MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS MONTHLY REGULAR MEETING

Date: Thursday, June 4, 2020

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Place: Zoom Teleconference

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

**Staff Participants:**

James Lonergan, Director; Liz Babbitt, State Aid Specialist; Celeste Bruno, Communications Director; Andrea Bunker, Library Building Specialist; Kate Butler, Electronic Services Specialist; Tracey Dimant, Head of Operations & Budget; Maura Deedy, Library Advisory Specialist; Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development; Susan Gibson, Accountant V; Paul Kissman, Library Information Systems Specialist; Evan Knight, Preservation Specialist; Rachel Masse, Assistant to the Director; Matthew Perry, Outreach Coordinator; Shelley Quezada, Consultant to the Unserved; Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs / Government Liaison; Aparna Ramachandran, Data Analyst/IT Systems Specialist; Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist

**Observers Participants:**

Sharon Bernard, Library Director, Fitchburg Public Library; Candace Bradbury-Carlin, Library Director, Tilton Library, Deerfield; Margaret Cardello, Library Director, Marlborough Public Library; Candice Cross, Board Chair, Wheeler Memorial Library, Orange; Eileen Dyer, Library Director, Swansea Free Public Library; Kent Faeber, Jones Library Inc., Amherst; Peter Feinstein, Trustee, Gloucester Lyceum & Sawyer Free Library, Gloucester; Linda C.W. Gardener, Library Director, Melrose Public Library; Dr. J Lynn Griesemer, Town Council, Amherst; Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator, Boston Public Library (BPL); Mandi Jo Hanneke, Town Council, Amherst; Jennifer Inglis, Library Director, Lynnfield Public Library; Deborah Kelsey, Library Director, Gloucester Lyceum & Sawyer Free Library, Gloucester; Marie Letarte, Library Director, Bigelow Free Public Library, Clinton; Jeannette Lundgren, Network Administrator, CW MARS, Inc.; Kathy Lussier, Executive Director, SAILS, Inc.; Christopher McGee, Director of Library Services, East Bridgewater Public Library; Philip McNulty, Network Administrator, Minuteman Library Network (MLN); Molly Moss, Assistant Director, Forbes Library, Northampton; Cynthia St. Amour, Library Director, Brewster Ladies Library, Brewster; Austin Sarat, Trustee Chair, Jones Library Inc., Amherst; Sharon Sharry, Library Director, Jones Library, Inc., Amherst; Sharon Shaloo, Executive Director, Massachusetts Center for the Book; Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS); Lorin Starr, Jones Library Inc., Amherst

**Meeting Called to Order by Chair Ochsenbein**

Chair Ochsenbein called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

**Approval of Minutes: May 7, 2020**

Commissioner Ball moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the minutes for the monthly business meeting on May 7, 2020 with minor corrections.

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| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner DeBole- YES | Commissioner Ochsenbein- YES |
| Commissioner Ball- YES | Commissioner Kronholm- YES | Commissioner Perille- YES |
| Commissioner Cluggish- YES | Commissioner Madell- YES | Commissioner Resnick- YES |

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**Chair’s Report**

Chair Ochsenbein presented the following report:

It’s been yet another month for the history books. I would like to once again recognize and commend the agency staff and management for their extraordinary efforts these difficult past weeks and months. The challenges associated with maintaining focus and equilibrium during these times of rapid change, uncertainty, and health risks are not to be ignored.

In mid-May, I attended and spoke, as did Director Lonergan, at the series of Virtual Library Legislative Days sponsored and organized by MLA and MSLA. The online events took place on May 12, 13, and 14. They were well attended. In fact, more advocates logged in to these meetings than usually attend the annual Legislative Day at the State House! A number of state reps and senators, or their staff, also spoke (or virtually attended), including both House Library Caucus Co-Chairs and the Senate Library Caucus Chair.

My focus this month, as it has been for a while now, has been on reopening efforts and FY21 budgets, including the construction bond.

Regarding reopening, the Reopening Advisory Board released its report on May 18, which included brief guidance for libraries. The report indicated that as of May 25 curbside pick-up and drop-off would be allowed, with appropriate safety and quarantining protocols in place. Further, the imminent authorization of Phase 2 (possibly as early as Monday, June 8) will allow municipalities to open their library buildings to patrons, including browsing inside the libraries, but with mandatory and extensive restrictions. The decision as to whether or not—and when—to operate to the full extent of what the Reopening Advisory Board orders allow within each phase remains a local decision.

Following shortly after the Reopening Advisory Board’s report, the MBLC and MLS jointly released recommendations for libraries regarding the phased reopening of buildings and services, with primary focus on safety of staff and patrons. The MBLC/MLS guidance was issued May 21, 2020. The documents were assembled by a team that included Rob Favini and Maura Deedy from the MBLC, and Sara Sogigian and Terry McQuown from MLS, with input from over 500 librarians statewide and other relevant industry research as to best practices. Well done! The guidance is comprehensive and targeted to the needs of libraries in communities of all kinds and sizes. It includes guidelines, roadmaps, and templates. The regularly updated Lib Guide is available through the MLS website.

Regarding the budget, we appear to be no closer to having an FY 2021 budget than we were a month ago, although I think that the dimensions of the economic disruption/pause are better understood, as is the likely shape of the recovery—it is likely not going to be a V-shaped recovery, or even a U-shaped recovery, but rather a swoosh, meaning a fairly long duration recovery. It is certain that the state will be working with smaller revenue numbers for FY2021 than initially projected, which means a very difficult budget season ahead.

As we said in the Legislative Day sessions, it is timely that we are focusing on State Aid To Public Libraries as the FY 2021 legislative priority, given the expected pressures local town/city budgets are going to feel.

The construction program is also very much affected by the economic disruption. We’ll talk in more detail about the status of the bond bill and cap in a moment during the Director’s Report and Legislative Report portion of the agenda. Even as we’ve been fighting to secure and protect funding for those projects on the wait list through the bond bill, we are now hearing growing concern from some wait list communities – especially those high on the list – about timing and their ability to make the match and move forward, given the suddenly changed fiscal landscape. The construction team met earlier this week to discuss this, and all of these points will be discussed in Item 11: Libraries and COVID 19, later in this meeting.

Finally, a word about the agenda. You may have noticed a new item on the agenda—Item 3: Commissioner Reports. This new regular item is proposed in response to suggestions from Commissioners to separate reports from activities and move important Commissioner updates more to the front of the meeting. Commissioner *reports* are intended to be a place to report out any MBLC-related activities that one might have been engaged in during the course of the month, or expect to be in the near future, for example: SACL, or ALA, or Census, a meeting with a legislator, speaking at a grand opening, a Commissioner-liaison topic, etc. Commissioner *activities,* therefore, will be a place for Commissioners to comment on more local activities that they might have engaged in or think might be interest to the Board, for instance: a fund-raising success, a great library program, etc.

