MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

Date: Thursday, May 7, 2020

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Place: Zoom Video Conferencing

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; Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs / Government Liaison; Aparna Ramachandran, Data Analyst and IT Systems Specialist; Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist

**Observers Participants:**

Ron Gagnon, Executive Director, North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE); Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator, Boston Public Library (BPL); Jennifer Harris, Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) Legislative Committee Chair; Marie Letarte, Library Director, Bigelow Free Public Library, Clinton ; Jeannette Lundgren, Network Administrator, CW MARS, Inc.; Kathy Lussier, Executive Director, SAILS, Inc.; Philip McNulty, Network Administrator, Minuteman Library Network (MLN); Terry McQuown, Consulting and Training Services Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS); Molly Moss, Assistant Director, Forbes Library, Northampton; Sharon Sharry, Library Director, Jones Library, Inc., Amherst; Sharon Shaloo, Executive Director, Massachusetts Center for the Book; David Slater, Network Administrator, Old Colony Library Network (OCLN); Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS); Sia Stewart, Library Director, Kingston Public Library

**Meeting Called to Order by Chair Ochsenbein**

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

**Approval of Minutes: April 2, 2020**

Commissioner Ball moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the minutes for the monthly business meeting on Aprl 2, 2020 as presented.

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**Chair’s Report**

Chair Ochsenbein presented the following report:

We are now about eight weeks into the Covid-19 induced state of emergency. And every day itself seems like a week. Much of the month for me was consumed by grappling with the reality of the situation we find ourselves in, and the future implications. It’s beyond stunning how quickly things have changed, and how profoundly they have changed.

All libraries in Massachusetts continued to be closed throughout April, but at the same time innovative remote programming continued to expand from libraries large and small, as did use of electronic materials of all kinds. I saw examples of truly innovative programming: virtual story times, online movie nights, virtual open mics, online cooking demonstrations, online book clubs, virtual career conversations, and on and on. It’s remarkable the inventiveness on display in these challenging times.

Top of mind for me right now are: 1) issues around reopening, and 2) FY 2021 budget.

On reopening, as you know, the Governor announced the creation of a Reopening Advisory Board last week to advise the administration on strategies to reopen the economy in phases, based on health and safety metrics. Their report is due May 18, a week from Monday, which is currently the last day of the stay-at-home, business closure order. Governor Baker appointed Lt. Gov. Polito to co-chair that Board and we quickly sent a letter to the Lt. Gov. last week reminding the Board of the important roles libraries will play in the recovery, and indicating that opening libraries should be done very carefully and in phases in order to ensure the safety of library employees and the public they serve, and offering our help. It goes without saying that the safety of employees and those they serve is the #1 priority in considering how libraries reopen. With 6,000 full and part-time employees, and with millions of visitors and millions of physical items passing through annually, libraries have the potential to be major virus transmission points. The MBLC and MLS have been working together to gather, on a crash basis, input from librarians through a series of facilitated information gathering sessions. There were 10 sessions held, involving some 570 participants, starting on the day the Governor announced the formation of the advisory board. And this working group is pulling together a summary report of the issues/concerns/hurdles associated with reopening, together with suggestions with regard to phasing, to submit to the Reopening Advisory Board and share with the library community, as soon as possible. It is urgent that we provide this input as soon as possible. The Advisory Board report is due to be issued on May 18. Personally, I think that the phase in to full library operations may be quite a long-term endeavor. I think we are going to see heightened health and safety measures broadly in place for a long time, perhaps a year or more, continuing until a vaccine is developed and widely available. We will see continued physical distancing, continued use of face coverings and PPE, continued limits on social and public gatherings in some form, careful rules about use of public spaces, heightened hygiene and sanitation practices, expanded testing and more. I think that is going to be a way of life for a while. Actually, there are many facets of this current time that may carry on for a long while ­– the work place, the school place, and the library place may be somewhat different in 5 or 10 or 20 years as a result.

And, just as we feel that we are coming to grips with one crisis, another one looms immediately ahead, and that is centered around the budget. I watched the Joint Ways and Means hearing on April 14, as some of you did as well. A number of advisors and economists testified that day. What they said was concerning to say the least, and not surprising given how much of the economy has shut down. Although they indicated that projections were still unknowable, most felt that unemployment could reach the 20% range and that tax collections could fall $4-$6 billion below initial estimates for FY2021. That was on April 14. Just this week, we read that state tax revenues for April were down 54% from April of a year ago. Income taxes alone were down 65% from a year earlier. At this time, it is not clear how much of the drop is attributable to the closing down of some sectors of the economy and how much is due to the postponed tax filing deadline. But I did see a figure that suggested that the number of tax filings through April 15 was down only 24% from last year, despite the emergency extension that was granted. That would indicate that some substantial portion of the shortfall is in fact a result of the suddenly idled economy. So we can assume that the FY 21 consensus revenue figure will be reconsidered in a major way in the coming weeks. And we can predict that there will be cuts proposed, possibly deep cuts.

