

Minutes of the Jones Library and the Town Libraries Board of Trustees

Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2010

Jones Library, Large Meeting Room

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

Also Present: Andy Steinberg, Budget Coordinating Committee & Finance Committee; the

Public; Library Staff: Sue Hugus and Carolyn Platt

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m.

Ms. Holland reviewed the agenda to calibrate the times for each item.

Minutes of Jan. 20 meeting: Ms. Gray's edits are on hard copy, bold, & highlighted in yellow. Ms. Holland moved to accept these as amended in bold and yellow. Mr. Hoffmann seconded. All Ayes.

Minutes of Jan. 26: To be considered next time.

Public Comment: Walter Wolnick referred to a cut list from the Budget Coordinating Group (BCG) re libraries. This list is posted on the BCG website. The list shows 18 cuts down to the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) which is under cut 13. The Governor's announced level funding of local aid (which would amount to **an additional** \$29,000 for Amherst libraries) might not happen.

Ms. Holland's report on BCG: Takeaway notes – Summary Points from January.

Regarding the green chart, the cuts are in reverse order with what we're going to do anyway at the bottom. The cuts we least want to make (one-week furlough of professional staff: our Tier 4) are at the top. Others had done it this was so we did, too.

The asterisk with handwritten \$14,924 should substitute for the \$14,150 in Item 14, cut half of the Office Assistant hours and benefits/add 11 hourly. Ms. Wang points out that ALL the other totals in the right hand column must now be recalculated.

Summary points from BCG: Consensus of meeting, not a vote. Ms. Holland: we must come up with a figure for the override regardless of the Trustees' position on an override. The override request would be for an increase in the levy to add \$1,900,000 to the **overall** budget. This is lower than previous estimate. Suggested policies for handling contingencies: if more money becomes available because the unions agree by February 12 to forego COLAs, we would ask for less in the override. If the unions agree after that date, the Finance Committee would recommend to Town Meeting that we NOT tax to the full limit of the authorization rather than spend it on something else.

Mr. Hoffman noted that BCG cannot bind Town Meeting.

Last point: for BCG needs a vote by each department of the Town as to what it wants for an override. If the Trustees do not vote a specific amount to request in the override, the BCG will not provide any money from any override to the libraries. Ms. Wang: we did not take a position on the override for many reasons of principle. Ms. Gray: we've always said that we will request a certification level budget at Town Meeting. We should make clear to the Finance Committee and BCG that we'll request a certification level budget regardless of the fate of any override. Ms. Isman: if we got a certification level budget, it would cover all of our Tier 3 cuts.

Ms. Holland had received a request by email that the trustees spend \$20,000 from the Woodbury gift or the endowment.

Ms. Isman: Take amount of any override; times 2.7%, would yield the libraries' share. We would actually get \$88,688 less if the override fails (Chart – Column 3, 4th item from bottom) and the libraries would not be guaranteed enough for a certification level budget. There seems to be a certain amount of pressure for the libraries to back an override in order to reach a certification level budget.

Ms. Gray: BCG is based on consensus and that includes us. Ms. Isman: Ms. Holland did express our position at BGC.

Ms. Wang: remembers last year's Town Meeting at which libraries were invited to go get a waiver.

Ms. Gray: concerned to make it clear that NOW the libraries want a certification level budget.

Mr. Greenbaum: Last year we were invited to take money out of the endowment. We cannot do it. Include that there is no way for the Town to sidestep its responsibility to finance the libraries.

Ms. Gray: possible language: she has emailed to S. McKee.

Mr. Greenbaum: say that the only way to be certified is if the Town meets its obligation.

Andy Steinberg: Both the Finance Committee and the BCG understand this. Last year, Select Board member Alisa Brewer said that she would support getting Town funds to meet the MAR if a waiver did not come through. This year, on the chart with all the numbers, at the bottom, the numbers in parentheses are deficits in operating budgets of the Town, Schools, and libraries.

Mr. Greenbaum: last year, the Select Board agreed that there was no money. If an override does not pass, and it becomes clear that the only way for us to receive certification is by vote of Town Meeting

Mr. Steinberg: The \$88,688 is ????

