MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

Date : January 8, 2015

Time : 10:00 A.M.

Place : Minuteman Library Network

 Natick, Massachusetts

Present : Gregory J. Shesko, Chairman; Mary Ann Cluggish, Vice Chairman; Carol B. Caro, Secretary; Mary Kronholm; Francis R. Murphy; Roland A. Ochsenbein; N. Janeen Resnick; Alice M. Welch

Absent : George T. Comeau

**Staff Present:**

Dianne Carty, Director; Liz Babbitt, State Aid Specialist; Celeste Bruno, Communications Director; Barbara Glazerman, Head of Operations and Budget; Marlene Heroux, Reference Information Systems Specialist; Paul Kissman, Library Information Systems Specialist; William Morton, Assistant to the Director; Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs/Government Liaison; Cynthia Roach, Head of Library Advisory and Development

**Observers Present:**

Megan Allen, Director of Libraries, Thomas Crane Public Library, Quincy; Mary Baker-Wood, Director, Richard Sugden Public Library, Spencer; Gayle Bradbury, Trustee, Somerset Public Library; James E. Burke, Somerset Economic Development Committee; Lynn Dobson, Trustee Chair, Richard Sugden Public Library, Spencer; Ron Gagnon, Executive Director, NOBLE; Adam Gaudette, Town Administrator, Spencer; Deb Hoadley, Interim Training & Advisory Services Director, Massachusetts Library System; Richard Kobayashi, Collins Center for Public Management, UMASS Boston; Susan McAlister, Executive Director, Minuteman Library Network; Bonnie Mendes, Director, Somerset Public Library; Gregory Pronevitz, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System; Jackie Rafferty, Director, Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Cohasset; Sharon Shaloo, Executive Director, Massachusetts Center for the Book; Tim Spindler, Executive Director, C/W MARS; Steve Spohn; Resource Sharing Director, Massachusetts Library System; Jim Sutton, Consultant, Collins Center for Public Management, UMASS Boston

**Call to Order**

Chairman Shesko called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. He recognized Minuteman Library Network Executive Director Susan McAlister who welcomed the Board to Natick and Minuteman headquarters. Ms. McAlister invited the Commissioners to tour the facility following their meeting.

**Approval of Minutes – December 4, 2014**

Commissioner Resnick noted two typos on page 7 at the beginning of line 9 and the end of line 13. These were later determined to be printer errors for quotation marks.

Commissioner Cluggish moved and Commissioner Murphy seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approve the minutes for the monthly business meeting December 4, 2014, as corrected.

**The Board voted approval.**

**Correction to Minutes – November 6, 2014**

At the November 6, 2014 Board meeting, the Commissioners agreed to delete the words “within the library” from the Minimum Materials Expenditure Standard Calculation Policy for the FY2017 State Aid to Public Libraries Program. This was not reflected in the minutes of that meeting.

Commissioner Caro moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners amend the minutes of November 6, 2014 to delete the words “within the library” on page 8, line 8.

**The Board voted approval.**

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Chairman Shesko welcomed Roland A. Ochsenbein to the Board who was appointed By Governor Patrick on December 23, 2014. Chairman Shesko noted that Commissioner Ochsenbein will not vote on actions at today’s meeting because he has not yet taken the oath of office.

Chairman Shesko reported that he attended the meeting of the Executive Committee at the Board offices on December 23, 2014.

He attended the December 16, 2014 meeting of the Resource Sharing Committee at MLS- Marlborough and noted that the Discovery group is prepared to bring its recommendations to the Board in the near future.

On December 17, 2014, he attended a meeting of the State Aid Review Committee at Millbury Public Library.

Chairman Shesko noted that on February 24, 2015 the Boston Library Consortium and the Massachusetts Library System will sponsor the Regional Resource Sharing Symposium: Interstate Opportunities in Worcester.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Carty reported that on January 9, 2015 she, along with several other staff and Commissioners, attended the Library Journal Design Institute at the Boston Public Library. Library directors and supporters from across New England attended the two-day event. This LJ Design Institute was presented in partnership with the Boston Public Library and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

Director Carty attended the 25th anniversary of the FLO (Fenway Libraries Online) library network on December 11, 2014, where she had the opportunity to hear its history and meet the founders.

Director Carty attended the MLS Executive Board meeting on December 15, 2014. Preceeding this meeting was the orientation for new board members at which she presented the organizational overview of the different library entities to the MLS Board and explained the MBLC state budget account lines, and what they fund. After the MLS Executive Board meeting, there was a retirement party for MLS Assistant Director Carolyn Noah at which Director Carty spoke about Ms. Noah’s accomplishments and all she has meant to libraries.

Director Carty noted that the Resource Sharing Committee met on December 17, 2014 and heard a final report from the subcommittee working on Discovery. The recommendations from the committee will come to the Board in March.

She relayed that the State Aid Review Committee had its first meeting on December 16, 2014. After reviewing the current State Aid program, the committee took time to talk about what works well and not so well with the current State Aid program. The committee reviewed the timeline for the group’s work. The plan is to meet monthly, on the fourth Tuesday. In February, the committee will look at State Aid programs in other states and begin an in depth look at the final State Aid to Public Libraries White Paper.

Director Carty stated that, on December 18, 2014, the Steering Committee of the eBook Beta project met at Perkins School. The committee was given a demonstration of various electronic devices and learned about various accessibility issues. The committee agreed that vendors should be held accountable for accessibility to their websites and eBook products. After testing the websites and eBooks of the current eBook project vendors, the representatives from Perkins said that the websites were accessible but there were problems downloading the eBooks. One of the primary hurdles for the visually impaired is that training is necessary for the use of any electronic device. The representatives from Perkins stated that it is their obligation to provide training on electronic devices because it needs to be so specialized for their clientele. The committee also discussed a goal to ensure that all of Perkins’ library users can obtain library cards from their local libraries.

Director Carty informed the Commissioners that the City of Everett received a construction grant of $2,236,491 in the 2010-11 construction grant round to renovate and expand its Shute Memorial Branch Library. The project is now complete and tentative plans are in progress for the dedication. Commissioner Caro will represent the Board at the dedication.

Director Carty noted that State Aid Specialist Liz Babbitt attended the State Data Coordinator’s annual meeting in Louisville, Kentucky from December 8-11, 2014. Director Carty stated that these meetings are especially helpful to meet colleagues from around the country who have the same job responsibilities as state data coordinators. In addition, this annual meeting is critical to the major national data collection project in which all the states participate.

Director Carty mentioned that next month Ms. Babbitt will be preparing the ARIS and Financial Report data for inclusion in the Public Library Survey hosted by IMLS and the US Census.

Director Carty reported that she, along with MBLC staff Celeste Bruno and Shelley Quezada met with staff of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) at the JFK building in Boston to discuss ways in which the MBLC can help libraries work more closely to provide citizenship resource information to their constituents. USCIS is following up with a plan to possibly use the MLA conference in May as a venue for having a Citizens’ Naturalization Service and they are working on a plan to give libraries an opportunity to set up Citizenship Corners. USCIS will likely recommend a pilot of a few libraries to begin. Funds have been included in the LSTA Special Projects budget to develop citizenship resources for libraries and to develop and present a series of workshops on why libraries should provide citizenship help.