**Commissioner Reports**

**Commissioner Cluggish**

* Participated in Executive Committee Call
* Participated in ALA Webinar
* Participated in Construction Team Meeting
* Sent about 40 emails to the Way and Means Committee Members
* Presented the welcome for one of the Trustee Orientations

**Commissioner Ball**

* Participated in Executive Committee Call
* Participated in Construction Team Meeting
* Worked with local town of Scituate about reopening

**Commissioner Abraham**

* Attended MLA Virtual Library Legislative Day
* Participated in one of the Trustee Orientations
* Participated in Construction Team Meeting

**Commissioner Resnick**

* Worked with Amherst
* Will be participating in Massachusetts Center for the Book Board Meeting that afternoon
* Attended MLA Virtual Library Legislative Day on behalf of WMLA

**Commissioner Kronholm**

* Attended MLA Virtual Library Legislative Day
* Participated in Executive Committee Call

**Commissioner Perille**

* May 07 - ALA How Foundations and Friends Can Support Their Libraries During Covid-19
* May 14 - MLA Virtual Library Legislative Day
* May 14 - Contacted my local state rep (Rep. Elugardo) for support of the bond authorization
* May 15 - ALA Working Together on Planning, Policies, and Legal Issues for Reopening a Public Library
* May 19 - popped in on the MBLC Virtual Trustee Orientation
* May 21 - Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Forum: Speaker DeLeo
* May 29 - Boston Globe Webinar on Unlocking Museums: Moving Forward in a Crisis
* June 02 - Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Forum: Attorney General Maura Healey

**Director’s Report**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

Meetings/activities since the last monthly Board meeting:

* May 7 and 21—MLS Sustainable Funding Committee meetings (virtual)
* May/early June—COSLA & COSLINE weekly virtual check-ins during COVID-19 crisis
* May 11— MLS Executive Board meeting, virtual
* May 12, 13, 14—Virtual Library Legislative Day sessions
* May 12 and 13—IMLS Grants to States Meeting (virtual)
* May 15—Call with Rep. Joan Meschino re: bond bill amendment proposal
* May 15—Call with Robert Miller, Lyrasis CEO re: Overdrive and SimplyE app
* May 28—COSLA/IMLS discussion of proposed COVID-19 survey questions
* June 1—Construction Team Meeting (virtual)
* June 1—Call with Rep. Mindy Domb re: construction waitlist

Commissioner Ochsenbein and I presented during the four **virtual Library Legislative Day** regional events sponsored by MLA and MSLA on May 12, 13, and 14. Almost 400 people registered for the calls, including a number of state representatives and senators. Our library caucus co-chairs Sen. Eric Lesser and Reps. Natalie Higgins and Brian Murray each spoke during one of the four virtual events. I reviewed the FY2021 Legislative Agenda, and Roland issued a call to action.

During the session with Rep. Higgins, she let us know that the IT bond bill (H.4708) had been rewritten earlier that week and no longer included $150 million for the MPLCP, but $100 million, due to funding being reallocated to COVID—19 related expenditures. Reps. Higgins and Murray sponsored an amendment (with 50 co-sponsors) to add $50 million to the MPLCP line, but ultimately House Ways and Means only supported amending the amount up to $115 million. The bill, now H.4733, was passed by the House to be engrossed and has been referred to the Senate Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures, and State Assets. Mary Rose has reached out to Sen. Lesser and his staff regarding the possibility of amending the bill to include a higher amount for the MPLCP.

As a follow-up to one of the virtual Legislative Day events, Rep. Joan Meschino contacted me about her interest in sponsoring an amendment to the IT bond bill to provide $10 million for a competitive, matching grant program to be administered by the MBLC, to assist public libraries in developing virtual resources and programming to promote remote learning and access to technology. This amendment failed in committee.

**Construction Team:** Commissioners Ochsenbein, Cluggish, Ball, and Abraham met with Mary Rose, Tracey, Lauren, Andrea, and me on Monday, June 1 to discuss the MPLCP and plans for FY2021. While no decision regarding expending FY2021 MPLCP funds will be made until after we have official notification from the Executive Office of Administration and Finance regarding our annual expenditure cap for FY2021 and the IT bond bill including authorization for MPLCP funds passes, we were in agreement that a pause in offering new provisional awards for FY2021 would make the most sense given the challenging economic situation most municipalities will be experiencing for the next fiscal year.

We would not provide provisional awards to the three communities that have already started construction projects (Boston and Grafton) or have recently completed projects (Cambridge) using their own local funds, but we would be able to make contractual payments to them if funds are available. Those three projects would remain on the waitlist and would receive provisional awards after the communities ahead of them receive or decline awards. If the Commissioners agree with this proposal, you would not vote on the contractual awards referenced above until our July 9 MBLC board meeting at the earliest.

Maura, Liz, and Rob hosted three virtual **trustee orientations** in May, which worked out very well. To make things a little more interactive they used the Zoom breakout room to allow people to talk with each other about how their libraries were preparing for reopening.

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| **Date** | **Location** | **Status** |
| Thursday, May 14, 20206:00pm - 8:00pm | Virtual | 40 |
| Tuesday, May 19, 202010:00am - 12:00pm | Virtual | 44 |
| Wednesday, May 20, 202010:00am - 12:00pm | Virtual | 30 |
| **Total** |  | **114** |

We wrapped up all the listening sessions for the MLS and MBLC’s **Reopening Libraries Project** with a total of 576 participants at the beginning of May. With feedback gained from these meetings, the state’s reopening report, CDC and other experts, and MBLC/MLS staff input, Terry McQuown and Sarah Sogigian from MLS and Rob and Maura developed three informational pieces that were released to the library community on May 21:

* Written guidelines: <https://guides.masslibsystem.org/ld.php?content_id=54800213>
* A roadmap that details the 4 phases: <https://guides.masslibsystem.org/ld.php?content_id=54800239>
* A template plan and policy for libraries to adapt for local use: <https://guides.masslibsystem.org/ld.php?content_id=54800273>

Rob and Mary Rose also participated on a call with Laurence Mayor Daniel Rivera and Library Director Jessica Vilas Novas to talk about library reopening plans. Mayor Rivera serves on the state's reopening commission.

Paul Kissman, Kate Butler and Shelley Quezada had a planning meeting on May 1 with representatives from the MA Court Service Centers, MA Trial Court Libraries, The Social Law Library, and Access to Justice to work on meeting the needs of citizens seeking legal information during the pandemic. They are working to provide virtual programming to provide **legal reference** on a wide range of topics that include employment law, landlord/tenant law and food stamps.

Multiple MBLC staff attended the two-day virtual IMLS Grants to States Conference. Rob presented as part of a panel on disaster preparedness and discussed the MBLC's disaster response program and our response to COVID-19.

**Donations to Correctional Libraries**: Shelley has connected with approximately forty libraries from across the state to collect donations from libraries that will go to incarcerated inmates in three DOC facilities. The inmates have been in lockdown since March due to COVID-19, with no access to library services or books. Shelley has been coordinating with the librarians from Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center (SBCC) and MCI Cedar Junction (Walpole) to pick up materials that will be delivered this week to SBCC and shared among institutions.

