

**Meeting of the Jones Library, Inc., and the Town Libraries' Board of Trustees**  
**February 14, 2023**                      **8:30 a.m.**                      **meeting conducted via Zoom webinar**

Members Present:     Austin Sarat, Farah Ameen, Alex Lefebvre, Tamson Ely, Lee Edwards, and Bob Pam  
Also Present:         Sharon Sharry, and members of the public (3 attendees)

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- I. Meeting called to order at 8:30 a.m.
- II. Changes/Additions to Agenda - none
- III. Approval of Minutes
  - A. **MOTION:** To approve the minutes of December 14, 2022. *Approved 6-0.*
    - 1. Pam clarified that his comments from this meeting were not that a plan B would be Net Zero but that we would seek improvements in energy efficiencies.
  - B. **MOTION:** To approve the minutes of January 18, 2023. *Approved as amended 6-0.*
- IV. Public Comment
  - A. Carole Hinkley – she has learned that the Library is holding an event on Friday with Giganta Smalls. In checking into their past, she found on FaceBook something they posted on their CV making references to homophobic and other remarks she found concerning. Would like to know if the Library has vetted this guest and is this the type of programming meant to be offered. She is all for costumes, but concerned about this program for young children.
  - B. Library Director commented that the Children’s Department coordinated this event with drag queen Giganta Smalls. Staff knows Giganta. It is a by registration only event. The Library Director will follow up with the head of the Children’s Department to determine what type of vetting was done.
- V. President’s Report
  - A. New group photo – will wait until it gets warmer outside to schedule
- VI. Committee Reports/Question for Committees
  - A. *Library Building Committee*
    - 1. Meeting once a week or more. Working closely with architects who have been very responsive to comments and direction from the committee; of note in these past few weeks are the design of the gender inclusive restroom on the ground floor, looked at landscaping plans, looked at color palettes for the interior, and there have been a couple of design changes (teen room moved to the north side on the second floor, opened back up second floor adult space, and the barrel vaulted ceiling opened up.) The architects will be providing a series of renderings. Will be considering further designs as respects the exterior and working on historic tax credits.
  - B. *Buildings and Facilities Committee*
    - 1. Next meeting is scheduled for February 28, 2023.
    - 2. At the last Trustee meeting, a request was made to see if the Town could provide us with information on the possible cost escalations, change orders, etc. on NAL expansion project. That information was forwarded to all Trustees the week after the meeting. The project is on track cost wise and there have been six approved change orders and two are pending.
    - 3. Question if it is the intention that the tent is now a permanent feature? Will leave it up this spring as families and children’s staff have expressed a preference for using the tent.

4. Question about building project and the roof – the latest design has light access through the roof using a long skylight which is horizontal in nature and MBLC does not like skylights. When will that begin to reach conclusion? Discussions regarding the exterior design are continuing. We don't have an exact date but this item is top of mind and part of discussions.

C. *Personnel, Planning, and Policy*

1. PPP has not met but the Equity, Justice, and Inclusion subcommittee (EJI) has met. Discussed restrooms in the new building, discussed survey to use at the Library. Next meeting of EJI is this Friday at 12:30 where they will be discussing the contents of the survey. Any suggestions on questions to include in the survey, request to email to Farah.

D. *Development*

1. Reviewed report from the packet. Capital Campaign committee end of Jan total received in gifts and pledges \$4,545,324 (includes \$2.1M from community campaign) \$129,000 of that came in the month of January. About dozen members on the committee, each working to cultivate prospects. Event last weekend for donors and prospective donors affiliated with Mt. Holyoke community. Planned event for Dana Street Community, another event planned for Amherst College community.
2. Historic Tax Credit conversations, the various entities needed to work together are in very active conversations.
3. Annual Fund end of January 2023, \$81,315. Number of donors is down over last year. Will be in touch with people who gave last year and either encourage them to give or find out why not giving. This year was unusual with the war in Ukraine that has had a significant impact on people's budget and typical giving.
4. Question regarding the reporting for the capital campaign. Request to finalize what will be in the report so there is consistency from report to report. Library Director & Development Committee will work together to review report.
5. Question if we should find ways to put articles in the alumni magazines for both the annual campaign and the capital campaign?

E. *Budget*

1. Required to present a budget to the town at the end of March 2023. Next meeting this afternoon and one more meeting in February to have a final version come to the Board in March for approval. Complications of creating a budget with the expectation of working out of temporary locations. Many items will be placeholders based on different scenarios. There is an increase in full time staff at the Library and a decrease in the number of part time staff, a policy the Library has been pursuing for some time. Also noted the receipt of some substantial grants, including an ESL grant providing funding for its activities and its citizenship program.
2. Question if there has been any further exploration of options for meeting financial obligations to the town if the project does not proceed. Difficult to have serious discussions without actual numbers. Will be going back in the next month to determine what information the state agency that provides bond funding, if required, would need.

F. *Investment*

1. As of January 31, the Endowment is at \$8,438,110 and Woodbury \$678,028, up considerably from last year. Meeting tomorrow with Vanguard and additional committee meeting next month to discuss the structure and management of the portfolio and available options from Vanguard.
2. Vanguard has updated their performance projections. They have raised their expectations from 4 to 4.5%. now looking at 5 to 5.5%.

VII. Friends of the Jones Library System Report - No report as a member of the Friends was not present.

VIII. Directors Report

A. Annual Tea Party each year – originally an American Girl Doll theme. These are very expensive dolls, and the children’s department has, over time, tried to make the event more inclusive. From Mia Cabana, Head of Youth Services:

1. **Why is there a drag queen this year?**

Is anything more fun and fancy than a drag queen?! The foundation of drag story hour is to introduce the concept of questioning gender norms in a society that historically prioritizes the heterosexual lifestyle. Drag queen storytime also promotes creativity, self-expression and play. Drag is simply another form of dress up, cosplay, etc. [This article](#) goes into more detail. We hope that seeing an adult who has created an amazing sparkly outfit and presents herself with enthusiasm and joy is as empowering as making our own sparkly crowns.

B. Limited to 25 people; pre-registration required.

IX. Meeting adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Alex Lefebvre