

Minutes

Jones Library and the Town Libraries Board of Trustees' Meeting

Dec. 1, 2009

Trustees' Room of the Jones Library

Present: Patricia Holland, President; Louis Greenbaum; Carol Gray; Chris Hoffmann; Sarah McKee. Absent: Kathy Wang. Also Present: Bonnie Isman, Library Director; Sue Hugus, Munson Memorial Librarian; Scott Merzbach, Press

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Comments from the Public: None

Changes to the Minutes: For Nov. 10, 2009: page 1 – change reference in BCG notes under President's Report to say that BCG wants a budget submitted by January 19, 2010. Same paragraph: O'Keeffe has 2 'e's and 2 'f's. Also November 10: same paragraph, line 2: "takeaway points which are THE consensus." Nov. 10, p.2, 2011 worksheet: Insert: 'The municipal appropriation required for certification was given as \$1,521,879.' Before sentence beginning 'Ms. Gray', on p. 2, middle of page change to: "Carol Gray requested that we propose, as a minimum, a certification level budget." Ms. Isman noted that a level services budget for FY2011 would be higher than the certification level. On p. 2, 2nd paragraph from the bottom: reformulate as necessary: "Ms. Gray wants to see a breakdown of what individual budget items cost, so that the Trustees can formulate the budget." "Among these items, she would like to see what a skeletal crew (hereinafter, minimum safe staff) would cost." Last page: "Ms. Gray believes that we should have earlier-funded CPAC projects under way."

Motion: To accept the November 10, 2009 Minutes as amended. Motion by: Chris Hoffmann, Second by: Patricia Holland. **Vote:** Unanimous.

President's Report: The Budget Coordinating Group (BCG) meeting had four messages: First point: the Select Board does not want to proceed with an override until all of the budgets have been submitted. Neither the Select Board nor the Finance Committee is committing itself to cuts on a strictly percentage basis across all departments. Ms. Isman: The impact to the libraries might be greater than the 2.7% cut currently allocated to the libraries. Ms. Holland: The BCG wants budget projections, albeit fuzzy, through 2013 before asking for an override. It would like to provide all Town boards and committees with information to address public concerns about all components in case of an override. Ms. Gray: Is there a presumption that all Town components are backing an override? Ms. Holland: They're being careful not to, though want all components to be able to explain how an override would affect all. Ms. Gray: Will we see and be able to vet drafts of anything before it goes public? Ms. Holland and Ms.

Isman: The BCG has learned from the mistake of having a draft going to press before the components have okayed it. Ms. Holland: We believe the library staff to be greatly underpaid, therefore, we want specifics in all components about staffing trends by positions. Louis Greenbaum: How do we fare in comparison with the school department? Ms. Isman has tracked only our librarians vs. school librarians, who are unionized and are paid more. Also, they get more money for completing hours toward an advanced degree, whereas our professional librarians do not. The hourly paid staff (with no benefits) are now at more than \$10.00 per hour, which is more equal to hourly schools' staffs. Louis Greenbaum wants a comparison of our librarians with teachers. He said our folks are underpaid in comparison with other cities and towns. Bob Saul (Finance Committee) has said that we should pursue comparisons of the Town's share of overall library budgets with comparable towns. Also, Saul mentioned circulation figures and library usage. Ms. Isman noted that in October, the circulation went up. In November, it went down because we are buying far fewer items.

Sue Hugus said the South Amherst Library needs door counters. Sue continued saying, 'Munson was very busy today – it's seeing more people who can't get into the Jones because of the lack of downtown parking, and more older people.' Recently, Sue was told that she was the first person ever to show a young man the Internet (some time ago). The schools are not pushing it, but Amherst/Munson Memorial Library had one of the first LANs (local area networks) in the state.

The BCG wants to get information to give to the public to support an override. Ms. Gray will send Ms. Isman stories we got on the effect of libraries on people's lives. Ms. Holland thanked Beth Girshman for the 3 Cups of Tea programs. She has done a great job! Also, a tip of the hat goes to Larry Schaffer, who led one group at The Harp. Thank you cards all around.