Moving forward, Shelley plans to reach out to contacts at DMH to see if donations can be coordinated for local homeless shelters and family shelters. The need is great, and these materials will continue to be appreciated.

**Video Library**: The video library, created in collaboration with First Lady Lauren Baker, continues to be popular. It now houses hundreds of educational and entertaining videos. Matt has worked closely with the First Lady to facilitate her doing a story-time video which is now the first video one sees on the site. The book that Bruins mascot Blades and Mrs. Baker read during their library visits is Up the Creek. Rachel has secured permission from the publishers for the duo to read the book together for another video story-time for the site. Matt is currently coordinating this effort. The communications team has also updated the video library site; changes include being able to search by library as well as by topic of interest.

**New site story collecting:** The communications team has collaborated with the Massachusetts Library System to collect stories about how libraries are responding to the pandemic. There are two ways for libraries to share. The [*From the Heart website*](https://www.librariesrespond.com/) is the MBLC initiative that collects stories about the creative ways Massachusetts libraries are stepping up and supporting their communities and residents. Libraries simply upload their stories. The MBLC can then share these stories more broadly with legislators, local officials and media. They have already been shared in recent media contacts (more info below). *Library Idea Share* is an MLS initiative aimed at librarians. As libraries begin to re-open it asks librarians to share how it’s going; what’s worked well and not-so-well. Libraries email their story to Kelly Jo Woodside and it’s shared on the MLS website.

**Media**: The communications team has also been busy with media. They have recently worked with CBS Boston, the Boston Globe, and WGBH on stories about how libraries have been impacted by the pandemic, how libraries have responded to COVID-19, and how libraries will re-open. The team has also developed and sent template news releases that libraries can use with their local media on the following topics: the statewide calendar of virtual events, the video library, the Bruins prizes, and the new summer challenge

**Summer:** The communications team is also gearing up for summer. The portal is being updated with information about libraries participating in the statewide summer challenge (First Lady of the Commonwealth and Bruins Mascot Blades), summer success stories and how summer reading benefits kids and teens. Libraries ordered materials for the national summer program through the MBLC this year and they are being shipped to libraries.

Staff has developed new ready-made social media posts for libraries to use to promote summer programs. They feature people at home, in a tent, and in other locations with laptops and tablets with text that says “Summer at the Library.”

**Boston Bruins**
Hockey may potentially start again in July which means our partners, the Boston Bruins, will be on the ice during the summer. Staff received over 50 applications for visits from Bruins Mascots Blades (even though the shutdown happened just 10 days after the application was released).

While visits will not happen this summer, new Bruins prizes will be awarded as part of the statewide reading challenge. Winners of the first round of prizes have already been drawn. Staff draws these prizes at the beginning of the summer and notify the winners so that libraries can use the prize as part of their promotion for summer reading.

Here is the response received from one of the winners:
*Wow! This is so unexpected!!!!! So cool! As we're trying to get folks excited about SRP this crazy summer this will be such a gift for our summer reading raffle as part of the Mrs. Baker and Blades Reading Challenge! I'm actually crying right now. I am so moved!*

**PJ Drive**Even though the Boston Bruins PJ Drive was interrupted by the pandemic, as of June 1, we have heard from 84 of the 126 libraries that registered for the PJ Drive and they have collected 11,176 pajamas. Matt has been coordinating with MLS warehouses to have Cradles to Crayons and DCF pick up pajamas that were stored there at the start of the pandemic. As of now all pajamas are picked up. Libraries that have pajamas still in their buildings have been asked to donate to a local community group and not put them into delivery.

Here’s an email we received: *The Holmes Public Library in Halifax collected 124 pairs of pajamas. We are donating them to Dove Inc. a local domestic violence shelter. Thank you so much for all that you do!*

**Legislative Report**

Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs presented the following report:

May Revenue collections total $1.738 billion. Monthly tax collections are down $262 billion or 13.1% when compared to May of 2019 and $320 million or 15.6% below the monthly benchmark. Fiscal year to-date through May, the state has collected $24.782 billion which is $1.726 billion or 6.5% less than 2019 and $2.253 billion or 8.3% below the benchmark. The full Department of Revenue (DOR) Report is published at the DOR website (mass.gov/dor).

There still has been no word from the Legislature on when each Branch plans to take up the Fiscal 2021 budget. There continues to be discussion concerning budget options that include developing a joint budget proposal through a Ways and Means Conference Committee as the first, rather than the last step in the budget process. Since the Ways and Means Hearing earlier this spring when financial experts testified that they expected a $4 billion shortfall going into the new fiscal year, those same economists and others are now projecting as much as a $6 billion revenue deficit. The governor's office and the Administration and Finance Secretary continue to push for additional federal funding to offset tax revenue losses and review options to use the rainy day fund to support the FY 2021 budget.

House Ways and Means did a complete rewrite of the IT Bond Bill, which includes library construction funding, before sending it to the full House for amendments and passage. The rewrite and most of the amendments that were approved related to COVID 19 projects and expenses. The new bill reduced the Bond for library construction to the original $100 million as proposed by the Governor last spring from the $150 million included by House Bonding last fall. While disappointing, this revision was not surprising, given the unprecedented crisis that faces the country. Representatives Natalie Higgins and Brian Murray, along with 50 of their colleagues co-sponsored an amendment to return the library construction amount to $150 million. The House approved $115 million in its final vote; this amount will fund the libraries on the waitlist. The bill has been sent to Senate Bonding where the Committee is accepting written testimony until 5:00 P.M. today.

The Senate has joined the House in approving remote formal sessions. This change will help speed up Senate consideration of the budget, funding for COVID 19 related expenditures, and passage of the IT Bond Bill now that the House has voted and sent it on to Senate Bonding. From Bonding, the bill will move to Ways and Means before heading to the full Senate for amendments and a vote. Senator Eric Lesser, Senate Co-Chair of the Legislative Library Caucus, has agreed to file an amendment to the library construction section of the bill. Swift passage is expected since there is considerable COVID 19 related funding in the bill.

Close to 400 attendees participated in the Massachusetts Library Association/Massachusetts School Library Association Virtual Library Legislative Day. Legislators were well represented at each of the sessions held over three days. MLA logged 575 uses of Engage, their advocacy tool, immediately following the events. The timing of the sessions was fortuitous for the construction bond bill. House Ways and Means released the proposal and requested amendments during the advocacy days’ events, giving legislators an opportunity to hear directly from their library constituents on the importance of state funding for libraries, including bond funding for library construction.

**Consideration of a FY2021 Grant Round for 7000-9506, Library Technology and Resource Sharing, including Telecommunications for Resource Sharing, Resource Sharing Program, Network Infrastructure, and Small Libraries in Networks**

Paul Kissman presented the four FY2021 Telecommunications, Resource Sharing, Network Infrastructure, and Small Libraries in Networks Grants.

