

The Trustees of the Jones Library and of the Town Library
Minutes of the Search Committee
Friday, August 5, 2011, at 10 a.m. in the Trustees' Room

Present: Lucy McMurrer, President, Friends of the Jones Library System; Tony Maroulis, Executive Director, Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce; Sarah McKee, Trustee President; Austin Sarat, Trustee Vice president; Matthew Berube, Head of Information Services, The Jones Library, Inc.

Absent: Tevis Kimball, Curator of Special Collections, The Jones Library, Inc.

Public

Called to Order: 10:08 a.m. Ms. McKee: This meeting is to carry out the charge of the Trustees to return a ranked listing of finalists for the position of Director of the Jones Library, Inc. The finalists are Sharon Sharry, Director, Greenfield (MA) Public Library, and Christopher Lindquist, Director, The Westfield (MA) Athenaeum.

Public Comment: Trustee Carol Gray wanted the Search Committee to have reviewed the comments by the staff and public on the finalists beforehand.

Meeting Continued for half an hour so that Committee members who had not yet read all the comments could do so. Town Counsel had advised that these are not public documents. Ms. McMurrer and Mr. Maroulis accordingly read them in the Director's office. Ms. McKee and Mr. Sarat read them in Mr. Berube's office. Mr. Berube had read them all previously. He provided each two Search Committee members with half of the comments and exchanged batches of comments at the midpoint.

Meeting Resumed: 10:44 a.m. Deliberations were as follows.

Ms. McMurrer: Concerning Ms. Sharry, enjoyed meeting her. She connected well with staff; knows public concerns first hand from working the circulation desk. Her presentation used posters from her "Read" campaigns in Sunderland and Greenfield; mentioned the Tech Petting Zoo of e-devices; used much data specific to Amherst, including Library's economic benefits to the Town. She's dynamic, energetic. Has never done a formal financial plan. Does no fundraising now. Ms. McMurrer is not certain how much fundraising she did in previous positions in Sunderland, Great Barrington. Some say that if a library works well, the fundraising works well.

Concerning Mr. Lindquist: knowledgeable; has a depth of experience; knows details about how libraries function. Weakness: poor communicator; did not connect with public, or as well with staff.

Mr. Maroulis: Concerning Ms. Sharry, it takes a special type of person to be a leader in Amherst. Leadership is setting a tone, creating a culture. Ms. Sharry comes with a strong culture, needed here: collaboration, reaching out to various constituencies. Her presentation was provocative and had substance: value of Library services vs. cost to Town; great discussion of where technology will take us. Has courage. Terrific candidate.

Concerning Mr. Lindquist: He is knowledgeable; his presentation was really tough. Ideas unclear; PowerPoint frames too full of information. Concerning his Search Committee interview, Mr. Lindquist budgets well; is willing to ask for money, but Mr. Maroulis thinks that both candidates have the same experience as to reaching out.

Mr. Berube: Did not find the ideal candidate. Each had big strengths and weaknesses - opposite ones. Ms. Sharry did a very good job of connecting. Eloquent; good job of presentation; staff were inspired by her spirit of customer service and her presidency of CW/MARS. He was less happy with her responses to Search Committee questions. She did not show a depth of experience. Has worked in substantially smaller libraries. He does not think that she could walk into the Jones ready to go.

Mr. Lindquist's presentation was not impressive, but during the rest of the time that Mr. Berube spent with him, Mr. Berube was impressed, e.g., as to budgeting, strategic planning, and was impressed with what he did in his organization. The Athenaeum is more complex than the Greenfield Public Library - is more like the Jones. Mr. Lindquist did not focus as much on customer service but Mr. Berube was pleased with what he heard.

Mr. Berube said that it was hard to represent the views of Tevis Kimball, Curator of Special Collections, the Committee member who was not there. She would probably echo his views and represent even more strongly that Mr. Lindquist brings what we need - vision. In discussing the challenges of space, Mr. Lindquist articulated a clear plan for an architect to provide plans for a capital campaign, to deal with what staff communicated as the challenges of this Library. Staff were much more pleased with the tone that Ms. Sharry would set.

Mr. Sarat: The Town and the Library owe a great debt to Mr. Berube, the Search Committee, and the staff. Both finalists are strong candidates. The Library would benefit from either. He does not think that the search process needs to be extended. The finalists bring different strengths and weaknesses. Ms. Sharry: communication and warmth; presentation was extraordinary. She did her homework - good administrator. Mr. Sarat liked being with her. Concerning what she said about customer service, it was incredible that she'd get to "yes" with everyone. She did a terrific adaptation of a national "Read" program to her locality. She has little experience with fundraising and financial planning. Too many of her answers to

questions were cooperation, team building. Her Search Committee interview was disappointing, though we are hiring a Director, not an interviewee. She gave general answers. He was deeply disturbed by her use of language. She has no direct experience cultivating large donors. As to what she said about being resistant to managing by the numbers, managing by the numbers is one part though not the entirety of management. She made a good first impression. He wonders how it will endure. She was successful in two other libraries.

Mr. Lindquist needs to work on interview skills. His presentation was like a first year teacher cramming too much into the first lecture. Was not responsive to questions – needs work on large groups. Mr. Sarat got the impression that Mr. Lindquist is a very skilled administrator who thinks in systems and structures -- very important – and that he is persistent, thorough, and dogged in going after problems. This would be of enormous benefit to the Jones. He is very experienced in a library comparable to ours. As to likeability, Mr. Sarat worries about it on hearing the staff reactions. Ability to connect is important. The public comments in general evaluated Ms. Sharry similarly to the Committee. Either would make a fine director. He hopes that whoever is hired is welcomed to the Town and the staff.

