

Jones Library and the Town Libraries Board of Trustees' Meeting

January 5, 2010

Large Meeting Room of the Jones Library

Present: Patricia Holland, President; Louis Greenbaum; Carol Gray; Chris Hoffmann; Sarah McKee
Absent: Kathleen Wang.

Motion: Carol Gray moved and Chris Hoffmann seconded: To accept the minutes of 1 Dec. 2009.
Approved.

Regarding the December 15 minutes: Carol Gray wants the minutes to record that at end of the meeting, the Trustees asked staff for their recommendations as to a certification level budget. Staff had presented only a 10% cut budget, which was all for which they'd been asked (for override purposes). Ms. Gray stated that the Finance Committee had asked for cuts of 3%, 5%, 10%, and for level services. Carol Gray had also asked: IF we were offered the donation of a commercial-grade used coffee machine, would we want to accept? Alter the minutes accordingly.

Motion: Carol Gray moved, Chris Hoffmann seconded, and all agreed: Accept the minutes as corrected.

Public Comment: None

President's Report: Sarah McKee's letter has been submitted to the Amherst Bulletin. Barnes & Noble's fundraiser will be on Jan. 17 (get a voucher with a special code number from front desk or download from Jones Library's website).

The Committee to evaluate the Director sent an email today to all employees about interviewing them for the purpose.

Treasurer's Report: The current balance is \$7,932,971 (including the Woodbury bequest). Chris Hoffmann read the list of funds in which Gage-Wiley/New England Capital, our new investment manager, has invested our endowment. Some are Vanguard funds.

Motion: Change the approved Investment Policy so that it accurately reflects what we are doing; She wants to change 4% to 4% - 5.4%, (page 6) and, next line, insert before 'using,' "with the goal being to strive for 4% when financially feasible." Second by Patricia Holland.

Discussion: Chris Hoffmann is against this and he would want a narrower range, if any. It doesn't bother him to say that we're out of whack now even though we have a different goal. Carol Gray asked, 'What if we say instead that we aspire to 4%?' Louis Greenbaum: We spent much time this year getting expert advice. Almost all agreed that exceeding 5% is a poor idea. We are inching up now due in part to luck – we must be sedulous about being prudent, doing our fiduciary duty. He likes that we must get approval of the Trustees for anything more than 4%.

Carol Gray: “aspire” would be more accurate. Sarah McKee proposes: “We intend, as promptly as is prudent, to be at 4%.” **Vote:** 3 ayes, 2 nays. Motion passed.

Director’s Report: We had a generous bequest last month from Natalie Woodbury, Shutesbury resident and academic who with her husband long supported the libraries. They donated their books, plus \$283,000. Attorney William Hart brought the check on 31 December 2009. Bonnie Isman delivered it the next business day to Gage-Wiley for deposit into the endowment. This bequest is “for general purposes without restriction, except as specifically provided below: ... The Jones Library, Inc. of Amherst, Mass. to be used by it solely and at the direction of the Friends of the Jones Library.”

Louis Greenbaum: Does the Director know why the testator specified that the Friends would direct the expenditure of the gift? No. Carol Gray: What about a lawyer-approved codicil that people can use? Development Committee to take up language for lawyers. Also, in the summer about \$1300 came in and was not voted as accepted. Ms. Isman asked, ‘Is that the Gloria Kelman bequest?’ Bonnie will check on it.

Ms. Isman will attend the Disaster Recovery Centers meeting. This meeting is expanding the partnership between the Mass. Emergency Management Agency and the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners. They want to have libraries set to be disaster recovery centers. This was started in southeast Massachusetts. Bonnie Isman and Assistant Fire Chief Zlogar will attend a meeting this month and suggest this: libraries as help for filing claims, etc., rather than as emergency shelters. Bonnie Isman is concerned about whether there’s financial assistance and or training. Carol Gray wants a press release about their having gone to the meeting.

MBLC Waiver Status: 98 waiver applicants this year, six must go before the MBLC and present in person. We are not among the six, which is a good sign that we might get the waiver without further scrutiny. The MBLC votes in February.

Bonnie Isman provided trustees with copies of the Fire and Emergency Instructions. Thanks from the Trustees.

Budget: Document handout, 4 pages: January 5, 2010 -- Cost Cutting Options – Scenario #1. Think of this in 4 tiers. Level Services (Tier 1); Certification Level (Tier 2); Tier 3 – no increase in Town funding; Tier 4 – what if Town funding is actually cut by 3%?

