

Meeting of the Town Libraries and the Jones Library's Board of Trustees

January 20, 2010 in the Large Meeting Room of the Jones Library

Present: Patricia Holland, Louis Greenbaum, Sarah McKee, Chris Hoffmann, Carol Gray at 8:55 p.m.

Absent: Kathy Wang.

Also Present: Bonnie Isman, Library Director; Tina Swift, Library Staff; Rosemary Loomis, Head Reference Librarian; Carolyn Platt, Tech. Services Director; Chris White, Library Staff; Scott Merzbach, Press; Sondra Radosh, Children's Librarian; Maggie Spiegel, North Amherst Librarian; Beth Girshman, Adult Svc. Librarian; Sue Hugus, Munson Memorial Librarian at 7:40 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. Ms. Wang cannot attend because she has Dept. of Education Officials attending her school tonight. Ms. Gray is stuck in traffic on the Mass. Turnpike. Ms. Gray arrived at approximately 9pm. She had been in standstill traffic on the MassPike for two hours because of a tractor trailer accident.

There was no comment from the public.

Consideration of the Minutes of January 12, 2010.

Motion by Patricia to approve as the minutes as amended. Second by Sarah McKee. Vote: 3 ayes, 1 abstention, 2 absent.

Motion by Patricia Holland to approve the Jan .5 Minutes. Second by Chris Hoffmann. Vote: 4 ayes, 2 absent.

Ms. Isman presented the FY2011 Funding Worksheet, revised 1/19/10 (blue and white) which shows a gap of \$35,478 for a Level Services Budget. The January 20, 2010 FY2011 Library Services – Cost Saving Options (3) which is colored pink and white showing Tier 1 cuts to be \$31,537 is \$4,000 short.

Ms. Holland asked the Trustees for advice on how to present the MAR budget to the Budget Coordinating Committee. The discussion centered on what the staff cuts would mean to the public. Cutting the office hourly help means long delays in booking rooms for the public's use. Cutting the AV assistant means long delays in getting requested items, lack of repair and thorough inspection (such as not noticing a CD is missing from a set). Ms. Platt spoke to cutting the Cataloging assistant saying that items would be much slower in reaching the shelves for the public because that person repackage items for public use. Further Cataloguing cuts would slow the cataloging of dvd's and children's materials. Ms. Girshman noted that line 11 which reduces the materials budget, has another significant impact because it means 2,000 fewer new books, books on cd's, and movies. The public may not be able to find the items that they want. All of these cuts eat into the central core services of the Library.

Mr. Greenbaum noted that the staff is not in favor of maintaining the current hours of operation with such deep cuts in staff. The discussion moved to line 15, which is to use \$8,000 unspent from FY09. Ms. Holland suggested moving it to income on the blue and white sheet and this will reduce the \$35,478 gap by \$8,000. Also, move line 16 to income: This will add \$4,000 to the Special Collections Assistant. But it must be explained that the \$4,000 donation from Special Collections only comes into play if the Special Collections assistant is cut by \$4,900. The discussion moved to line 18, which would close the Library Friday afternoons, cutting temporary staff. Ms. Holland agreed with moving the furloughs to Tier 4 since it is not clear that enough people are volunteering to take a furlough. By consensus, the Trustees agreed to move "Closing Fridays" Line 18, to above "cut Cataloging Assistant (Line 12)."

Ms. McKee felt that she would rather close on Fridays than make so many staff cuts. Mr. Greenbaum said he did not see any certainty of an override passing and he wondered what the Library would do if it were forced to make Tier 4 cuts. Ms. Holland wanted to look at reducing the ESL program to 9 months, thereby saving \$3,000. Ms. Girshman said that felt arbitrary to her. Ms. Holland feels that the Trustees could raise money to cover the ESL program's cut of one month. Ms. Girshman urged the Trustees to stop trying to raise tiny amounts of money, but to try for larger amounts. Ms. Holland agreed.

Ms. Hugus said the public must understand that the Library may be closed because they do not really care if staff or materials are cut. Ms. Isman said cutting a few hours from the branches would be very visible to the public. Ms. Hugus suggested the Friday closing should be first on Tier 3, not near the bottom. Ms. McKee agreed. By consensus, the Trustees agreed to move Friday closings to the top of Tier 2.

Ms. Gray joined the meeting at this point.

