

Meeting of the Jones Library and Town Libraries Board of Trustees
February 17, 2009
Trustees' Room, Jones Library

Present: Molly Turner, Patricia Holland, Louis Greenbaum, Kathleen Wang, Ann Grose
Absent: Chris Hoffmann

Also Present: Bonnie Isman (Library Director), Tina Swift (Library Staff), Scott Merzbach (Press), and Members of the Public.

The meeting was called to order at: 3:07 p.m.

Molly Turner greeted Lucy McMurray and Jock MacDonald (both who are running for trustee). She also greeted staff and the public.

Consideration of 2-3-09 Minutes: Change on page 2, 3rd to end paragraph, change "branch librarians" to "branch libraries"; 1st page, fix "minutes" which is spelled wrong. Change to a "new HVAC system" for Special Collections, not a restoration (page 1).

Motion: To approve the Minutes of February 3, 2009 as amended. Motion by: Ann Grose, Second by: Pat Holland. Vote: Unanimous (with one member absent).

[Ed. Note: Below these are the corrections voted as approved on March 3, 2009.

Minutes of Feb. 17th remove "only Ann Grose missed..." and replace with "Five of the Trustees attended." Delete 'shop or eat at local businesses' and change to 'use the local businesses.' Add: Ms. Wang responded to John Musante that Corporations have been funded by donations for more hours, ESL, etc. Change Cathy to Kathy.]

Molly Turner spoke of the Finance Committee meeting. Only Ann Grose missed attending that meeting where Director Isman gave a tutorial on the MAR (Municipal Appropriation Requirement). At that time, Ms. Isman told the Committee that a waiver of the MAR is very unlikely to happen. At that time, Louis Greenbaum gave a presentation on erosion of the endowment. He explained the rolling percentage of use of the invested funds. Pat Holland spoke of the unfairness of the Finance Committee's allowing a greater percentage of spending for other departments [other than the Library]. Molly Turner talked about the Library's assisting lower income families and patrons with computer use and reading readiness. Ms. Turner pointed out that decreasing the Library's hours results in fewer people coming into Town to use the Library and then they do not shop or eat at local businesses. Kathleen Wang talked about the large amount of private donations which come to Library, noting that fundraising has quadrupled in the past five years. Ms. Wang reiterated that the Library is doing more and more fundraising and many citizens do not realize that this has been happening.

Ms. Holland and Mr. Hoffmann are still working on a newspaper article for the Amherst Bulletin. This would provide information on the Munson Memorial Library and the North Amherst Library.

Kay Moran from the Finance Committee was appreciative of the large showing of Jones Library Trustees who spoke to the Finance Committee. Ms. Moran reminded the Board that the Finance Committee only makes recommendations, it does not give or allow budgets. Ms. Moran said the 2% guideline was for the Town and schools, but the regional school budget was higher.

Treasurer's Report. The current endowment is \$6,162,395.43. This is a loss from (at the end of 2008) when it was approximately \$6,500,000.

Director's Report: the Legislative Breakfast on Friday, 2/13/09 was at the Leverett Library – and there was a large turnout. Ellen Story could not attend due to illness. Two or three people told their stories focusing on how important the Leverett Library was to them and their families. One recuperating carpenter who was staying with his family, really used the Library to assist in his recovery. The other interesting story was an entrepreneurial woman who used the library's delivery system to aid her in raising chickens. These stories highlighted how the library really made a difference in people's lives. This meeting also highlighted how every library is scrambling for funds.

April 2, Boston, will be the next legislative event. There will be a bus going to Boston and information is provided through wmrls.org.

For the Trustees: West Brookfield Library discussion on state aid and the impact of cuts, Feb. 23, 6:30 p.m., West Brookfield Town Hall

Ms. Isman brought summaries from her department heads' discussion. She described a brainstorming session. There are some non feasible items on the list (as well as feasible items). Discussion ensued.

Ms. Isman asked the Trustees what level of funding, and cuts, should she plan for. Ms. Turner wants level services and wants to see what the state funding will include. Ms. Holland stated that she feels this is a year that the Trustees might spend more than 5.5% of the invested revenue. Ms. Turner said 5.4% is more than originally agreed upon. Ms. Holland said she would support spending more. Ms. Grose thanked Ms. Isman for her work on the budget.

Mr. Greenbaum asked what Ms. Isman was planning for fundraising for FY10. Ms. Isman stated she is using the optimistic figure of \$51,000. Mr. Greenbaum asked Ms. Moran if the Trustees' had influenced the Finance Committee. Ms. Moran said the Finance Committee (going along with the BCG suggestion) is asking the budget making groups to consider a worst case scenario because state revenue does not look good for anybody.

Table: fines policy vs. donation. Cathy, Amy, Bonnie, Molly will meet on it.

New Business: 'The Finance Committee supports the process recommended by the BCG, asking the Town, Schools, and Library ... to prepare a budget to illustrate the worst case scenario.' The Finance Committee will not issue budget guidelines due to incomplete information on state aid.

Tier 1: Minimal Cut 2% Town Funds

Tier 2: MAR funding

Tier 3: Worst Case Scenario: Not meeting state requirements, with layoffs, with cutting hours

Ms. Wang asked for the parking revenue numbers from when the library is open vs. when it's closed.

Ms. Grose told the Board of Tevis Kimball's demonstration of Digital Amherst for the 250th Committee. She and Kristin Kay have worked hard on this Digital Amherst project.

Ms. Isman called for more additions to the fundraising committee.

Maggie Spiegel, North Amherst Branch Librarian, suggested that she be allowed to have a fund raiser to support replacing the tree which was recently cut down (outside of the North Amherst Library). She wants to raffle off pieces of the tree.

Next Trustees meeting: March 3, 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Grose, Clerk

Tina Swift, Transcriptionist