Director Carty informed the Commissioners that the agency has been approved for an MLA program on serving the GLBTQQ community. It is slated for Tuesday May 5, 2015 in the afternoon.

Director Carty reported that Cindy Roach and Shelley Quezada are working on a proposed IMLS leadership grant with Maine. The proposal should be submitted on January 15, 2015. There will be a total of 6 pilot libraries. The three libraries in Massachusetts are Shutesbury, Methuen, and Bellingham. All three have submitted letters of support for the project, and Ms. Quezada will be the “STEM Librarian.” Ms. Roach will provide the necessary support which will help serve as a project match.

Director Carty relayed that in late January Ms. Quezada will go to Chicago for the final deliberations as a member of the 2015 John Newbery Medal committee. Ms. Quezada is one of 15 committee members, who for the past twelve months, has read all the works under consideration for an award. The announcement of Youth Media Awards will be Monday, February 2, 2015 at 8:00 am, CST.

Director Carty noted that the Massachusetts Municipal Association annual meeting will be held on January 23 and 24, 2015. She requested that Commissioners let Mary Rose Quinn know if they can cover a time slot on Friday or Saturday.

Director Carty announced that Legislative Breakfast season begins tomorrow at the Bigelow Free Library in Clinton. She distributed sample packets of the materials that will be at the breakfasts.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs and Government Liaison, reported that Governor-elect Baker will be sworn in at noon today.

Ms. Quinn noted that preliminary revenue collections for December 2014 totaled $2.307 billion, $211 million or 10.1 percent more than the state took in last December. Year-to-date tax collections totaled $11.204 billion, $440 million or 4.1 percent more than this time last year. Tax collections totaled $11.180 billion year-to-date, $416 million or 3.9 percent more than this time last year and $18 million below the year-to-date benchmark. However, Governor-elect Baker’s transition team along continues to predict that the budget deficit for fiscal 2015 was around $750 million.

She stated that the first Legislative Breakfast is scheduled for January 9, 2015 in Clinton. Legislators in attendance will include, Senator Harriette Chandler, Representative Kate Hogan, and Representative Harold Naughton. The Newsroom on the MBLC website has been updated to include the online Legislative Agenda for 2016, the talking points for the Breakfasts, and links to additional information on topics included in the Agenda. She distributed the latest Legislative Breakfast schedule.

Ms. Quinn relayed that the focus of the handouts for the Massachusetts Municipal Association Convention will be state aid and construction as well as the 2016 Legislative Agenda and the budget line explanation chart.

She announced that the Massachusetts Library Association Legislative Committee is hosting “Know How” sessions around the state to encourage Trustees, Friends, and other Library supporters to advocate for library funding. The events will finish with a program at the MLA Conference in May. Speakers at the conference program will include former MBLC Commissioner John Arnold, State Representative and Legislative Library Caucus Chair Kate Hogan, and Worcester City Manager and former State Senator Ed Augustus.

Ms. Quinn informed the Commissioners that Senate President Stan Rosenberg has asked Senators Harriette Chandler, Bruce Tarr, Dan Wolfe and others to schedule meetings with local officials and constituents to gather information about legislative priorities for this legislative session. She noted that these meetings appear to be modeled on the Hampshire Council of Governments summit in Senator Rosenberg’s District this past fall. She urged the Commissioners to promote these sessions with library supporters.

**MARKETING PLAN UPDATE**

In her report, MBLC Communications Director Celeste Bruno focused on the FY2016 Legislative Agenda.

Ms. Bruno informed the Commissioners that all the legislative information and materials have been organized on the MBLC Newsroom, making it simple for people to access and share. The MBLC Newsroom includes the online Legislative Agenda, which is the easiest way to share the agenda. It also links to more information, for example: the jobseeker section of the agenda links to a job seeker success flyer that contains stories from patrons who have found jobs thanks to the support they received from their library; the STEM/STEAM section links to a newly developed tumblr which features what Massachusetts libraries, especially those with LSTA funded projects, are doing to support STEM/STEAM. Links to the construction video and to the “We All Need Libraries” video are also included in the online legislative agenda.

In addition to the online legislative agenda, all the materials that are included in the packets for the Legislative Breakfasts can be found on the Newsroom including the Small Libraries in Networks Map and the State Funding to Libraries Graphic. There is also a jobseeker success template flyer that libraries can populate with their own local information.

Talking points are also on the Newsroom. They are: “Efficient,” “Opportunity for All,” and “Need” with additional information and ideas of how these may be used to further explain the Legislative Agenda. Speakers are asked to use local examples as they relate to these talking points.

**CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MUNICIPALITIES MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FY2015 STATE AID TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES BASED ON ELIGIBILITY ESTABLISHED IN FY2015 FOR THE MUNICIPAL APPROPRIATION REQUIREMENT AND IN FY2014 FOR THE MINIMUM STANDARDS**

Liz Babbitt, State Aid Specialist, presented for certification 23 municipalities meeting the requirements for FY2015 State Aid to Public Libraries program. She relayed that Amesbury is using the accommodation policy for materials and will receive a prorated award.

Ms. Babbitt also noted that three municipalities (Edgartown, Lancaster, and Nahant) are using the flexibility option for materials.

Commissioner Caro moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners certify that communities on the attached list have met minimum standards of free public library service and award each a FY2015 Library Incentive Grant, a FY2015 Municipal Equalization Grant and a FY2015 Nonresident Circulation offset in the indicated amounts, totaling $174,941.65, and authorize any additional FY2015 State Aid to Public Libraries disbursements that may be possible toward the end of the grant cycle.

**The Board voted approval.**

Ms. Babbitt relayed that there was a data loss at Counting Opinions, the web-based data management software that collects and tabulates State Aid data for the MBLC, which erased the NRC for Ludlow. The proposed motion will restore that part of Ludlow’s State Aid for FY2015.

Commissioner Caro moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners also award Ludlow a FY2015 Nonresident Circulation offset grant in the amount of $1,635.30 which brings the total amount of the State Aid award to date to $13,244.12 and authorizes any additional FY2015 State Aid to Public Libraries disbursements that may be possible toward the end of the grant cycle.

**The Board voted approval.**

**REVIEW OF MUNICIPALITIES REQUESTING WAIVERS OF THE MUNICIPAL APPROPRIATION REQUIREMENT IN THE FY2015 STATE AID TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES PROGRAM WITHIN THE 5% THRESHOLD**

Mary Rose Quinn reported that the number of MAR waiver applications for FY2015 has dropped to 55 from the 2009 high of 123 applicants.

Ms. Quinn reviewed with the Commissioners background material relating to the 55 municipalities that had applied for a waiver of the Municipal Appropriation Requirement for FY2015. She reported that those municipalities (53) within the 5% threshold are only required to submit their petition and documentation in writing to the Board. These 53 municipalities are Abington, Attleboro, Carver, Chelsea, Clarksburg, Clinton, Dartmouth, East Bridgewater, Fairhaven, Fall River, Florida, Franklin, Haverhill, Holbrook, Huntington, Lawrence, Leicester, Lenox, Leverett, Longmeadow, Lynn, Malden, Medford, Mendon, Middleborough, Millbury, Monson, Newbury, North Adams, North Attleborough, Northborough, Norwell, Oak Bluffs, Palmer, Paxton, Pepperell, Pittsfield, Plainville, Provincetown, Scituate, Somerville, Tewksbury, Uxbridge, Ware, Wareham, Warren, Wayland, West Springfield, Wilbraham, Windsor, Winthrop, Woburn, and Yarmouth.

