MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

Date : January 2, 2020

Time : 10:00 am

Place : Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Offices

Boston, Massachusetts

Present : Roland A. Ochsenbein, Chairman; Mary Ann Cluggish, Vice Chairman; Mary Kronholm, Secretary; Deb Abraham; Les Ball; Stacy DeBole; Philip Madell, Esq.; N. Janeen Resnick

Absent : Gina Perille

**Staff Present:**

James Lonergan, Director; Liz Babbitt, State Aid Specialist; Celeste Bruno, Communications Director; Andrea Bunker, Library Building Specialist; Maura Deedy, Library Advisory Specialist; Tracey Dimant, Head of Operations and Budget; Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development; Lyndsay Forbes, Project Manager & Grant Specialist; Evan Knight, Preservation Specialist; Rachel Masse, Assistant to the Director; Matthew Perry, Outreach Coordinator; Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist

**Observers Present:**

Anna Fahey-Flynn, Central Library Manager, Boston Public Library (BPL); Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator, Boston Public Library (BPL); Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS)

**Call to Order**

Chairman Ochsenbein called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

**Approval of Minutes: December 5, 2019**

Commissioner Ball moved and Commissioner Resnick seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the minutes for the monthly business meeting on December 5, 2019 as presented.

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**Chairman’s Report**

Chairman Ochsenbein presented the following report:

Activities

I attended the December 9, 2019 MLS Executive Board meeting at the Marlborough offices, as MBLC board liaison.

On December 18, 2019 I participated in a planning session conference call to begin the work of updating and extending the agency strategic plan. Participants included the Executive Committee and the principals of Maverick and Boutique consulting firm--Abby Straus and Jane Darling. A formal kick off is scheduled for January 8, with a goal to have it wrapped by the end of the fiscal year.

I participated in the monthly Executive Committee conference call, also on December 18, 2019.

On December 19, I represented the board and spoke at the grand opening of the East Forest Park Branch of Springfield City Library in Springfield, Mass. This was a wonderful event, the culmination of years of planning and work and advocacy on behalf of the neighborhood and the city. A Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program grant of $4.9 million covered about 57% of the total cost. This event marked the sixth grand opening of a Massachusetts public library receiving a construction grant in the 12 month period from December 2018 to December 2019 (Stoughton, Woburn, Leicester, Monterey, Cambridge/Valente, and East Forest Park-Springfield City)!

On a related note, the construction team will be meeting immediately following today’s board meeting. The construction team will be reviewing the status of the bond bill (H.4154) currently with House Ways and Means, the status of discussions surrounding the annual construction cap, potential changes to the construction program, and an advocacy plan related to both the bond bill and the desired annual cap increase.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

Meetings/activities since the last Board meeting:

* December 9—Presented as part of the orientation for new MLS Executive Board members and attended monthly meeting, Marlborough
* December 11—COSLA webinar—Inclusive Services Consultant discussion
* December 12—Phone call with Abby Straus/Maverick & Boutique
* December 13—MLA Executive Board meeting, Shrewsbury
* December 17—eBooks for All Campaign Update webinar
* December 18—Strategic Planning Team conference call
* December 19—Springfield City Library East Forest Park Branch grand opening

H.4154, An Act Financing the General Governmental Infrastructure of the Commonwealth, which includes $150 million for the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP), is still in the House Ways and Means Committee. We are regularly monitoring the bill’s status.

Regarding the MPLCP annual cap, the Board’s Construction Team will meet immediately after our monthly board meeting to discuss the following: the status of the cap, including recent communications with A&F; potential changes to the MPLCP; an advocacy plan for working with the library community to support our bonding and annual cap goals for the MPLCP; and a small library pilot project.

Strategic Plan 2021-2025: The Strategic Planning Team (Executive Committee and management team) had our first group call on December 18 with Abby Straus and Jane Darling of Maverick & Boutique to discuss project scope/timing and to begin identifying stakeholders. Abby will be meeting with the Strategic Planning Team and staff in person on Wednesday, January 8.