As timing would have it, next week Director Lonergan and I will be speaking in four regional Virtual Library Legislative Day sessions organized by MLA/MSLA, a replacement for the in-person Library Legislative Day that was canceled in early April at the State House. You all received a notice about it. Each session is scheduled for one hour and I hope you will be able to drop into one of them. We are, in some ways, fortunate that State Aid was already our focus item for the legislative agenda. In this new climate, State Aid will be critical to libraries in view especially of the pressures the local funding sources will face. We are going to have to hit the message hard that libraries are crucial players in supporting a successful economic recovery, that they are crucial to social recovery, and they are crucial to fostering a continued learning support environment for students both on site at school and remotely. It’s going to be a message in some form of “protect your library, now more than ever.” I hope every legislator reads the Libraries In the News announcements that are posted regularly. They are great for showcasing the wonderful work that libraries are doing even when the doors are closed to the public. Libraries are indeed open!

Related to this budget discussion, let us not forget the construction program. This shut down has obvious effects on the construction program. As of this moment, it is my understanding that work on most, if not all, active construction projects has been temporarily suspended. And I am sure there is growing concern in the town halls of those with projects on the wait list, as they look to a new future characterized by real economic uncertainty. You’ll hear more about this as well today.

As you’ll hear from James in a moment, there is also A LOT of other important work going on. One only needs to read the excellent Service Updates that are coming out regularly. I must commend Director Lonergan and all the staff for keeping things together in these challenging times, made more difficult by the new normal of working remotely. And for showing resilience, inventiveness, and compassion for those you work with and those you serve. You are all facing urgent issues every day, and dealing with a professional community that is itself facing complex and difficult issues as they plan out the next weeks and months.

**Director’s Report**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

Meetings/activities since the last monthly Board meeting:

* April/early May—Office space weekly meetings with Tracey and DCAMM and 90 Canal representatives
* April/early May—COSLA & COSLINE weekly check-ins during COVID-19 crisis
* April 13— MLS Executive Board meeting, virtual
* April 14—Revenue hearing livestream
* April 17—MLA Legislative Committee, virtual
* April 17—Statewide strategy discussion with David Leonard and Sarah Sogigian
* April 23—MBLC strategic planning Western Mass Community Workshop, virtual
* May 1—MLA Legislative Committee meeting, virtual
* May 4—ALA Advocacy webinar
* May 6—COSLA Spring Meeting, virtual

Roland and I will be presenting next week during the **virtual Library Legislative Day** regional events being sponsored by MLA and MSLA on May 12, 13, and 14. I will review the FY2021 Legislative Agenda, and Roland will issue a call to action.

We have been allotted $622,796 in **IMLS CARES Act** funds as part of their disbursement of $30 million of the $50 million they have received to date. IMLS will soon be announcing funding opportunities for applying for the remaining $20 million, which will be channeled through their discretionary program, including the National Leadership Grant program. We are still in the process of gathering input regarding possible uses of our CARES Act funds and will be scheduling a call with our State Advisory Council on Libraries, among others, but our preliminary ideas include the following:

* Workforce/Job search e-resources
* Workforce/Job search training for library staff
* IT/Technology assistance for small libraries
* Summer learning virtual programming support (partnering with museums, if possible)
* Online summer learning platform support

**State Advisory Council on Libraries (SACL) Review:**

The review of FY21 LSTA Direct Grant applications by SACL included a series of four virtual breakout group meetings prior to the full SACL meeting on May 6, at which final recommendations will be made to the Commissioners. These meetings replicated the morning session of the traditional day-long annual in-person SACL review. Application materials were loaded on a shared drive and accessed by SACL members in advance of the review meetings. During the virtual review sessions evaluation scores were submitted and discussed.

**Reopening Libraries Project:** Maura, Rob, and Terry McQuown and Sarah Sogigian from MLS facilitated 10 feedback sessions to gain insights and anticipated needed guidance around the resumption of full library services. Planning was done through the automated library networks. We wrapped up all the listening sessions with a total of 576 participants. These sessions were formatted to gather input along several broad categories, like Collections, Service Delivery and Staff Concerns. Most of the major concerns were similar across the sessions in terms of quarantining items, opening phases, supporting staff, managing the flow of people through the building. The next steps will be taking these concerns and forming them into guidelines and suggested recommendations for phased reopening, which we will submit to the Reopening Advisory Board and add to the MLS COVID-19 response libguide.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Network | Date | Participants |
| MBLN : Reopening Libraries | 4/28/2020 | 11 |
| CWMARS #1 : Reopening Libraries | 4/28/2020 | 70 |
| CWMARS #2 : Reopening Libraries | 4/28/2020 | 54 |
| Minuteman: Reopening Libraries | 4/29/2020 | 73 |
| SAILS : Reopening Libraries | 4/30/2020 | 49 |
| CLAMS : Reopening Libraries | 4/30/2020 | 60 |
| OCLN : Reopening Libraries | 4/30/2020 | 43 |
| NOBLE : Reopening Libraries | 5/1/2020 | 100 |
| MVLC : Reopening Libraries | 5/4/2020 | 63 |
| Open Session: Reopening Libraries | 5/4/2020 | 53 |
| TOTALS |  | 576 |

