

Meeting of the Jones Library, Inc. and the Town Libraries' Board of Trustees
January 19, 2022 **9:00 a.m.** **meeting conducted via Zoom webinar**

Members Present: Austin Sarat, Farah Ameen, Lee Edwards, Alex Lefebvre, Tamson Ely, and Bob Pam
Also Present: Sharon Sharry, Lewis Mainzer, and members of the public and press

- I. Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m.

- II. **Officer Elections:**
 - A. The Trustees were unanimously approved for officer positions as follows:
 1. President - Austin Sarat
 2. Vice President - Tammy Ely
 3. Secretary - Alex Lefebvre
 4. Treasurer - Bob Pam
 5. Vice Treasurer - Lee Edwards
 - B. A request was made for the Director to add a separate agenda item for future agendas to include the Jones Library Building Committee

- III. **MOTION:** To approve the minutes of December 13, 2021. Approved 6-0-0.

- IV. **Public Comment:** None

- V. **President's Report:**
 - A. Welcome, Farah!!
 - B. Next Trustee Meeting is scheduled for February 23 at 9:00 am, and then March 16 at 9:00 am. Monthly meetings beginning in April will be held the 4th Wednesday of each month at 9 am.
 - C. The President appointed Trustees to Library Committees as follows:
 1. Budget - Bob Pam, Chair, and Lee Edwards
 2. Building and Facilities - Alex Lefebvre, Chair, and Farah Ameen
 3. Development - Lee Edwards, Chair, and Tamson Ely
 4. Investment - Bob Pam, Chair, and Austin Sarat
 5. Personnel, Planning, and Policy - Tamson Ely, Chair, and Farah Ameen
 6. The Friends of the Jones Library - Lee Edwards, liaison
 7. Jones Library Building Committee - Alex Lefebvre and Austin Sarat

- VI. **Committee Reports:**
 - A. Jones Library Building Committee
 1. Second meeting of JLBC was on for 1/12. The Committee is still not fully formed, waiting on appointment of additional public member(s) by Town Manager who will then be approved by Town Council.
 2. The OPM has been hired and we are waiting on proposal from architects at which point the committee will determine how to proceed.
 3. Next meeting scheduled for 1/27 at 4:30. Plan to initially meet every two weeks.

 - B. Building & Facilities
 1. Have not met since last meeting. Library Director confirmed that everything discussed previously has been repaired and nothing else has broken down yet.
 2. B&F will report at the next meeting on the current repair budget and where we stand.

3. The Board previously discussed whether we should be hiring an attorney relative to the building project. Did not go forward because have not felt the need for separate representation at this point. If that arises, have someone have spoken to and feel quite good about. At present don't have a need.

C. Development

1. Semi-annual reporting for the periods of July 1- December 31 and Jan 1 - June 30.
2. For the period July 1 to December 31, 2021:
3. Annual Fund
 - a. \$67,864.76 transferred to the Library - this is Library's 80% share. Of that amount \$6,169 is restricted.
 - b. \$15,716.49 is 20% share in Friend's account
 - c. \$103,079 raised since July, puts us fairly close to where we would have been last year
 - d. Number of gifts is down but amount of money is on track. 534 individual gifts against 735 as of December 31 last year
4. Capital Campaign Report
 - a. As of yesterday cash on hand gifts \$500,709 plus \$276,000 remaining in VanSteenberg, plus outstanding pledges that are on schedules \$697,863
 - b. for a total \$1,474,572.16 against commitment of \$3.3M
 - c. This does not include the CPA grant of \$1M.
 - d. Two additional grant applications have been submitted in the past week. Mass Cultural Facilities Fund for \$500,000 and one to the Beveridge Foundation believe for another \$500,000. We can apply multiple times if we get turned down or only receive partial funding.

D. Budget

1. Met on December 16. Library Director prepared summary of expenditures for FY 1 - showing expenditures matched receipts. Report on FY22 budget, as of middle of the year, funds have come in and are moving along. Maintenance spending ballooned because variety of things failing but overall the budget is as expected.
2. FY23 budget report, as of January 1, the minimum wage has gone up and will go up again next January. This has raised our expenditure levels. However Town funding will not go up more than the 2% bump which will create pressure to make that work.
3. We also have a number of personnel actions that will increase our work. During FY22 we had several staff retirements. We did not fill those positions while we were closed to public due to COVID. Once we reopen to the public for FY22 will start rehiring for many of those positions.
4. Will costs go up much beyond what they were pre-COVID?
5. No, except part timers. Town implemented a new wage chart. Town intended that if someone was at say a Level 4, step 6 previously, under the new wage chart, the Town intended that employee would move to the step on the new wage chart that was the closest to what they were making on the old chart without going under their prior pay. Instead, the Library Director kept our employees at their same level from the old chart to the next which resulted in our employees receive between a \$1.50 to \$3/hour increase. The Library Director felt the Town was making great strides by moving to the new wage chart in order to get to \$15/hour but wanted to get there faster. The only Library employees that receive minimum wage are the shelvers.
6. The schedule for creating the budget prior to the Charter required the Library to put together a budget in November or December so that it was available to the Town in January. With the Charter we have more time to create the budget (and be further into the FY) and provide it to Town.

E. Investment

1. As of 12/31 Endowment is \$9,892,525. This is the 5th quarter in a row where the Endowment has been greater than \$9M. Market going down this week. Allocations remain as supposed to be.