Treasurer's Report: There is still ~ \$4,000,000+ with Vanguard. We are still trying to get online viewing capability for the donations from TDBank. We just finished signing more paperwork for Gage-Wiley/New England Capital for various funds, e.g., Building Expansion and Renovation (BE&R) and Special Collections, tonight. Ms. Isman said, 'We're setting up to get our first transfer of funds from New England Capital.'

Director's Report: We have a holiday schedule and the Town Manager has extended additional release time in addition to normal holiday leave. Sue Hugus reported that the Munson will be open on December 26. We have not yet heard from North Amherst.

2011 Action Plan: Technically speaking, our five-year plan ends in 2010 (June). But in order to qualify for certain grants, we are going to submit to the MBLC a Transitional Plan in light of our budget cuts. The MBLC will expect a five-year plan by June 2011. Handout: Action Plan for FY 2011. Ms. Isman has submitted this to the MBLC. Ms. McKee asked whether we could have a

Chinese outreach since we have a Latino outreach. By consensus, the Trustees thought this a good idea – though we might have to get a separate grant for it, making it difficult to administer both at once. However, we can modify this plan to make it more workable for our purposes. Consensus: Fold the various types of surveys, including that from Chamber of Commerce, into the Transitional Year project. The Board will invite Becky Demling to work on this.

Award: The Digital Amherst website (produced by Special Collections) has won a Cutting Edge Technology Award from the American Library Association Office of Information Technology Policy. This is ranked in the top three nationally. Also, Digital Amherst has been submitted for the Conch Award of the Amherst History Association

Elm Tree of Contention: The tree will be moved twelve feet. One dogwood, which is very old and diseased will have to be removed. Sherry Wilson explained why it should go. (Update: Per the Amherst Bulletin, Friday, Dec. 11, 2009, p. 2, the Public Shade Tree Committee has “voted unanimously against moving the Princeton elm, a decision that Tree Warden Alan Snow said he will likely follow. ‘I will not recommend moving the tree, Snow said.’”)

Press Releases: Ms. Isman will “carbon copy” all press releases to the Trustees.

New Business: Ms. Isman told the Board it will cost \$7,822 keep the Jones open on Fridays. Ms. Gray moves that we transfer this amount into the FY2010 budget for the purpose; Hoffmann, 2nd, passed unanimously.

Ms. Isman stated that after the above vote, a level services budget for 2011 now includes opening the Jones on Friday afternoons and this will be in the “extra help” budget line. We also have a 3.5% cost of living adjustment negotiated into the contract with SEIU88. Ms. Isman: We can come up with a certification level budget. BCG is looking at level services as one level. For libraries, this would be 4.1%, or \$85,437. We are seeing decreases in private & state funding. Ms. Holland: The Town appropriation for level services might well be 5%.

Next meeting, 15 December: we’ll hear from library staff about effect of cuts. They’ve been asked to make 10% cuts in each of their departments.

Trends: back page, blue and red bar charts. Over last ten years, our budget for benefits has increased 171.40% from 2001, but taking 2006 as the base year our benefits, the budget has risen 43.50%. This reflects the Town’s efforts to slow increases.

Next time: Ms. Gray requests options, including minimum safe staffing for an additional afternoon and evening (Ms. Isman – we already have that for the evenings that the libraries are open) so that we can evaluate cuts. We also have that now on Friday afternoons. Ms. Gray wants it also for another afternoon and morning. Ms. Isman: Be clear: cuts are going to mean

cuts in services. There is a certain amount of work that has to get done. Cuts mean cuts in service. Currently, our budget calendar has the cuts coming to the trustees on January 5. Remember, the Town Manager's budget comes out in January with all of his cuts.

Mr. Greenbaum asked: How do you calculate the MAR (municipal appropriation requirement)?

Ms. Isman replied that it is a mathematical formula that incorporates an average of the previous 3 years' MAR plus 2 ½%. Ms. Isman noted: even if we get 5% more, for level services, we will have a \$85,437 gap.

The Board needs to submit the budget to BCG by Jan 19, 2010. The weekly meetings in January will be on the 5th, 12th, and 19th.