**Trustee Orientations:** The remaining Trustee Orientations were canceled as the Governor extended an order to Executive Branch employees to cease travel and work remotely when possible. We have scheduled some virtual trustee orientations for later this month.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Location | Status |
| Tuesday, April 7, 2020 | Monterey Library | CANCELLED |
| Wednesday, April 15, 2020 | Hopkinton Public Library | CANCELLED |
| Thursday, May 14, 2020 | Seekonk Public Library | CANCELLED |
| Wednesday, May 27, 2020 | Falmouth Public Library | CANCELLED |
| Wednesday, June 3, 2020 | Leominster Public Library | CANCELLED |
| Thursday, May 14, 20206:00pm - 8:00pm | Virtual |   |
| Tuesday, May 19, 202010:00am - 12:00pm | Virtual |   |
| Wednesday, May 20, 202010:00am - 12:00pm | Virtual |   |

We held three MBLC Service Update calls for Trustees with Liz Babbitt on State Aid- these were fantastic and helpful for us to start to think about using Zoom for more programming.

**MBLC Service Update- Virtual Zoom Sessions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Location | Status |
| Tuesday, April 21, 2020 | 11:00am - 12:00pm | 72 |
| Thursday, April 23, 2020 | 11:00am - 12:00pm | 51 |
| Wednesday, April 29, 2020 | 6:30pm - 7:30pm | 65 |
| TOTAL |   | 188 |

The **State Aid Unit** held three Question and Answer Sessions in mid-April. The virtual sessions were scheduled to review the policy changes included in the Emergency Preamble to the FY 2020 State Aid Policies approved at the Commissioners’ April board meeting and to address attendees concerns regarding municipal budgets and other topics related to the State Aid Program and the COVID 19 crisis.  Two hundred sixty-six people, mostly library directors, attended the three sessions.  The State Aid Unit plans to develop an FAQ document from the questions and responses. Additional sessions may be offered once re-opening guidelines have been developed in order to revisit policies and standards that may need revision for FY 2021.

The Annual Report Information Survey (ARIS) will open on its regularly scheduled date of July 1; the deadline will be extended to correspond with the State Aid report in October. There will be eight online ARIS workshops offered in June. The workshops this year will be longer than usual to accommodate the anticipated increase in questions about the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) waiver process

**Summary of the MPLCP April 28 Q&A Session via Zoom:** Lauren and Andrea gave an overview of where the construction program stands now:

* All our projects actively under construction should be shut down
* All projects in the planning phases are ongoing as architectural and OPM firms work remotely or using social distancing
* Monthly reports are not required during this time, but may be submitted
* Disbursement requests for payments on current projects are ongoing
* We are still planning for new Provisional Grant awards in July or August of 2020
* We have no updates about the bond bill or the annual cap yet

There were a few specific questions concerning ongoing projects, including what, if any, work can be done on our sites. We clarified that all contractor activity, including site work and commissioning, is suspended.

The majority of the questions and discussion concerned funding for upcoming projects. A great deal of anxiety was expressed by several libraries with projects on the waiting list. We were asked several times and in several different ways if more time and money could be allotted to these projects, since they anticipate increased difficulty in securing the local funding needed to go forward in the current economic situation.

We stated that we have no information on the FY21 budget, either operating or capital. We can’t predict what adjustments, if any, will be made to the annual cap, and that number is what will determine how many provisional grants will be made this year.

Regarding time extensions, we are tied to the fiscal year and municipalities must accept or decline provisional grants by April 30 of the fiscal year in order to execute a contract before June 30. Extensions beyond that date are not possible in the state funding system.

The Construction Team would like to introduce you to our new endeavor: the **“Building Literacy: Public Library Construction”** podcast, in which we will explore all topics relevant to the entire construction process.

The first two episodes replace our first Sustainability Summit, a one-day conference geared toward anyone seeking to incorporate sustainability into a major building upgrade or a partial or whole building project. In episode one, “Sustainability and Building Performance: An Interview with Building Evolution Corporation”, we talk with Building Evolution Corporation's (BEC) Wesley Stanhope, BEC's Founder and CEO, and Ken Neuhauser, BEC's President, about practical steps for planning for and implementing partial and whole-building projects that achieve energy goals while not compromising on other aspects of building performance.

In episode two, “Designing for Sustainability,” we discuss how architects approach the integration of sustainable measures within the design process to reduce energy load and usage and how it impacts project budgets in an interview with Finegold Alexander Architects’ Ellen Anselone, Rebecca Berry, Josephine Penta, and Beth Pearcy. We encourage anyone considering a building project of any scale to listen to these episodes, as sustainability goals must be identified early and remain a priority throughout the process.

In future episodes, we hope to cover everything from advocacy and fundraising to what to expect a year after a new and improved public library opens.

**Communications:** Given the large scale and extended school closures, access to library summer learning programs will play a critical role in helping communities continue to provide an education for students. The communications team met with MLS colleagues to discuss ways in which CARES Act funding could be used to support summer programs. The team also launched the First Lady of the Commonwealth and Blades reading challenge. It provides an opportunity for libraries that have had to cancel summer plans to be a part of statewide turn-key initiative. It will also provide the MBLC with data that demonstrates the value of summer library programs.