On December 20, the President signed a bill that includes $252 million for IMLS for FY2020, including $166.8 million for LSTA Grants to States (a $6 million increase over FY2019 funding). On another note, the President has nominated Crosby Kemper, the director of the Kansas City Public Library since 2005, for a four-year term as IMLS’s next director. The Senate will consider the nomination once it is back in session.

We have submitted our FY2018 State Program Report (SPR) to IMLS with detailed narrative, financial, and performance information on how the MBLC and our grantees spent our $3,283,698 FY2018 LSTA Grants to States allotment. The report helps us tell the story of the impact that IMLS funding has on Massachusetts. Thank you to Rob Favini, our LSTA Coordinator, and the many staff members who contributed a great deal of time and effort to preparing the 40 project reports in this year’s SPR.

In other LSTA news, December 5 was the deadline for libraries to submit of letters of intent to apply for LSTA direct grants. This year saw a significant increase in letters with a total of 72 submitted. This represents a 47% increase over last year. Funds requested in the letters of intent far surpass this year’s direct grant budget, ensuring a very competitive grant round.

Opioid Symposium Mini Grants: December 20 marked the deadline for applications for the Opioid Symposium Mini Grants. Attendees of the November 15 symposium were eligible to apply for a mini grant ($500-$1000) to fund library programing and training. Response was terrific as 24 libraries submitted applications. Over the coming weeks a review team will evaluate the proposals and name recipients. The review team members are: Clayton Cheever, Assistant Director, Thomas Crane Public Library, Quincy; Christina Connolly, Public Services Supervisor, Worcester Public Library; Susan Halpin, Education and Outreach Specialist, National Network of Libraries of Medicine; Michele Eberly, MLS; and Shelley Quezada, MBLC.

Statewide Databases: As a result of the substantial increase in FY2020 for our Library Technology and Resource Sharing (7000-9506) budget line, and in partnership with MLS, we just brought back one database (Opposing Viewpoints) that was eliminated in 2017 due to budget cuts and added four new statewide library research databases:

Opposing Viewpoints (Gale) covers timely issues, from capital punishment to immigration to marijuana. This cross-curricular resource supports science, social studies, current events, and language arts classes. Informed, differing views help learners develop critical-thinking skills and draw their own conclusions.

Career Transitions (Gale) provides guidance and essential activities for job seekers and those investigating new career options, including students, soon to be graduates, and adults new to navigating the modern job market.

HeritageQuest Online (ProQuest) provides access to more than 4.4 billion records. It delivers an essential collection of genealogical and historical sources—with coverage dating back to the 1700s—that can help people find their ancestors and discover a place’s past.

Science Database (ProQuest) is a growing resource of 7.3 million full text articles from over 1,600 sources. In full-text format, researchers have access to all the charts, diagrams, graphs, tables, photos, and other graphical elements so vital to scientific and engineering literature. Supports the needs of students studying applied and general sciences.

Research Companion (ProQuest) helps students do more effective scholarly research and supports educators as they teach the core information literacy principles of finding, evaluating, and using information.

MPLCP: The Springfield City Library East Forest Park branch’s grand opening was held on Thursday, December 19; Commissioner Ochsenbein spoke at the ceremony, as did Library Caucus co-chair Senator Eric Lesser. The newly-constructed branch is 17,000 square feet and was completed with a $4,906,115 MPLCP grant, which was almost half of the $9,499,221 total project cost. The branch library was previously located in a rented space in a neighborhood strip mall. It includes a spacious meeting room, quiet study rooms, a large children’s room, a dedicated teen area, and a makerspace. It is one of a few neighborhood enhancement projects completed after the EF-3 tornado that hit the area in 2011.

Liz Babbitt attended the annual meeting of State Data Coordinators (SDC) in Albuquerque from December 10-13. She was elected by her colleagues to fill a one-year vacant position as an SDC mentor and as a representative to the Library Statistics Working Group (LSWG). LSWG was set up by IMLS to “review new data elements, identify methods for improving the usefulness of data, and contribute to the development of new library statistics products”. Representatives on the working group include the Chief Officers of five state library agencies, five state data coordinators, and five representatives of the library and community development research community. They meet several times per year online and in person.

