**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS monthly regular meeting**

**Date:** Thursday, December 3, 2020

**Time:**  10:00 A.M.

**Place:**  Zoom Meeting

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

**Staff Present:**

James Lonergan, Director; Liz Babbitt, State Aid Specialist; Celeste Bruno, Communications Director; Andrea Bunker, Library Building Specialist; Kate Butler, Electronic Services Specialist; Amy Clayton, Administrative Coordinator; Terry D’Angelo, Administrative Assistant; 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; Maryellen Osborne, Contracts Specialist; Matthew Perry, Outreach Coordinator; Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs / Government Liaison; **Aparna Ramachandran,** Data Analyst/IT Support Specialist; Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist

**Observers Present:**

William Adamczyk, Committee Co-Chair, MLA Legislative and Director of the Milton Public Library; Sharon Bernard, Library Director, Fitchburg Public Library; Nora Blake, President, Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) and Director of the Emily Williston Memorial Library and Museum, Easthampton; Eileen Chandler, Administrator, Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing Network (CLAMS) ; Kim Charlson, Executive Director, Perkins Library

Anna Fahey-Flynn, Central Library Manager, Boston Public Library (BPL) ; Ron Gagnon, Executive Director, North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE); Antonia Golinski-Foisy, President, Western Mass Library Advocates (WMLA) and Director, West Springfield Public Library; Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator, Boston Public Library (BPL); Jennifer Harris, Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) Legislative Committee Chair and Director of the Plymouth Public Library; Sharon Kelleher, Merrimack Valley Library Consortium Marie Letarte, Library Director, Bigelow Free Public Library, Clinton; Jeannette Lundgren, Network Administrator, CW MARS, Inc.; Kathy Lussier, Executive Director, SAILS, Inc.; Catherine Mardula, Library Trustee, Tyringham Free Public Library; Brittany McDougal, President, Central Mass Library Advocates (CMLA) and Director of the Oxford Free Public Library; Krista McLeod, Board Member, Massachusetts Center for the Book (MCB) and Director of the Nevins Memorial Library, Methuen; Philip McNulty, Network Administrator, Minuteman Library Network (MLN); Betsy Meaden, Business and Human Resources Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS); Becky Plimpton, Central Mass Library Advocates and Director of the Joshua Hyde Public Library, Sturbridge; Greg Pronevitz, Consultant, Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA); 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)

**Meeting called to order by Chair Cluggish**

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

**Approval of Minutes from the regular monthly meeting: November 5, 2020**

Chair Cluggish moved to join the minutes and adjournment to a consent agenda. A consent agenda is a board meeting practice that groups routine business and reports into one agenda item. The consent agenda can be approved in one action, rather than filing motions on each item separately.

Commissioner Resnick stated that she would be working with Rachel Masse to fix all minor corrections to the minutes.

Commissioner Resnick moved and Commissioner Ochsenbein seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the consent agenda.

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

Hearing no objection, Chair Cluggish declared that the motion passed under the consent agenda.

**Chair’s Report**

Chair Cluggish presented the following report:

In the past month I participated in or observed the following:

* Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) Virtual Legislative Committee Meeting
* Web Junction- The Accidental Facilities Manager with Lauren Stara and Andrea Bunker
* Statewide PR Committee Virtual Meeting
* MLS Virtual Marketing Check In with Anna Popp
* MLTA Virtual Annual Meeting
* MLS Virtual Annual Meeting
* Executive board virtual meeting
* PR Committee Legislative Agenda Discussion

This is a month of beginning and endings.

This is the end of the quest for a decent 2021 budget, and this month we will begin the work on the 2022 Legislative Agenda. While James and Mary Rose will describe the budget line items in detail and where we go from here, I must remark that so far most of my warnings about being prepared for huge budget cuts have only not been necessary, but we've been pleasantly surprised while being braced for the worst.

However, we do know from past experience that the difficult years show up after the crisis year, so I can't help but remain braced for cuts. After so many years of spending a tremendous amount of effort and energy advocating to the point where Commissioners walked the whole State House and delivered handwritten notes to the office of every legislator, it feels foolish to become complacent.

Thank you so much to those who contacted members of the Conference Committee to advocate for our budget lines.

This month is also the end of the terms of two Commissioners. For both Roland Ochsenbein and Philip Madell, this is their last meeting. Philip sent us a letter of resignation effective January 1 as his family is moving out of state. This is of course the perfect time for the well-known exclamation, “Philip, we hardly knew ye”. Philip joined the MBLC in February 2019.