The communications team worked with Kate Butler and Paul Kissman to launch the new statewide calendar of virtual library events. Libraries do not have to take any additional action to have their programs included in the calendar. Burbio (the company the MBLC is working with) automatically harvests almost all public library calendars. The response from the library community has been extremely positive. Over 300 libraries are offering virtual programming.

The team has also been busy with the new video library which provides easy access to educational and entertaining videos for kids. Parents/caregivers can sort by topics: Science, Sing-a-longs, Storytime, cooking, art projects. Hundreds of videos have been uploaded since the launch a few weeks ago. Matt is currently working with Mrs. Baker as she creates a story-time video for the site.

Matt has also been working to update the portal with new resources as they become available and to include new the new statewide initiatives mentioned above. He is also sharing these initiatives with the individual in the Governor’s office who is responsible for the website and social media.

There are many heart-felt stories of how libraries are supporting their communities. The communications team is currently in the process of creating a new website where librarians can upload their stories so that the MBLC may share them more broadly.

**Staff news:** Aparna Ramachandran started her new job as the Data Analyst/ IT Support Specialist at the MBLC on April 13. Aparna worked for STAPLES for several years as their Principal Software Engineer/Lead Analyst and has a Masters in Computer Applications from IGNOU, New Delhi, India. She is currently working on a system to assist us with our remote work activities and is getting up to speed on the data analysis needs of the State Aid Program. Aparna replaced Ann Downey, who retired in January.

**Legislative Report**

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

Massachusetts Library Association and Massachusetts School Library Association have invited the library community to join in virtual sessions this May to connect around library advocacy.

Four, MLA/MSLA Library Legislative Day, online sessions will be offered:

* May 12, 10:00 A.M. – featuring Western Massachusetts Library Advocates, CW MARS
* May 13, 10:00 A.M. – featuring Central Massachusetts Library Advocates, CW MARS
* May 14, 10:00 A.M. – featuring libraries from Boston, Metrowest, and North of Boston
* May 14, 11:30 A.M. – featuring libraries from South of Boston, the Cape and Islands

These virtual events were scheduled in place of the April 2 in person State House event canceled due to the Governor’s stay at home order and State of Emergency declaration. Unlike the traditional Library Legislative Day that brings library advocates together from across the Commonwealth, these virtual events are organized regionally. Each one-hour session will include:

* Welcome and overview

Jennifer Harris, Chair, MLA Legislative Committee

* Regional Welcome & Introduction, WMLA/CMLA (May 12 & 13)
* Legislative Agenda Briefing

James Lonergan, Director, MBLC

* MSLA Briefing

Greg Pronevitz, Director of Outreach, MSLA

* Remarks from Legislator, member of Library Caucus
* Call to Action

 Roland Ochsenbein, Chairman of the Board, MBLC

* Formal session ends, optional overview of Engage software for those who wish to remain on the call

State tax collections dropped in April by more than $2.3 billion compared to last April. This revenue drop is attributable to both the extended filing deadline and from the steep decline in economic activity. The Department of Revenue reports that they have received 24% fewer income tax returns through April 30 than during the same period last year. Income tax collections for April were $1.122 billion, $1.895 billion or 62.8% below benchmark, and $2.090 billion less than April 2019. Income tax estimated payments totaled $67 million for April, $216 million or 76.3% less than benchmark, and $227 million or 77.2% less than April 2019. Sales and use tax collections for April totaled $469 million, $139 million or 22.9% below benchmark, and $101 million or 17.7% less than April 2019. Corporate and business tax collections for the month totaled $209 million, $111 million or 34.6% below benchmark, and $141 million or 40.2% less than April 2019. Other tax collections for April totaled $181 million, $23 million or 11.1% below benchmark, and $9 million or 4.9% less than April 2019. With two months left in the fiscal year when the state has spent most of its more than $43 billion budget, tax collections are running 6 percent, or nearly $1.5 billion, behind the same 10-month period in fiscal 2019.

The Governor's office and Administration and Finance Secretary continue to monitor revenues and federal funding to determine how best to determine funding the FY 2021 state budget and are looking to borrow money to balance the FY 2020 budget. Massachusetts has approximately $3.5 billion in its stabilization account and is expected to receive federal aid to deal with coronavirus impacts and pay unemployment benefits. The state’s stabilization account or “rainy day fund” has approximately $3.5 billion.

The first remote session of the House took place on May 6, 2020. In their first remote formal session, House members passed a bill 157-0, allowing Massachusetts to borrow money to cover the shortfall for the last quarter of the fiscal year, resulting from delayed tax revenues and the sudden and drastic slowdown of the economy. The pandemic is causing lawmakers to delay state budget deliberations and recalculate estimates and expectations, beginning with a new assessment of anticipated tax collections.

Economic reopening plans are being discussed at every level of government and throughout the private sector. A plan for re-opening businesses and organizations in Massachusetts is expected from the working group led by Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito by May 18. This report will help inform our library re-opening plans and processes statewide.