Elm Tree Redux: Carol Gray is concerned that her motion did not OK cutting down a tree. Ms. Holland and Bonnie Isman accompanied Sherry Wilson (former trustee and garden expert) when Cherie showed how the dogwood is dying. Chris Hoffmann will convey to the Friends of the Jones Library that one trustee opposes cutting down the dogwood. Ms. Gray is free to lodge her objections with the appropriate bodies.

Re CPAC Official Town Chart Format handout, FY09 approved – FY15. Ms. Isman: We've spent about \$5,000 on new computers to match the Gates grant, and we have spent about \$5,000 for a network printer/copier for Special Collections.

Aaron Hayden of Amherst College, in his individual capacity, has helped us organize several CPAC projects into two projects, organized into Phase 1, design, and Phase 2, construction, as part of using new Request for Qualifications procedure for contracting used by Ron Bohanowicz (Buildings Supervisor). Ms. Isman has Grodsky coming to look at our archival HVAC design and give a better cost for the redesign. They are our current HVAC contractor.

We have \$14,000 that was approved for the roof in 2009 plus another \$55,000, in capital projects. Ms. Isman said there are problems with the glass roof. It was installed in 1991, and is beyond its 10 year warranty. George Hicks, Maintenance Supervisor, has been getting expert advice and quotes on the leaks. AA Royal Windows and Construction gave a quote of \$150,000 for recaulking the glass panels. Mr. Greenbaum asked Ms. Isman to ask Ron Bohanowicz about this. Also: The elevator controls to Burnett Gallery and Special Collections should be replaced. Our current elevator servicer says that it will cost \$42,000 for a new control panel.

Ms. Gray spoke of solar panels and geothermal. A Boston solar expert is willing to visit and Larry Shaffer is willing to meet him. Ms. McKee advised making sure that we check out Nanosolar – prints solar panels on foil. Mr. Greenbaum: make sure that we get all possible funds to preserve the building.

Director's Evaluation: Handouts of policy document, Trustees' Annual Review of Director, Amherst Town Libraries, revised Jan. 2004; Director's contract with Board; Position Description; and 2009 evaluation. Previous evaluation had been in 2004. Subcommittee: Holland, Gray, McKee. Evaluation due in January 2010. Mr. Hoffmann points out that the Subcommittee should be appointed in June, but we can at least use the sequence. Ms. Gray suggests appointing the subcommittee right after spring Town Meeting. Ms. Gray suggested also meeting with the staff. Ms. McKee suggested making requests and responses in writing.

Report on Chamber of Commerce meeting: Dean Cycon of Dean's Beans will donate all the coffee and the cups as long as he has a sign saying this.

Burnett Gallery: Mr. Greenbaum said the Burnetters have reviewed all of the artists' submissions for next year. They have narrowed the 40 submissions to 24.

Cost Cutting Committee: Working on geothermal.

Development Committee: Ms. Holland: The owner of Copy Cat strongly advised approaching businesses in person. We will meet next Monday to devise strategy.

Ray, the owner of Copy Cat gave us \$800 off the bill for printing the annual fund appeal letter, and he wanted us to ask the same of the direct mail service. We thanked Copy Cat on our mailing. Ms. Gray: We should ask for the donation before giving people the contract. Ms. Holland has asked for list of all businesses with which we have contacts. Gray: we also need to know what businesses gave money last year.

McKee moved that the Trustees join the Chamber of Commerce if we have an anonymous donation for it. Holland 2nded. Passed unanimously. Then we'll be fellow Chamber members when we call on businesses. Friends of the Library joined for similar reasons because they seek donations for the Valentine's baskets.

Investment committee: Meets December 10, 2009 at 3 p.m.

Town Personnel Committee – Ms. Holland is ex officio as President of the Board of Trustees. There has been a delay in revising the personnel procedure manual, which is full of typos and outdated. No meeting since October. Ms. Holland could call a meeting and invite the Town Manager, who is pretty unavailable.

Dec. 9 Wed. 11 a.m. - 5 year plan committee at Jones; Dec. 7 Monday 2 p.m. – Development Committee Meeting, Trustees' Room; Dec. 4, Friday, 4 p.m., Trustees' Room, Evaluation Committee

Adjourned 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McKee

Clerk