The Commissioners observed that funding to many of these libraries is slowly recovering. However, they also expressed concern that many of the current MAR waiver applicants have received waivers for several years.

**REVIEW AND PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS FOR WAIVERS OF THE MUNICIPAL APPROPRIATION REQUIREMENT FOR THE FY2015 STATE AID TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES PROGRAM ABOVE THE 5% THRESHOLD**

Ms. Quinn outlined the waiver review process for those municipalities above the 5% threshold. These are required to submit their petition and documentation in writing and present testimony on their petition before the Board at today’s meeting. The two municipalities are Somerset (-6.93%) and Spencer (-25.35%).

**Somerset**

Somerset Library Director Bonnie Mendes and James Burke, the Chairman of the Somerset Economic Development Committee and member of the Somerset Fiscal Task Force, presented testimony on behalf of Somerset’s petition for a waiver of the MAR in the FY2015 State Aid to Public Libraries Program.

Testimony as presented and/or submitted for the Somerset Public Library follows.

*January 8, 2015*

*To the Board of Library Commissioners: Introductions:*

* *Bonnie Mendes, Library Director*
* *Gayle Bradbury, member of the Board of Library Trustees since 1992, a retired reading in teacher Somerset School District.*
* *James Burke, the Chairman of the Somerset Economic Development Committee and member of the Somerset Fiscal Task Force*

*Statement [Bonnie Mendes]: It is with a very heavy heart that I stand before you this morning. It hurts me deeply that as a Library Director and as a life-long resident of the Town of Somerset, I have to make a request that you consider our petition for waver of the FY2015 Municipal Appropriation Requirement.*

*I have been with the Somerset Public Library since 1987 and we have never had to come before you; however, the town of Somerset is in a financial tail spin with the loss of our two biggest taxpayers (our two power generating plants). Yes, Somerset led a Camelot existence for decades with millions of dollars coming from these two power companies; but those days are gone and although our town officials have been planning for this possibility it has it hit us hard. One of the reasons we have had to submit the paperwork for a waiver the past few years is based on the fact that our town officials saw the writing on the wall and have been level funding municipal services since 2007 trying desperately to stabilize the town’s tax rate.*

*I have asked Mr. James Burke, to speak to you about Somerset's deep fiscal crisis. He can explain to you the hardship Somerset is facing and the extenuating circumstances that sadly will not go away quickly.*

*Mr. Burke addressed the Board regarding Somerset’s tax rate, the closing of Montaup Electric Company and the sale of New England Power Company and the effect it has had on Somerset's stabilization fund and tax base [both commercial and residential]. Also discussed was Somerset's economic plan.*

*Statement [Bonnie Mendes] continued: Like many Library Directors, I wear many hats in the community. As a lifelong resident of Somerset, I am actively involved in the town and serve as a municipal department head. As we began the FY2015 budget talks I knew, before it was even stated publically, that deep cuts were going to be requested and I was prepared. Our Town Administrator stated that town departments didn't need to just cut to the bone, but we had to cut to the marrow. The Board of Trustees and I worked tirelessly with the Advisory and Finance Board, Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator to come up with a budget that provided the services our citizens deserve; but also something that was fiscally responsible for the entire town.*

*Was the library's budget disproportionately cut? The answer is yes. I cannot deny it. But I do have an explanation.*

*I have attached a chart identifying the library's municipal budget numbers from FY2011 to my projected FY2016 numbers.*

*As we were planning the FY2015 budget, two library employees announced their retirements. These were two, long time employees who were on the top rung of the municipal pay scale. We did not fill these positions, reorganized staffing, merged some positions and saw a savings of $52,115.00. With the staff cuts, we were forced to decrease our operating hours, which in tum allowed us to estimate lower utility costs saving approximately $2,500.00. We removed mileage reimbursement, calculated some other savings and all of this resulted in an 11.5% cut. But keep in mind, much of this was based on the retirements.*

*We were not alone, the Fire Department experienced a 7.8% cut; the Police Department was not able to fill police officer positions and saw a 7.5% cut.*

*The school department is currently making cuts to their FY2015 budget to make up for a shortfall experienced in special education and food service expenses; so their number on the projected FY2015 are actually not accurate and will be decreased. Prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, they closed an elementary school in an attempt to reduce the budget gap.*

*The highway department is at the lowest number of workers in history.*

*The services of the library have been affected by the reduction in the budget as have services for all town departments including public safety. As explained, we have not been able to fill staff vacancies. We did have to reduce our operating hours from 51 hours per week down to 40 hours per week. We are still open two evenings until 8:00 PM and we are open six days a week. This was a very difficult decision to make and our Trustee in attendance today, Gayle Bradbury, will tell you that she is passionate about getting us back to seven days and four nights a week (and with a cafe)! Despite the staffing cuts and hours we have maintained our expenditures for materials. I feel strongly that if the doors can't be open 24/7 then as many eBooks, electronic resources and online programs as possible should be available to our patrons remotely -the budget is in place to continue to provide materials to our patrons. The residents of Somerset are extremely fortunate (as am I) that the library staff is the most dedicated group you will find.*

*They have sacrificed, and in spite of all the obstacles, they provide the best possible customer service to our patrons and they have provided a seamless transition during these cuts.*

*We are meeting the hours open requirement and we will be able to meet our material expenditure requirement this fiscal year and next. Will we reach the MAR in FY2016? The answer is probably no. All municipal department heads were in a meeting this week to hear the news that the FY2016 budget will need to be decreased as the town has a shortfall of 7 million dollars.*

*However, we have vowed to work together with budget workshops, cooperation and fiscal responsibility. In fact you have letters from the School Superintendent, Fire Chief, and Recreation Director which will verify the fact that we have all faced cuts and are working together.*

*I won't read to you each and every letter (I have provided copies to you); but there are a few highlights I would like to make:*

* *Please note that the Superintendent of Schools mentions their budget cuts which sadly resulted in the fact that not one of the K-8 schools have a librarian at the moment. My children's librarian (which was cut to a part time position) is working in partnership with the Superintendent and school principals to provide library services to all students.*
* *The Fire Chief stressed the cooperation among departments as we all face budget cuts.*
* *The Director of Recreation outlines the spirit of collaboration we share.*
* *The Friends of Library vow their financial support.*
* *The Advisory and Finance Board understand the need of Library services for all.*
* *Representative Haddad mentions the “catastrophic loss of tax revenue” and the “spirit of the library staff.”*

*I can confidently say that we have the support of the Board of Selectmen, Fiscal Task Force, and Advisory and Finance Board. We were never targeted, but as one Selectman stated the library “gets it” meaning that we understand the fiscal responsibility we must put forward to our taxpayers. They in turn understand the burden this has placed on library services.*

*You also have a packet of letters which were actually compiled in the spring when talked turned to the fact that our budget cuts were going to force us to decrease library hours. These letters not only support the Somerset Public Library, bur reflect a tone of why libraries are important everywhere.*

*Fifteen years ago we stood in front of Town Meeting voters and asked them to fund our building renovation and expansion project and we got a unanimous vote in the affirmative. The townspeople of Somerset are still in our corner supporting the library and the library staff every step we take.*

*I respectfully ask that on behalf the residents of Somerset, town and school officials, and the staff of the Somerset Public Library that you consider our waiver and allow us to continue to serve the needs of our patrons.*

*Thank you.*

**Spencer**

Spencer Town Administrator Adam Gaudette and Mary Baker-Wood, Library Director of the Richard Sugden Public Library, presented testimony on behalf of Spencer’s petition for a waiver of the MAR in the FY2015 State Aid to Public Libraries Program.