While our in-person National Library Legislative Day (NLLD) 2020 was canceled, the American Library Association (ALA) is hosting a week's worth of advocacy training and activities for library advocates. Typically, NLLD has a registration cost and specialized trainings, like the Congressional Management Foundation webinar and are available to ALA members only. During this crisis, ALA is opening access to everyone. ALA hopes that “library advocates will have the opportunity to hear from each other, to train virtually, and to continue creating connections and relationships with decision makers at every level of government”. The training sessions are being offered, free of charge between May 4 and May 8. Session recordings will be available on ALA’s website through May 31.

**Report from the Massachusetts Library System (MLS)**

Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director presented the following report:

**Executive Director report:**

In response to the COVID-19 epidemic, MLS took the following steps:

**March 11, 2020**-in person CE canceled, as well as use of MLS meeting spaces until at least Mid-April

**March 16, 2020**-after discussions with MLS and Optima, Statewide Delivery suspension beginning on March 17, 2020 and addressed weekly. Beginning on March 16, both MLS offices will be closed and staff are directed to work from home until at least May 4, 2020.  MLS Resource Guide goes live and is updated almost daily.

**March 18, 2020**-Sarah Sogigian emailed Rep. Natalie Higgings, Library Legislative Caucus Co-Chair, to state support for the closing of libraries, in accordance with Governor Baker’s recommendations. MLS, NELA, ALA, and MBLC also issue guidelines in support of this step.

**Ongoing meetings** with Executive Board President Matt Berube, Optima, NetAdmins. MLS staff, MLS Director’s team, and MBLC staff.

**March Member reach outs** - 12 publics, 6 schools, 3 specials 3 academics. MLS staff also emails on average 1 email/day since March 16 to the membership with info, news, offers of services, and general support.

MLS has signed a contract with Stephanie Chase to facilitate our Strategic Planning process. I have shared with her background and data documents, and we are working together to adapt our timeline and activities to our current situation.

**Business/HR report**

**Delivery**

* Due to the COVID 19 outbreak and the closing of many libraries across the State the decision was made to halt delivery until further notice. We realize the impact of this but, in the best interest and safety of library staff, drivers and sorters we believe it was the right thing to do.
* I speak with Jim Blondek, Director of Operations almost daily and we have weekly meetings with the President of the company, Len Braudis as well as Chis Nock who manages the warehouses.
* Optima is working on procedures on when delivery is back up and running.
* We have had 2 meetings with Network Administrators to get their input on delivery. They have started to send us data on number of holds that are in their systems and were very helpful in sending out a survey we put together to the Library Directors requesting the number of full bins in the libraries waiting to be picked up. So far 200 libraries have responded. It is anywhere from 5 - 45 bins per library. This will give us some idea of the volume we are looking at.
* Optima and MLS both agree this is going to be a long process to get back up and running, and everyone will have to be patient.

**HR**

* I have been researching the CARES ACT to help small businesses survive the COVID 19 outbreak. Our auditors, Marcum LLP presented a webinar on the CARES ACT Tuesday strictly for nonprofits. I spoke with our Attorney as well as David St. Yves from Marcum to see if we would qualify for anything. He suggested applying for the Payroll tax credits. They have a task force set up to help companies navigate the waters. I will have more information at the next meeting.

**Bibliotemps**

* We still have 10 Bibliotemps working at Harvard, Northborough and FLO.

**Resource Sharing**

**Staffing Changes and promotion**.

There were a number of staffing changes for resource sharing in March. In early March we lost Hansie Grignon, MLS Resource Sharing Librarian, to a new job at the Maine State Library as a Library Section Supervisor. Hansie was invaluable coordinating Interlibrary Loan activities for the MLS for almost six years. We wish Hansie all the best with the new job and move to Maine.

Starting March 9, Alison DeMers was promoted to the Resource Sharing Librarian position with responsibilities coordinating Interlibrary Loan and eventually MassCat support. Alison has been part a valuable part of the MLS ILL team, and we are very pleased that she will be bring experience and continuity to Resource Sharing. Alison has a MLS from Simmons College and a public library background having previously worked at: Concord Free Public Library; Pratt Memorial Library, Cohasset; Wellesley Free Library; and Watertown Free Public Library.

We are also welcomed a new Resource Sharing Assistant with primary responsibilities in Interlibrary Loan. Kathryn Bowen also started March 9, and has experience working as a school librarian at Grafton Elementary and at Simon Fairfield Public Library, Douglas. Kate had a full week of ILL training before work-from-home started for MLS staff. She made tremendous progress starting her new job, and is continuing her training with me and the ILL staff. She has already made a positive impact for the ILL team in a difficult circumstance.

**Work from home transition.**

A rather eventful month for the Library Resources departments. The seven staff who work in Interlibrary Loan, Commonwealth eBooks, Database support, MassCat, and IT support rose to the occasion, providing service above and beyond to our library members while supporting each other. It has been a pleasure to work with my staff on tackling and solving issues for our members as well as the mechanics and logistics of this unprecedented change to our work lives brought by COVID 19. The following statistics help to illustrate the hard work of the Library Resources staff.

