

Meeting of the Jones Library Trustees

March 22, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.

Large Meeting Room of the Jones Library

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

Absent: Kathy Wang.

Also Present: Bonnie Isman, Library Director; Tina Swift, Office Manager; Beth Girshman, Adult Services Librarian; Rosemary Loomis, Head Reference Librarian; Sondra Radosh, Children's Librarian; Sue Hugus, Munson Memorial Branch Librarian, and Frank Hugus.

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

Consideration of Minutes: The February 26 Minutes are not complete.

**Motion:** To accept the amended minutes of March 8, 2010. Motion by Chris Hoffmann, second by Sarah McKee. **Vote:** Unanimous in favor, 1 absent.

The trustees will read the minutes of March 19<sup>th</sup> at home and bring edits next time.

In saying a fond goodbye to Louis Greenbaum, Patricia Holland read this resolution:

**WHEREAS, LOUIS GREENBAUM, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT AMHERST, HAS SERVED DILIGENTLY AS A TRUSTEE OF THE JONES LIBRARY, INCORPORATED;**

**WHEREAS HIS FELLOW TRUSTEES, PAST AND PRESENT, HOLD HIM IN HIGH ESTEEM FOR HIS ELOQUENCE, FORCEFUL EXPRESSION, INSIGHT, WITH, GENTLEMANLY DRESS, FAITHFUL ATTENDANCE, COMMON SENSE, AND DEVOTION TO THE HISTORY AND FUTURE OF THE JONES LIBRARY; AND**

**WHEREAS HIS LEARNED ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF THE 250<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWN OF AMHERST AND THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION OF THE ROBERT FROST ROOM IN THE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT OF THE JONES LIBRARY SHALL REMAIN A MODEL OF ALL THAT IS MOST ILLUMINATING AND ADMIRABLE IN AMERICAN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE;**

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT UPON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER TONIGHT'S MEETING, WE, HIS COLLEAGUES, EXPRESS OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION OF HIS MANY CONTRIBUTIONS; OUR HOPE FOR HIS ONGOING COUNSEL; OUR BEST WISHES FOR HIS MANY FUTURE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TOWN OF AMHERST; AND OUR GRATITUDE FOR THE EMAIL PROWESS OF MADAME GREENBAUM.**

**DONE THIS TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF MARCH IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TEN,  
COMMON ERA.**

Treasurer's Report: Liz **Roberts** at Gage Wiley confirmed that Gage Wiley would have to give the current figures **of the endowment and of the Woodbury Gift, respectively**, and the Treasurer could not see the current worth of the **Endowment alone just from looking on-line**.

Currently, the total of the invested funds is: \$8,005,629.06 and \$283,521.51 is the Woodbury gift, so the endowment is \$7,719,385.05.

Director's Report. See: Director's Report for the Trustees: March 22, 2010. Sing with Your Baby has approximately 70 visitors per week; the Monday morning visits from the second graders (a Friends program) is going well; the jubilat poetry series has had their second program and one more is coming; the Wii Dance Party is coming up this Friday; April 10<sup>th</sup> will be a big poetry day funded by the Amherst Cultural Council, Jewish Lit. grant, and the Friends. The rest of the sheet outlined staff projects and capital projects

Mr. Greenbaum praised Ed Wilfert's atrium display of the new historical district in East Amherst.

The Director talked of the shelving project, shifting items to make room for more AV items and other items; **Head of Circulation, Amy Anaya**, has received ten gifts of periodical subscriptions and Ms. McKee would like to publish that information in the newspaper. Mr. Greenbaum suggested a sign thanking those who have donated and encouraging more donations of periodicals. Ms. McKee suggested putting donors' names on the shelf where the periodical resides. The census people have held training sessions at the Munson Memorial Library. Latino outreach: Beth has identified community partners and has developed an advisory group. We now have a separate section of Latino music. The League of Women Voters is about to begin collection of books for their sale.

