library system is a regional library and part of the "destination" that is Amherst. It's a benefit to the economic life of this community. Mr. Greenbaum affirmed the benefit of publicizing the Library and to 'not hide it under a bushel.' He talked about informing the public of the extent of what the Library provides. Ms. Page said people who suggest alternating days of operations at the branches are not making these suggestions because they don't like the Library, it's because they must find ways to cut the budget.

Ms. Isman distributed a memo titled FY2009 Budget Discussion. The ESL program is not on this sheet (for possible cuts) because it's in the "as is" budget. These items were discussed but not voted on last year. The Library must be open 63 hours a week. Ms. Page wondered the cost benefits of reducing the branch librarians five hours per week.

Possible revenues: Rent out third floor of the library, permit parking when the Library is closed, a café.

Ms. Page requested a continued discussion of possible cuts. Ms. Wang said she would like to think about the list. Ms. Page and Ms.Turner asked for clarification as to the reasons why ESL is not on the possible reduction list, such as a ten month schedule. A member of the public suggested that the \$7,000 fund raised for the ESL program should be used only for the ESL program.

Press Coverage. Ms. Holland has written a column about the North Amherst Library and Ms. Turner spoke to Noah, the editor at the Gazette. Apparently, Noah did not receive the article. Ms. Isman noted that there had been a wonderful profile about a former ESL student in the newspaper. Ms. Isman has learned that the Bulletin is not receiving faxes regarding events, as evidenced by the fact that we have had no coverage for children's events. Last Saturday's children's concert (with notice in the paper) had 140 attendees.

Ms. Isman distributed the MBLC Legislative Agenda and noted how important the next legislative breakfast (March 21 at 7:30 a.m.) at the Jones is.

Committee Reports: Capital Requests. There are nine. Form 1: Departmental Capital Request Summary FY07 –2011. There was consensus that the capital improvements are necessary.

JCPC met on Feb. 11 and will meet tomorrow.

The Fundraising Committee has not met. Ms. Holland thinks the Trustees should seriously look into the café idea. Ms. Page suggested spending money for a private fundraiser to seriously increase the endowment. Ms. Grose suggested selling more of the art collection. Mr. Greenbaum asked to see the inventory of the Burnett collection. About \$120,000 has been garnered through the sale of art. This money has been put into the endowment.

Personnel Board. No meeting.

250th Committee will meet tomorrow. The Subcommittee on History has developed themes for each month of 2009 with programs listed on the web site. The Arts and Literature Subcommittee has met with Tevis Kimball, Curator.

Amherst Planning Together. Nothing to report (Ms. Turner)— The final report is back to the consultant.

Burnett Gallery. They are booked into 2009. In February 2009, there will be a community art show to commemorate the 250th.

Friends of the Jones Library. All but three of the Valentine baskets have been picked up. The basket sales brought in about \$6,000.

Director's Review. Meeting with the Director will be rescheduled.

Other Business: Hwei Ling Greeney, Select Board had telephoned Ms. Holland. Ms. Greeney suggested Amherst College take over Special Collections. Ms. Holland asked for a formal response outlining the legalities of such an arrangement. Ms. Isman said there could easily be problems with gifts that have been deeded to the Library. There was discussion as to what "take over Special Collections" might mean. The Trustees did not agree with this idea. Ms. Holland will give a response to Ms. Greeney.

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Note: Pencil in March 10, 7 p.m. for the next Trustees meeting instead of March 13.

Submitted,

Ann Grose

Tina Swift, Transcriptionist