Ms. McKee told the Trustees that Atty. Hart strongly suggested that the Trustees have a definite plan for use of the Woodbury bequest and bring that to the Friends. The Woodburys had been active with the Friends of the Jones Library and wanted the Friends to participate in the utilization of their monies. Atty. Hart thought the Woodburys, as conservationists, might like geothermal HVAC but he reiterated making a good presentation to the Friends. Atty. Hart said that the principle can be used since it is an unrestricted bequest. Ms. Isman said the Budget Coordinating Group (BCG) will undoubtedly want to hear what the Board will do with the Woodbury bequest. Ms. McKee is not opposed to using some of the Woodbury bequest for FY11's budget.

Mr. Greenbaum told the Board that people around Town are saying that the Library now has enough money to solve any problems. He suggested stating that the money will be used to prop up the endowment.

Motion: To set up a committee to determine the best use of the Woodbury bequest and to develop proposals to submit to the Friends of the Jones Library. Motion by Ms. Gray. Second by: Chris Hoffmann Vote: 4 ayes, 1 abstention(Greenbaum).

Ms. Gray asked about the position of office assistant. She ran through figures saying that the Library should remain open on Fridays since you can save enough by eliminating the office assistant position.

She has found \$12,594 in savings in Tier 2 which was money remaining from the Office Assistant cut that was only taken for part of that position. It was agreed that there was this additional money remaining from Tier 2 that could be applied elsewhere. Ms. Gray wants it used for the Friday hours.

Motion: That the Trustees place closing of Friday afternoons at the top of Tier 3. Motion by Patricia Holland. Second by: Chris Hoffmann.

Discussion: Ms. Gray wants the Library open on Friday afternoons since there were other ways to make that same cut, such as a furlough, and because of the additional \$12,594 realized from Tier 2 from the Administrative Assistant.

Vote: 4 ayes, 1 nay.

Ms. Gray wants to go on record as “vehemently no” because she feels the Library should remain open since the public needs the library now more than ever because of the difficult economy.

Motion: To close budget discussion and proceed to the CPAC discussion. Motion by Mr. Greenbaum. Ms. Holland did not agree with this because this budget is due tomorrow at the BCG by 11:30 a.m.

Ms. Gray wants to swap cut #17 with cut #19 in Tier 4 and add in the \$12,094 remaining from the Office Assistant position. DELETE: This mixes tiers and will not work. (DELETE: Ms. Gray understood that the Asst. Curator is not being cut in Tier 3.) Ms. Gray wants to assume a furlough in Tier 3.

Motion: To move furloughs to the very bottom of Tier 4. Motion by Ms. Holland. Second by: Chris Hoffmann.

Discussion: Ms. Gray noted that furloughs were firmly in Tier 3 at the last meeting. She sees furloughs as ‘spreading the pain equally.’ She wondered why targeting the assistant in Special Collections which is a department of only two people, with this cut eliminating most of the job of one of them is a good idea vs. a furlough which would share the pain equally among all departments.

Vote: 4 ayes, 1 nay (Gray)

Mr. Hoffmann said he thinks there is still a \$12,000 gap. Ms. Holland suggested moving item 17, the \$17,402 for the assistant curator, to Tier 3. Ms. Gray opposed this.

Ms. Gray questioned why the list of cuts discussed at length at the last Trustee meeting and detailed in the minutes of that meeting were not put into the chart for this meeting since that was what had been discussed would be the plan at the end of the last Trustee meeting.

Ms. Gray raised several concerns about the Trustees not having been provided all the information necessary to make informed decisions about the budget. Ms. Gray said she had requested in advance of this meeting that the Director cross-reference the multi-page handout itemizing cuts recommended by Department Heads to determine what cuts they recommended that were not included on the chart prepared by the Director. Ms. Gray said she had also requested at the last Trustee meeting that the Director inquire of the staff to determine how many staff members would be willing to take a voluntary

furlough. Ms. Gray expressed frustration that the Trustees had not been provided with this information to factor into budget discussions. Ms. Gray was also concerned that in her quick reviewing of the budget drafted for the Trustees, she had found two errors, one resulting in \$12,000 found from Tier 2 and the second resulting in \$4,000 found from Tier 1.

When Ms. Gray requested that the Trustees consult the list of cuts proposed by Department Heads, Ms. Isman said there was a cut on that list for \$5,300 to the AV department that could be used to achieve Tier 3.

