Meeting of the Town’s Library Board of Trustees, and the Jones Library Inc
22 April 2024 - 9 a.m. – meeting conducted online via Zoom Webinar

Members Present: Austin Sarat, Tamson Ely, Lee Edwards, Bob Pam, Eugene Goffredo, Farah Ameen

Member Not Present: None at start; Trustee Goffredo left at 9:42am

Also Present: Sharon Sharry, Richard Morse, John Shannon. Members of the Public (5 attendees at start of meeting)

1. Call to Order/Attendance – Austin call to order @9:00am.
2. Changes/Additions to Agenda. None
3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting(s) (3-25-24). Approved
4. Public Comment. None.
5. President’s Report.
   a. Robert Pam Leaving Celebration, 6-5-24; 4pm; Goodwin Room.
6. Committee Reports/Questions for Committees.
   a. Library Building Committee (Sarat). (15 minutes)
      i. Waiting for GC bid, due on April 26, other bids received so far have been slightly under budget. Once rec’d and if on budget with begin to move to selection then construction
      ii. Per Director Sharry, interim location chosen, 101 University Drive. Additionally, 65 University Drive will store the paging collection, for adult collection (8,000) items will be hosted by Amherst College for free for 2 years. Still looking for a location for fine arts collection, some items that to not fit into our collection policy will be auctioned off. Research for how to store a large mural is ongoing. ESL programming will be held at St. Bridget’s meeting house. Timelines are still approximate: close Jones in May, and while interim space is being prepped, branch hours will be increased. Packing and moving will be in June. July will see interim spaces open to the public, and branch hours go back to normal.
      iii. Director Sharry stated, in response to President Sarat’s question, that as staff start planning for the move, some programming bandwidth reduced. Referenced how services were reworked by the staff during the pandemic.
      iv. Trustee Pam asked about how the budget is impacted by the move and costs associated with it. Per Director Sharry, costs are covered in existing budget. Trustee Pam asked about follow-up answer around who pays for insurance relating to Strong House risk, per Austin, to be covered by contractor. Trustee Pam asked about the budget impact of removing ceilings during renovations and installing insulation. Per Director Sharry, additional insulation will not be added as there is no budget for that.
   b. Buildings and Facilities Committee (Ameen).
      i. Nothing new, not met this year.
      ii. Trustee Ameen mentioned N. Amherst Library opening next week, all Trustees are encouraged to attend if possible.
   c. Development (Edwards).
      i. Annual fund: slightly ahead year over year
      ii. Capital campaign 44K last month, 86K year to date
      iii. A lot of activities, as mentioned in the packet, ongoing, including the PBS Viewpoint video which starts airing in May across the PBS stations. Plus we will have access to all the video footage for additional use.
iv. So far about 100 people have gone through the Jones Library tours, including special tours for potential large donors, follow-up with those who have taken the tour for fundraising opportunities.

v. Efforts to reach out to younger Amherst residents or school graduates, even living outside of Amherst to tap into their networks for fundraising opportunities.

vi. Trustee Pam asked about the ‘grand opening’ of the capital campaign fundraising, and if that will happen. Per Trustee Edwards, the public launch will happen when construction starts.

vii. Trustee Pam asked about trying to reach the colleges, for example alumni magazines. Per Trustee Edwards, will look into UMass, due to her professional connections there.

viii. President Sarat asked about donor process. Trustee Lee explained the complexity of courting donors, especially those who could donate large sums, including cultivation of relationships with them via tours, house parties, coffee meetings, to raise over $9M. Mentioned difficulties due to project stopping and starting repeatedly. Also the complexity and volume of work identifying and applying for various available grants.

ix. Trustee Pam asked about meeting with the capital campaign to get visibility into how the Friends of the Jones are running the campaign. It was suggested that the Jones Board of Trustees would be the ones to arrange that. President Sarat suggested if there are questions that are not answered by the monthly report the Friends supply, they could be asked explicitly, in a Trustee meeting. Trustee Pam stated one reason why he wants the meeting is the rate of receipts are lower than he expected and wants to know if that will continue. Also stated he wanted a better understanding of the specific policies that govern how monies move from the Friends to the Town. President Sarat suggested the next Trustee meeting could include a reading and discussing the MoU between the capital campaign and the town.

   i. Has not met since last Board meeting. There will be PPP meeting in May to discuss the evaluation process, and the forms will be presented at the June Board of Trustees meeting.
   ii. Trustee Ameen discussed the JEDI meeting: discussed the collection development benchmarks around how to distribute that information via website or newsletter.
   iii. Trustee Pam asked about whistleblowing, retention/destruction of records, and conflicts of interest policies at the library. Trustee Ely stated that Sharon is checking to see what the town policies for those are.

e. Budget (Pam).
   i. Budget committee did not meet this last week.
   ii. Proposal for 2 organizational credit cards for the Jones Library, one for small items, one for larger purchases that would include an approval process. Trustee Pam had discussions with business manager John Shannon, who explained why we need a credit card both for workflows that include staff paying small invoices on personal cards then seeking reimbursement; also some vendors do not want to get paid via check, and talked about the process and governance capabilities of a purchasing card specific to non-profit organizations that map to an organization instead of an individual.
   iii. FY2025 budget has been submitted to the town.

f. Investment (Pam).
   i. As of March 31, endowment is valued at $9,176,576 and the Woodbury fund at $750,507.
   ii. Transition for Vanguard to Mercer continues.

7. Friends of The Jones Library System Report (Mainzer/Morse).
   a. Friends are looking to have more one-on-one meetings with Trustees, looking for each Trustee to come to one meeting before the end of the year, to draw the two boards closer together.
b. Rich to send calendar of the Friends board to the Trustees, on President Austin’s suggestion

8. Director’s Report
   a. Friends approved $4K withdrawal from Woodbury Fund for yearly museum passes for the library. Trustees needed to vote to withdraw from Woodbury. **Motion passed.**
   b. President Sarat asked if there is any pending Massachusetts legislation about protecting libraries and librarians from various censorship activities. Director Sharry indicated that right now MA does not have specific legislation around protections for libraries or librarians, and will find out if there are any pending.
   c. Trustee Pam stated that he has printed out examples of a library newsletter from a library in CT that he and family used to patronize and offered to leave them at the library as an example of how another library is doing this.
   d. President Sarat asked Trustee Pam when his official resignation would occur, so the process can minimize interruption around full membership of the board. Trustee Pam responded that it would happen next month (May) sometime, that there were probably one more meeting of the investment and budget committees.

9. Adjourned at 10:15am by President Sarat.

Respectfully submitted by Eugene Goffredo