

## Minutes of the Board of Trustees

The Town of Amherst and the Jones Library, Inc.

March 10, 2008

Large Meeting Room

Present: Anita Page, Pat Holland, Kathy Wang, Louis Greenbaum, Molly Turner,

Absent: Ann Grose

Also Present: Bonnie Isman, Library Director; Tina Swift, Library staff; Susan Hugus, Munson Memorial Branch Librarian; Kay Moran (Finance Committee); Chris Hoffman, candidate for the Jones Library Board of Trustees, and a member of the public.

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

Add to the Minutes of Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>, “Mr. Greenbaum made reference to “A Blissful Place,” a guest column in the Daily Hampshire Gazette,” when he noted that the Library should not hide its attributes under a bushel.

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of February 2 and February 19 as amended. Motion by Anita Page. Second by Louis Greenbaum. **Vote:** 5 ayes.

Ms. Page noted that this would be her last meeting as a Trustee. Ms. Wang thanked her for keeping her on track with the agenda. Ms. Holland told the group that Ms. Page has volunteered to be on the Coffee Shop Committee (exploring the possibility of a Library coffee shop). Ms. Turner thanked Ms. Page for her service and noted that Ms. Page was instrumental in getting better financial management for the Library’s invested funds.

Treasurer’s Report: Currently, the invested funds are \$8,485,988.08. The endowment has lost about \$300,000 since February 19, 2008.

Director’s Report: We have applied for the federal LSTA grant in the amount of \$12,500 (2 year period), for the ESL center. The title of the grant is “Developing Conversation Circles.” If awarded, \$2,000 of this grant can be used for the ESL coordinator’s salary. This “circle” is for ESL students to practice speaking English. The awards will be announced in July.

The Library has also applied to the Community Foundation. of Western Massachusetts. We have asked for \$8,000 for general support of the ESL center, to fund two months of the ESL coordinator, and to train an intern who will do fundraising for ESL and produce promotional materials. This award might come in the spring.

The Amherst Club will send \$750 for the ESL center, since their concert was very successful. Amherst College has sent \$800 for the ESL tutors and handbooks (that money arrived today).

There has been discussion of increasing the CPA funds (Community Preservation Act). Tevis Kimball, Curator of Special Collections, wants reliable temperature and humidity controls in Special Collections (approximately \$25,000). The woodwork in the front of the building needs treatment (front hall stairs) such as oiling. Dave Marley of Diversified Construction will give us estimates on exterior building repair.

The Town's IT (Information Technology) Department has put in a request for computer replacement and security cameras for the Library (as a capital project).

Mr. Greenbaum asked about the current security system which detects theft of circulating items. Ms. Isman said research must be done on a new technology security system. Ms. Isman will query the staff on this issue.

Ms. Isman distributed a memo that she had mailed to Town Counsel and the Town Manager Re: Overdue Fines. This memo requested putting an article on the Annual Town Meeting warrant in order to retain fines. Mr. Greenbaum noted that citizens repeatedly favor the Library's retaining fines.

Ms. Moran asked if retaining the fines were approved, did the Board see this as 'extra' funds (in addition to the Town's budgetary contribution). The Trustees answered in the affirmative. She reminded the Board that this money must be applied for every year, and it would increase the municipal contribution on the State Aid to Libraries form. Ms. Moran noted that the Library uses the IT Department and Town Counsel without paying extra for those services. Ms. Turner noted that the Library has made a trade off in that Hank Allan works part time for the IT Department so that the Library can avail itself of the IT Department's expertise without added cost. Opinions from Town Counsel this year are all part of the contract (without additional fee). Mr. Greenbaum noted that the Library helps many townspeople and other Town departments. Ms. Holland added that the Library has assisted with microfilming of old Town records. Ms. Turner stated that the Library has assisted the 250<sup>th</sup> Committee in many ways.

Ms. Wang asked Ms. Isman to ascertain the exact date for filing a warrant article and she requested a response to the memo regarding overdue fines.

**Budget Gap:** Ms. Isman presented the revised list of budget options (FY 2009 Budget Options for Discussion). The health insurance cost will be lower (by dropping the surcharge), making the budget gap now about \$8,000. Also, we have been awarded \$2,100 from the state's aid to public libraries (which is \$600 more than Ms. Isman expected). Further discussion of possible strategies ensued.

**Motion:** In FY09, cut the hourly staff, closing the Jones Library for a full day on Mondays saving \$11,000 in hourly help. Motion by Anita Page, second by Kathleen Wang. **Vote:** Unanimous.

**Press Coverage:** There was praise for Ms. Holland's article about the North Amherst Library and also a letter praising the Munson Memorial Library.

Committee Reports:

JCPC: Ms. Turner reports that she thinks the Library will get a new security camera for Special Collections. The request seemed to be well received.

BCG: Ms. Holland reported that the Library must come up with 5 scenarios for long term planning (reaching to 2012). Ultimate dream, level fund, level service, modest dream ... This is not current, it's strategies for the future.

Blue Ribbon Committee: They are looking into financial efficiencies mainly between the Town and Schools.

Long Range Planning Committee (for the Library) may need to be reconstituted.

Fundraising: Current total is about \$43,000. This committee met today and discussed sending reminders to contribute; Pat Holland distributed her report on looking into having a coffee shop.

Personnel Committee: No meetings.

Planning Amherst Together: The report is with the consultant, being edited.

Burnett Gallery: There were lots of people at the last reception.

Friends of the Jones Library: They will again do the Literary Birdhouses. They need volunteers for the Friends' book sale.

Vincent Brann left books and cd's on musical theater to the Library.

Director's Review: Ms. Turner and Ms. Grose are looking at the possibility of surveying the staff and doing a staff satisfaction survey.

Ms. Isman will be away March 21 through April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The next Board meeting is April 8<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Swift for

Ann Grose, Clerk