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

1 March – 7 April 2020 vs. 2019

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Service* | *2020* | *2019* |
| Interlibrary Loan | 753 | 791 |
| Commonwealth eBooks | 127 | 68 |
| State-wide Databases | 66 | 24 |
| MassCat | 149 | 45 |

Notes:

* Interlibrary Loan has effectively shut down for all libraries in the United States and internationally. Staff continue to deal with loans in transit, overdue and due date extensions. The stats for 2020 are not that different from 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, nearly tripling the number of support tickets helping libraries access these resources.
* MassCat increased its support load three-fold working with its 52 members on issues with holds, holds queues (pick lists), notices and delivery.

**Additional state-wide databases added.**

State-wide database vendor, Gale Cengage, opened access nation-wide to four resources to support pre K – undergraduate learning on Friday, 20 March 2020. These are resources that are not currently part of the statewide MLS/MBLC state-wide database line-up. They will be available throughout the COVID19 crisis. We met with Gale to include these resources on the very popular Galepages websites that many MLS members use as a point of access. The additional databases are listed below:

*Miss Humblebee's Academy* - an interactive kindergarten-readiness program that introduces children ages three to six to key concepts in math, science, social studies, language and literacy, art, and music. It’s as challenging as it is fun!

<https://infotrac.gale.com/itweb/c19micro3?id=open&db=MHA>

*Gale In Context: High School* - supports student papers, projects, and presentations while empowering the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills with content aligned to national and state curriculum standards.

<https://go.gale.com/ps/start.do?p=SUIC&u=c19micro&password=open>

*Gale In Context: College* - interdisciplinary content that reinforces the development of skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation.

<https://go.gale.com/ps/start.do?p=CSIC&u=c19micro&password=open>

*Gale In Context: Canada* - an engaging online experience for those seeking contextual information on a broad range of Canadian topics, people, places, and events.

<https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=CIC&sw=w&u=c19micro&v=2.1&pg=BasicSearch&it=static&sid=CIC&password=open>

**Webinars in Response**

In response to the COVID19 related school and library closings, Tressa Santillo, Electronic Resources Coordinator, worked with vendors Gale Cengage and OverDrive to provide timely workshops for our member libraries the past two weeks, listed below. Further webinars will be scheduled later in the spring / early summer: <https://calendar.masslibsystem.org/>

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| OverDrive K-12 Shared Sora CollectionsMarch 19, 2020Online Learning Tools Within your Gale Resources for K12 SchoolsApril 2, 2020Online Learning Tools Within Your Gale Resources for Public LibrariesApril 3, 2020 | Online Learning Tools Within Your Gale Resources for Academic LibrariesApril 3, 2020Accessibility Features in Your Gale Resources April 7, 2020Purchasing Multiple Copies of Titles for Students: Class Sets in Sora/OverDriveApril 8, 2020 |

**Consulting and Training**

**The MLS Consulting & Training Services Team Responds to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

On March 11, MLS announced that, due to the COVID-19 situation, all in-person training and consulting services would be suspended starting on March 13. This suspension is currently scheduled to last through the end of May. In order to support our member libraries during this time, the Consulting & Training Services team has worked hard to ensure that our member libraries have access to relevant COVID-19 information in addition to other library related learning opportunities.

**Coronavirus Resources for Librarians Blog Post:** As we began to receive questions about COVID-19, MLS worked collaboratively with MBLC to create a blog post that provided resources about the virus and how libraries could begin to prepare for it. That post has received 5,006 views since it was published on March 4.

**COVID-19 LibGuide:** In collaboration with MBLC, MLS created and launched the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Massachusetts Libraries guide on March 12. The guide includes pages on:

* News
* MLS & MBLC Updates
* Sample Policies & Responses
* Continuation of Operation
* COVID-19 Library Training & Forums
* What Your Library Can Do Remotely
* Remote Library Resources
* Hygiene, Cleaning, Supplies
* Information for Patrons
* Youth & School Services
* Financial Assistance & Recovery
* Stay Engaged, Have Fun, Relieve Stress
* MLS Member Libraries Respond

Through April 6, the guide received a staggering 17,286 views. After the guide’s homepage, the most viewed pages are “Continuation of Operations” (1,582 views), followed by “Stay Engaged, Have Fun, Relieve Stress” (1,515 views). The guide is continuing to be updated by MLS staff as events unfold and member library needs change. Recently, we debuted the “MLS Member Libraries Respond” blog page, where we are sharing how MLS member libraries are continuing to provide essential services to their community throughout the pandemic, even as their physical spaces are closed.

**Online Training Resources Page:** We received several requests for additional resources for online learning opportunities. In response, MLS created and launched the Online Training Resources page on March 25. That page provides links to both MLS resources and other external resources that provide online training opportunities to library staff. Through April 6, the page received 2,331 views.