Testimony as presented and/or submitted for the Richard Sugden Public Library follows.

*November 14, 2014*

*Ms. Liz Babbitt, State Aid Specialist*

*Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

*Board of Library Commissioners*

*98 North Washington Street, Suite 401*

*Boston, MA 02114*

***RE: FY2015 Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) Waiver Packet***

*Dear Ms. Babbitt:*

*As part of the Town of Spencer’s petition for a waiver of the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) for FY2015 to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, I am writing to offer the following information as a perspective as to the financial challenges that the community has faced over the past several years and what lead to a reduction in hours and services at the Richard Sugden Library and how this has impacted our ability to fund the MAR.*

***Fiscal hardship surrounding the municipality’s inability to meet the FY2015 MAR***

*Revenues*

*The Town of Spencer’s recent financial struggles began with the economic downturn and recession that occurred starting in 2008. When the housing and financial boom of the earlier part of the decade crashed, Spencer was deeply impacted. In FY2008, the Town received $2,859,902 in State Local Aid, a key component of the Town’s revenue stream used to fund school assessments and General Government Operating Budget. That revenue drastically dropped in FY2009 as part of the Governor’s 9C cuts and was reduced midyear to $2,469,905 and continued to drop a low of $2,108,169 in FY2013. This amounted to a $751,733 annual loss from FY2008 levels or a 26% reduction.*

*In addition, in FY2008, the Town collected $2,601,201 in Local Receipts (Excise Tax, Permits, Fines, etc.), another key revenue stream for the Town. This revenue stream dropped by $509,808 in the following year and reached a low of $1,865,889 in FY2011 for a total net loss from FY2008 of $735,312 or 28%.*

*Fixed Expenses*

*While 2 of the 3 main sources of revenue for the Town drastically declined (2rd being property tax revenue), the Town also was experiencing major increases in some of its fixed expenses. From FY2008 to FY20015, the Town’s responsibility for Education, which includes regional school assessments, member vocational school assessments, and non-resident vocational assessments, increased from $6,796,156 to $8,660,826 for a total jump of $1,864,670 or 27%.*

*Also, the Town’s pension liability for Worcester Regional Retirement System rose 75% from Fy2008 to FY2014, from $312930 to $548,059 and increased this year for FY2015 by another 10.57% or $57,920 to $605,979.*

*Health Insurance Fixed Expense Cost Control*

*In order to maintain minimum service levels while experiencing loss of revenues as a result of the economic downturn and also counter rising fixed costs, the Town acted to control some of its expenses and make selective reductions in staffing. First, the Town targeted its employee Health Insurance Costs. The Board of Selectmen adopted a policy to increase retiree insurance contribution rates by 1% per year for 25 years such that they will gradually shift the burden of this expense to 40% come 2030. The current rate is 25% for FY2015.*

*In addition, the Town negotiated with its collective bargaining units in FY2011 to reduce the number of plans offered to one provider, reducing monthly premiums and began purchasing through a joint purchase group (MIIA), which helped the Town avoid a 20% increase in premiums that year.*

*In FY2013, the Town again negotiated with its active employees who agreed to pay higher copays helping the Town avoid a 3.5% increase in premiums that year and the town employees have again agreed to restructure copays for FY2015, such that a 3.75% premium increase has been avoided.*

*Finally, the Town was successful negotiating with its collective bargaining units in FY2012 and also adopted Personnel Bylaw Changes in FY2013 such that the burden of health insurance cost premiums has been shifted from the Town to Active Employees. Starting in FY2014, all Town Employees pay 40% of the cost of health insurance premiums where previously the contribution rates had been as low as 20%.*

*The changes above detail the Town’s strategy to counter rising health insurance costs and restructure plan design and contribution rates that weren’t sustainable. This allowed the Town to maintain certain service levels, including at the Library, despite the economic downturn.*

*Personnel Reductions*

*Another way in which the economic downturn was countered was making selective reductions in staff, regionalizing positions, or privatizing positions. These are listed as follows:*

* + *Eliminated the P/T Board of Health Clerk in FY2009*
	+ *Eliminated the P/T Building Inspector in FY2009*
	+ *Eliminated the P/T Parks & Recreation Director in FY2009*
	+ *Reduced the F/T Town Planner to P/T in FY2011 (regionalized with Leicester)*
	+ *Reduced the F/T Building Inspector to P/T in FY2013*
	+ *Reduced the F/T Town Accountant to P/T in FY2013*
	+ *Eliminated the P/T Benefits Coordinator in FY2013 (privatized)*
	+ *Eliminated the P/T Assessors Junior Clerk in FY2014*
	+ *Eliminated the P/T Information Technology Coordinator in FY2014 (privatized)*

*Personnel Wage Adjustments*

*The employees of the Town of Spencer, most of which live within the community, did everything they could to help Town Officials maintain services while undertaking extreme economic challenges. In addition to making concessions in Health Insurance to save the Town in the area of fixed expenses, they also accepted the following wage adjustments, again, to maintain minimum service levels and retain as many staff positions as possible:*

* *FY2010 – All Contracted Department Heads took a* ***Wage Freeze****.*
* *FY2010 – The Police Association Unit took a* ***Wage Deferment*** *until FY2011*

 *when it then became a* ***Wage Freeze*** *resulting in 0% increase for FY2010.*

* *FY2010 – The Utilities & Facilities Unit took a* ***Week Furlough Unpaid****.*
* *FY2010 – The Police Dispatchers Unit took a* ***Wage Freeze****.*
* *FY2010 – The Town Hall Clerks Unit took a* ***Wage Freeze****.*
* *FY2011 – The Town Personnel Bylaw Employees took a* ***Wage Freeze****.*
* *FY2011 – The Utilities & Facilities Unit took a* ***Wage Freeze****.*
* *FY2012 – The Police Association Unit took a* ***Wage Freeze****.*
* *FY2012 – The Town Hall Clerks Unit took a* ***Wage Freeze****.*
* *FY2012 – The Utilities & Facilities Unit took a* ***Wage Freeze****.*
* *FY2013 – The Board of Selectmen* ***eliminated their Salary Stipends****.*

*Budget Control*

*As can be seen below, the Town also made selective reductions in departmental budgets and modest increases as necessary in order to further defray the economic challenges that began in FY2008.*

