

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

The Town of Amherst and the Jones Library, Inc.

April 25, 2008

Jones Library's Trustees' Room

Present: Trustee Wang, Trustee Greenbaum, Trustee Hoffmann, Trustee Turner, Trustee Holland. Absent: Trustee Grose. Also Present: Library Director Bonnie Isman; John Musante, Finance Director; Naomi Ossar, Public; Tina Swift, Staff; Laurence Shaffer, Town Manager.

The meeting was called to order at 4:34 p.m.

The Board discussed the revolving fund. Finance Director Musante said the revolving fund requires enactment by Town Meeting, there must be a spending ceiling, and it must be voted (re-created by Town Meeting) every year. Monies in this type of revolving fund can be carried forward, unless Town Meeting does not re-authorize it. If that happened, the money would go into the General Fund.

Mr. Musante stated that unless fine revenues increased, there would not be more money for the Library after creation of a revolving fund. The book fine revenue has already been included as part of the Library's budget for FY09. If this money were given to the Library, the Finance Committee and Mr. Musante recommend decreasing Town tax support for the Library. Mr. Musante noted that it's just moving money from one area to another.

Ms. Wang noted that this money did not exist two years ago and it is new revenue that seems to have "evaporated." Mr. Musante said the Library's budget is "less worse" due to the addition of this fine money because two years ago, the Town was spending reserves during a time of fiscal necessity. Mr. Shaffer said the Town has had a 3.2% rise in budget, whereas the Schools have had approximately a 5.5% combined increase. As was the Trustees, Mr. Shaffer was shocked at this. The School Committee had been pushing to use reserve funds, which seemed to sway the Finance Committee to approve School use of the reserve funds. Ms. Turner noted that closing the Library all day on Monday detracts from economic development for the Town because it eliminates the Library as a destination when it is closed. Ms. Wang stated that this [fine money] is a small amount of revenue for the Town, but a huge amount for the Library. Mr. Shaffer said this is a 'pretty good year,' and the 'bad years' are coming in the next four or five years. He noted that he and Mr. Musante are trying to lay the groundwork for alternative sources of revenue and establish alternative ways to fund the Town operation. Mr. Shaffer suggested that the Trustees should look for revenue enhancements because, 'this is just the leading edge for what will be very bleak years.' The lack of overrides and economic development has led to this bleak financial picture.

Mr. Greenbaum left at 5:30 p.m.

Motion: To dismiss Article 9 from the Town Meeting warrant. Motion made by Ms. Holland, second by Ms. Wang. **Vote:** 3 ayes, 1 abstention, 2 absent.

Article 9 may come up for consideration on Monday (4/28/08) night at approximately 9 p.m. or 10 p.m.

Discussion of accepting the challenge grant from the Community Foundation. Ms. Holland wanted clarification, to be sure that the branches were included in the award amount (adding more money to the challenge amount). Ms. Wang wanted to know if the donor would fund more than the original \$3,000. Ms. Holland and Ms. Turner both wanted all hours (branches and the Jones) restored.

Motion: To accept this challenge of matching funds from the Community Foundation of Western Mass to match private gifts to the Jones Library, Inc. on a one to two basis.

Motion made by: Mr. Chris Hoffmann Second by: Ms. Pat Holland. Vote: 4 ayes.

Ms. Isman urged the Trustees to call Representative Ellen Story to support more Library funding.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Grose, Clerk
Tina Swift, Stenographer