**Teleworking Tips Videos:** We know many library staff members are adapting to new ways of working during the COVID-19 pandemic. It might be fewer phone calls, more emails, video meetings, or differing levels of personal interactions. With this in mind, we asked some MLS staff to share their top tips on alternative work arrangements. You can check out their tips in these five entertaining videos, which launched on April 1. Through April 6, these videos received 326 views.

**Recorded Webinars:** Over the past several years, MLS has been recording the webinars that it offers to members and has put the recordings on Vimeo. Currently, there are over 210 videos on the MLS Vimeo channel. We looked at the statistics of our recorded webinars from 3/17/2020 to 4/6/2020 and compared them to the 365-day period prior to the suspension of in-person CE. For comparison:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 3/17/2020-4/6/2020 (21 days) | 3/17/2019-3/16/2020 (365 days) |
| Plays | 3,278 | 3,699 |
| Loads | 12,466 | 32,115 |
| Finishes | 621 | 520 |
| Unique Viewers | 1,396 | 1,044 |

**Online Check-Ins:** We 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. In response, MLS consultants have held online “check-ins” where library staff can do just that.

* Massyac Virtual Check-Ins, 3/20 (48 attendees), 3/27 (62 attendees), 4/2 (63 attendees)
* Reference/Adult Services Virtual Check-In, 4/3 (40 attendees)

**Converting In-Person CE to Online:** The suspension of in-person continuing education classes meant that the majority of MLS’s scheduled Spring series had to be cancelled. However, we are in the process of converting content from several of our Spring series classes into an online format. Currently, content from two classes has been converted to an online format, with more to come over the upcoming weeks.

* Advanced Juggling: Time Management, 3/25 (86 attendees)
* How to Create Surveys that Generate Useful Data

**COVID-19 Related CE:** MLS is offering several 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
* Massachusetts Libraries Respond to Emergencies with COSTEP MA

**Other Online CE Opportunities:** MLS is continuing to offer non-COVID-19 related trainings, to ensure that our members have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of their patrons now and into the future. We are also in the process of scheduling additional CE opportunities.

* Books and Literacy Tips for Toddlers, 4/1 (106 attendees)
* Basic Library Techniques: Collection Development and Maintenance (Part1: Online Class), begins 4/6 (48 attendees)
* Building Middle School Services That Work, 4-week class begins 4/6 (60 participants)



**Report from the Library for the Commonwealth (LFC)**

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

**Books for Boston**

* In an effort to reach vulnerable populations who also have limited access to internet and devices, BPL launched an initiative called Book for Boston. We cannot safely circulate books from our collection, so we are purchasing new books to donate to local non-profits who then distribute the books. Librarians worked with non-profit staff to develop genre requests.
* To date, nearly 1,400 books have been donated.
* Just a few places we donated to: 500 books to Boston HOPE Medical Center that has been created in the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, 237 books to Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program in the South End, 300 books to Pine Street Inn at Suffolk University and Dorchester Family Engagement Network.
* The program supports local businesses by purchasing the books from local booksellers and keeps money in the community. (Bookstores we’ve purchased from include: Trident Booksellers in downtown Boston, Frugal Books in Roxbury, Brookline Booksmith, and Cambridge's Porter Square Books)
* The Fund of the Boston Public Library is fundraising to support the continuation of this effort. The goal is to donate 5,000 books.
* We have also deployed hotspots in areas identified by Boston Public Health Commission, such as, residential recovery programs and walk-in substance use treatment centers that lack Wi-Fi for clients and staff. There are 23 hotspots that can reach 120 clients on a given day giving them critical connection to family, services, and telemedicine appointments.
* An excellent article was recently published about these efforts in Library Journal, written by Health & Human Services Librarian, Ally Dowds https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=boston-public-library-finds-ways-to-safely-serve-homeless-recovering-patrons-thru-pandemic

**Headspace**

* We will be adding a subscription to the mindfulness and meditation app, Headspace, to our offerings of Online Resources. We were hoping for a launch in May, but it looks like this will now be launched in June. I hope to have more information to share at next month’s meeting.

**Remote Programming**

* Youth: Taking calls, near-peer homework help online, librarian led story-times and crafts, cooking classes, breakdancing, drawing.
* Adult: Grants for non-profits, resume and cover letter assistance, ESL, Computer Coding and software for business w/ General Assembly, yoga, book clubs, author talks, “supper club” with live cooking with area chefs.

**Online Programs numbers:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 3/15 - 3/21 | 3/22 - 3/28 | 3/29 - 4/4 | 4/5 - 4/11 | 4/12 - 4/18 | 4/19 - 4/25 | 4/26 - 5/2 | Total |
| Number of: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Adult Programs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 12 | 29 |
| Youth Programs | 3 | 12 | 18 | 27 | 28 | 11 | 8 | 107 |
| Literacy/ESL | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 18 |
| Instruction | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 13 |
| Book Groups | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 7 |
| Total | 4 | 15 | 21 | 36 | 39 | 21 | 38 | 174 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Live Participants |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Adult Programs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 96 | 146 | 578 | 707 | 1527 |
| Youth Programs | 0 | 1188 | 514 | 458 | 629 | 410 | 1553 | 4752 |
| Literacy/ESL | 0 | 0 | 45 | 30 | 52 | 64 | 126 | 317 |
| Instruction | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 36 | 59 |
| Book Groups | 0 | 18 | 0 | 10 | 35 | 0 | 11 | 74 |
| Total | 2 | 1210 | 563 | 597 | 866 | 1058 | 2433 | 6729 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| View of Recorded Events |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Adult Programs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Youth Programs | 1832 | 16260 | 5616 | 13147 | 10604 | 3663 | 0 | 51122 |
| Total | 1832 | 16260 | 5616 | 13147 | 10604 | 3663 | 21004 | 72126 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total Views |  | 17470 | 6179 | 13744 | 11470 | 4721 | 23437 | 78855 |