He served on the By-law revision committee and showed us how unusual our bylaws were in that they were full of policies, processes, procedures, part of the Director's job description, and other extraneous material. Unfortunately, we never got to finish the work as multiple crises beset us; we became overwhelmed with COVID work, and then Black Lives Matter redirection. We do intend to take up the bylaw work again as soon as is feasible. I'm truly sorry you're not able to continue with the MBLC, Philip, but we do wish you well in your future endeavors and in your upcoming move.

Roland Ochsenbein joined the MBLC in December, 2014. Carol Caro, a former Commissioner, worked with him on SACL, and being a good spotter of talent, she recruited him and twisted his arm just a bit. He remained on SACL for a while, and immediately joined the Construction Team due to his extensive work in building the new Bolton Library. Because at the time, his State Rep was the Chair of the Library Caucus, we prevailed on him to get to know her and begin to advocate, advocate, advocate. He never failed to seize every opportunity, but as far as I know, Roland, you did miss her annual homemade pie event, and that's the only negative and unfortunate thing I have to say about you today.

Roland served on the Director Search Committee and also on two Strategic Planning Committees. He was Chair when COVID overtook us and he worked diligently for many hours, generated appropriate urgency, and went beyond what might have been expected of him. For the last four years, I've worked closely with Roland, and I want to publicly express my appreciation for the ability to check in, share ideas, or review what we should be doing. Roland, you surely know already that you will be missed, and we hope you'll check in *with us* occasionally. Perhaps when the pandemic is over, we can all come and watch you perform somewhere.

For the Commissioner beginnings part of this, two highly qualified candidates are going through the last of their background checks, and we believe both of them will be able to attend the January Board Meeting.

It is also the ending of the first phase of creating our Strategic Plan. We now have an aspirational plan that requires Board approval. For those of you who felt the Strategic Plan was not adequate, the beginning of the very important second part, creating the Implementation Plan, has already started. The Implementation part of the Strategic Plan is where the rubber meets the road, and will include the steps we will take to meeting the goals and objectives, with responsibilities, measurable results, and a column for how and when an objective is achieved with the measurements that we will be looking for.

Today, you will hear an update on the State Aid to Public Libraries MAR (Municipal Appropriation Requirement) waiver requests. There is still not enough information for us to begin the review process. I know I keep bringing it up, but because our budget allocation is delayed, staff does not have enough information to do the calculations as yet. I know that I have already spent a lot of time talking about the process, but it is the most wide reaching and visible action that we take.

Congratulations, once again, to Lauren Stara and Andrea Bunker, this time for their successful Web Junction webinar, The Accidental Facilities Manager. My understanding is that 641 people signed up with over 400 attending the live session. There were attendees from all over the United States and internationally from as far away as Egypt. Soon we will all be able to say we knew them when.

Congratulations also to Tracey Dimant, Rob Favini, Maura Deedy, and Mary Ellen Osborne for their Citations for Outstanding Performance from the Governor. James has more to say on this.

**Commissioner Reports**

**Commissioner Abraham**

* Participated in Sharing Visions Conference with Paul Kissman
* Attended two PR Committee Meetings; November 19 and December 2
* Writing to Senators
* Keeping up my Library Bits Twitter

**Commissioner Ball**

* Participated in MLS Executive Committee Meeting
* Participated in MBLC Executive Committee Meeting

**Commissioner DeBole**

* November 14- Welcomed Trustees at the MLTA Meeting
* November 17- Attended the Small Libraries Forum

**Commissioner Kronholm**

* Attended the Small Libraries Forum
* Participated in the PR Committee Meeting
* Speaking to local legislators about new Board Members

**Commissioner Perille**

* November 05 - Libraries as Civic Hubs: Extending Conversations on Civic Engagement webinar (MLS with MBLC)
* November 18 - Library Journal Design Institute - morning keynote by the CEO of the Sacramento Public Library
* November 19 - MBLC Public Relations Committee meeting on marketing plan
* December 02 - MBLC Public Relations Committee meeting on legislative agenda

**Commissioner Ochsenbein**

* Reviewed and made comments about the new Strategic Plan
* Participated in Zoom call with Director and Trustees at the Brockton Public Library

**Commissioner Resnick**

* Attended the November 10, 2020 Central Mass Library Advocates Annual Meeting
* Attended the Small Libraries Forum Keynote Address
* Participated in MBLC Executive Committee Meeting

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

Meetings/activities since the last monthly Board meeting:

* November 5— “Libraries as Civic Hubs: Extending Conversations on Civic Engagement” webinar
* November 9—Quarterly statewide check-in call with David Leonard, BPL and Sarah Sogigian, MLS
* November 9, 16, 19 & 24—Check-in calls with Abby Straus re: strategic plan
* November 10—Presented MBLC update during Central Mass. Library Advocates Annual Meeting, virtual
* November 10—Webjunction “Accidental Facilities Manager” webinar
* November 11—BPL/State Library/NEHGS online talk with Nathaniel Philbrick about *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War*
* November 16—IMLS State Program Report Refresher webinar
* November 16—MLS Executive Board meeting, virtual
* November 17—Presented welcoming remarks during online *Small Libraries Forum* and attended sessions
* November 18—Presented welcoming remarks during *Sharing Visions: 2020 New England Resource Sharing Conference* and attended sessions, virtual
* November 18—Phone call with Noah McClanan, Deputy Director of Governor’s Office of Boards and Commissions
* November 19—COSLA Update
* November 20—MLA Legislative Committee meeting, virtual
* November 23—Lyrasis/IMLS National Leadership Grant Information Session
* December 1—Provided MBLC Update at CWMARS Users Council, virtual
* December 1—MLS webinar: *Libraries and their Critical Role Serving Immigrant Communities*
* December 2—COSLA EDI Engagement Group meeting

We are still working under a level-funded interim budget (the third for this fiscal year) that funds state government through November and covers “several days into December,” according to a recent State House News article. The Conference Committee budget should be out soon, unless the legislature passes another interim budget.

Most of our budget lines are in conference, however the proposed amount for our Admin line (7000-9101), our legislative agenda request amount of $1,579,876, is the same for both the House and Senate budgets. For the other lines, proposed amounts are either level funding or our legislative agenda request—including our $12 million ask for State Aid to Public Libraries (7000-9501) in the Senate budget proposal--with the exceptions of State Aid to Regional Libraries (7000-9401), for which the House proposed a $1 million increase, or for the Mass. Center for the Book, for which the Senate has not provided funding.



The **Sharing Visions: 2020 New England Resource Sharing Conference** took place on November 18. Paul Kissman served on the planning committee for this conference sponsored by the state library agencies of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island with coordination from the Library of Rhode Island Resource Sharing Working Group. Portions of the Conference were supported by IMLS LSTA funds from the Connecticut State Library. The event drew 150 attendees from New England and across the country.

The day-long conference featured a keynote by Trevor Dawes, Vice Provost for Libraries and Museums and May Morris University Librarian at University of Delaware, who’s topic was *Is True Resource Sharing Now a Reality*? Full program information, and coming soon session recordings, can be found here: <https://olis-ri.libguides.com/rswg/sharing-visions>

Jointly produced by MBLC and MLS, the third **Small Libraries Forum: Small Libraries, Big Connections** took place November 17-18 with five sessions spread over those two days. The forum included a keynote by Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, an ignite session focused on libraries succeeding by playing to their strengths, a Libraries in the Woods panel, a panel on library collaborations with other organizations, and virtual table talks.

There were 156 registrants from around the country. All sessions were recorded and are available for viewing. The Small Libraries Forum was made possible by a grant from the Manton Foundation.

Kristi Chadwick from MLS and Lyndsay Forbes were the main organizers for the Forum. There was a planning committee comprised of 5 directors from small libraries around Massachusetts: Karen Stinchfield, Cushman Library (Bernardston); Kevin Bourque, Boxford Town Library; Antonia Stephens, Hyannis Public Library; Katherine Umstot, Sunderland Public Library; and Karen Demers, Wilbraham Public Library. These individuals received a scholarship from the MBLC paid for with LSTA funds to attend the 2019 Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) conference in Vermont. They held a series of meetings with the group over the past year to gather ideas, get feedback, and review proposals. The planning committee members also helped moderate sessions during the forum. We also had staff members from MBLC and MLS help with table talks and the MBLC Communications team helped promote the event.

The 4th Small Libraries Forum is set for November 2021. Kristi and Lyndsay will again take the lead and will work with a small group of planners who received scholarships to ARSL 2020. The planning group for that forum includes Beverly Bullock, Meekins Library (Williamsburg); Nicole Daviau, Porter Memorial Library (Blandford); Jessie McKinney, Raynham Public Library; Jessica O'Conner, West Falmouth Library; Sheila Parks, Lanesborough Public Library; and Misha Storm, Leverett Public Library.

Maura and Rob have participated in several consulting meetings with library trustees and directors from individual libraries addressing specific issues that they are facing. In the past this type of engagement was nearly impossible due to travel and scheduling challenges. Video conferencing has created new opportunities to interact with entire boards of trustees and with combinations of trustees and directors. Topics that we have discussed include advocacy for funding with municipal governments, the role of trustees, and relationships with library foundations. We anticipate that this will be a regular outreach methodology moving forward.

The final **Fall 2020 MBLC Trustee Orientation** session took place on November 18. Maura, Liz and Rob presented to, and fielded questions from, 20 attendees. The attendance total from this fall’s 5 sessions was 130.