The communications team has been working with Buyer to finish the Legislative Agenda website. The goal of the webpage is to provide further information about the State Aid to Public Libraries program that supports the four key points on the print version:

1. State Aid to Public Libraries increases access for all residents;
2. it saves money;
3. it can be used for any library related expense; but
4. state funding has not kept pace with local funding.

To that end, the website will feature more quotes from library directors, will allow a user to see how many items their local library received from other communities and how much money the community saved by being certified in the State Aid program.

The team also developed social media posts to support the Legislative Agenda. These feature some of the compelling quotes received in the legislative agenda survey and will be posted on the agency’s social media channels over the next few months using #StateAidinMA; librarians can also share how they use state aid—these will all appear on the webpage. The team has also developed materials to support the new statewide databases and finished the new MBLC Magazine which will be out (in print and online) later this month.

Staff news: Ann Downey, our systems analyst, is retiring on January 15 after almost 30 years at the MBLC. Ann received a 2019 Citation of Outstanding Performance for her exemplary work in our migrating to a new data collection and statistical reporting platform. We thank Ann for her dedicated service to the MBLC and to the Commonwealth’s libraries and wish her all the best in her retirement!

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

Director Lonergan gave the Legislative Report on Mary Rose Quinn’s behalf.

* The Governor’s House 2 Budget is due out January 22 in time for Gov. Baker’s State of the Commonwealth Address.
* The Bond Bill that includes the $150 Million for library construction remains in the House Ways & Means.
* There are now 10 Legislative Breakfasts scheduled from January 10 in Brewster to March 9 in Monson. The events this year include a luncheon, an evening social, and a breakfast on a Monday rather than the traditional Friday. An eleventh breakfast in Hingham is still pending. The breakfasts will wrap up around the same time as Ways and Means FY2021 Budget Hearings are scheduled. The MBLC will provide handouts including the Legislative Agendas, the MBLC Budget Organization Chart, the affiliate sheets, and the revised construction sheet.
* The Mass Municipal Association (MMA) Trade Show & Convention will be held on January 24 and 25. Commissioners Kronholm, Cluggish, and DeBole will be helping at the booth in addition to MBLC staff.
* National Library Legislative Day in Washington will be held on the Georgetown Campus May 4 and 5. Several Mass Library leaders have expressed interest in attending and a number have already registered. In addition to attending briefings and trainings, attendees will have an opportunity to meet with staff from the nine Congressional and two senate offices during the two day event.
* Revenues for November were above the benchmark and above the prior year totals. November 2019 revenues were $2.093 Billion, $237 million or 12.7% more than last November and $148 million above benchmark. Mid December figures totaled $927 million, down $42 million or -4.4% from last December at the same point in December.

**Consideration of approval of the LSTA Summer Learning Grants**

Lyndsay Forbes, Project Manager and Grant Specialist presented the LSTA Summer Learning Grant program that aims to encourage public libraries to offer learning opportunities to school aged youth during the summer beyond the summer reading program.

While summer reading programs are a well-established tradition, libraries offer many other opportunities for learning during the summer months. This program supports expanding the concept of summer learning in libraries beyond reading. Public libraries may apply for funds in the range of $1000-2000 to carry out a project that promotes youth learning in their community during the summer.

There were 27 applications received.

Ms. Forbes presented the following 13 libraries to receive grant awards totaling $20,000.

**Jones Library, Amherst Grant Award : $1,950**Jones Library will host four three-day sessions of a robotics boot camp. Aimed at middle to high school youth, the camp will offer instruction about robotics and basic programming. Participants would build a robot, learn simple coding software, and program their robot to complete obstacle courses using color, touch and IR sensors.

**Cambridge Public Library Grant Award : $1,245**Cambridge Public Library will expand the existing library garden. The revamped garden will be maintained by teens employed in the Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program. Additions to the garden include a compost feature, mason bee house, beneficial plantings for pollinators, and a way to reclaim rainwater. Related programming will be offered throughout the summer.