**

*Spencer East Brookfield Regional School Financial Crisis*

*Up until the fall of 2012, the Town of Spencer officials felt that they had done everything they could to counter the economic downturn which resulted in $1.5 million in lost revenue between State Local Aid and Local Receipts. They had made efforts to control health insurance costs, eliminated selective positions, regionalized positions, privatized positions, and asked employees to take wage freezes or reduction.*

*Also mentioned above, the Town experienced the 27%, or $1.8 million, increase in education assessments. This was mainly due to the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s mandate (Education Reform Act of 1993) to meet Foundation Budget levels and beginning in 2007, mandating a Target Share for the Town which would greater shift the burden from the State to the Town in terms of education.*

*Beginning in December of 2012, the dire situation took an increasingly turn for the worst. At this time, the Spencer East Brookfield Regional School District (SEBRSD) announced that their auditors had determined that there was an estimated $2 million gap in the FY2013 Budget and that the Superintendent was being investigated for malfeasance, incompetence, or both. As a result, the Superintendent was terminated and the District acquired special legislation and was able to borrow $2 million from the State of Massachusetts to close the gap to balance the year.*

*Moving forward the District sought to balance the budget and shortfall in the subsequent FY2014 Budget, and requested a 35% increase in the annual assessment. In May of 2013, the voters of**Spencer and East Brookfield overwhelmingly rejected the additional SEBRSD Budget Assessments at their respective Annual Town Meetings and Elections for a Proposition 2 ½ Override.*

*In June of 2013 the SEBRSD revised the FY2014 Budget Request lowering the additional Assessments from 35% to 26% and in July of 2013, Spencer and East Brookfield Special Town Meeting Voters approved the revised Assessments contingent upon successful Override Election votes. The revised Assessments were overwhelmingly rejected at Special Town Override Elections in September of 2013.*

*In October of 2013, the SEBRSD approved a revised FY2014 Budget lowering the additional Assessments (from 26% to 17%) and this was followed by a District Wide Meeting which was held and voters further reduced and adopted a revised budget with lower Assessments (8.5%) but the SEBSRD Committed failed to adopt the compromised budget following the meeting.*

*Thus, in November 2013, the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MADESE) set the District Budget, as authorized by MGL c. 71, §16B, at $701,428 higher than previous year. The Town of Spencer officials acted quickly and held a Special Town Meeting to adopt the revised FY2014 Assessment for SEBRSD and the General Government Budget. The Town of Spencer was forced to use $400,000 in reserves, $100,000 in adjusted revenue (New Growth) and made $200,000 in operational cuts midyear to balance the Budget as there was no time to request additional revenue via a third override request before being able to set the tax rate prior to December 31, 2013..*

***Explain the municipality’s FY2015 budget process regarding the library***

*During the budget development period of January 2014 through April 2014, the Town officials knew that they would be faced with a budget deficit moving forward to FY2015 as the Town now had a new threshold of responsibility for SEBRSD assessments as was explained by MADESE with the $701,428 increase to the FY2014 budget. As part of this, the Town prepared for an evaluation of services which involved evaluating every line-item within the General Government Operating Budget. Moving forward to FY2015, the Town had to find a way to balance the budget with the higher assessment being incorporated into the upcoming budget year.*

*After factoring in additional revenue from the 2 ½% levy increase, New Growth, additional State Aid and Local Receipts (if available), and factoring in additional fixed costs (utilities, collective bargaining unit agreement obligations) as well as the additional Education Foundation Budget and Minimum Local Contribution requirements ($345,670 of the $376,586 in available new levy), the Town made selective cuts and decided on a Proposition 2 ½ Override request of $484,000 in General Government services in order to balance the FY2015 budget.*

*Town Officials held multiple public hearings as it went through its services review and after these sessions with Department Heads, the Finance Committee, and the public, concluded on the following services that would be cut if the override failed and the FY2015 Budget had to be balanced:*

* ***Close Town Hall on Thursdays*** *($124,000) – Reduce Support Staff Hours by 25%, Eliminate 3 PT Positions and Reduced Building Inspectors Hours by (40%). This would possibly lead to delays in customer service, longer permit wait times, and inaccessible services on two business days/week as the Town Hall had already been closed on Fridays.*
* ***Richard Sugden Library*** *($92,000) – Reduce Hours by 20% from 40 to 32 (loss of Saturday and evening hours). Eliminate 7 positions, and cut expenses resulting in: loss of all programming including Early Childhood, after-school, and teens; longer wait times for computers and services; and fewer new books and movies. The Library would also face loss of grant revenue and potential decertification by the MBLC.*
* ***Parks & Recreation*** *($61,000) – Eliminate Beach Programs and Cut Park Maintenance leading to the loss of summer swimming instructions and Park facility deterioration.*
* ***Highway Department*** *($51,000) – Eliminate a Position and Reduce Roadwork Expense Budget. This would potentially lead to delays in required work being performed and further backlog in road repairs.*
* ***Public Safety: Fire Department*** *($36,000) – Firefighter Training and Reduce Facilities Maintenance (50%).* ***Police Department*** *($16,000) – Reduced Police Overtime (special events) & Reduce Facilities Maintenance (50%).*
* ***Council on Aging*** *($90,000) – The plan for the relocation of the Senior Center to Maple Street School (which was given back to the Town as part of the SEBRSD crisis) would be eliminated.*

* ***Board of Health*** *($4,000) Cut Fluoride Program and eliminate all* ***Board Salaries*** *($10,000).*

*On May 13, 2014 the General Government Services Override, in addition to another override request for SEBRSD, was rejected by voters by a count of 1,051 to 1,006 votes.*

*Thus, on July 1, 2014, the Town of Spencer implemented the reductions above in order to move forward with a balanced budget in FY2015.*

*After the above reductions were made, and eventually the SEBRSD balanced their FY2015 budget by lowering the assessment request, Town Officials decided to add a Special Town Election Question to the November 4, 2014 State Election as the previous vote was narrowly defeated. The question would be the same as in May of 2014, this time to restore the cuts that were made as of July 1, 2014. Unfortunately, this time the measure to balance the General Government Operating Budget was vastly defeated by a vote of 2,215 against to 1,698 in favor.*

*So, after 5 failed override request questions (3 for SEBRSD, 2 for the Town) in approximately 18 months, the Town must move forward with the service levels that were reduced as of July 1, 2014 and after making all the efforts deemed feasible from FY2008 to FY2014 to stave off major service reductions in General Government services.*

***Provide evidence that any reduction to the library budget is not disproportionate relative to changes in other municipal departments and the overall budget***

*The attached Cut Worksheet demonstrates the budget numbers as a result of the reductions made in July of 2014. Unfortunately, the Library experienced a 21.86% reduction. However, other departments also faced drastic reductions; the Parks & Recreation realized a 69.06% reduction, the Land Use Department realized a 23.83% reduction, and human services a 2.72% reduction.*

*Although the Town Hall closed one day a week and the administrative support staff experienced a 25% reduction in hours, the General Government Budget demonstrates a 2.32% increase as Utility Costs and certain CBA obligations and other adjustments were made (FinCom Reserve increased).*