**Series Feedback from Evaluations:**

*What is one thing you will take back to your library***:**

* The importance of diligence in pursuing state aid.
* The response to the COVID-19 related issues were addressed and I feel more comfortable that the libraries will be able to continue running in a safe way.
* I feel more confident in my role as a trustee. This information will help me be more involved in the decisions being made and conversations.
* Building library’s value story.

*Additional Comments***:**

* Generally knew a good deal about this topic - it was a good refresher for me thus the checkmarks on learned a little. Presenters were well prepared and did a GREAT job.
* Particularly given the time of day, i.e. late in the day, the presentation was a bit dry, so I found my attention slipping. The info package is much appreciated, and I am anxious to go thru it. Also nice to know that you exist as a potentially valuable resource we can consult with going forward.

Maura held the final **Fall Friends Sharing with Friends coffee hours** on November 10th. These sessions are an opportunity for Friends to gather and share their successes, ask questions of each other. This series’ 4 Friends Coffee Hours were attended by 62 people.

Maura also will be facilitating a round table at the ALA Midwinter national virtual conference for United for Libraries, where she is a current member of the Board.

Shelley Quezada facilitated the ***Libraries as Civic Hubs: Extending Conversations on Civic Engagement*** webinar on November 5. 50 attendees learned about recent LSTA Direct Grant programs from Jessica Fitzhanso (Chelmsford Public Library), Alexandra Pratt (W. Tisbury Public Library), and Millie Gonzalez (Framingham State University Library). The event emphasized libraries role as serving as public forms and civic engagement ‘incubators’ encouraging libraries to support informed, issue-oriented public programs and structured opportunities for discussion.

Shelley also began work on planning the **IMLS School Readiness Toolkit** training by meeting with other state agencies online and coordinating our training team in Massachusetts, which will include Laurie Collins from Ipswich and April Mazza from MLS. Virtual training will take place in February and the team is charged with reaching 75+ libraries later in the spring.

Kate Butler and Tressa Santillo from MLS have started a series of listening sessions to let librarians share how the **statewide databases** are working for them, and what they want to see from the next procurement.   In November they met with librarians from NOBLE and CLAMS.  In December they have meetings planned with Minuteman, 2 school librarian sessions, and hopefully one with MCCLPHEI (Mass. Consortium of Libraries in Public Higher Education Institutions).

**MPLCP**: Over 400 people participated in the “Accidental Facilities Manager” webinar that Lauren and Andrea presented for WebJunction on November 10. It was well received, and they’ve gotten quite a few compliments on it.

We have published *Library Space: A Planning Resource for Librarians* and it is available in an online magazine format and as a download at <https://mblc.state.ma.us/libraryspace>. Lauren also learned how to tag a complex pdf for accessibility.

The Building Literacy podcast has surpassed 1,000 downloads, and our latest episode is “HVAC and COVID-19.”

Andrea and Lauren have been recruited to write an in-depth article for *Library Journal* on HVAC and COVID-19 for libraries. It will appear in December.

**Staff News**: Two groups of staff—Maura Deedy and Rob Favini; and Maryellen Osborne and Tracey Dimant-- were nominated for and have received **Citations for Outstanding Performance** signed by Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito. Citations awards are based on one or more of the following achievements:

* Attainment of high priority agency objective(s);
* Exceptional managerial, organizational and/or communications achievements;
* Exemplary leadership;
* Achievement of significant improvements in productivity and/or savings in agency operations.

Maura and Rob’s nomination focused on their outstanding work with MLS colleagues to help Massachusetts libraries respond to the COVID-19 epidemic, including providing guidance and communicating with the Reopening Advisory Board.

Maryellen and Tracey’s nomination focused both on their efforts towards organizing our agency’s response to COVID-19, including supporting our working remotely and preparing our office spaces for safe in-person work when required, and their exemplary work with colleagues to facilitate our move to new office space—a challenge at any time, but particularly during a pandemic.

We usually present citations in person at a staff meeting and awardees are invited to attend a ceremony at the State House. This year we recognized our awardees at a virtual staff meeting and certificates were sent by email—no word yet on whether a virtual ceremony will be held.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

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

Revenues continue to remain ahead of Fiscal Year 2021 benchmarks and year to year reporting for both monthly figures and year to date collections. The November revenue report is due out later today and can be accessed at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-revenue>. As of mid-November, the Department of Revenue (DOR) reported revenue collections of $827 million, up $117 million or 16.5% over the same date in November 2019.