**Forbes Library, Northampton Grant Award : $2,000**  
Inspired by the summer reading theme “Imagine your Story”, Forbes Library will offer *World Voices,* a series of performances that will highlight the stories, cultures, and languages of people from around the world. The series will showcase diverse formats for telling a story, such as through movement, song, and oral history.

**Hubbard Memorial Library, Ludlow Grant Award : $1,800**  
Hubbard Memorial Library will offer a Live Action Role Play (LARP) program. LARP is a type of interactive improvisational theater program in which the participants role-play characters “in real life” through physical action while wearing costumes and using props appropriate to the storyline. Aimed at teens and tweens, this program will offer participants the opportunity to learn through play in a non-competitive environment.

**Lawrence Public Library Grant Award : $1,400**In partnership with local nonprofit Tech4Hood, Lawrence Public Library will offer a biweekly tech camp for teens. Over the course of eight weeks, participants will learn about augmented reality, machine learning, internet of things, coding, web development, robotics, and mobile development.

**Mattapoisett Free Public Library Grant Award : $1,000**  
Mattapoisett Free Public Library will offer a six week program that will focus on a different myth or tale connected to Mattapoisett’s environment through both land and water. The Library will work with local museums and artists to develop programming and activities. Each theme developed will also have a circulating backpack with books, activity sheets, and toys and manipulatives.

**Needham Free Public Library Grant Award : $1,240**  
Needham Free Public Library will offer *Building the Story*. Participants will be able to design fantasy buildings, landscape, and characters using FableVision Learning. These creations will be printed and assembled by participants into a 3D paper model of a fairytale world. The Library will also offer four separate Fairytale Engineering sessions, which combine oral storytelling of traditional tales with science and engineering concepts.

**Pollard Memorial Library, Lowell Grant Award : $1,125**  
Pollard Memorial Library will expand its STEAM offerings. Funding will be used to provide additional STEAM programming, purchase materials and storage to enhance current offerings, and conduct outreach to the local Girls, Inc. summer program.

**Porter Memorial Library, Blandford** **Grant Award : $1,960**  
Porter Memorial Library will offer *Code Bots,* a series of beginner level robotics programming classes aimed at rising first grader to sixth graders. A local high school intern will be hired to assist with the classes. The Library will also provide two simple robots available for check out.

**Randall Library, Stow Grant Award : $1,700**  
Randall Library will expand their monarch butterfly programming. There will be a series of programs focusing on monarch development, husbandry, and the importance of habitat. The Library will also offer circulating “Take a Hike - Butterflies” backpacks, teach patrons how to safely tag butterflies, and plant milkweed and nectar plants in the Library planters to attract monarchs and other pollinators.

**Scituate Town Library Grant Award : $1,070**  
Scituate Town Library will address the variety of stressors affecting adolescents through *Mindful Mornings,* a weekly workshop focused on the practices of yoga, meditation, and mindfulness. Aimed at tweens and teens, the program will introduce a number of tools, exercises, and activities that youth can use now and for life to manage stress, anxiety, and big emotions.

**Sharon Public Library Grant Award : $1,510**  
Sharon Public Library will offer *Diversi-con*, a seven week series of tween programs promoting diverse characters and creators through book and media discussions paired with interactive, themed STEAM/creative activities. A teen intern will provide assistance with the series. During the hands-on creative components of programs, participants will be encouraged to imagine their own diverse stories through costume and prop creation. There will also be a culminating celebration at the end of the series featuring a cosplay fashion show to share tweens’ completed workshop projects with their peers and community.

**Waltham Public Library Grant Award : $2,000**  
Waltham Public Library will offer a three day graffiti camp led by Boston graffiti legend Cedric “Vise One” Douglas. Aimed at teens and tweens, participants will learn about the history of graffiti, explore techniques of letter-making, and use spray paint to create a group mural. They will also take a field trip to see the art created at Lynn’s Beyond Walls festival.

Commissioner Cluggish moved and Commissioner Resnick seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the LSTA Summer Learning Grants $20,000 as presented in agenda item 5.