We have to maintain MBLC – required hours of operation, and materials (which NOW is ONLY what the Town provides for the purpose).

We will lose four benefited positions: Office Assistant, ESL Coordinator, Asst. Curator, Maintenance Asst. (All of these are SEIU positions.) Ms. Isman has nothing against furloughs, which still loses services to the Townspeople. She wants to retain core services. Ms. Gray asked about other options and Ms. Isman replied that she feels this is the best budget scenario because the departments are so interrelated that a cut in one affects others. Ms Isman noted that everything in Tier 1 & 2 was proposed in a staff meeting. Ms. Gray is interested in staggered furloughs, with closing libraries as the very last option.

Ms. Isman continued, saying that a level services budget includes COLAs, then they go on the first list of reductions. She can't furlough SEIU people, who are under contract. Any time you have furloughs, you lose service. Ms. Gray asked for a cost saving list attached to furloughs. Patricia Holland: The BCG wants a prioritized list. Ms. Isman noted that her list had been prioritized by the staff.

Louis Greenbaum: The trustees are not united on maximum hours vs. enough staffing to provide adequate services in the hours that we are open. He is concerned about having the Library open without adequate staff. Chris Hoffmann is concerned that maximizing hours may result in offering less service when we are open. Bob Saul, a member of the public and Finance Committee said the Town Level Services budget is generally requiring 5% more Town funding. He suggests that the Trustees need to demonstrate to the Finance Committee that our level services budget is moving ahead at a certain rate of change. Library rate of change may be lower than Town's.

Ms. Isman had estimated endowment distribution at \$420,000. With new figures on endowment, on either 3 or 5 year computation, we can add income. Even if costs increase by 5%, our funding isn't increasing at the same rate. The state aid will be \$63,000, if we are certified. The MBLC votes on recertification on February 4th. Right now we have a negative balance of \$28,000 in state aid. We're depending on the MBLC to certify us and erase that negative balance. That would leave about \$36,000 in state aid which Ms. Isman does not recommend spending completely. This is the least amount we've ever had from the state, and next year it will be less. Carol Gray: proposes putting back everyone in Tier 1 who's not temp staff, and she wouldn't eliminate ESL.

Sue Hugus suggested: if someone takes a voluntary furlough, have the person donate it to the Library so they can get a charitable tax deduction! A 10% cut if an override fails, accepting certain assumptions, is \$206,467. Members of Public (ESL Tutors): agree with Hoffmann & Greenbaum – cuts in hours are not the worst thing that can happen. They would rather have fewer hours, e.g., closing on Sunday, than cutting the ESL program. Ms. Gray wants to see figures of saving by using minimum safe staffing one morning and one afternoon. We already do this on two evenings. Ms. Isman: in Tier 1, we would save \$9,000 by cutting the Children's Department's "temp" staff and shelvers – but it would be a nightmare. If you have only one person, that person must stay at the desk and many other things don't get done. Ms. Isman is trying to explain what a minimum safe staffing is.

Sondra Radosh: if you cut to one person, you're laying off someone. None of the other departments are working in the evening, e.g., Special Collections and technical services. So the checkout desks would take the full brunt of all patron interaction. Louis Greenbaum: the last thing he's willing to tolerate is diminishing staff. We must ask: how much can we save by closing the libraries? If we do, will we be able to save their positions? Ms. Isman: we've been trying to retain our benefited staff because they are the most knowledgeable, experienced and responsible. When you go down the list for Tier 1, the tech. services cut of ten hours and the Children's Services temp. cut would maintain the staff with benefits. The Office Receptionist has benefits. Mr. Greenbaum said, 'We libraries perform education as do the schools. Yet we never cut school hours: we can't. We'd like to achieve same with libraries., He guesses that we'll be looking at a very different library – and he does NOT want to cut the branches. Mr. Greenbaum trusts the professional staff to come up with how we maintain honor and integrity in a

climate of much, much reduced resources. Tevis Kimball: The \$4,900 reduction for the Special Collections assistant is for Kate Boyle, whose work has taken two national awards this year.

Public: What is Tier 3, "If limited to available Town funds?" Isman: The question is whether we'll get an override (whether lump sum or menu). If no override, then we'll have to cut by another \$85,834.