Due to the fact that we may not know the final budget figure for Account 7000-9506 until well after July 1, no specific grant figures have been projected at this time. The motion authorizes the grant rounds as outlined below and in the accompanying fact sheets. I would be pleased to come before the Board later in the summer or fall with specific figures for each grant opportunity once the FY21 budget picture becomes clearer.

**Telecommunications for Resource Sharing** provides offsets to the ongoing costs that networks bear for providing broadband connectivity, dedicated data lines and shared Internet service to their members. Telecommunications for Resource Sharing also provides ongoing support for the cost of Internet service for smaller libraries that are not part of a network.

The **Resource Sharing Program** grant recognizes that libraries in networks are contributing to the overall universe of materials available to all residents of Massachusetts, by showing their holdings in network bibliographic databases, and by facilitating interlibrary lending using network technology.

The Resource Sharing grant also offsets the annual platform fees for those networks participating in the LEA (Library eBooks and AudioBooks) sharing effort, funded through LSTA (7000-9702).

The **Network Infrastructure** grant provides funding to each network based on the network’s size in number of outlets. These funds allow the network to accomplish large equipment replacement projects and related system costs on its own timeline.

The **Small Libraries in Networks** (SLIN) grant encompasses all previous versions of Small Libraries support: the original 2002/2003 libraries, the state expansion grant begun in 2007, and the pre-existing small library members brought into the program in FY15. With these funds, networks directly offset annual membership costs for small public libraries.

Commissioner DeBole moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the four FY 2021 grant opportunities, to be funded out of account 7000-9506 as described in the fact sheets in agenda item 6: Telecommunications for Resource Sharing, Resource Sharing Program, Network Infrastructure, Small Libraries in Networks.

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| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner DeBole- YES | Commissioner Ochsenbein- YES |
| Commissioner Ball- YES | Commissioner Kronholm- YES | Commissioner Perille- YES |
| Commissioner Cluggish- YES | Commissioner Madell- YES | Commissioner Resnick- YES |

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**Consideration of a FY2021 Grant Round for 7000-9506, LEA eContent grants**

Kate Butler, Electronic Systems Specialist presented the LEA eContent Grants.

The **Library eBooks and Audiobooks (LEA) Content** grant provides networks participating in the LEA program with additional funds to purchase sharable eContent. These funds will directly support the continually growing demand for eBooks and Audiobooks across the Commonwealth.

**Background**

Three networks (SAILS, OCLN and Minuteman) piloted a new inter-network lending model with the vendor OverDrive beginning in the winter of 2017-18. The pilot allowed, for the first time, patrons of one network to check out eBooks and Audiobooks from the collection of another network. Over the course of the next year, the remaining automated networks having OverDrive collections joined the program. By May 2019, with the on boarding of the final two networks, the Library eBook and Audiobook (LEA) lending program was available statewide. In addition, the SAILS network serves as the access point through which MassCat members and unaffiliated libraries may participate. MLS manages these participants.

**Purpose of this Grant Offering**

The LEA program creates a statewide eContent system more closely approximating how books and other physical materials are shared. However, the current marketplace for digital books bears little resemblance to that for physical books and media. Prices and license periods for eContent are in constant flux, and often trend in ways harmful to library budgets. The LEA Content Grants funding will significantly supplement networks’ own collection development purchases, will help reduce hold queues and patron wait times, and increase the breadth of the collection.

**Procedures**

Each network provides MBLC with title and holdings counts of their shareable OverDrive collection, and both the network spending and individual library spending on shareable content for the previous fiscal year. Items which are not shareable via LEA -- eMagazines, simultaneous use products, and OverDrive Advantage copies -- are not eligible for inclusion. Awards will be calculated with a common base amount for each network, with the remaining funds apportioned based on their provided data: 50% for total spending and 50% for holdings.

All funds must be spent on eContent that is shareable through the LEA program and must be fully expended by the end of the fiscal year in which they are awarded.

Commissioner Cluggish moved and Commissioner Ball seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioner approves the FY 2021 grant opportunity, funded out of account 7000-9506, as described in the fact sheets in agenda item 7: Library eBooks and Audiobooks (LEA) Content. The Board authorizes any additional FY2020 7000-9506 disbursements that may be possible toward the end of the grant cycle.

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| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner DeBole- YES | Commissioner Ochsenbein- YES |
| Commissioner Ball- YES | Commissioner Kronholm- YES | Commissioner Perille- YES |
| Commissioner Cluggish- YES | Commissioner Madell- YES | Commissioner Resnick- YES |

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**Consideration of re-appointment to the State Advisory Council on Libraries (SACL)**

Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development presented the SACL re-appointments.

Three members of the Statewide Advisory Council on Libraries have completed the first of two available three-year terms and have agreed to continue their service on SACL. MBLC staff thanks these returning SACL members for their hard work, dedication and guidance. We are pleased to present the following candidates for reappointment to a second term:

Reappointments:

* Representing public libraries: Esme Green, Director, Goodnow Library, Sudbury
* Representing school libraries: Kim Cochrane, Library Media Specialist, Fitchburg High School
* Representing special libraries: Jessica Bell, Director of Library and Instructional Design, Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH)

Commissioner Abraham moved and Commissioner Perille seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners reappoints Esme Green, Director, Goodnow Library, Sudbury, Kim Cochrane, Library Media Specialist, Fitchburg High School and Jessica Bell, Director of Library and Instructional Design, MGH to a second term on SACL starting October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2023.

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| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner DeBole- YES | Commissioner Ochsenbein- YES |
| Commissioner Ball- YES | Commissioner Kronholm- YES | Commissioner Perille- YES |
| Commissioner Cluggish- YES | Commissioner Madell- YES | Commissioner Resnick- YES |

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**Report from Massachusetts Library System**

Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director presented the following report:

**COVID-19 info**

MLS staff continues to work remotely. We’ve conducted several check in meetings with members, allowing them to discuss and socialize around planned topics/service points.

MLS and MBLC have also begun working on a project to prepare some guidelines to assist our members in the re-opening of their physical spaces. Working with our network partners, we conducted 10 info gathering sessions with members, from April 27-May 4, 2020. Over 500 members attended the sessions, which Terry McQuown and Maura Deedy from the MBLC facilitated. Notes from these sessions can be found on our Resource Guide, along with a summary of information.

On April 2, 2020, we adapted our Continuing Education (CE) policy to allow for library workers from all Massachusetts libraries, or who have been employed by a Massachusetts library to attend our virtual offerings. (until the end of June 2020.)

April member reach outs: 4 schools, 31 publics, 1 academic. I, and our staff, continue to send regular emails to members, host virtual discussion sessions, and offer consultations via phone and email.

**MLS Strategic Planning Update**

Consultant Stephanie Chase led a facilitated discussion for staff on April 23, 2020. She will be hosting one for our board in conjunction with our June Executive board meeting. We are currently planning virtual sessions for our members.

We’ve made changes to our timeline and processes, but Stephanie is confident that we will still be able to meet our deadline for our Annual Meeting in November.

Clare Dombrowski and I will co-lead a small committee to assist with putting the plan together.