Otis Elevator and the Independent Elevator Company have provided elevator **repair estimates for the atrium elevator**. A staff person has written comments on **the window photographs taken by Bill Gillen, the architect overseeing the exterior repainting of the Jones Library window frames, concerning windows that also need repair**. There was a floor covering meeting at Kuhn Riddle's offices. Roy Brown, architect working on the slate roof, came to look at metal roof which needs repair due to ice dams. He knows of a strengthening substance for the **crumbling** masonry nun's caps (on top of the chimneys). Ms. Isman told the group that the CW Mars group is upgrading the high speed internet cable.

What is not written in the Director's report: Since the elevator has been shut down the electricity usage has changed from last March (over 1,000 kwh. per day), to this March when it is 720 kWh. per day. The Jones accepted the gift of two paintings by Lorna Ritz, purchased by the Norwottuck Art Project of South Amherst. These paintings are views of Mt. Norwottuck from Mt. Pollux. One is for the Munson. **One is for the Jones**. The unveiling will be in June or July.

Ms. McKee said Ms. Isman's report was most useful.

Consideration of tabled motions.

Motion #1: I move that a trustee may not call a staff member at home or outside of their work hours, unless that staff member has previously agreed to receive such a call, or in case of emergencies when all other options have failed. Moved by Chris Hoffmann.

[Not discussed or acted upon, but tabled previously:

Motion #2: I move that a trustee may not attend a staff meeting unless invited to attend that meeting by the staff involved, or if a majority of trustees vote to have an attendee at that meeting. This rule does not apply if for legal or contractual reasons a trustee is required, or forbidden to attend such meeting.

Motion#3: I move that a trustee may not request to see the minutes of any staff meeting unless a majority of the trustees vote to see such minutes. This rule does not apply if for legal or contractual reasons the trustees are required, or forbidden, to view such minutes.

Motion#4: All requests for information about the library's operations that will require significant staff time or resources are to be made to the director, preferably at a meeting of the full board. The director will provide the information to the full board by its next meeting, or explain why the information cannot be provided at that time. This rule does not apply if there are concrete deadlines that require shorter response times. In such cases, the full board must still be notified of the request and informed of the director's response by its next board meeting.]

Louis Greenbaum asked why these motions are really needed. He said, "Whatever success this Library has had ... has come as a result of the very close interworking of the Trustees with the Library Director and the staff. Some may construe this motion as pitting one governing entity against another. Also one might construe this as criticism." He continued, applauding Mr. Hoffmann in discerning areas of concern. Mr. Greenbaum said, 'I don't want there to be any misunderstanding or hint of our being at cross purposes.' Continuing, Mr. Greenbaum stated that the Trustees' main charge is to protect the endowment and the finances of the Library. He noted that the Woodbury gift is fantastic from mostly unknown people who thought enough of the Jones Library to donate a half million dollars. Mr. Greenbaum referred to the Mass. Trustees Handbook which says the trustees must utilize proper channels of communication, striving for a team effort between the Board and the library staff. Mr. Greenbaum lauded the founding fathers of the Jones Library for raising the money, building the Library, and depending on Charles Greene for 47 years as the Director of the Library. He does 'not want to undermine what has been a flaming success' that is the Jones Library by hinting at discord. Mr. Greenbaum said, he had felt that the Library should go ahead with closing on Friday, due to (1) extraordinary strain on staff who have had their numbers reduced, and, (2) this would be a way to get the word of budget cuts out to the community. But then he read Molly Turner's letter which said, 'You cannot close the Library in times when people need it most.' Mr. Greenbaum said, "I was wrong and both Carol Gray and Molly Turner were right."