Ms. Gray: what she's trying to convey is that we should give the numbers of what we expect to get from the override (MAR level); what number do we need to ask the Town for?

Mr. Steinberg: green chart: if you tonight say that we support a budget request for an override that includes items 1 – 16 on this list, it will be assumed to be a request for the libraries to be included in an override.

Motion: That the libraries request as their share of any override the total of Items 1 – 16 on the Libraries' green cut list. (Will add up later.) Motion by: Ms. Gray. Second by Ms. Holland. Vote: 4 Ayes, 1 Nay (Ms. Wang).

Mr. Greenbaum: His position is close to Ms. Wang's.

Ms. Wang: Having gone through two previous overrides, the Trustees spent a long time on that and it's not our job to tell the voters how to vote for other departments. She feels strongly that many people with whom she's talked in Town don't want the Trustees telling them how to vote.

Ms. Isman: Does it make a difference to you if it's a menu override? Ms. Wang: Not only is the Library an extremely small part of the Town budget, in past overrides it has not benefited to the same proportional extent as other departments. She thinks that the Library shares in the cuts but not always in the gain – not to put up a wall between us and the other departments.

Mr. Greenbaum: What he feels uncomfortable about is that no one is giving us anything. Do we put the good name of the Jones to sell the idea of an override from which we ultimately may not benefit at all?

Ms. Holland: We should consider the form of any override.

Ms. Gray: The Facilitating Community Choices Committee's report recommends a menu override.

Ms. Hugus remembers back when there was a menu override in which the libraries requested \$10,000 – and it lost. What she's afraid of is that the public may say that the libraries have the Woodbury gift and the endowment.

Ms. Platt thinks that people will be dubious this year – that the last override that passed did so because the schools were behind it and organized.

Mr. Hoffmann: Walter had handed out at BCG an analysis of overrides. Walter: In the 1994 menu override, (State Department of Revenue, division of local services **web site** shows outcomes of overrides).

Ms. Wang thinks that we should move on.

Walter at BCG, Gerry Weiss said that not taking a position on the override will not fly. Also, it is a possibility that if an override fails, many people will pin it on the Trustees. BCG is a coordinating group: Town, elementary Schools, regional schools, libraries. Libraries need a small amount of money – thinks it possible to get a guarantee that if an override passes, the libraries will get the MAR.

Ms. Holland thinks that the result of our taking no position on an override will breed resentment in other committees.

Ms. Gray thinks that BCG is for coordinating – phrase this as, an override is the decision of the voters.

Ms. Isman asked, 'Are you willing to have informational sessions, to explain to people what the money would go for in the libraries if an override passes?' I.e., are you willing to educate the public?

Ms. Gray.: The press is taking a different stance.

Ms. Holland: We must move on.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Hoffmann: The endowment as of yesterday is \$7,856,265.34. This does include the Woodbury gift.

Woodbury gift and Friends' meeting yesterday: Unfortunately, the Friends' mailing list had not worked and they had not received our email about the gift. It is fair to say that they don't want to be rushed into any decisions. They will meet on 9 Feb. at 7:45 a.m. about the gift. They take this responsibility seriously – they want to be able to deliberate on their own. Is not clear whether any Friends will come to the Trustees' meeting that night.

Mr. Greenbaum: We have no agendas. Both the Friends and the Trustees want the same thing. The last thing in the world we want is any dissidence.

Mr. Hoffmann: the Friends don't want to be rushed – **they** take this seriously.

Ms. Wang: Can there be a joint meeting with the lawyer, the Friends, and the Trustees?

Ms. McKee:

Director's Report:

- 1) Janet Ryan, George Hicks, Amy Anaya, and the Director have worked out a proposal for a new display for the Annual Fund – for lobby of Jones. Great! Ms. McKee will participate.
- 2) Governor's budget has come out with announcements re library funding. Has level funded **and state aid to libraries** taken a chunk out of our regional library system.
- 3) Library Legislative Breakfasts coming up. 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 19, Pelham Library, preregister with Director. Free. Good food per Sue Hugus. Notice a trustees' meeting!
- 4) Re Finance Committee meeting this Thurs. night, Director will prepare a certification level budget to show what we'd use the money for.