There will be 19 new faces in the Legislature this January. They will join their colleagues in the 192nd General Court when they are sworn in after the New Year. They are:

**Senators**

John Cronin (D) Lunenburg; defeated Senator Dean Tran (R) Fitchburg

Adam Gomez (D) Springfield; defeated Senator James Welch (D) in the primary

**Representatives (House)**

Kip Diggs (D) Barnstable: defeated Rep. William Crocker (R)

Vanna Howard (D) Lowell; defeated Rep. David Nangle (D) in the primary

Steven Xiarhos (R) Barnstable; replaces Rep. Randy Hunt (R)

Adam Scanlon (D) North Attleborough; replaces Rep. Elizabeth Poirier (R)

Sally Kerans (D) Danvers; replaces Rep. Theodore Speliotis (D)

Kelly Pease (R) Westfield replaces Rep. John Velis (D)

Orlando Ramos (D) Springfield; replaces Rep. Jose Tosado (D)

Michael Kushmerek (D) Fitchburg; replaces Rep. Stephan Hay (D)

Meg Kilcoyne (D) Northborough; replaces Rep. Harold Naughton (D)

Brandy Fluker Oakley (D) Boston; replaces Rep. Dan Cullinane (D)

Rob Consalvo (D) Boston; replaces Rep. Angelo Scaccia (D)

Patricia Duffy (D) Holyoke; replaces Rep. Aaron Vega (D)

Ted Phillips (D) Sharon; replaces Rep. Louis Kafka

Erika Uyterhoeven (D) Somerville; replaces Rep. Denise Provost (D)

Steven Owens (D) Watertown; replaces Rep. Jonathan Hecht (D)

Jessica Giannino (D) Revere; replaces Rep. RoseLee Vincent (D)

Jake Oliveira (D) Ludlow; replaces Rep. Thomas Petrolati (D)

Many of the outgoing legislators were retiring or moving on to other positions outside of government; some were defeated in the primaries and a few lost in the general election. There are former legislative aides that are replacing their bosses and one outgoing representative, Angelo Scaccia, who is retiring the seat he has held since 1973.

The Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) Legislative Committee will use the Legislative Breakfast season and other MLA events as a way to introduce the new legislators to Massachusetts libraries and the importance of statewide support and funding. The Committee’s program, ***Expanding your Library's Advocacy Potential to the Max*** has been accepted for the MLA 2021 virtual conference: Let's Get Digital.

The FY 2021 budget remains in Conference Committee, where House and Senate Ways and Means leadership are working to resolve the differences between the House and Senate budget plans. The Committee traditionally includes the Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Ranking Minority Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. Senators include Michael Rodrigues, Chair, Cindy Friedman, Vice Chair, and Patrick O’Connor, Ranking Member. House members include Aaron Michlewitz, Chair, Denise Garlick, Vice Chair, and Todd Smola, Ranking Member.

There are a few more steps in the budget process before the Government Appropriations Act (GAA) budget becomes law. Once the Conference Committee publishes its compromise budget, the House and Senate vote the budget, separately in their respective chambers, and send it to the Governor for his signature. The Governor can sign or sign and veto sections and line items. If he vetoes parts of the budget, the House and Senate have the option of voting to override. Once the Conference Committee releases its report, the Legislature and the Governor should make short work of the remaining budget steps and finalize the FY 2021 budget.

There is a wonderful Budget Process explanation available at the Legislature’s site: <https://malegislature.gov/>. There is also a tool on the site that Commissioners, and others interested in how the state government works, might find helpful called [My Legislature](https://malegislature.gov/MyLegislature). The site allows those who sign up to follow legislation and navigate other activities on Beacon Hill.

Below are the budget figures to date, including the budget lines in Conference Committee; the numbers highlighted in yellow reflect the best-case scenario for the MBLC budget lines for FY 2021.

* MBLC Agency (7000-9101): matches the Legislative Agenda and across all budget proposals
* Regional Libraries (7000-9401): The House figure is over the Agenda request and $1 million over FY 2020
* Worcester Talking Book Library (7000-9402): The House figure meets the Agenda request
* Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library (7000-9406): The House figure meets the Agenda request
* State Aid to Public Libraries (7000-9501): The Senate figure matches the Agenda request
* Technology and Resource Sharing (7000-9506) The Senate figure matches the Agenda request
* The Massachusetts Center for the Book (7000-9508): The House figure meets the Agenda request\*



In addition to the Ways and Means membership and leadership, important legislators during the Conference Committee deliberations include the Chairs of Education (where MBLC legislation lives) and Tourism, Arts, and Cultural Development (where the MBLC budget resides), and, as always, with membership and leadership of the Legislative Library Caucus. With the election this month and the swearing in of a new Massachusetts General Court in January, some of the leadership positions may change for the next budget cycle. Commissioners will be kept informed about the changes, if any in leadership roles, including if there is a challenge to the Speakership.