Mr. Greenbaum wondered if a formal vote was necessary or if the trustees could take the issues of Mr. Hoffmann's motions to heart. Mr. Hoffmann said he agrees with the idea of team work and he has seen that breaking down because the staff perceive the concept of team work with the trustees breaking down. He felt it important that both the Director and staff have rights and responsibilities just as the trustees do. He wanted the chain of command to be recognized. He said group affirmation of the fact that teams are important with the staff is important. Mr. Hoffmann said the team work on the Board has been missing. He said, 'We need to be absolutely clear that we are speaking as a Board and not just one person is asking for information and work from the staff.' Some things, Mr. Hoffmann said, can be put off to a later date. "Whenever we can, we must say 'We trustees want to hear ...'" Mr. Hoffmann told the Director to be sure the staff knows they can talk to the trustees. Mr. Hoffmann said if the Board agrees with what he has said about working together as a group and treatment of employees, then he is willing to withdraw his motions.

Ms. Gray thanked Mr. Greenbaum for speaking of a team. She thanked Mr. Greenbaum for agreeing about keeping the Library open on Friday. She thanked Mr. Hoffmann for withdrawing his motions. Ms. Gray did not want to discourage the trustees from asking for information from the Director or staff. Mr. Hoffmann wants to know what information is being requested because he wants it to be a Board decision. Ms. Holland said many of their requests have been answered by **Library Director Bonnie Isman** and **Business Manager Tina Swift**, particularly about accounts.

Beth Girshman lauded the Board for its enthusiasm about the business of the Library, but not everything can have a high priority. She said Mr. Hoffmann's idea of a group effort from the Board made sense. She continued saying that calling people at home is unacceptable. Calling people and asking them to do Library related work on personal time is unacceptable. Beth said the supervisors are complaining on behalf of their staff. Ms. Hugus said employees' phone numbers should not be given out.

Ms. Hugus said she is very disappointed that the trustees did not go to Library Legislative Day in Boston because that is the highest advocacy you can do. They take note of trustees' presence, she said. Ms. Gray said she teaches classes on that day and could make a private appointment with Senator Rosenberg. Ms. Hugus pointed out that no trustee from this board or any other has gone to Legislative Day.

Mr. Hoffmann said he feels that communication is a problem for the Trustees. Had he known it was so important, he would have attended Legislative Day. Mr. Hoffmann reserved the right to bring his motions up again, but he hears a consensus to accept the spirit of the motions.

Ms. Isman suggested a future meeting to discuss the role of the Trustees because some seek details that normally are not within the purview of the Trustees. Mr. Greenbaum said this is an important concept so that the Trustees can work with the Friends on the Woodbury gift without animosity. He said it is very important to understand what the role of the trustees is. Mr. Greenbaum thanked Mr. Hoffmann for his thoughtful motions and he continued saying he did not think letters of apology should be written to the staff who were called at home. He suggested that the Director express to the staff that mistakes were made, but the Trustees have taken this lesson to heart.

Ms. Gray knows of a trustee who gets line by line costs of items. She continued saying this Board is in transition from a Board that was 'hands off' to a more involved Board of Trustees. Ms. McKee said, "It's very important for us as a Board to find out what our responsibilities are." Ms. Gray said she thinks other boards' **procedures** should be consulted. Ms. McKee likes monthly bullet points from the Director, informing the Board of Library news.

Beth Girshman disagreed about past Boards being hands off. They got the addition built; they changed investment policies, among other innovations. She suggested meeting with other trustees from libraries of a comparable size, not smaller libraries. Ms. Gray **requested** summaries of what the department heads discuss, such as long range planning.

Friday Afternoons. Ms. Girshman said, 'This is a community-wide experience [of droves of middle schoolchildren swarming and using inappropriate behavior] affecting a lot of businesses in Town, and it's affecting us as well.' This is a big group year for middle schoolers, with a lot of interest in sexual activity among the 13 and 14 year olds. These groups range from 70 to 80 kids. Groups of this size intimidate other Library users. This issue takes a lot of staff time and it's not something we feel can be done by volunteers or work study students because they need authority and investment in the Library.