*Also, the Fire Department, despite losing $30,000 in training, experienced an increase to their department budget as the Town incorporated a $100,000 lease payment for the replacement of Engine 2 which unexpectedly went out of service in September of 2014 and had to be replaced. There was no time to ask for a debt exclusion and after 5 failed overrides, it appears the voters don’t have the appetite to increase taxes for town expenses. Thus, the Town opted for a 5-year lease, and incorporated the expense into the FY2015 budget as a front line piece of equipment is essential to the fire protection operations of the Town.*

*Finally, another department experienced an increase to their budget, despite reductions in staff and repairs expenses, the Town’s public works department had to be increased ($90,000) for the purpose of countering the mandate from EPA by the new MS4 storm water management permit being issued this fall. If the Town does not comply with these mandates it is subject to hefty fines.*

*The above documentation is designed to illustrate for you our financial position and the efforts we have made to avoid making any reductions in the Library and all of our other departments.*

*We look forward to meeting with you to discuss the above information and our petition for a waiver from meeting the FY2015 Municipal Appropriation Requirement.*

*Sincerely,*

*Adam D. Gaudette*

*Town Administrator*

*Thursday, January 8, 2015*

*Mary Baker-Wood, Library Director*

*Richard Sugden Library*

*Review of Library Impacts and Action Plan*

*The library presented a FY15 Budget Request to the Town Administrator in January of 2014 which met all requirements for operation of the library including the MAR. The library director presented detailed budget proposals and core service reviews at a special Select Board hearing and at a Finance Committee meeting in March. Both presentations were made available to the public on local cable access television and on You Tube. The administrator had initially approved the budget request ($400,656.00) and presented it to the Select Board. By this time it had become apparent that the school funding crisis would heavily impact the availability of funds for general government. Department heads were asked to respond to proposed cuts in their budget. At that point, and in every subsequent discussion, the state grant requirements were reviewed and the consequences of failing to meet them were made clear. The Select Board approved a revised budget which maintained minimum weekly hours and materials budget but drastically reduced staffing levels. They were aware of the implications for the MAR and the possibility of decertification, but were faced with the need to make serious cuts in many budgets. At no time did they propose closing the library or eliminating library services.*

*The Town of Spencer has consistently funded the library at levels which exceeded the MAR; the Town has never needed to apply for a waiver. However, the school funding crisis as outlined our supporting documents, was unprecedented. Our budget sheets reflect consistent increases for the library over the last few years. We have also received capital funds for major projects in the last five years such as new computers, carpeting, roof repairs and major HVAC repairs.*

*The library continues to be a busy and essential service for the Town of Spencer. It is open the required minimum of 32 hours per week and we plan to meet our 16% materials expenditures target. Circulation figures remain strong, the library is still a net lender in the C/W MARS system, and patrons crowd the library during its open hours. They are able to access public computers and a 24 hour open Wi Fi system; they borrow materials, receive instruction on e-book downloads, and get help with reference questions. They use our reading rooms and quiet studies. The library website is up to date and heavily used and the building is adequately maintained. Library staff and administration have above all remained centered on our core mission; we have not for one second forgotten why we do this work and what it means to our community. We will continue to work with our community partners and with the town to develop resources, and will use our recently completed Long Range Plan to guide our choices.*

*The greatest impact from the budget cuts has been on open hours and programming.*

*The library is no longer open on Saturdays and only open two evenings. Some of our patrons can no longer access the library during our open hours and there are longer lines for circulation, computers, and reference assistance. We have a growing population of young teens, tutors, and retired seniors who use the library as a gathering place and reading room; the reduced hours have created a hardship for many of them.*

*In May of 2014, we were offering an average of 40 programs a month, ranging from early literacy classes, afterschool STEM activities, and a Junior Theater Group, to teen movie nights, free adult computer classes and craft programs. There were waiting lists for many of the popular offerings and the library programming was frequently cited as one of our strengths in recent surveys and long range planning forums.*

*By July 2014, we were reduced from a staff of twelve to a staff of five. We had to eliminate almost all programming except for summer events which had been previously grant funded. Among the positions we lost were a Young Adult librarian, Story Hour librarian, catalogers, circulation librarians, and our accounts manager. Existing staff, and in particular, the director, have had to step in and take over some of the most crucial functions such as cataloging materials and processing invoices and supply orders. We have no time to write grants or supervise additional volunteers. Staff members sometimes work unpaid hours in order to keep up with the work load and have deferred vacation time in order to avoid closures. This level of staffing is not sustainable and will continue to affect direct service.*

*The library will submit a FY2016 budget which meets the MAR by building back staff levels. There are no further override votes anticipated at this time, and the foundation budget for the schools will have to be met by the town. We will seek to add back staff by shifting other funds in the existing budget and through our budget request process. We hope to support increased programming through community partners and with the help of Project ABLE, the Senior Work Program in Spencer, and student interns. We will use our Long Range Plan results to continue the work of community involvement and education.*

*Mary Baker-Wood, Library Director*

*Richard Sugden Library*

**CONSIDERATION OF A FY2015 NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT AWARD UNDER ACCOUNT 7000-9506**

Paul Kissman, Library Information Systems Specialist, presented for consideration the award recommendations for the FY2015 Networks Infrastructure Grant, totaling $200,000, to be funded out of account 7000-9506 Library Technology and Resource Sharing,

**LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY AND RESOURCE SHARING (7000-9506)**

**FY2015**

**NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM**

**PROGRAM ABSTRACT:**

The Network Infrastructure program provides annual support for the capital and infrastructure costs of the nine automated resource sharing networks that form the foundation for essential library services throughout the Commonwealth. This is a new grant offering for FY2015. It replaces LSTA funding under the Network Connections and Servers grant category beginning with the FY2016 LSTA direct grant round.

Applications were reviewed by MBLC staff and outlet data verified prior to the final recommendation. This is a formula-based grant program that includes a common base amount for each network and a per outlet amount based on the number of network member libraries and branches. For FY2015, the base amount is $7,500; the per outlet amount is $258.79 (512 total outlets).

Commissioner Murphy moved and Commissioner Caro seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approve the following nine Network Infrastructure Grants, totaling $200,000, for FY2015.

**Telecommunications for Resource Sharing**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NETWORK****NETWORK / MLS** | **MUNICIPALITY****MUNICIPALITY** | **AWARD****AWARD** |
| CLAMS | Barnstable | $17,334  |
| C/W MARS | Worcester | $50,976  |
| FLO | Boston | $11,382  |
| MBLN | Boston | $18,887  |
| Minuteman Library Network | Natick | $23,545  |
| MVLC | North Andover | $17,593  |
| NOBLE | Danvers | $16,558  |
| OCLN | Braintree | $17,851  |
| SAILS | Lakeville | $25,874  |
| **TOTAL $200,000** |

**The Board voted approval.**

MLN Executive Director Susan McAlister and NOBLE Executive Director Ron Gagnon expressed their appreciation for the grants.

**CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF A FACT SHEET FOR THE FY2015 SMALL LIBRARIES IN NETWORKS SUPPLEMENTAL GRANT AWARDS UNDER ACCOUNT 7000-9506**

Paul Kissman presented for consideration the fact sheet for a Fiscal Year 2015 Expansion grant round for the Small Libraries in Network Program (SLIN).