F. PPP

1. President appointed the Trustees to the Town Boards as follows:
 - a. Personnel Board, Chair of PPP acts as the representative on that Board, will become Tammy Ely
 - b. JCPC, Members of B&F - Alex Lefebvre and Farah Ameen
 - c. Audit - Treasurer - Bob Pam
 - d. BCG - Treasurer and President, Bob Pam and Austin Sarat
 - e. BID - Library Director
2. President praised the good relations that have been developed between town and Library. Noted this was not always the case, and acknowledged the importance of a good relationship and appreciation that we have a good working relationship.

VII. **Friends of the Jones Library System** - No report.

VIII. **Director's Report**

- A. Library Legislative Breakfast - Mindy Domb and Jo Comerford will attend. This year it will be virtual. Upside to virtual meeting is that more legislators are attending so it is good for as many people to attend as possible Friday, February 11, 2022 at 9 am.
- B. **MOTION:** To approve limiting the capacity at the North Amherst Library and Munson Memorial Library to 50%. Approved 6-0-0.
 1. The Library Director will lift the 50% capacity limit when safe to do so. The Library Director does not need to return to the Board to lift the capacity limit and will determine when they should be lifted working in conjunction with the Health Director.
 2. Request for capacity limits are stemming from discussions with the staff at the branches and in discussions with Town Health Director. Both buildings are so crowded it is very difficult to stay 6 feet apart. In order to prevent 'clumping' the Health Director suggested dropping capacity down to 50% which is 9 people. For the North Branch, the most people they have seen at one time is 10 people. Same with Munson. In practice will not force people to stand outside in long lines. Munson still operates it's window and will encourage patrons to use that even more. Staff is getting really concerned about the spread of the virus and their very small spaces. The North Amherst Library will close mid to late March for its building project. Staff will move to Munson at that time.
 3. What will the time limits be? Families will want to use the libraries on break. Removed time limits from the buildings. Believe patrons will move on if they know people are waiting. Can add time limits if it seems they are needed. Staff can monitor.
 4. Clarified that we will still only have two staff members at any one time at the Munson, just expanding hours with the addition of the NAL staff.
- C. The Library has several phases in the provision of services and systems in the buildings over the next several years.
 1. From now through end of March - 'normal' phase
 2. March to end of calendar year - NAL closing and staff will go to Munson to expand hours
 3. October - February - back to 'normal'
 4. March '23 - March '25 - Jones closes, Jones staff going to two branches to increase open hours and will operate in temporary space(s)
 5. April '25 - entirely new system, will relook at open hours for all three buildings and figure out how to move from there

- D. Temporary Location - OPM working with town and Library. Temporary location will be vetted by Board.
- E. Suggestion of using volunteers in moving to temporary location. Library Director commented that Sunderland Library was moved entirely by 100 volunteers. Using volunteers is a lot of work but incredibly rewarding. Sunderland was a much smaller library.
- F. Question regarding staff and the town providing 2 K95 masks each month. According to the CDC you can get up to 5 'safe' uses out of the mask before the elastic stretches and you lose a quality seal. Can we/do we need to figure out how to provide more masks to staff? Library Director clarified that we get 2 K95 masks per month from town plus enough surgical masks to last for the full month. According to the Health Director, when you look at the data, spread is happening at home, rather than in stores, restaurants or libraries. Most staff members are wearing surgical masks plus a cloth mask. Asked Library Director to reach out to the Town to see if there is a way to get additional KN95 masks for staff.
- G. Masking of patrons? There were a few clusters of people who would not wear masks but they have not been coming into the Library recently and patrons not complying with mask mandate has reduced exponentially.
- H. What is the traffic like in the Jones on an average day? It is slow which helps with people feeling safe. People are not returning to 'normal' life. People tend to grab books and then leave.
- I. Homebound program has increased in terms of usage. Staff is recommending to patrons more and more regardless of situation. If you live in Amherst, will bring your books to you.
- J. Circulation over the last year, starting to level off but higher than a year ago.
- K. Were numbers up during Winter Break? Health Director is expecting the peak of COVID in February.
- L. Programming is all virtual. Tried teen lounge in person a couple of times before the Holidays. Went well but pulled back because of increase in COVID numbers. Also some staff have come down with COVID and that has impacted our ability to offer some programming.
- M. North Amherst Library - variance was approved for the existing front door, does not need to be made accessible. Still waiting on architects to see how they can maximize design to maintain as many materials as possible.

IX. **Historic Structure Report**

- A. The architects and our consultant for historic tax credits both reviewed the report and commented that it reflected their thinking about the building and there were no surprises. The expenses that will come from preservation of the building are already included in our budget.
- B. Some concerns expressed about guidelines in report, especially the use of the interior spaces and what that means.
- C. The issuance of the report should provide a lot of comfort to those who were worried about the historic features of the Library. The report says we will be keeping virtually all of the woodwork and features that have been appealing to people. The architects have been taking that into account since the beginning.
- D. It was nice to hear their opinion that the building has been so well cared for over the years.
- E. Recommendations from the *Historic Structure Report* are made for the architects for this project but also for the Library going forward - would like B&F to look at those recommendations and bring them to the Board for a discussion. B&F to vet and then lead the Board in a discussion of recommendations and then motions around recommendations.

Meeting adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Alex Lefebvre