**Communications Update**

In her report, MBLC Communications Director Celeste Bruno addressed promotion of online resources and the results from the promotional efforts. Access to online resources became even more important during the pandemic, so the MBLC has promoted LEA Library eBooks and Audiobooks, databases and other newly created online resources in several ways.

The communications team worked with Buyer Advertising to switch from running a paid advertising campaign for summer reading to a campaign for LEA. The campaign was entirely digital and ran during the month of May. With digital campaigns targeting our audience is more effective—the ads only appear to individuals who fit in the set targeted demographic.  Overall, the digital campaigns are less expensive (roughly 1/3 the cost) of more traditional advertising.  The MBLC also included LEA and databases as part of the online promotion for the virtual Boston Book Festival.

All promotion led users to the consumer portal mass.gov/libraries.

One of the ways success of campaigns is measured is through pageviews to the consumer portal. The portal experienced dramatic increases as the pandemic worsened and more closures occurred. By April 2020 consumer portal pageviews had more than doubled in just four months. With the paid campaign in May the increase topped 200%.  Participation in the Boston Book Festival also drove users to the site making October the second busiest month on the portal. The Boston Book Festival had more than 15,000 attendees and the Marketplace (where the MBLC featured LEA, databases and other newly created online resources) was the third-most visited page on the BBF site. Only the homepage and festival schedule were busier.

On the MBLC’s consumer portal, new visitors- 78.9%- made up most of the traffic. This is encouraging since the goal of the campaign and participation in the book festival was to attract new users.

The communications team also looked at LEA usage statistics. When LEA began over a year ago, not everyone was convinced of the need for branding and promotion. Some felt that people were finding it on their own. While many current library users were indeed finding and using LEA, we wanted to attract new users.

Due in part, to increased demand from the pandemic, eBook and audiobook usage has increased dramatically. However, if the LEA program was not user friendly or if it was a little-known service, double digit increases would not occur. In May 2019 checkouts totaled about 650,000. In May of 2020 when the paid campaign ran, checkouts totaled over one million in a single month (a 55% increase) and usage has stayed at the elevated levels. This, combined with the new user traffic to the portal indicates that the campaign was successful in bringing new users to LEA. Overall, the campaign resulted in close to 5 million impressions, which means the total number of times the ads appeared to a person in the targeted demographic. This is even higher than the successful summer reading campaigns.

In terms of databases, the MBLC compared April and May of 2019 and April and May of 2020, it’s clear that the pandemic cut database usage in almost half. This is most likely because schools were closed and therefore students were not using them. Database usage did surge during the month of the Boston Book Festival. Going from 245,000 full text views to more than 537,000 during the month of the festival (an increase of more than 100%)

Most recently, the MBLC ran *Kids Cast Your Vote*, a fun campaign in which kids of all ages were invited to go online and cast their vote for their favorite book. All candidate books are available free through the LEA program.

The communications team worked with Buyer Advertising to create a special voting website that highlighted access to the titles through LEA. Networks also featured the titles on their landing pages.

Bookmarks that could be placed in curbside pickup were also created. Posters for libraries that had started physical re-opening were also available. The website and all materials were created in 5 languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and Haitian Creole.

Votes were received from 144 different communities and the MBLC created the best booklist and template news release. The MBLC still needs to look at data, but the campaign did result in several news stories in which LEA and statewide library usage was highlighted.

**Update to State Aid Applications and Waivers**

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

At this time, there are 53 waiver applicants. To put this number in context, in 2011, there were 123 applications, last year there were sixteen, and in statute, there are ten. In budget language, Commissioners have the authority to grant as many waivers as needed/necessary. I used the phrase, at this time, to begin because libraries are still reporting in that they are receiving additional funding from long delayed Annual Town Meetings, Special Town Meetings, and budget transfers, and have since withdrawn their waiver applications.

Of the 53 waiver requests, 39 are under the 5% cut benchmark when compared to other municipal departments. Some of this number are from libraries that received increases to their budgets, but not enough to meet the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR); others were level funded; and still others are from municipalities that cut their libraries by a smaller percentage than the overall town budget. Fourteen waiver applications are over 5% and of that number, eight are over 10%.

The State Aid Unit is recommending to Commissioners that the municipalities with disproportionate cuts between 5% and 10% receive a follow up review in the next state aid cycle. The eight municipalities with over a 10% disproportionate cut will be expected/required to present their petitions in person at the February Board Meeting. Commissioners will vote at the March Board meeting whether to grant “waivers with reservation” to these municipalities. These petitions range from slightly over 10% budget decreases to slightly below 20% reductions to library funding. The other waivers (under 5% and between 5 and 10%) will be presented and reviewed in February and voted as a group in March.