He reported that, with $102,500 new funding available for Small Libraries support in account 7000-9506, the Small Library in Networks Working Group has developed an approach to support those small libraries that have been eligible but have been unable to participate fully before now.

These fall into two categories:

1. **Network Members that have Received Partial Awards**

Network awards have been based on the longstanding amount of a $2,500 annual membership offset per full member. However, six libraries were still being funded at either $1,800 or a smaller, partial award due to funding limits.

1. **Network Members That Have Never Received Small Libraries Support**

The Small Libraries Working Group recognizes that many small public libraries (as defined by being in municipalities of under 10,000 in population) had never obtained similar relief for their membership assessments. Fifty-seven (57) small libraries were either: a) already members of a network before the Small Libraries program was created or b) had joined a network in a year when the program was frozen.

Commissioner Resnick moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approve the Fact Sheet for the Small Libraries in Networks FY 2015 Expansion grant round.

**The Board voted approval.**

**CONSIDERATION OF A REVISION TO THE FY2015 LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT SPECIAL PRIORITIES PROJECTS BUDGET**

Cynthia Roach, Head of Library Advisory and Development, presented for consideration a revised budget for the FY2015 LSTA Special Projects.

Ms. Roach noted that included in the revision is funding for the Center for the Book and New England Library Association’s Leadership Institute which were not included in the version of the budget that the Board approved in July 2014. Also included is the initial funding for a consultant to facilitate strategic planning for the agency and a citizenship initiative. Both of these projects may begin prior to July 1, 2015 but will mainly occur in FY2016.

Since the Board’s approval of the budget last July, the Small Libraries in Networks program is being funded entirely through MBLC account line 7000-9506. The Small Library Forum funding was less than anticipated. The Board provided stipends of $150 to 26 libraries in communities that have a municipal population of fewer than 4,000.

The Resource Sharing Committee met in mid-December. There will be a report from the Committee for the February board meeting. This may require another revision to this budget.

These changes all meet the LSTA five year plan goals and objective.

Commissioner Cluggish moved and Commissioner Murphy seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt the proposed Revised Special Priorities and Projects Budget for the Library Services and Technology Act program for FY2015 as presented in the attached documentation in the amount of $1,489,576.

**The Board voted approval. Commissioner Resnick abstained.**

Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

Library Services and Technology Act

FY 2015 Special Priorities and Projects Budget Revision #1

Projects budgeted for State FY2015 use two sources of LSTA grants; some projects are funded with FY2013 monies, the majority of the projects are funded with Federal FY2014 monies.

**Agency Data Collection** $50,000

The Agency will contract via bid or use state contract to hire a consultant to help staff identify data the agency is collecting today and how to move that data into products that will provide easy access.

**Citizenship Initiative** $15,000

The Agency will contract via bid to hire a consultant to develop citizenship resources for libraries and to develop and present a series of workshops on why libraries should provide citizenship help. Recently, the Agency has started a partnership with the USCIS (US Citizenship and Immigration Service).

**Emergency Assistance/Disaster Recovery** $25,000

The Agency has two contracts for direct assistance to public libraries in the event of a disaster. One contract provides on-site recovery services and the second contract provides professional preservation consulting services available on site or by telephone 24 hours/day 7 days/week.

**Library Leadership** $10,000

The New England Library Association will hold its biennial New England Library Leadership Symposium (NELLS) in the summer of 2015 from August 3-7 2015. In 2013, Massachusetts sent 9 attendees to NELLS. By supporting NELLS, the board is developing future library leaders.

**Marketing Plan Implementation** $150,000

The Public Relations Advisory Committee and MBLC staff will develop a Public Awareness plan this year. In FY2015, staff will promote the statewide eBook project, the new Virtual Catalog, ComCat, launch of the re-designed portal and will continue to support Summer Reading, Bruins Partnerships and other programs.

**Preservation/Digitization Planning**  $40,000

This project continues the planning process to identify the preservation and digitization needs of public, academic, school and special libraries, museums, and historical societies across the Commonwealth. The Planning Committee has been working with consultant Maureen Sullivan. It is conducted a survey and had focus groups in the fall. The Committee will develop a plan in early 2015 that will address the major stakeholders and will outline strategies to addressing the needs of libraries, historical societies, and museums across the Commonwealth.

**Small Library Forum** $4,000

The Small Library Forum was held on October 29, 2014. Jessaym West was the keynote speaker and there was a panel of local libraries that have been sharing services, grants, etc. The focus of the institute was to help small libraries think of alternative ways for sustainability. The program fits well with the Small Libraries in Networks Planning that is happening now.

**Small Libraries in Networks Planning** $12,500

The agency contracted with Carol Mahoney to do a series of focus groups on the SLIN program. The Committee met through the fall to determine how to best structure the program for the future.

**State Aid Review** $20,000

The Committee will review the state-aid program and make recommendations for potential changes to the program. A consultant will be hired to facilitate the process.

**Statewide Databases** $646,000

Over 1700 libraries that are members of MLS and all residents of the Commonwealth have access to core resources through contracts with Gale/Cengage, Boston Globe through Proquest and Encyclopedia Britannica. These database offerings are through a partnership with MLS.

**Statewide Library Card Planning** $20,000

Statewide Library Card Working Group is completing its study and will do a final set of focus groups as they complete the process this fall.

**Strategic Planning** $15,000

The agency will hire a consultant to work with the Commissioners, library community, other stakeholders and agency staff in the development of a strategic plan for the agency. This would cover costs that happen before June 30, 2015. Additional funding will be needed in FY2016.

**Support for Summer Reading Online Registration** $17,000

The project funds the online registration system used for the Summer Reading Program.

**Virtual Catalog Help Desk** $41,000

The virtual catalog is administered and maintained at Fenway Libraries OnLine (FLO). The transition to ComCat, the new virtual catalog, is happening later this summer. FLO will maintain the current system product until most libraries have transitioned to ComCat. This covers licensing, FLO help desk support, and overall administration and maintenance of URSA for its final year.

**Web-based Data Collection** $74,012

Counting Opinions is a web-based data management solution (LIbPas) that facilitates the collection and automatic tabulation of library data and enables the MBLC to manage and define data collection sets. Public libraries report their ARIS and financial report information on this system. The agency is offering a customer satisfaction component for all public libraries. The agency subscribes to InformsUS, which will give the agency the ability to gather data and feedback to help us meet the Governor's customer service initiative.

**Website Redesign** $75,000

The goal of this project is to create a future-proof responsive redesign for the MBLC's website that will serve both in-house staff and library stakeholder needs.

**Website Support** $59,064

This project covers the ongoing costs of maintaining the MBLC websites (mass.gov/mblc and mass.gov/libraries) for one year. The sites are maintained by a private vendor under a competitively bid service contract.

**Workshops/Trainings** $12,000

This includes workshops and training programs for Trustees and Friends groups and training for our LSTA direct grant program.

**Special Project Grant Programs**

These are grant programs that are reviewed by agency staff and are not part of the direct grant process reviewed by SACL. Each award has an application process and evaluation process in place.

**Statewide eBook Project** $150,000

As part of the Board’s commitment to state-wide eBook products, the funding will support the infrastructure to make this program possible. MLS and MBLC have agreed to support the on-going infrastructure costs.

