

Minutes of the Jones Library and the Town Libraries Board of Trustees
February 23, 2010 in the Trustees' Room of the Jones Library

Present: Patricia Holland, Sarah McKee, Chris Hoffmann, Louis Greenbaum, Carol Gray, and Kathy Wang.

Also Present: Bonnie Isman, Library Director; Tina Swift, Library Office Manager; Emily Lewis, Trustee candidate; Tevis Kimball, Curator of Special Collections; Rosemary Loomis, Head Reference Librarian.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Public Comment: Emily Lewis said several of her friends have **known people who have** been stuck in the Library elevator and she feels that is “totally not acceptable.” She wants it “solved immediately.” Ms. Holland moved this topic to old business.

Ms. Gray wants to hear more from Gage Wiley at each meeting to hear what the endowment is earning.

Rotary Club Grant Application: Tevis Kimball spoke about “Jones Library Connected” which is the title of the Rotary Club grant proposal and project. **She emphasized that connection, both online and face to face, is “the heart of our future.”** This grant, **if we are awarded it**, will enable social networking, digital databases, and **additional services for patrons’** mobile computers, **as the library will be playing more and more of a role in helping the public with this.**

Ms. Kimball said the Library has taken steps toward more technology with the Library’s web site, **which got more than 1,500,000 hits last year**, and Digital Amherst. She wants to create a state of the art web presence which will market the Library’s resources to the teen population, immigrants, a senior section, with a niche for small businesses and children. The Library is requesting \$15,000 to build the site and \$10,000 to buy databases.

The Rotary Club has asked if this project is sustainable. Ms. Kimball asked the Trustees to think about this, noting that currently there ~~is~~ **are** no staff schooled in these technical challenges (such as building a whole new interactive web site). Can the Library sustain \$10,000 in database subscriptions in future years? Ms. Kimball says the staff needs training in technology and money is needed for that. She further stated that technology needs to be built into any hiring done in the future. These are the types of questions that pertain to the Rotary’s question about sustainability.

Ms. Kimball asked the Trustees to consider technology as one of the key elements in any five year plan. The grant will be submitted on February 26th.

Rosemary Loomis spoke about the requested databases which include *Newsbank*, a news and job search database in the format of a traditional newspaper. *Tutor.com* is an online

service where students can log in and talk to a person and get homework help 24/7. Another database: *mangolanguages.com* which will teach 36 different languages, **plus English from 12 foreign languages to help ESL**, online. *Tumblebooks* is for children and it has animated picture books with a person reading the text. *Constant Contact* email marketing and online surveys costs about \$750/year.

Motion: That the Jones Library Trustees support the Rotary grant application as proposed as a critical piece of the Jones Library's five year plan. Motion by Carol Gray, second by Patricia Holland.

Discussion: Ms. Holland hoped that if the grant proposal is denied, the plan will not die. Ms. Kimball said she and Ms. Loomis are demonstrating their commitment to the plan. Ms. Gray suggested getting sponsors for certain databases in order to sustain the subscriptions in future years. Ms. Kimball said they hope to do some revenue generating on the web site **though could not promise a specific amount**. Ms. Loomis noted that the \$15,000 is for a consultant to come in and set up the web site.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Library Attendance Figures: Ms. Isman brought a chart showing daily and **average** hourly tallies of Library attendance. The heaviest hourly rate is 139.5 people on Monday afternoons (in an hour). Traffic after 7 p.m. on Tuesdays is very slow. There are more people per hour on Sunday than Tuesday and Thursday nights. Ms. Wang suggested adding up possible parking revenue demonstrating the effect of our economic engine for the Town.

Motion: That we ask the Library Director to craft a memo showing increased usage in many sectors of the Library and that the memo be ready before the election in March. Motion by Carol Gray, Second by Patricia Holland.

Discussion: Mr. Greenbaum wants a comparison of circulation and usage and comparative financing from Town governments across the state. He said the Town is getting a first class facility with third class financing from the Town. Mr. Greenbaum said Town Meeting might not wish to give money to the certification level. Ms. Wang reiterated that the Library is an economic engine and magnet, bringing people into Town, and thus is a revenue generating source. Ms. Isman noted that many of our card holders do not live in Amherst, also bringing more people into town. **We have more than 26,000 cardholders, of whom more than 18,000 live in Amherst.**

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Elevator: Ms. Gray said there have been very many complaints about people, especially elderly people, getting trapped in the elevator. She wants a proposal for the JCPC to fund elevator repairs immediately. The Trustees asked for two additional estimates for repair and she wonders if the elevator should be shut down. Ms. McKee said the liability is large. Mr. Greenbaum said it must be fixed immediately.

Motion: That the Jones Library close the atrium elevator to the public until repairs can be made. Motion by Carol Gray, second by Patricia Holland. **Vote:** Unanimous **in favor.**

Ms. Gray was concerned that Trustees learned of patrons' being trapped in the elevator only when interviewing staff recently. Ms. Isman said that the elevator had been repaired again and again.

Trustees discussed various ways that might help the disabled to access library services when the atrium elevator is closed for repairs.

Update: The following day, the Director distributed by email copies of the Library's Policy Statement: Disability Services, updated 4/13/99.

The elevator is in the part of the building that was built with Town funds. If it is an emergency procurement, we do not need to get 3 bids. Ms. Isman hoped that the Town purchasing department does not regard this repair as construction so that we won't be required to get an architect.

By consensus, the Trustees want to ask the Town for funding for elevator repair. Ms. Holland wants a press release about shutting down the elevator. Ms. Isman said she would discuss possible elevator repair funding with John Musante, Finance Director.

Frequently Asked Questions on the Amherst Override: Ms. Isman and Mr. Hoffmann created an override draft information sheet. The Trustees want a disclaimer noting that the Trustees did not take a position on an override. Further discussion of the information sheet was postponed to next Tuesday's meeting.

The March 9th Trustees' meeting has been canceled. The next regular Trustees' meeting will be on March 8 at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Isman will contact Julia **Weatherby, the mechanical engineer studying the Jones Library's HVAC system**, to see if she can attend then.

League of Women Voters Study of FY10 Budgets: On February 24 at 1:00 p.m., the LWV will present their Town budget study showing all of the cuts in the Library and the Town departments during 2009.

Update: The League cancelled this presentation because of the snow on February 25th. No new date has as yet been set.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McKee, Clerk
Tina Swift, Note Taker