New Business:

- 1) Chart from December of Capital spending: New Items that we might want to substitute, e.g., what Ms. Gray did to get quotes for insulation – there are 2 different buildings.

Ms. Isman is very interested in the \$30,000 for self-checkout because we keep losing people from Circulation. Has info. Might be cheaper to get just the equipment but not the furniture.

Get JCPC color-coded chart from last fall.

Re the **\$7,500** for carpeting for lobby (hardwood floor underneath), the money is sitting there because there's been an issue for two years of whether to have a café, and there's also apparently an issue of handicapped accessibility.

Mr. Greenbaum: Is the painting for \$50,000 for inside or outside? Ms. Isman said this was to redo the Atrium, and reconfigure to accommodate self checkout. Ms. McKee: Would this accommodate relocating Circulation and Reference together? Ms. Isman: That's been considered for about a year, are cross-training Ref. and Circ.

Ms. Isman, there is a Building Fund for emergencies. We put it into a money market back when we did the building reconstruction. Ms. Wang: We borrowed from that one year to keep hours open – and we didn't repay it. Also, in the middle of one year the health insurance premium went up 19% so used money from Building Fund for this emergency. We restock it when we sell paintings, etc.

Ms. Gray: maybe the cooling tower for the Jones air conditioning system (AKA the Titanic) should be at the top of our list for capital projects.

Problems with elevators: They stick.

Bay State Elevator Co. does our preventive maintenance every month. But the elevator controls are out of code. They date from 1989 – 91.

Ms. Isman: Fire dept. inspects building thoroughly every year. Bay State provided a budget quote in 2008 for modernization of the large Jones library elevator. See copy.

Ms. Gray: moves that we elevator #1; self-checkout #2; cooling tower #3 on capital planning list.

Ms. Wang: moves to authorize the Director to add the Bay State Elevator quote (\$45,000 - \$41,888.20 for elevator, plus Director will get estimate of what it will cost for the required architect to supervise); and cooling tower (\$50 – 100K); and insulation (between \$6,000 – \$10,000 – are awaiting an estimate. Mr. Hoffmann seconded. Passed: All ayes.

Committee Reports

- 1) Burnett Gallery: Mr. Greenbaum: Arthur Mange told Mr. Greenbaum that the committee were very busy -- just a few people do most of it. Mr. Greenbaum finds their shows very creative. Ms. Gray suggested a volunteer event to recognize our volunteers. Ms. Isman will check on dates.

- 2) Coffee Bar committee: Will meet with espresso guy on Friday at 2 p.m.
- 3) Cost cutting & Greening: Ms. Gray – spent about one hour on phone with Director of North Adams library, which has geothermal. Who wants to have a field trip there? Ms. Holland, Ms. Gray, Ms. McKee, Mr. Hoffman possibly.
- 4) Director’s evaluation committee has been interviewing staff members; received Director’s self-evaluation right on time.
- 5) Development & Fundraising Committee: needs date. Ms. Gray wants to be on email list but can’t come to meetings. ESL has proposals, including Scrabble tournament. If can meet the week of Feb. 14th, Ms. Wang can be there.
- 6) Investment committee: needs date.
- 7) JCPC: missing in action
- 8) Personnel Board: will have a sort of emergency meeting on Friday because it has to ratify non-union people giving up their COLAs. Still working on revising the Personnel Manual. Ms. Gray is interested in a Libraries standing personnel committee – knows another library that has one, and uses paradigm job descriptions from the MBLC.
- 9) Ms. Gray wants the Trustees notified of staff, etc. meetings. Ms. Gray: Moves that we set up a Google Calendar. Ms. Isman: On joneslibrary.org, we have that sort of thing already. Easy, and Ms. Gray’s techie husband is willing to do it. Ms. Isman – this is the first group of Trustees that’s ever been interested in staff meetings – no problem with trustees coming once in a while, but is uneasy for staff. Ms. Wang: there’s a difference in MBLC trustees’ manual between governance and management. Mr. Greenbaum: appreciation of the staff.
Ms. Holland was presented with a gavel by the Director and Business Manager! It’s from Hastings.
The meeting adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McKee, Clerk