Ms. McKee: Ms. Sharry's presentation was outstanding. Excellent use of the PowerPoint. She is empathic. Next to no fundraising experience. Has not done financial planning: thinks of it as for a professional. She said, "You don't spend \$5,000 to plan \$3,000." Mr. Lindquist as a Library Director has however projected the costs for the Athenaeum's various program areas for the next three years. His Board is planning to raise money accordingly.

Mr. Lindquist was at ease at Town Hall, though having to wait about 20 minutes for his meeting with the Town Manager. He met and chatted easily and pleasantly with the Town Manager's administrative staff; with the Town Finance Manager, who happened by and with whom he knowledgeably discussed the financing of a multi-million dollar project in Newton, MA, for which the Finance Director had been responsible in his previous job; and with the Fire Chief.

Mr. Maroulis: Ms. Sharry did a lot more homework on Amherst. She clearly understood institutions other than the Jones. Mr. Lindquist's answer to a question about where he sees the Jones in the spectrum of cultural institutions here was questions about the possibility of cooperative theme presentations involving a number of institutions. Museums 10 has done this already. It made Mr. Maroulis think that Mr. Lindquist didn't know what was here, though these are who you need for financing, fundraising, strategic planning in bringing people together, collaborative efforts – is where you get the greatest wisdom brought to bear.

Ms. McMurrer: Saw more big picture thinking, thought Ms. Sharry's observation significant that the Jones did not have a big picture snapshot of its finances. Ms. Sharry tackled the Trustee-Friends' relationship right off the bat; was cognizant of larger issues.

Mr. Berube: Mr. Lindquist has great experience in libraries with substantial Special Collections. Is a positive. On behalf of the staff, there's a feeling that he may overemphasize Special Collections at the expense of public service, a valid concern given the staff's exposure but Mr. Berube thinks that Mr. Lindquist would strike the right balance. Concerning technology, Mr. Berube appreciated Mr. Lindquist's answer about ebooks more than Ms. Sharry's. There is no one answer, but Mr. Lindquist has paid significant attention to it. Mr. Berube thought Ms. Sharry's answer, that they're just like physical books, a little flip. It showed that she had not spent the time thinking about it. There's more complexity than that, and a danger that ebooks pose to libraries.

Mr. Sarat: An interview is one part, not unimportant but not the only one. Both finalists have been successful: Ms. Sharry's building project; Mr. Lindquist is widely respected and admired in Westfield for forging partnerships. He's successful internally at the Athenaeum, with a vision of how to administer a more complex organization because he has done so. Based on what we've heard, it's that Mr. Lindquist does work well with staff. Mr. Sarat thinks that Mr. Lindquist will push and stimulate staff to think critically about the future – will not romanticize the past – will consider how to do things more efficiently. Mr. Lindquist's public presentation was not good but this is out of the larger context. Mr. Sarat is confident on the evidence that Mr. Lindquist will do well with the staff, and will reach out.

Mr. Maroulis: There are two types of manager. Mr. Maroulis felt that he had to press Mr. Lindquist in some areas in which he is supposed to be strong.

Ms. McMurrer: Is concerned that, as good as someone is on paper, the person might not be able to get people to the table. Ms. Sharry is energetic – thinks out of the box – would bring different people to the table.

<u>The Rankings</u>	<u>Ms. Sharry</u>	<u>Mr. Lindquist</u>
Ms. McMurrer:	1	2
Mr. Maroulis:	1	2
Mr. Berube:	2	1
Mr. Sarat:	2	1
Ms. McKee:	2	1

The vote is thus three to two in favor of Mr. Lindquist. All Committee members agreed, however, that whoever was their

first choice, they would be satisfied to have their second as the next Director of the Jones Library.

Ms. McMurrer: Mr. Lindquist would be an acceptable choice.

Mr. Maroulis: Agreed. Thought that the search process would not have to be restarted.

Mr. Sarat: Both would be terrific directors. It's a close call. Sometimes it's a feel you get. You can be tough without informality: "You guys."

Ms. McKee: All of us believe that either would serve the Library well as Director.

Mr. Sarat: What the draft Search Committee report lacks and cannot have is a report of this meeting. He thinks that there needs to be a report on the deliberations on the finalists' respective strengths and weaknesses.

Trustee Emily Lewis, present as a member of the public: Mr. Maroulis and Ms. McMurrer could email Ms. McKee sections for inclusion in the report.

Mr. Maroulis: Is comfortable with where we are as a Search Committee. For him, it's a feel.

Mr. Sarat: The draft Search Committee Report is valuable. It can come from the Chair as a Chair's document. The value is for future Trustees. He suggests taking Ms. Lewis's suggestion. There is an issue for staff if the Trustees do choose Mr. Lindquist. There needs to be a statement of reassurance to the staff from the Trustees. The Trustees in any case will need to think about the transition to the new Director.

Consensus: The Report will not be a Search Committee document. It will be from the Search Committee Chair to the Board, with additional input at the request of individual Committee members.

Adjourn: 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McKee
Chair, Search Committee
President, Board of Trustees, The Jones Library, Inc.

Document: Draft Search Committee Report