**New and Returning Members**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Librarian Name | Library | Town/City | Email |
| Mindy Andrews | George R. Martin Elementary School | Seekonk | andrewsm@seekonkschools.org |
| Priya Rathnam | Shrewsbury Free Public Library | Shrewsbury | prathnam@cwmars.org |
| Allison Babin | Beverly Public Library | Beverly | babin@noblenet.org |
| Krishna Longanecker | Edward P. Boland Elementary School | Springfield | longaneckerk@springfieldpublicschools.com |

**Consulting and Training Services**

The MLS Consulting & Training Services Team’s Continuing Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Below is an update to our April board report regarding the Consulting and Training Services team’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Coronavirus Resources for Librarians Blog Post:** The initial blog post that we wrote about COVID-19, which provided resources about the virus and how libraries could begin to prepare for it, has now received 5,669 views between its publication on March 4 and May 5.

**COVID-19 LibGuide:** Our Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Massachusetts Libraries guide, which was created in collaboration with MBLC, continues to be a huge draw. New content was recently added about continuation of operations, specifically reopening libraries and more examples of pandemic plans. From its publication on March 12th through May 5th, the guide received 29,517 views. The guide also includes a blog that highlights how MLS members are responding to the COVID-19 crisis. Posts include Worcester Public Library’s #HeartWorcester Campaign, Needham Free Public Library’s Activities at Home, Topsfield Town Library’s Share Your Story, and Millicent Public Library’s Coronavirus Fairhaven Project.

**Online Training Resources Page:** Our Online Training Resources page, which provides links to MLS and external training resources, has received 3,920 views between its launch on March 25 and May 5.

**Teleworking Tips Videos:** Our series of five entertaining “teleworking tips” videos (featuring MLS staff), which are intended for library staff who are adapting to new ways of working during the COVID-19 pandemic, has received 1,430 views between April 1 when it was launched and May 5.

**Recorded Webinars:** Our recorded webinars continue to be extremely popular, and viewing numbers are skyrocketing. With over 210 videos available on the MLS Vimeo channel, our members have a lot of recorded webinars to choose from. Below are the statistics for the 7-week period from 3/17/20 – 5/5/20 compared to the 365-day period prior to the suspension of MLS’s in-person CE program:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 3/17/2020-5/5/2020 (7 weeks) | 3/17/2019-3/16/2020 (52 weeks) |
| Plays | 12,277 | 3,699 |
| Finishes | 3,118 | 520 |

**Online Check-Ins:** Our online check-ins continues to be very popular. We began hosting online check-ins because we had heard from library workers that they wanted a way to get together, build community, and share ideas on how to serve their communities during this time of social distancing.

* Massyac Virtual, 3/20 (48 attendees), 3/27 (62 attendees), 4/2 (63 attendees), 4/9 (100 attendees), 4/14 (26 attendees), 4/16 (77 attendees), 4/30 (64 attendees)
* Reference/Adult Services, 4/3 (40 attendees)
* YA Librarians, 4/28 (93 attendees)
* Massachusetts Health Sciences Libraries Network (MAHSLIN), 4/21 (25 attendees).
* Academic Librarians, 5/1 (29 attendees), 5/6 (19 attendees)
* Reference, 5/5 (16 attendees)
* Local History/Genealogy, 5/1 (13 attendees)
* Circulation, 4/29 (50 attendees)
* Adult Programming (35 attendees)
* Technical Services, 4/24 (23 attendees)
* Consultants have scheduled additional Virtual Check-Ins throughout the month of May

**Converting In-Person CE to Online:** We are continuing to convert some of the content from our planned Spring CE season into online learning opportunities.

* Advanced Juggling: Time Management, 3/25 (86 attendees)
* How to Create Surveys that Generate Useful Data, 4/9 (119 attendees)
* Make Shift Happen: Weeding the Physical Collection: 4/14 (24 attendees), 4/16 (22 attendees), 4/20 (22 attendees), 4/23 (23 attendees). Future sessions are scheduled for 5/5/, 5/7, 5/13, 5/18, 5/28, 6/3, 6/11. Each of these has hit capacity within 24 hours of registration opening.
* Transforming Teen Services – Getting Started with Connected Learning, 4/21 (127 attendees)

**COVID-19 Related CE:** We are continuing to offer webinars specifically to address issues that have been raised by the COVID-19 situation.

* Coping Strategies for All During a Time of Isolation and Uncertainty, 4/2 (223 attendees)
* Summer Planning Webinar, 4/7 (215 attendees)
* Streaming Storytime, 4/10 (222 attendees)
* Massachusetts Libraries Respond to Emergencies with COSTEP MA, 4/24 (113 attendees)
* Healthful Laughter in Difficult Times, 4/17 (312 attendees)
* Caring for Ourselves in Unprecedented Times, 5/8 (240 attendees)
* Trivia Pursued Remotely: Hosting Online Trivia Contests in a Time of Social Distancing, 5/12 (246 attendees)
* Storytelling for a Virtual Summer and Beyond, 5/13 (156 attendees)

**Other Online CE Opportunities:** We are also continuing to offer non-COVID-19 related trainings, to ensure that library workers have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of their patrons now and into the future.

* Books and Literacy Tips for Toddlers, 4/1 (106 attendees)
* Basic Library Techniques: Collection Development and Maintenance (Part1: Online Class), begins 4/6 (48 participants)
* Building Middle School Services That Work, 4-week class begins 4/6 (60 participants)
* How to Create Surveys that Generate Useful Data, 4/9 (125 attendees)
* An Introduction to Roll20 and Dungeons & Dragons, 4/22 (125 attendees)
* World Languages Collections for Kids, 5/6 (77 attendees)

**Library Services Director, MassCat, ILL, Resource Sharing**

Member interactions slowed a bit for most of the Library Resources departments. The seven staff who work in Interlibrary Loan, Commonwealth eBooks, Database support, MassCat, and IT continue to rise to the occasion with quick turn-around for member libraries with questions and support requests.

The following statistics help to illustrate the hard work of the Library Resources staff.

**Member Interactions / Support requests (email, phone):**

2020 vs 2019: 1 March – 30 April

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Support Area: | 2020 | 2019 |
| Interlibrary Loan | 1,124 | 1,294 |
| Commonwealth eBooks | 244 | 119 |
| State-wide Databases | 104 | 36 |
| MassCat | 154 | 45 |

* **Interlibrary Loan** has effectively shut down for all libraries in the United States and internationally. Staff continues to deal with loans in transit, overdue and due date extensions. The 2020 stats continue to be on par with the same time period in 2019.
* **Commonwealth eBooks** opened annual spring enrollment early to help expand OverDrive access to our K-12 members during the school closures, this in turn doubled the support interactions from a year ago.
* **Database** support was unsurprisingly busy, tripling the number of support tickets helping libraries with access issues.
* **MassCat** support increased three-fold, working with its 52 members on issues with holds, holds queues (pick lists), notices and delivery. School members are essentially shut down in the system until next Fall, this would normally not happen until early June.