Motion by Carol Gray: Moves that this budget, and all other draft budgets, put on top "For Discussion Only, Not Approved." Second:

Ms. Isman told the group that bumping is available to both union & non-union staff. Patricia Holland: We will need to provide BCG with both cuts & impact. We should add that into this chart to help us. BCG will then use this to help the Select Board craft an override. She agrees with Carol Gray that we need to take up implications. Ms. Isman: The budget already assumes \$55,000 from the Annual Fund drive, and nothing borrowed from state funds the next year. This chart assumes that we get an MBLC waiver. Ms. Gray said, 'We need to make clear that we're asking for the MAR. Can we structure this so that what we are asking for is VERY clear, then other options?' Holland: Thinks that we must also make clear what the level services budget is. We must at least ask for level services. Ms. Isman: level services is possible ONLY with an override. Also, we cannot furlough the hourly staff. Ms. Gray: We could go to finance committee and say IF there is an override, we ask for Tier 1. Without saying whether as a board we endorse an override. Ms. Holland: Let's ponder these figures, and receive the additional points for which we've asked before next week.

CPA Projects: Patricia Holland is worried about them. What proposals do we have ready, and what are the deadlines? Louis Greenbaum: There is a CPAC meeting this Thursday, organized around 4 rubrics. One is historical preservation, including the Jones. (\$40,000 for roof; \$30,000 for HVAC for Special Collections; \$12,000 for exterior and restoration work for North Amherst.) CPAC has received twice as many requests as last year and it has \$497,000 for all projects. The meeting will be Thursday, Jan. 7, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall. If someone could come to the meeting & present info for the Jones, that would be helpful. Ms. Gray: At the last CPAC meeting, at least two other departments made full presentations. Do we have any data to back up our requests? Do we have any backup for the \$40,000 for the roof? Isman: CPAC had wanted us to hire an architect for a roof estimate, but we did the repairs instead. Rivet roofing was here for emergency repairs. Ms. Isman tried to get \$10,000 of emergency repairs, but Sonia Aldrich (Town Accountant) denied it saying it was not an emergency, and we can spend \$5,000 without getting three quotes. Ms. Gray: what do we have that will convince CPAC / Town Hall that our numbers are real? Ms. Isman: Last year's Rivet roof project figures might work if we want to do emergency repairs, and put off getting an architect's plan. Two of the worst spots have been repaired and there is one more repair needed. We must decide whether to repair the current HVAC system or change completely to geothermal. Ms. Gray: Two different geothermal firms have given us two opinions on geothermal in conjunction with the HVAC. The North Amherst branch would require only one geothermal well, with apparently ½ federal government funding if it will increase efficiency more than 50%. Regarding the lack of insulation at North Amherst: some towns have used CPAC funding for the insulation of historic buildings. Ms. Isman: the \$12,000 was pulled out of air as a placeholder. Harry Fisher gave a quote for \$5,000 for painting the North Amherst Library many years ago.

Ms. Gray: asked Dave Marley, General Contractor, for an estimate on painting and restoring the North Amherst Library. She asked about making North Amherst handicapped accessible. Ms. Gray asked if there were photos of completed work to show to CPAC? Ms. Gray is part of a group that is going to ask for some money to be set aside. Ms. Isman asked again about the HVAC: 'Are we going to shore up what we have, or get something new?' Ms. Gray asked if there are estimates of HVAC options' costs? Ms. Isman said Hurley and David, HVAC contractors, had given a \$30,000 estimate. Ms. isman: will talk with Rivet Roofing and try to get the estimate in writing.

Ms. Gray: we should spiff up our presentations – use power point, better presentation. Also, the CPAC will want to know all – all – the moneys that it has given to the libraries over the years and what we've done with them. Mr. Greenbaum: Peter Jessop wants the CPAC to start thinking before the Thursday meeting about prioritizing. Ms. Holland: There's still about \$20,000 in the Holland fund for the North Amherst building.

Endowment Distribution: postpone until next week.

Investment Committee: will meet in Febuary. Patrick Brock out of the country Jan. 20 – Feb. 5. Ms. McKee to work on a date for the next meeting.

Development Committee : Ms. Isman reported on the people counts for the MBLC. The last submitted estimates were based on the counters at the Jones which malfunctioned for two months last year.

Ms. Holland moved to adjourn. Gray seconded. Passed by acclamation! at 10:05 p.m. or so.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McKee

Clerk