

The Jones Library Meeting of the Board of Trustees
January 20, 2009 at the Jones Library

Present: L. Greenbaum, P. Holland, M. Turner, C. Hoffmann, A. Grose; B. Isman, Library Director and Scott Merzbach, Reporter.

There were not minutes to vote upon. They will be available at the next meeting.

President's Report: The Director's evaluation draft which M. Turner passed out last week and asked anyone who had comments to send them to her before this meeting. L. Greenbaum brought his comments to this meeting. He was surprised and saddened by the comments that some of the staff are not friendly and occasionally rude or gruff. One of the goals is for more professional training in customer service. Patrons also enjoyed being engaged with the Director who is not very visible in the Library.

The highest priority is to have the staff friendly. Some times staff are unhappy about the policies and this need to be talked about. We should not talk about individuals at this time. Some patrons feel that they are not recognized even though they've been coming to the Jones for 20 plus years. Greenbaum stated that the Director does not have to be more visible, but more audible and vocal. Turner said that people don't know Isman; that she should let the public know how terrible the financial situation is. She has to be the spokesman for the Library and stronger with the Selectboard. Greenbaum said it's not the same to have the Trustees speaking as it is for Isman to be heard. Turner stated that Isman will always have the solid support of the Trustees. Isman said that we must decide tonight on the bottom line. Turner gave Isman her evaluation report.

Turner asked about a warrant article for Town Meeting. There is none now. Vince O'Connor wants a sense of support for the Library from the Selectboard. Should we have a Resolution/Warrant article? Hoffmann does not support this. He said that everyone supports the Library anyway. We discussed keeping the fines collected instead of giving them to the general revenue of Amherst. Isman said there is no legal advice from Town Counsel; that the Attorney General will not touch this since it is a local matter. April is National Library Week and we might ask the Selectboard and Finance Committee to support the Library at this time.

Turner suggested we ask the Survival Center and Human Resources to support the Library, not monetarily, but to tell how helpful we are to many Town people. Greenbaum wants to keep the fines. Isman said we collect fewer fines this year than last year because CWMars sends reminders. The only thing on the computer is the videos that come up on the screen. Greenbaum feels that if the Town of Amherst wants the Library to collect fines for books, this should be a warrant article. This would help the Library. Grose said we have to know how we feel about the fines before we go to the public. Turner said that Wang does not want us to have fines. Williamsburg and Sunderland libraries do not assess fines. Hoffmann suggested we have a cookie jar for donations. Isman said if you do not pay the fines to the Jones, you are blocked at other libraries. She spoke with Amy Anaya who said without fines the videos would

not come back as quickly and that there is no incentive to return them on time. Isman feels that the staff would like to have input on this problem. Turner recommended that a committee be established with a circulation staff person, a Trustee, and Isman on it. This will be decided at the next meeting.

No Director's Report as it was given last week.

Unfinished Business: Fringe benefits are down by \$1,078 because some of the staff changed their health insurance carrier. If the Jones Library closes all day on Mondays, we would save \$9,000. The budget is \$2,209,399 which is up 3.1%. Some suggested closing another day of the week rather than Monday because so many people want to come here on Monday after the weekend. Mondays are good because so many holidays fall on Mondays.

Committee Reports: BCG – Holland said we'll probably have to cut more. Turner talked about salaries; there are 29 staff with benefits with 9 librarians with library degrees. Degreed librarians are more expensive than non-degreed staff. She suggested having few degreed staff and more support staff, at least one less. There are 5 FT degreed staff and 4 PT degreed. School librarians are paid much more than our librarians, but they are in the union and have a bargaining group. Isman said we'll have to discuss more cuts in the next several months.

Turner suggested that some people may need to retire. She asked how helpful the Assistant Director is to her. She knows that Isman is concerned about quality of service, but we are concerned about access (open Monday afternoons). Isman: Trustees unwilling to give up any of our services. Grose said we could give up computer classes since they are taught at the Bangs Center. Greenbaum: Is much of the budget for salaries? Isman: 75% is for salaries. They are a very high performing staff. Turner: We need to reorganize staff and look at services. She would like to eliminate one professional staff person. Holland agreed. Grose not ready to do this without studying it. Hoffmann needs to look at it.

Budget: Isman said that state aid to libraries is on the Cherry Sheet. We gave ourselves three years of bridge loans. 2010 is the last year for bridge loans. The Governor has released only half of the money. We received \$42,000 in 2009; last year it was \$86,000. We only have \$9,802 for all of 2010 unless the Governor gives us more money. Isman's chart was discussed. Optimistically we will receive \$52,229 but it might be \$14,970 less than that. There is a \$72,094 gap. The budget is \$2,137,305 which is less than last year.

Endowment: Isman suggested using 5.8% of the endowment which is level funding. Amount is \$472,412. Grose suggested that Treasurer Holland talk to the Vanguard advisor and Will Bridegam. Greenbaum: How much are we expected to raise? Hoffmann: \$72,000. The goal of the Fund Drive is \$60,000 and we have raised \$37,000. The Friends have given \$10,000 in the past.

Isman asked if the Trustees want level funding. The Trustees do not want to take 5.8% from the endowment. Holland said if we use 5.4% instead, we would reduce the budget by \$100,000.

Turner suggested a staff meeting to discuss reorganization and bring the suggestions to the Trustees.

Hoffmann and Holland will write a newspaper article by February 3 about the branches. Hoffmann suggested that Isman write an Op-Ed piece.

Committees: JCPC has not met. BCG – Wolnik said it looked like we'd be unwilling to cut our budget from reading Turner's article. Musante talked about decreasing budgets. The health insurance for staff has gone down. Holland: Personnel Committee is working on the grievance process for non-union personnel.

The Friends of the Jones Library are working on interesting and beautiful Valentine baskets for February. This is a tremendous amount of work.

250th Committee: Grose told of upcoming events in 2009 and of the successful even with Liz Chilton on January 11 at the First Congregational Church. She reiterated that she would not run for reelection. Turner has not decided if she will run again or not. Nomination papers are due by February 10.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Submitted by,

Ann H. Grose
Clerk