**Staffing Changes**

As had been discussed during March’s Executive Board meeting, Betsy and I spoke with Resource Sharing Assistant candidate, Gwenyth Swain on 15 April 2020. Due to the extended COVID19 work-from-home situation and concerns for the FY2021 budget, we rescinded the offer of employment at the MLS. We offered Gwenyth a one-time payment equivalent to a month’s salary. Gwenyth had never been employed by the MLS or on the MLS payroll. This position will not be filled or re-instated for FY2021.

**Report from Library for the Commonwealth**

Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator, Boston Public Library (BPL) presented the following report:

**Reopening**

* Our reopening plan is currently under review with the City and at this time we don’t have a clear timeline of when our physical spaces will be reopening. We, like other libraries around the state, will have a phased approach as to which in-person services will be offered. Due dates for MBLN materials have been extended to September 1, and no cards will expire until the end of this year.

**Headspace**

* As of June 1 we are offering a new online resource called, Headspace. Headspace is an online meditation and mindfulness tool. BPL has purchased 1,000 licensed seats per month. Licenses expire on the 1st of each calendar month.

**OverDrive**

* BPL will be spending an additional $500,000 in OverDrive purchases. These funds come from salary savings and the City granted permission for the library to reallocate this money to purchase e-content to meet increased demand. These materials are available to LEA checkouts.

**Remote Services**

* E-card registrations are leveling out but were averaging about 210 registrations per day in the month of May.
* Patron usage in May was averaging 8,839 patrons using online library resources per day. (This is usage of a library barcode in any way: placing a hold, using OverDrive, a database, etc.)
* Checkouts via OverDrive in May were averaging 57,411 checkouts per week.
* Online programs in May:
* 41 programs/week average
* 1,656 live participants/week average
* 24,572 recorded views/week average
* 26,228 total views/week average

**Libraries and COVID-19 Discussion**

**Discussion about the Construction Program**

Director Lonergan spoke about the current status of the Construction Program funding. He stated that the bond bill is still in committee (as reported in the Director’s Report), and we still haven’t heard about the FY2021 cap.

**Sharon Sharry, Director of the Jones Library in Amherst spoke about the Construction Program.**

Thank you all so much for allowing me to speak. I am joined this morning by Dr. Lynn Griesemer, the President of our Town Council, in case any of you have questions for her.

I am here to advocate on behalf of the existing construction grant waitlist libraries. I have asked the other waitlist libraries to join me in this call, and I’m hoping others will speak after me. I do understand that 2 of the waitlist projects are complete, and 1 or 2 waitlist projects have secured their local matches. But for many of us, if our Towns were forced to vote in FY21, our projects would not pass. Thus, rather than moving forward as planned and risking more failure than success, we are asking the MBLC for both additional time, and a higher reimbursement rate.

This is entirely due to COVID-19. Libraries have been closed to the public since March. The economy is uncertain and unpredictable. It’s very hard to advocate and fundraise for a library project when the public can’t even enter the library. And I know I’m preaching to the choir when I say that libraries are going to be needed more than ever once we re-open, especially in light of the Black Lives Matter movement and the fact that libraries create equity and access and inclusion.

We have invested so much! The Trustees, staff, Friends, patrons, and Town leaders of Amherst have been working on this particular Jones expansion/renovation project for almost 10 years; hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent over this time period in preparation for our project. Had COVID-19 not happened, I believe the Town would have approved our project. Now, I don’t believe it can. Not because it doesn’t believe in the importance of libraries or the value of our project, but because it can’t afford our project now due entirely to the pandemic.

The thought of throwing away the past 10 years’ worth of project expenditures is unimaginable. It doesn’t take the need away, or our town’s desire to fund the project. We truly want to support the construction program, but the thought of re-applying in the next grant round, just to have to spend all this money again, is completely unthinkable.

I understand the importance of re-opening the economy and moving forward with these library construction projects; we all want that money to be spent in our towns. I also understand that this is a very large waitlist that you are desperately trying to get through (all these projects have already experienced 3 years’ worth of escalation). But we are now asking that you wait one year before moving forward with the waitlisted grants, then gave libraries 75% of their total project costs (or eligible project costs) to cover the costs of escalation (which is at about 4% per year right now) and the inability to fundraise. This would put us in line with MSBA regulations, and it is allowed for in the statute.

We are asking that you continue to partner with us and continue to help us succeed. This virus has caused us all to have to re-think our approach to so many things we used to take for granted. Please take this opportunity and re-consider the regulations of this very important program.

Amherst is very diverse, and has a high level of poverty:

* The Amherst school system welcomes students from over 38 different language groups.
* 51% of Amherst students are non-white.
* 31% of our elementary school students have languages other than English as their first language.
* 19% of our middle and high school students have languages other than English as their first language.
* Amherst has the highest poverty rate in the state of Massachusetts.
* 30% of Amherst residents live in poverty.
* 31% of Amherst PreK-12 students are economically disadvantaged.

We look forward to seeing you again on July 9.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

**Sharon Bernard, Director, Fitchburg Public Library spoke about the Construction Program.**

I’m in agreement with everything the others have said, so I would just like to add this comment.  In Fitchburg we are concerned that if libraries ahead of us aren’t able to fund their projects that we will be given the provisional grant much sooner than would reasonably have been expected.  We need the additional time to fundraise funds to supplement the city’s contribution.  We don’t want to have to make the decision to turn down the grant when the additional year or two would allow the project to continue.

**Peter Feinstein, library Trustee and Chair of the New Building Committee of the Sawyer Free Library in Gloucester** **spoke about the Construction Program.**

Good morning. Thank you for allowing me to comment.

I am Peter Feinstein, library Trustee and Chair of the New Building Committee of the Sawyer Free Library in Gloucester.

The comments of the library director from Amherst reflect many of our concerns as well. We have been working on this project for over four years. We also have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars of our limited endowment funds to qualify for a provisional construction grant. Our current building is almost fifty years old with systems that will not last until the next grant round. Nor is the library physically able to support the many educational and community services that public libraries now offer.

Gloucester doesn’t quite fit the typical grant applicant profile. We are a private/public corporation not able to raise funds through taxpayer contributions for capital improvements and building maintenance. Currently, the City of Gloucester supports the library annually by paying for staff, library materials, and network membership. We will have to raise money directly from our community and foundations for capital improvements. Therefore, hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting financial recession, it will take several additional years and many thousands of additional dollars to complete the project.

A tax override is not an option, particularly in light of the current erosion of the city’s tax base due to the shutdown of local businesses and a total collapse of tourism. However, we do have the support of the Gloucester population and can expect the city to support us in every way possible, though not with a proposition 2 ½ override.

Progress is slow. Raising money during COVID-19 is extremely difficult. Though the city and state will gradually reopen and the economy will eventually recover, we will continue to be in difficult times for years to come. We will need the time to raise the matching funds. We do not have a pre-existing development program. We are not a city of great wealth, but some. And, we have a great deal of endemic poverty and an immigrant population that is particularly reliant on library services for support during their acclimation into the community.

