Meeting of the Town’s Library Board of Trustees, and the Jones Library Inc

13 May 2024 - 9 a.m. – meeting conducted online via Zoom Webinar

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

Also Present: Sharon Sharry, Richard Morse, John Shannon, Bob Peirent, Ellen Anselone, Tony Hsiao, Josephine Penta. Members of the Public (13 attendees at start of meeting)

1. Call to Order/Attendance – Austin call to order @9:01am.
2. Changes/Additions to Agenda. None
3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting(s) (4-22-24), approved with small edit.
4. Public Comment.
   a. Toni Cunningham: Comment on amounts of monies deposited by the Friends to the Town, what happens to MBLC funds already spent if the expansion project does not go through and needs to be repaid to the state what are the plans of the Trustees to pay this money back as the town should not be responsible for it.
   b. Kelly Erwin: thanked the Trustees, on behalf of the Friends, for their work.
   c. Maria Kopicki: asked if public attendee names could be read out, President Sarat stated he would not for reasons related to privacy
5. President’s Report.
   a. Library Trustees/Friends of Library MOU (November 2019)
      i. Trustee Pam stated that had some questions about these and that is why the MoU is on the agenda today. He questioned what the specifics were about the accountability section as laid out in the MOU as they did not include the Treasurer of the Library (which is Trustee Pam). President Sarat stated that we should get a report from the Capital Campaign, as is typical that includes their receipt and expenditures. Trustee Pam stated he did not find that sufficient due to the differences between the amount of funds on hand with the Friends and the amount transmitted to the Town as per the MOU and that the Capital Campaign should not be making those decisions on its own.
      ii. Motion: the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees review with the Capital Campaign staff and/or leadership, the receipt and expenditures and transfers of funds as they have occurred and are expected to occur in the future.
         1. There was no second to the motion
6. Committee Reports/Questions for Committees.
   a. Library Building Committee (Sarat). (15 minutes)
      i. Jones Library Project Status/Options
      ii. (Trustee Goffredo recused himself from this agenda item due to possible conflict of interest, Trustee Ameen took the following minutes)
         1. MOTION: To recommend the Town Manager reject all Jones Library Expansion/Renovation Project bids from April 2024, including the Filed Sub-bids and the General Bids. Passed
         2. President Sarat stated one bid from GC, well-regarded GC. Bid came substantially over budget. JLBC met, Town Manager met and presented a series of options:
            a. go forward to try to go with GC bid, would need authorization from TC;
            b. turn down bid, rebid in the fall;
            c. explore some redesign the project to help with the gap.
         3. President Sarat stated getting one bid could help explain some of the cost. We should’ve gotten 5 bids. Could be due to time we went out to bid (season for construction activity). We didn't have a clear sense why we didn't get more bids. We want to continue to
explore if we are able. Sub contractor bids were within scope. Understanding the gap is important for us to do.

4. No questions at this point.

5. Trustee Pam stated he had many questions and that the question has always been our ability to meet our obligations under the plan to cover those costs.

6. Trustee Pam read a prepared statement outlining his concerns about the ability of the Capital Campaign to meet fundraising goals especially if those fundraising goals are increased by an additional $4-5 million assuming the current bid, over $7 million, can be reduced by that $4-5 million and that the pipeline for addition donations and grants does not look like it will be sufficient. He stated that the odds and possibility of the project going forward are very low now. Made specific suggestions around path forward for HVAC, physical layout including additional bathrooms on main level.

7. President Austin stated that we can’t go forward with GC bid and a lot to ask Capital Campaign to go forward with the amount that can be raised and he can’t see going back to the Town Council to raise borrowing authorization. We can’t go forward with the bid on hand.