**Massachusetts Center for the Book**  $14,000

The MCB requested funding to support the 2015 Massachusetts Book Awards.

**NCIP Connections** $30,000

Funding for NCIP connections will assist Virtual Catalog Members with capital costs to implement NCIP connections on their local ILS. For the past two years, the Board has funded these costs as current virtual catalog members become ready to migrate to ComCat. There are some academic libraries that will not have to move to ComCat yet, and this funding will assist them with capital costs.

**Planning for Joint Public Libraries** $10,000

The town of South Hadley has its public library and a private/public library, the Gaylord library. The libraries desire to share services and staff. These funds will assist the library in the planning for the merging of services and staff.

**Total Special Priorities and Project Budget $1,489,576**

**CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE FY2016 PLAN OF SERVICE AND PROGRAM AND BUDGET FOR THE LIBRARY FOR THE COMMONWEALTH**

Chairman Shesko presented for approval the FY2016 Plan of Service and program budget for the Library for the Commonwealth as presented and discussed by Michael Colford, Director of Library Services at Boston Public Library, at the December 4, 2014 Board meeting.

Commissioner Murphy moved and Commissioner Caro seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approve the FY2016 Plan of Service and Budget filed on November 28, 2014 for the Boston Public Library as the Library for the Commonwealth with a bottom line of $2,501,883, including a personnel budget of $1,466,715 that exceeds the established 50% limit on personnel expenditures by $215,773.50.

**The Board voted approval.**

**CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE FY2016 PLAN OF SERVICE AND PROGRAM AND BUDGET FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS LIBRARY SYSTEM**

Gregory Pronevitz, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System, presented for approval the FY2016 Plan of Service and program budget for the Massachusetts Library System as presented and discussed at the December 4, 2014 Board meeting.

Commissioner Cluggish moved and Commissioner Kronholm seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approve the FY2016 Plan of Service and Budget filed on November 5, 2014 for the Massachusetts Library System with a bottom line of $7,381,599.

**The Board voted approval.**

**CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE FY2016 PLAN OF SERVICE AND PROGRAM AND BUDGET FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS CENTER FOR THE BOOK**

Sharon Shaloo, Executive Director, Massachusetts Center for the Book, presented for approval the FY2016 Plan of Service and program budget for the Massachusetts Center for the Book as presented and discussed at the December 4, 2014 Board meeting.

Commissioner Caro moved and Commissioner Kronholm seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approve the FY2016 Plan of Service and Budget filed on November 26, 2014 for the Massachusetts Center for the Book with a bottom line of $125,000.

**The Board voted approval.**

**PRESENTATION AND CONSIDRATION OF THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE STATE AID REVIEW WHITE PAPER**

Richard Kobayashi, Senior Analyst at the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management, and Team Leader for the State Aid White Paper and James Sutton, Project Associate for the White Paper, presented the White paper for consideration. The White Paper, which is a technical report, has reviewed all elements surrounding the State Aid to Public Libraries program.

Project Consultant James Sutton provided information about the methodology and interview process for the White Paper.

He noted that librarians have been exceedingly positive about state aid and, overall, perceive it to be a terrific program that has accomplished a great deal and the board has managed the program in a very sensitive way during the economic downturn. He stressed that reciprocity is the heart of the program.

Mr. Sutton also briefly discussed the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) and mentioned the “new normal” that has been created by libraries that continue to experience budget cuts and require MAR waivers year after year.

Mr. Sutton and Mr. Richard Kobayashi then took questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Resnick moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners accept the final State Aid to Public Libraries White Paper as presented, with minor editorial changes, and release the paper to the State Aid Review Committee for discussion and use as they review the State Aid to Public Libraries program.

**The Board voted approval.**

**REPORT FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS LIBRARY SYSTEM**

MLS Executive Director Gregory Pronevitz noted that accompanying him at today’s meeting is MLS Executive Board member and Chair of the Commonwealth eBook Collections Steering Committee Jackie Rafferty, Director of the Paul Pratt Library in Cohasset, Steve Spohn, MLS Resource Sharing Director, and Deb Hoadley, MLS Interim Training and Advisory Services Director and formally eBook Team Leader, and member of the State Aid Study Committee.

Mr. Pronevitz reported on the following items:

**Whately Facility Purchase**

The Town of Deerfield has now deferred to the interests of the Town of Whately. Whately is considering the facility as a Town Hall and Regional EMS service hub.

**Vacancies**

* MLS has a posting out for Training and Advisory Services Director closing February 15, 2015.
* MLS will be announcing a posting for Business & HR Director later this month.

**Member Forums**

MLS is scheduling a series of six member forums in 2015, beginning January 13 at South Hadley’s new library. Forty members are registered for the January event. MLS will be announcing the other locations soon.

**Regional Resource Sharing Symposium: Interstate Opportunities**

MLS announced the February 24, 2015 event at the Beechwood Hotel in Worcester earlier this week. MLS will be discussing opportunities for interstate delivery and other resource sharing. All are welcome.

**Commonwealth eBook Collections**

The first year beta project is going well. Thanks to Steve Spohn and his team’s extraordinary work and skills, MLS is moving forward with authentication and training for more than 300 libraries that have agreed to participate including 65% of public libraries. MLS is creating a shared statewide collection to help alleviate potential resource sharing issues in the future with three vendors to provide content purchased under three scenarios: ownership, short-term loan, and multi-user access with geolocation. The Steering Committee is providing member-driven governance for the project.

MLS appreciates the grant funds provided by MBLC for this important effort. The budget cuts sustained last month have prevented MLS from adding needed staff. MLS is calling in existing staff to contribute to the training and support efforts at the expense of their normal duties.

MLS is working with its consortia colleagues around the country to enhance user experience; advocate for libraries with publishers; and provide cost-effective content. MLS is planning to sign on as a partner with New York Public Library and others to develop and test enhanced technology and discuss the option of a library based eBook marketplace.

**REPORT ON THE MASSACHUSETTS E-BOOK PROGRAM**

MLS Resource Sharing Director Steve Spohn distributed a written update on the Commonwealth eBooks Collections (beta) program that has been in place since October 1, 2014, following the MA eBook Project pilot phase. Mr. Spohn noted that this update is organized by the 10 recommendations made by the Board of Library Commissioners. He discussed the recommendations on the beta phase and funding model of the program.

**COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES**

Commissioners Caro and Cluggish attended the Executive Committee meeting on December 23, 2014 at the Board offices in Boston.

Commissioners Cluggish, Resnick and Welch attended the retirement farewell for MLS Assistant Director Carolyn Noah on December 15, 2014 at MLS-Marlborough.

Commissioners Kronholm, Murphy, and Resnick attended the Library Journal Design Institute at the Boston Public Library on January 9, 2015.

Commissioner Kronholm attended the State Aid Review Committee meeting in Millbury on December 16, 2014.

Commissioner Resnick attended the Small Libraries in Networks working group meeting at MLS-Marlborough on November 24, 2014.

Commissioner Welch participated in the SACL conference call on December 18, 2014.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Shesko adjourned the January 8, 2015 monthly business meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners at 1:14 P.M.

Carol B. Caro

Secretary