The library is an important, central, public-service organization to the city. It provides critical services to our residents, especially those without other personal resources. It contributes to the city’s wellbeing by supporting all our residents with the best public library possible.

Due to the COVID-19 situation and the need for the Sawyer Free Library to raise funds from private sources, we ask the following:

1. We will need extra time to raise our funds due to the difficultly of arranging meetings with potential large donors during a period of mandatory separation and restrictions on holding large fundraising events.
2. We need a stabile matching funds target date. It is important that when a library ahead of us drops out, our fundraising window is not automatically reduced.
3. To give us a greater chance of meeting our funding goal, it would be highly desirable to increase the percentage of MBLC matching funds due to Gloucester’s large population of immigrants and other individuals in need, and the large percentage of our population suffering a lengthy period of unemployment due to COVID-19 related restrictions on commercial activities.

**Christopher McGee, Director of Library Services, East Bridgewater Public Library (EBPL) submitted his comments after the meeting.**

My name is Christopher McGee, and I am the Director of the East Bridgewater Public Library.  My library is first on the waiting list in the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program, and from what I understand; there are already funds from the previous bond to fund my library's expansion project in FY21, regardless of the actions taken by the legislature on the next bond bill.  I was in attendance at the Commissioners' meeting yesterday morning, and I want to say how much I appreciate the careful consideration the Commissioners are giving to the current economic situation resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and the effect that situation will have on the various projects in the Construction program.

I would also like to add my voice to the others the Commissioners heard yesterday.  If EBPL is awarded a provisional grant in FY21, we feel confident that we would fail in our efforts to pass a vote to raise local funds.  On the whole, East Bridgewater citizens love the library and support us tremendously.  However, East Bridgewater already has one of the highest residential property tax rates in southeastern Massachusetts, and townsfolk are reluctant to see the rate go higher for a costly capital project during a time of economic uncertainty.  The Library Trustees and I are concerned that even bringing the matter to a vote at this time could make the library seem out-of-touch and generate negative sentiments in the community.  If it is possible to hold off awarding construction grants for the upcoming fiscal year, that might go a long way toward a positive outcome for us.  I must admit, however, that I do have serious reservations about escalation costs as well.  If there are any actions the Commissioners can take to mitigate those costs, that would almost certainly help to ensure the success of my library's building project.

I apologize for sending an email.  I traveled out of state last week and am self-quarantining at home through the end of next week.  I do not presently have access to library letterhead or word processing software.  Thank you for reading this and allowing me to share my concerns with the Commissioners.

Best Regards,

Christopher McGee

**Statement from the Board about racism and work for racial justice**

The Commissioners discussed preparing a statement on behalf of the Board about racism and working for racial justice.

Commissioner Cluggish moved and Commissioner Madell seconded that Executive Committee will work with Communications Team and Commissioner Perille to develop a statement on behalf of the Commissioners to the current racism in the country.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner DeBole- YES | Commissioner Ochsenbein- YES |
| Commissioner Ball- YES | Commissioner Kronholm- YES | Commissioner Perille- YES |
| Commissioner Cluggish- YES | Commissioner Madell- YES | Commissioner Resnick- YES |

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**Update on Strategic Plan**

**MBLC staff provided the following update on the current Strategic Plan.**

**Rob Favini:**

Program quality – statewide coverage

* In COVID times seamlessly transitioned to virtual training with trustee orientations and updates
* Grant writing workshops now include online components to catch those who can’t make in person training

Collaboration with MLS in FY2020 – moved beyond exploration phase and are now regularly collaborating on events and initiatives

* Libraries respond to Opioid Crisis Symposium in November ‘19
* Evan Knight and Anna Popp led a series of field trips highlighting special library collections
* Initiated new programs for small libraries enabling librarians to attend national Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) Conference
* Partnership in COVID response – resource page on the MLS LibGuide and opening guidance feedback session and plan

SACL called on at various times of the year for input on mini grant programs as well as MBLC guidance – strategic planning and CARES Act

The LAD team continued to introduce new grant programs in FY 20 addressing food insecurity, family engagement and expanded offering in the area of collection management and preservation.

**Paul Kissman:**

For automated resource sharing networks and small libraries, we completed and implemented a new Small Libraries in Networks formula.  We also completed a new Resource Sharing Program formula but are delaying implementation for another year.

Improving overall library connectivity and expanding  E-rate has been a mixed success.  CW MARS and CLAMS were able to obtain discounts on data circuits for an additional 55 libraries and 59 locations.  However, only minor progress has been made developing a more comprehensive solution to public library bandwidth needs.  New federal funding to help with digital inclusion through legislation such as the CARES Act cannot currently be leveraged by most Massachusetts public libraries, due to libraries’ stance on the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) certification requirements.  Workshops on CIPA and E-rate are being planned to ensure that libraries have an opportunity to receive up-to-date information.

**Mary Rose Quinn:**

State Programs Unit (State Aid, Construction, Data and Technology)

* Developed new forms (online) to streamline statistical, financial, and Compliance reports (year 3) as part of the new data collection system implementation
* Established a State Aid Advisory Committee to test new survey questions, procedures, data points and to advise on policy and regulatory updates and changes
* Completed year one of the Five Year Waiver Plan and began the implementation of year two for FY2021 (delayed due to COVID 19; see Policy changes in the FY 2021 Emergency Preamble)
* Organized an Ad Hoc group of Network Data Coordinators to review and discuss survey questions, definitions, and data collection needs for the ARIS, State Aid Financial and Compliance form requirements in order to develop more consistent reporting of data among networks and networked libraries
* Created an Ecosystem Study Committee to review the Evolving Ecosystem Report and participate in ongoing discussions that examine the MBLC’s ongoing role in providing resources and services to libraries and library organizations statewide
* Drafted preliminary Technology Plan for the Agency as part of the succession planning and hiring process for a new Data Analyst/IT Systems Specialist

Activities moved forward to the next Strategic Plan:

* Develop revised regulations for Librarian Certification and training
* Develop policies and procedures (and forms) related to the Five-Year Waiver Plan implementation
* Continue to work with Network Data Coordinators to develop consistent data gathering guidelines and tools
* Formalize the Agency Technology Plan
* Establish a Data Team (internal) to review and assess current data needs and develop an Agency wide plan to coordinate data gathering, analysis, and reporting activities

**Celeste Bruno:**

Communications Director Celeste Bruno reported on the progress made on the implementation plan. She stated that the communications team has met all goals in the plan except those related to the in-house government team, since this was disbanded.

Highlights include helping local libraries better promote statewide services. Ms. Bruno mentioned that usage of the Awarehouse, which was created as a one-stop place for librarians to find ready-made promotional materials, continues to increase. Campaigns were implemented that support the statewide eBook program and statewide databases, as well as summer reading. LEA (Library Ebooks and Audiobooks) materials were developed in coordination with the Networks. All libraries could order bookmarks, posters, flyers and had ready-made social media posts available through the Awarehouse. Libraries received materials in January and since then, LEA usage has increased by 50%.