b. Buildings and Facilities Committee (Ameen).
   i. Trustee Goffredo rejoined the meeting
   ii. Trustee Ameen stated the Committee has not met yet, but will meet next week. In the meantime stated several Trustees attended the N. Amherst Library official opening and that is was a really good event.
   iii. President Sarat stated that the Building and Facilities Committee take up with some urgency a plan for repair alternatives since the expansion project is not proceeding at this time and that the Committee should work with Director Sharry and the people of the town to prepare a plan around what can be accomplished and a plan to move that forward.
   iv. Trustee Pam asked about replacing the boiler which died a year ago, stated we should discuss not just replacing the boiler to look at more fossil fuel efficient solutions like heat pumps

c. Development (Edwards).
   i. Trustee Edwards stated that the Annual Fund still slightly ahead year over year, just over $100K
   ii. Capital Campaign Report – still difficulties around momentum due to the project still not fully moving forward, donors are typically not willing to donate to projects that start and stop repeatedly.
   iii. Tours continue, opportunity to show the issues with the library, as well as instruct tour attendees on the resources and programming available.
   iv. President Sarat asked about how much cash Capital Campaign has on hand, Trustee Edwards did not have the numbers handy, will bring to next meeting
   v. President Sarat asked about HVAC and atrium funding for the next few years and if any of the funds collected or pledged to the Capital Campaign can be used for those repairs. Trustee Edwards responded she would discuss with donors about any funds on hand being repurposed to repairs
   vi. Trustee Ameen thanked Trustee Edwards, and wanted to confirm the amount, 1.6M, the amount the campaign has transferred to the town, Trustee Pam confirmed the 1.6M
   vii. Trustee Pam asked about the PBS video and if the footage could be used to make additional videos for the library fundraising efforts. Trustee Edwards confirmed we do have the footage, and that future videos can be produced from this footage
   viii. Trustee Pam asked if the project would go forward, if the information around the insurance for the... Bob Peirre restated that it would be provided by the contractor

i. JEDI Committee Report – Trustee Ameen stated want to continue the survey, inserting into the school superintendent email and others. Committee also attended a DEI session the prior week. Additional discussions around documentation to be produced on results of the discussions the committee had

e. Budget (Pam).
   i. **MOTION:** to amend the document as previously supplied. **Passed** unanimously.
   ii. **MOTION:** To approve the proposal dated May 9, 2024, as amended, for an organizational credit card for the Jones Library, Inc. **Passed** unanimously.
      1. Trustee Pam stated this motion was not ready to be voted on
      2. John Shannon suggested the original proposal of two cards should now be just one card, with a process to support that (transactions would be executed in the office of the business manager.)
      3. Director Sharry asked why the original proposal of two cards is no longer acceptable. Trustee Pam stated that the process is the same as the way the rest of the town.
      4. President Sarat asked if amendments could be made now, Trustee Pam and John Shannon made edits that Trustee Pam suggested, enabling Trustee Pam to support the motion

iii. Meeting for this and last month were cancelled, no updates.

iv. Trustee Pam stated the need to prepare one or two budget proposals to address that the library is not moving but will be staying in the current building for the next 12 months.

v. FY25 Budget, Trustee Pam stated that new budget proposals are needed to account for move being delayed.

f. Investment (Pam).
   i. Meeting scheduled to meeting with Mercer, on May 21st at 1pm.

7. Friends of The Jones Library System Report (Mainzer/Morse).
   a. No meeting since last Jones Library Trustees. Next meeting for Friends is today at 5pm in the Woodbury Room at the Jones. Annual meeting will be held on Sunday June 9 at 3pm at the Munson Library.
   b. Whole Friends Board reinforce the sentiments of support that Kelly Erwin made in public comments

8. Director’s Report
   a. Nothing to add at this time.
   b. President Sarat stated gratitude for Director Sharon’s work and efforts through all the constant changes to the expansion project and related issues
   c. President asked about what is going on with the staff during all the … Director Sharon stated that the situation is hard on all the staff, but staff is pivoted to the move not happening in the near future, including planning now for summer programming that can happening now that building project is not immediately moving forward, and how awesome the staff is.

9. President Sarat reiterated generosity and thanks to Hilda Greenbaum for her gift, even with all the project cost increases. Suggested Trustee Goffredo draft a letter, on behalf of the Trustees, expressing our gratitude. Also expressed gratitude to the library staff and Director Sharry for all their work on the project

10. Trustee Pam stated that the printouts of the newsletter he receives from another library have been dropped off, and asked if any board members had seen it, and if the staff had seen it. No Trustees have seen it, but per Director Sharry, staff has examined them.

11. Adjourned at 10:25 am by President Sarat.

Respectfully submitted by Eugene Goffredo