Liz Babbitt has put together a comprehensive LibGuide that includes the Program and Waiver Histories. I recommend that Commissioners review the documents to become familiar with the process. These documents can be accessed from the State Aid and ARIS page <https://guides.mblc.state.ma.us/state_aid_summary>. Summary Documents include:

* [FY2020 SA Summary](https://guides.mblc.state.ma.us/ld.php?content_id=55808674)
* [SA History 1890 - present](https://guides.mblc.state.ma.us/ld.php?content_id=55808989)
* [Award History 1987 - 2020](https://guides.mblc.state.ma.us/ld.php?content_id=55808156)
* [MAR formula history 1890 to 2020](https://guides.mblc.state.ma.us/ld.php?content_id=55808740)
* [MAR Waiver History 1990-2020](https://guides.mblc.state.ma.us/ld.php?content_id=55808823)
* [Municipalities not certified](https://guides.mblc.state.ma.us/ld.php?content_id=55806883)

Uechi Ng has kept the State Aid Program archives up to date and we have files for the more recent iterations of the Program dating back to the 1970s. Once the current waiver documentation has been compiled, including the letters from the library and the municipality, the Unit will share copies with the Commissioners.

Massachusetts has 369 public libraries in 350 of its 351 municipalities. 347 municipalities have applied to the State Aid Program this year, the highest number in several decades. Millville has reapplied after it lost certification a few years ago due to a steep budget cut, Tyringham has applied for the first time since the 60s, and Hancock returned to the program last year after a decades long absence.

In these unprecedented times, these numbers are significant, and in a positive way. The State Aid Unit was anticipating a record number of waivers, given the pandemic and the resulting financial crisis. We were surprised and encouraged that so many municipalities continued their strong financial support and concern for their local public libraries this year. It is a credit to the great work that libraries do to support their communities every day, but especially during times of crisis.

At the January Board Meeting, State Aid staff will bring recommendations to Commissioners regarding changes needed to the standards and requirements this year for reporting next year. These recommendations will be similar to those in the Emergency Preamble last April and will address, among other things, the Hours Open and the Materials Expenditure Requirements. There will be a Commissioner waiver training mid-January as well.

COVID 19 has required changes to the State Aid Program, the requirements, the process, and the timeline. Ordinarily we would be presenting Commissioners with the second list of libraries to be certified in December. Due to a number of factors, including no State Budget, the calendar for State Aid certification has been pushed forward to February. We will be presenting the libraries that have met all of the requirements for certification for a vote at the February Board Meeting.

**Preliminary Discussion of the FY2022 Legislative Agenda**

Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs/Government Liaison started off the Legislative Agenda discussion.

Below is a chart with some very preliminary budget figures which are being offered for discussion purposes only. Since a current fiscal year budget has not, as yet, been approved, the figures included in the chart are conditional (e.g. if State Aid is approved at $12 million, then the FY 2022 request is $13 million; if State Aid remains at the around the $10 million mark, the 2022 request will be the $12 million requested in the last Agenda.) For most other lines, if the budget meets or exceeds the FY 2021 Legislative Agenda requested amount, the new request for 2022 will be 3% higher. If the lower figure for a line item comes out of Conference Committee (level funding to 2020 for 2021), the request is 5%.

We do not know at this time if the FY 2021 budget will include the increase requested to State Aid to Public Libraries, the focus of the FY 2021 Legislative Agenda. With the ongoing uncertainty surrounding library services and the pandemic, State Aid continues to be the most direct way to support public libraries in the Commonwealth.



Thoughts behind the numbers:
1.) The Agency line will need annual increases to meet its obligations.
2.) The Regional line received a real boost in the House version of the budget. The figures in the chart represent a 3% increase over the higher House number and a 5% increase over the lower Senate number.
3). Perkins and Worcester have overcome significant challenges resulting from adapting services for their patrons during the pandemic. They require increases to continue to support their communities, especially in a mostly remote environment.
4.) Although State Aid to Public Libraries has seen increases in the last few years, it remains funded close to the funding level it had 20 years ago in FY 2000. State Aid is local aid and the most direct method to provide financial assistance to local libraries
5.) Technology and Resource Sharing has received significant increases the last two years. Ongoing funding increases are critical for the networks as they continue to provide essential technology infrastructure support and online collections to their member libraries
6.) The Center for the Book has requested a baseline budget of $300,000 to fund the office, the program, and the outreach necessary to secure private funding for this private/public partnership. The Center has not had an increase in a number of years. Their work promoting literacy is especially important to the schools during this crisis.

The Communications Team will lead the meeting discussion focused of the FY 2022 messaging related to the budget requests.

**Statements from affiliates**

**Massachusetts Library System (MLS)**

Betsy Meaden, Business and Human Resources Director spoke on behalf of MLS. She stated that MLS continues to support 3% increase. MLS agrees the priority should be State Aid to Public Libraries.