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**consideration of approval for the FY2021 Plan of Service and Program and Budget for the Massachusetts Library System**

Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director presented the FY2021 Plan of Service and Program and Budget at the December 5, 2019 meeting.

The MLS Executive Board unanimously approved the budget at its September 16, 2019 meeting and the MLS Council of members approved it unanimously on November 4, 2019.

The priorities of the plan of Service and our Strategic Plan will continue with our Executive Board approving an extension to our Strategic Plan through 2020. This plan of service calls for the development of a new plan to launch in 2021. In keeping with our current Strategic Plan, we will continue to develop a co-creator culture to actively engage our members through discussion groups around the State; MLS will continue its involvement in advocacy efforts and building resources for the community. We will continue to develop services so all libraries and MLS staff can manage change and become future ready.

MLS will continue to focus on our three strategic goals; co-creator culture, future readiness and marketing, communication and advocacy.

The budget is based on our current annual budget figure: $8,637,000.

Commissioner Resnick moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the FY2021 Plan of Service and Program and Budget filed on December 5, 2019 for the Massachusetts Library System, with a bottom line of $8,637,000 as presented in agenda item 6.

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**Review of municipalities requesting waivers for the FY2020 municipal appropriation requirement in the FY2020 State Aid to Public Libraries Program within the 5% threshold**

Liz Babbitt, State Aid Specialist presented 17 libraries that were petitioning the Board for a Waiver of the MAR that were below the five percent threshold set by the Board for not being disproportionately cut in relationship to other departments within their municipality. These 17 municipalities are Adams, Clarksburg, Duxbury, Fairhaven, Fall River, Greenfield, Haverhill, Lawrence, Longmeadow, Malden, Montgomery, Newbury, North Adams, Somerset, Ware, Warren, and Yarmouth.

Board will vote on waivers at the February 6, 2020 meeting.

**Presentation and discussion of the fy2021 plan of service and program and budget for the library for the commonwealth and monthly report**

Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator presented the Program and Budget.

The budget we are submitting is level-funded at $2,879,000. In the coming year, we are looking to expand our role as a leader in digitization services by creating a historical Massachusetts newspaper repository to share the Commonwealth’s shared cultural heritage. Our budget shows an additional Developer for this project as well as an increase in contractual services to account for the rise in cloud storage costs. We do not expect to request over and above the 50% personnel costs allowed in the LFC budget. In addition, we are exploring new opportunities to establish partnerships to develop the connection between communities and library resources. BPL has been piloting workshops and trainings around the themes of Education, Civic Engagement, and Personal Success.

Our e-book collection continues to be our most popular resource, as it recently surpassed over 10,000,000 total checkouts through OverDrive. 2,000,000 of those checkouts were in calendar year 2019, which saved Massachusetts taxpayers over $30,000,000.

Catherine Halpin, presented the following update:

# Digital Commonwealth

* *Analyze data collected on usage of collections site to; track popular collections, improve search features, highlight successful consultations*

Between July and mid-November:

46applications for digitization consultations were received

20site visits took place

24bound material collections were added to Internet Archive

31,209items were added to the Digital Commonwealth repository (15,246 hosted, 15,963 harvested)

Tracey Dimant, from MBLC, visited the Central Library with the new House Ways and Means Analyst. Catherine Halpin and Anna Fahey-Flynn gave a tour highlighting how LFC funds are used, but also concrete examples of how the other library budget lines support what we and libraries across the state do.

**Standing Committee and Liaison Reports**

**COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES**

**Commissioner Resnick**

* Attended Holiday Dozen Event in Amherst as liaison to the Center for the Book

**Commissioner Cluggish**

* Participated in Executive Committee Conference Call
* Will be speaking at Brewster Legislative Luncheon

**Commissioner Kronholm**

* Participated in the Strategic Planning Conference Call
* Participated in the Executive Board Conference Call

**Commissioner Madell**

* Worked on draft of the Bylaws. The committee will be meeting after the February Board Meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Cluggish moved and Commissioner Ball seconded to adjourn the January 2, 2020 monthly business meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners at 11:20 am.



Mary Kronholm

Secretary