 Awareness campaigns like Library Lovers yielded over 8,000 personal Valentines from patrons to legislators in just two February-based campaigns.

In terms of members on the statewide Public Relations Advisory Committee, all networks were invited to have representation on the committee. Minuteman, SAILS, and CWMARS provided members.

The team worked closely with the Massachusetts Library system on IDEAL Academy which took an innovative approach to developing database promotion. Outcomes from IDEAL were adapted to the way databases are promoted and librarians have commented on how much they like this approach. The team also worked with OCLN on several successful awareness campaigns: *Miles to Reach You* which, in one month, yielded 700 patron to legislator contacts and *Wired to Reach You*. Both highlighted resource sharing.
The team updated its press contact list and continues to track press interactions.
The team also continues to coordinate with MLS on summer reading activities.

**Tracey Dimant:**

**Financial Reporting:**

One of the main goals was to put a comprehensive financial reporting system into place. We have done so and adjusted the system over the last year in order to clarify and adjust the process. My staff member, Maryellen Osborne, extracts the financial information from the state accounting system monthly and provides it to me in a detailed, comprehensive report. I review, clarify, and put it into a format that gives our management team a clear overview of the financials, including a financial projection mechanism. I feel confident that we are now providing, and will able to continue to provide, clear reports, and adjusting the budget according to need and funds availability.

A note on this with regard to the current COVID-19 related economic crisis: I am working closely with Director Lonergan and the rest of the management team on projecting what our budget will look like over an array of possible budget cuts as we move forward and how we will work to continue to maintain staffing levels as well as the work of the agency. This will be a crucial component of the upcoming new strategic plan.

Rob Favini and I continue to work closely to ensure that LSTA expenditures are appropriate and reported accurately as required by IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) as part of the yearly Special Projects Report. Rob has a clear understanding of how his staff time is spent and we work closely together on the reporting of that.

**Construction Bond Funding:**

We have spent substantial time over the last three years of this strategic plan establishing a relationship with Maya Jonas-Silver, the Director of Capital Planning and Long-Term Obligations at A&F (the state’s Administration and Finance agency). We had several conversations with her and her team this past fall regarding the program, continued funding, and our desire to raise the yearly funding cap.

The bond bill (now H.4733) as it now stands is still in progress (currently with the Senate) and includes $115 million for the MPLCP (Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program). Clearly with the current economic crisis, we are anticipating the possibility (if not probability) that we will not get an increase to our yearly cap and will remain at $20 million. Also, given the difficulties the municipalities will likely have to get their municipal match, we may not be awarding new provisional grants in FY2021.

Still, we have established and continuing communication with A&F, focusing on ensuring they have a comprehensive understanding of the program and our funding needs. We have had multiple discussions with Maya Jonas-Silver regarding the costs of running a grant round, the time required to prepare for a grant round, and “future-proofing” of libraries – something that the current crisis and evolving safety needs of the libraries makes clear is ever more important.

All of this speaks to the goal of advocating for the raising of the bond bill, engaging officials about bond authorization and library construction, and continuing discussion with A&F about bond authorization.

**Job Descriptions, Workloads, Reorganization, Succession Planning, and Knowledge Transfer:**

I’ve discussed previously the substantial staffing changes the agency has gone through in the last three years, largely due to retirements, resulting in nine (out of 23) new staff members in place since mid-2017. (Director Lonergan, Tracey Dimant, Maryellen Osborne, Lyndsay Forbes, Rob Favini, Maura Deedy, Kate Butler, Evan Knight, Andrea Bunker.)

Even before the current economic crisis, we were well aware of the fact that we could not rely upon a sustained level of funding in the Administration line (7000-9101). That leaves us, obviously, unable to create new positions for the agency as indicated in the plan. I am working closely with Director Lonergan and the management team to outline a contingency plan regarding the funding of the Administration line in particular.

The vast majority of funding in that line goes to two items: staff salaries and rent. With our upcoming move this fall, which comes with substantial rent increase (up $146K from our current costs – we pay $266,758, which is substantially below market value for the area. Our new lease cost is $413,200.).

That, plus the actual costs of the physical move, puts the agency in quite a difficult position if we receive even level funding to this line. I have been in close contact with our A&F analyst, our House Ways and Means analyst, and our Senate Ways and Means analyst, to communicate to them the importance of increased funding to this line in particular. The contingency plan, as we are developing it takes into consideration utilization of other funding lines for salary costs as appropriate, including another review of what salaries would be appropriate to be funded by the LSTA grant. This is still a work in progress.

Such internal transitions lead to a greater need for succession planning. Director Lonergan and I have requested that Rob and Mary Rose work with their staff to document work flows, specialized knowledge, and a yearly tracking calendar so as to prepare for any upcoming transitions. This is obviously a lengthy process and will be continuing as part of the new strategic plan.

**Internal Communication:**

This is something that the agency continues to work on. Prior to the crisis related to COVID-19, the agency had monthly full-staff meetings, each unit has a goal of monthly meetings of the individual units (Library Advisory and Development, the Business Unit, and the State Aid/Construction unit), and we met on an as-needed basis, as well. As we have all been teleworking for the past few months, we have moved to weekly staff Zoom meetings and virtual unit meetings as needed.

Communication, even in a relatively small agency, is challenging at any time, but particularly so during such an unprecedented crisis as we’re currently experiencing. That, plus the substantial agency turnover of the last few years, means we must work harder on this going forward. It’s a key part of the upcoming new strategic plan.

**Director Lonergan:**

Director Lonergan talked about our partnerships, including our work with MLS regarding reopening libraries, and our interest in partnering with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development to help the public find jobs during these challenging times. He also discussed our efforts regarding the bond bill and cap.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**List of documents for the June 4, 2020 Regular Monthly Board Meeting:**

1. Agenda for the June 4, 2020 Regular Monthly Board Meeting
2. Draft Minutes from the May 7, 2020 Board Meeting
3. Materials for the FY2021 Grant Round for the 7000-9506, Library Technology and Resource Sharing
4. Memo to the Board
5. Fact Sheet for Telecommunications for Resource Sharing
6. Fact Sheet for Resource Sharing Program
7. Fact Sheet for Network Infrastructure
8. Fact Sheet for Small Libraries in Networks
9. Motion
10. Materials for a FY2021 Grant Round for 7000-9506, LEA eContent grants
11. Memo to the Board
12. LEA eContent Fact Sheet
13. Motion
14. Documents about the re-appointment to the State Advisory Council on Libraries (SACL)
15. Memo to the Board with a motion for the re-appointments

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Kronholm moved and Commissioner Perille seconded to adjourn the May 7, 2020 monthly business meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner DeBole- YES | Commissioner Ochsenbein- YES |
| Commissioner Ball- YES | Commissioner Kronholm- YES | Commissioner Perille- YES |
| Commissioner Cluggish- YES | Commissioner Madell- YES | Commissioner Resnick- YES |

**Board voted unanimous approval.**



Mary Kronholm

Secretary