

The Jones Library Meeting of the Board of Trustees
January 13, 2009 at the North Amherst Library

Present: L. Greenbaum, P. Holland, Molly Turner, C. Hoffmann, A. Grose; Bonnie Isman, Library Director, and M. Spiegel, North Amherst Librarian.

Absent: K. Wang

Guests: George Hicks, Jones Library Building Maintenance Supervisor, and Scott Merzbach from the Amherst Bulletin.

George Hicks worked for the Easthampton School Department for 20 years before coming to the Library. He states that the Library needs more upkeep, that there are not enough off-hours workers and it shows. Most buildings have someone two nights a week. The building is not kept up as it should be. Some things should be looked at now.

Hicks is full time; he has a part time helper for 5.5 hours a day, a 25 hour per week person (who was suspended this week) for weekends and evenings, a four hour per week delivery driver, and a ten hour per week hourly person who cleans bathrooms. Hicks also takes care of the North Amherst Library.

Capital projects are on a five year plan and there is a need for implementation of these programs. Maintenance repairs are being taken care of. The relamping plan finds Hicks very helpful. Turner said we need to ask for the money for these needs even though we probably won't get it. We can't stand any cuts. Turner asked about Greening but it is too expensive to think of geothermal and solar would be too difficult at the Jones Library. The LEED program is only for new construction. Turner advised Hicks to educate us about what needs to be done. Holland said the capital campaign must have specific things to ask for.

The 18 year old cooling tower is rotting away and will need replacement. We have not asked for money for this, but we could do that. Research is needed. The atrium skylight was white washed last summer and that helped to keep the Library cool during the hot months; that will be done every year. Turner suggested that Hicks give us a list of things needed. We thanked him for coming.

Minutes of the last meeting were accepted after two spelling corrections: Cowles (not Cowls) and Isaac (not Isaacs).

President's report: Turner passed out a draft of the Director's evaluation. We are to read this and call her if we have any changes or corrections by January 17. Turner wrote a column for the Bulletin which we all appreciated. Holland and Hoffmann will write an article about Munson Library soon. Greenbaum suggested that any reference to the branches should include the Jones Library System. Both branches qualified for the Gates funding. Grose shared an article from the Boston Globe about the increased use of libraries during these difficult

economic times. Hoffmann said that people have suggested we close the branches. Greenbaum said the deficit won't end if this happened. They are important to the life of the communities and the quality of neighborhoods.

Sara McKee wrote a letter to Turner suggesting a way for the Library to raise money. She suggested the Library put out a wish list for books wanted. The donors could take a tax deduction for them. Turner invited her to our next meeting. Maggie Spiegel thought travel books and DVD's would be acceptable and helpful but that most people want new books as soon as they are published. Hoffmann said if a person bought a new book early, they could donate it and have a book plate put in the book. Isman said our budget must be 13% for materials.

Holland wrote a letter to Congressman John Olver about the need for major repairs and capital expenses. She will send a copy to Town Manager Larry Shaffer to let him know the Trustees are doing this. Motion to approve was made by Grose with corrections and an appending list of Library needs. Passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: The endowment has risen by nearly \$200,000 and is now at \$6,418,358.73.

Director's Report: Bonnie Isman submitted a proposal to the Town Manager who, working with Finance Director John Musante, submitted a Town-wide proposal to the Lt. Governor's office. This proposal requested funds from the Lt. Governor's stimulus program. CPAC was a friendly hearing and Isman spoke about where and why we need money for exterior and interior work. According to Greenbaum, the Historical Commission decided that the most important item is to fix the leaks in the roof. The next priority is the HVAC system to protect Special Collections and to preserve the documents. A study must be made first about new system and then paid for. An architect is working on the roof leaks. The total roof project would be \$55,000.

Revised Library card policy. The new printed policy will have the Jones Library and Branch Libraries, and further into the policy it will say the Amherst Town Libraries. Hoffmann moved approval of the policy and we agreed.

Spiegel said the North Amherst Library is busier due to more people going to the Survival Center and using the Library for warmth. Many use the computers as well as books and DVD's. The home schoolers come more often and international student families as well as all residents.

The Budget: The new calendar has two dates of importance. The Town election is March 31, 2009 and Town Meeting begins on May 4, 2009. This leaves us with the whole month of April to negotiate. The good news is that the bottom line is only up by 3.5%. There are higher medical insurance rates, but the Finance Committee will decrease this amount. The Town unions' COLA's will be 3.5%. Some employees will also get step increases which total 4.7% (most Library employees are not eligible for step increases). Contracts have been negotiated (with this increase) and are in place. Monday extra help (part time, non benefitted) wages have

been donated by loyal Library patrons. Isman stated that if this money is still not available, we would have to close the Jones on Monday afternoons. Fringe benefits will not increase.

The operating budget is level funded except where we know we have increased expenses based on this year's expenses. 13% must be for circulating materials. The increase for operational expenses is 2.4%, but the increase in electricity is 5.6%. Natural gas is level funded. Replacement materials fees from lost or damaged books include money from sales of materials. Life magazines that were old and moldy were purchased by Amherst College for \$3,000 and they will restore the set of magazines.

Tax support is expected to be up 2%, but the Governor's budget is unknown as well as state aid to libraries. The Cherry Sheet state aid amount is \$32,801, but this is not solid. The current recommendation by the Finance Committee is 2%. The Annual fund drive is at \$37,000 plus \$7,000 for replacement materials and this will total about \$51,000. The endowment is up over the previous month.

Thelma Isaac left \$25,000 to Munson and \$25,000 to the Jones with another amount of \$800 to each one.

All committee reports were deferred at the request of Turner. Greenbaum stated that the Burnett Gallery committee is planning an historical exhibit for the 2009 celebration.

Turner asked us to think of the kind of warrant articles that would support the Libraries. And to get support for them before Town Meeting. Grose announced that she would not run for reelection.

Next meeting: January 20, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Trustees' Room of the Jones Library

Submitted by,

Ann H. Grose
Clerk