Ms. Isman added that on the half day of school two weeks ago, the Library was prepared. The police department had been warned that they would be called if needed; George Hicks worked over time to monitor the rest rooms. Four professional staff were patrolling and monitoring. A week later, last Friday, the crowd was cut in half.

Ms. Isman said there are reports that drugs are also involved. She said, 'We do not want the Library to be a place where there are drugs.' She noted that when the police officer arrived, he spoke to the children, but he was not investigating nor looking for drugs in their back packs.

Ms. Gray suggested creating an **advisory** board made up of juveniles **and adults** and providing a room for these young people to occupy. She also suggested a Friday movie with popcorn for the middle school children. Ms. Girshman reiterated that this is a community-wide issue and she said to identify this as a Library problem is missing the issue. Ms. Gray said, "**We don't have to see this as a problem. It can be seen as a Library opportunity since many libraries are struggling to figure out how to draw teens in to the Library and we already have teens coming to the Library.**" Ms. Girshman said she really believes these kids would not participate in organized activities. Ms. Gray advocated creating a teen panel such as what they have in Sunderland. Ms. Gray feels the Library should offer movies or activities for the teens. She suggested finding a volunteer to organize a youth advisory board.

Ms. Isman has spoken to the Bangs Center and CVS and many other downtown entities and she feels this is a Downtown Amherst issue. Ms. McKee was glad to see the **Library's newly** posted rules of behavior, and she was most interested to hear that this teen problem has affected many businesses. She recounted that one group told her that the Boys and Girls Club now charges and the Library is warm and free. She noted that the Library has no space that could be designated as a teen lair. Ms. McKee said she is glad that this is being looked at by the community as a whole. She added that this might be a use for some parts of the Woodbury gift. She put forth the possibility of reconfiguring space to accommodate a teen **room**.

Ms. Holland asked if the schools had any ideas of how to alleviate this problem. Ms. Isman said the schools have offered space in a newsletter to the Library, and they said the **schools' behavioral rules should be followed**.

Mr. Greenbaum said, "It's urgent that these schoolchildren understand they are perpetuating behavior that is unacceptable." He said, "I would like to propose that the Library employ a part time person who will toss the ruffians out, if necessary." Ms. Girshman stressed that only unacceptable behavior ensures that the teens are asked to leave.

Mr. Hoffmann left at 9:40 p.m. Ms. Gray, **Googling resourcefully on her laptop**, recounted libraries that had received teens and tweens grants. Ms. Gray offered to work on a grant proposal. Ms. Isman said the new application cycle begins in the fall. Ms. Girshman said that she is project administrator for two grants and one is the Latino outreach. Ms. Isman explained that only one grant will fly at a time, so another proposal might cut off any further Latino outreach grant. Ms. Gray read the grants and amounts of more libraries. Ms. Gray asked for authorization from the Board to work on a grant. Ms. Girshman noted that while writing a grant is difficult, being the project manager for a grant is more difficult.

Mr. Greenbaum reiterated asking the Friends to be able to use some of the Woodbury money for the teen problem. Ms. Gray asked the Board for authorization to work on a teen grant. Ms. Holland said the meeting needed to move on.

CPAC. Mr. Greenbaum said Carol Gray had made a superb presentation on the HVAC needs. His colleagues on the committee said that the Library should ask for \$75,000 rather than the \$30,000 so that there would not be a piece meal fix. It's possible that there will be more money to spend, so Mr. Greenbaum thinks there is a very good chance that the Library will get all of its requested money.

Ms. Gray left at 9:46 p.m.

Mr. Greenbaum invited Sarah McKee and Carol Gray (5:30 p.m. Historical Commission) to the 7:00 p.m. Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) meeting on April 1, 2010. Mr. Greenbaum hopes that the Historical Commission will approve the \$12,000 requested for the North Amherst Library.

The meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McKee, Clerk

Tina Swift Note taker

*Edits are in bold face and were approved by the full Board on April 6, 2010.*