**Libraries and COVID-19 Discussion**

Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development, started the conversation by talking about the wonderful partnership working with MLS on reopening guidance. He discussed the 10 feedback sessions that he, Maura Deedy, and Sarah Sogigian, and Terry McQuown from MLS conducted with the automated networks.

Mr. Favini said the overall feeling of librarians is anxiety. The date of May 4 is looming over everyone. Most of the anxiety is over safety; safety of the staff and the public. People aren’t comfortable going to work. Anxiety about the materials and social distancing were also discussed. Questions include how to enforce social distancing and if patrons don’t want to wear a mask, can we refuse to provide service to them.

Sarah Sogigian set out these links:

* Virtual School Librarian site: <http://guides.masslibsystem.org/VirtualSchoolLibrarian>
* Here’s the link to the summary of the listening sessions: <http://guides.masslibsystem.org/ld.php?content_id=54450791>
* Here is the link to the full guide with all the notes from the sessions: <http://guides.masslibsystem.org/GuidelinesforRecoveryofServices>
* Reopening plan suggestions: <http://guides.masslibsystem.org/COVID19/COOP>

Commissioner DeBole stated that libraries are closed but open to vital virtual services. There have been significant increases in the usage of most of these virtual services. She is concerned that some people don’t think that libraries are in the forefront because they have been closed to the public, but they are have been doing a tremendous job provide services remotely.

Director Lonergan stated that we will be directing the library community to the MLS COVID-19 page, where we will be posting the reopening guidance. He stated that reopening needs to be in phases. He stated that even the agency staff will be continuing to work remotely and then possibly only coming in every other day.

Commissioner DeBole stated that we have to have a united voice with the reopening guidance. We need to be clear what resources will continue to be provided virtually, and we need to avoid library jargon.

Commissioner Cluggish stated we must be very clear that this document is from the MBLC, MLS, and the Networks.

**Standing Committee and Liaison Reports**

Commissioner Resnick spoke about the Massachusetts Center for the Book Board meeting that she attended:

The MCB Board met via Zoom on April 29, 2020. In attendance were: James Wald (Chair), Em Claire Knowles (Clerk), Alexandra Marshall, Krista McLeod, Moying Li, Sharon Shaloo (Executive Director). Observing: Jan Resnick, MBLC Liaison.

The early part of the meeting was spent on discussions of financial details due to the pandemic and the cessation of programs and conferences: lease, limitations of the office since only one person is allowed in, and, if either the House or Senate budget is zeroed out for MCB, they will not be eligible for the 1/12 funding that may occur if we do not have a state budget by July.

There was a brief mention of succession planning since Sharon is planning to retire. No date mentioned.

There was a discussion of the MCB’s Theory of Change document (as different from a Strategic Plan). The first step in this document is a discussion of the future of a relationship with the MBLC and MCB. A conference call/online meeting with James, Roland, Sharon Shaloo, Jim Wald, Jan Resnick and Krista McLeod will be arranged.

The Theory of Change document was approved in principle with some edits to come. The remainder of the meeting was a discussion of recruitment of new board members. As Em Claire has retired and will be moving, she will cycle off the Board. They would also like to increase the membership of the Board to broaden its scope.

**Commissioner Activities**

**Commissioner Abraham**

* Attended virtual retirement party of Em Claire Knowles

**Commissioner Ball**

* Participated in the Executive Committee Call

**Commissioner Cluggish**

* Participated in the Executive Committee Call

**Commissioner Kronholm**

* Participated in the Executive Committee Call

**Commissioner Perille**

* April 21 - MBLC Service Update for Trustees
* April 24 - MBLC State Aid Seminar
* April 29 - MBLC State Advisory Council on Libraries sub-group meeting
* April 30 - MBLC State Advisory Council on Libraries sub-group meeting
* May 04 - MBLC open meeting on Library Guidelines for Recovery Project
* May 04 - American Library Association session on Long-term Strategies for Building Relationships w/ Lawmakers
* May 06 - MBLC State Advisory Council on Libraries full meeting

**Commissioner Resnick**

* Attended end of the April Strategic Planning Western Mass Online- Zoom Meeting
* Attended Evan’s COVID-19 Webinar
* Attended Center for the Book Zoom Meeting

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Madell moved and Commissioner Resnick seconded to adjourn the May 7, 2020 monthly business meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners at 12:29 P.M.



Mary Kronholm

Secretary