Motion: To accept the budget as discussed and annotated by Ms. Isman. Motion by Patricia Holland. Second by: Chris Hoffmann. Tier 1 is cuts 1, 2, and 3. Tier 2 is cut 4 (cola for temp staff) and as much of the Office Assistant as is necessary to achieve that tier's amount, namely, \$51,706 of the Office Assistant position will be cut. Tier 3 includes Friday afternoon closings; the remainder of the office Assistant position for \$12,594; items 6,7,8,9, 10, 11, 12 and 13; the AV cut of \$5,300, plus \$4,079 saved from tier 1 and \$2,000 of cut 19 (assistant curator) but saved due to Tevis Kimball's donation from the Special Collections gift fund. Tier 4 was for furloughs. (DELETE: plus \$2,000 of cut #19 but saved by this donation.)

Vote: 4 ayes, 1 nay (Gray). This is the approved budget and Ms. Holland wants the MAR highlighted because the Trustees are proposing Tier 2.

Motion: To tell the Finance committee and the BCG that we wish to fund Tier 2. Motion: by Carol Gray. Second by: Sarah McKee. Vote: 4 ayes, 1 nay.

The Finance Committee will consider the Library budget on Feb. 4th at 7 p.m. Ms. Gray wants that meeting posted in case several of the Trustees attend.

Ms. Holland reported that the Historical Commission voted to approve the roof repairs to the Jones Library and archival conservation and repainting the North Amherst Library. The next CPAC meeting is tomorrow night. Ms. Gray said she thought the Library Director should present the Library's request.

Ms. Gray is meeting with an engineer tomorrow who can do a feasibility study of fixing the HVAC and estimating the use of geothermal. She's estimating a feasibility study will cost \$3,000 to \$5,000. Mr. Greenbaum feels that this new study should not be included in the CPAC proposal. He said he has worked on a proposal for fixing the HVAC for two years and he feels that the new proposal is not proper. He said CPAC is not interested in hearing about geothermal, but rather fixing the HVAC in order to preserve Special Collections' items. Mr. Greenbaum was shocked to learn from the Historical Commission that the Library had changed its mind on fixing the HVAC. He feels betrayed since no one on the Board had informed him of the change from fixing the HVAC to getting a geothermal study. Mr. Greenbaum feels that since the Historical Commission did not approve this HVAC repair, the CPAC may not support the new proposal which includes a geothermal feasibility study. He thinks that CPAC may expect the Woodbury bequest to fund a \$10,000 study. He thinks this change demonstrates that there is no urgency in fixing the HVAC in order to preserve documents.

Ms. Gray said she thought there had been a misunderstanding. She said during the last Trustee meeting when all trustees had agreed that they wanted to proceed with the request for funds to repair the HVAC system, she had not realized that there had been \$10,000 appropriated for a study on how to fix the HVAC. Ms. Gray said she hadn't realized there was money appropriated for an HVAC study until she read in the Director's responses to CPAC's questions that there was an HVAC study about to be commenced. Ms. Gray didn't think we should proceed with an HVAC study immediately for several reasons: since she joined the board last year, there had never been any discussion by the Trustees or proposals by the Director about doing an HVAC study so she thought it inappropriate to say that the Trustees were about to commence such a study. Also, she said one of the geothermal experts who came to look at the HVAC system said repairs to the HVAC system might be obsolete the moment the Library converted to Geothermal power, if that happened. For these reasons, Ms. Gray said she would be in favor of conducting the study of the HVAC system in the context of the broader picture which would include an assessment of green energy issues.

Mr. Greenbaum suggested acknowledging the receipt of \$10,000 for a study to CPAC, but saying the Library does not have a proposal yet for more. Ms. Gray wants to go forward asking for \$30,000 for the HVAC repairs since we could start the broader study as soon as possible and provide CPAC with additional information about HVAC repair costs after that study is complete. Mr. Greenbaum feels the Board is not ready to provide a program that can be brought to completion.

Motion: That we acknowledge the \$10,000 for an HVAC study and then we reapproach CPAC with the recommendations for the work to be done and ask for more money to complete the project. Motion by: Louis Greenbaum.

Roof repair was seen as a first priority – there are slates falling onto the pedestrian walkway. Mr. Greenbaum would like to see the North Amherst painting and repair work done. A third priority would be fixing the HVAC in Special Collections.

Motion: To prioritize first the Jones Library roof, repairs to the North Amherst Library, and repair the HVAC in Special Collections. Motion by: Ms. Gray. Second by: Louis Greenbaum. Vote: 5 ayes.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McKee, Clerk

Transcriptionist: Tina Swift