**Library for the Commonwealth (LFC)/ Boston Public Library (BPL)**

Anna Fahey-Flynn, Central Library Manager stated that BPL supports State Aid being the priority. Boston directly benefits from the State Aid program. The BPL gets a lot of their money from renting space in their buildings and now there are no renters, so they need the money more than ever.

**Perkins School Library**

Kim Charlson, Executive Director says that the FY2022 Legislative Agenda sounds perfect and is on target. She said she is filling out the affiliates sheet that Matt Perry had sent to her. She thinks that breaking down affiliates statements and show what we do is great. It will help show why access and equity are so important.

**Massachusetts Center for the Book**

Krista McLeod, Board Member supports the $300,000 for the Center for the Book. The increase will allow us to do the things that we have been planning to do like the Book Awards, Letters about Literature, Book Bytes, and Boston Book Festival. The Center for the Book will also have to move because the current space can only have one staff member at a time in the space. Ms. McLeod also said they need to work on the Senate going forward and how much she appreciates the support for the increase.

**Library Networks**

Ron Gagnon, Executive Director, North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE) was speaking on behalf of the networks. He said they appreciate what has gone into this process and also the funding increase. He said they are also happy that State Aid is the priority because it will directly help so many of their libraries.

Philip McNulty, Network Administrator, Minuteman Library Network (MLN) also spoke on behalf of networks. He stated that 9506 does help getting money to libraries on a whole. 9506 was helpful with LEA. He said they appreciate all the support for LEA.

**Massachusetts Library Association**

William Adamczyk, Committee Co-Chair, MLA Legislative spoke on behalf of MLA. He stated that MLA has not taken an official stance on the Legislative Agenda but State Aid to Public Libraries is very important to them. They are currently working with EveryLibrary and MSLA. EveryLibrary is the first and only national political action committee for libraries. EveryLibrary helps public, school, and college libraries win bonding, tax, and advisory referendum, ensuring stable funding and access to libraries for generations to come.

**Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA)**

Greg Pronevitz, Consultant stated that the statewide databases and eBooks are the priority for MSLA.  I attended a meeting yesterday led by Tressa Santillo (MLS) and Kate Butler (MBLC) to gather information about use of online content in schools.   The school librarians clearly expressed the importance of statewide online content to their students and teachers.

In light of these ongoing needs and as we look at two upcoming outreach efforts for libraries, i.e., the MBLC statewide PR Committee’s planning and the MLA Legislative Committee’s work with EveryLibrary, we hope there’s a way to shine a light on the role and value of school librarians and libraries as we advocate for this funding.  This can help by sharing information about the value and activities of school librarians/libraries and identifying commonalities among all libraries.

We understand that electronic content is funded through several budget lines, i.e., MBLC administrative, MLS/LFC regional libraries, 9506 library technology, and LSTA federal funds.  We hope the current services can be supported and, if possible, additional content be made available to support education in the Commonwealth.

We understand that this funding is one part of the work of MBLC and its affiliates, and we support the direction to move all areas of funding forward.

**Presentation and discussion of the FY2022 Plan of Service and Program and Budget for the Massachusetts Library System**

Betsy Meaden, Business and Human Resources Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS) presented the FY2022 Plan of Service and Program and Budget.

The MLS Executive Board unanimously approved the FY2022 Plan of Service and Budget at its October 5, 2020 meeting and it was presented to the MLS Council of Members virtually on November 2, 2020. The MLS Executive Board gave final approval on November 16, 2020.

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

The priorities of the Plan of Service and the implementation of our new Strategic Plan are described in the introduction. Additionally, we will present an annual Action Plan to connect our work to our plan.

**In 2021-2024 MLS will focus on these three initiatives:**

* Initiative 1: MLS ensures its services are sustainable, prioritize member needs, and equitably serve all member types.
* Initiative 2: MLS empowers leaders to emerge at every level of library service, connecting staff throughout the stages of their careers.
* Initiative 3: MLS will take the lead in convening important conversations in and support member-facing initiatives focused on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Social Justice work (IDEALS).

**Presentation and discussion of the FY2022 Plan of Service and Program and Budget for the Library for the Commonwealth**

Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator, Boston Public Library (BPL) presented the Plan of Service and Budget.

The FY2022 budget and plan of service for the Library for the Commonwealth program, administered by Boston Public Library (BPL), and funded through state budget line 7000-9401, we are submitting is level-funded at $2,879,000.

Next year, we will continue to provide services in four key areas:

* Digital Commonwealth & Digitization Services
* Statewide Reference & Research
* Education & Civic Engagement
* Statewide Collection Development & Access

As we have done in the past, we do request that the personnel costs for the two developer positions and the statewide metadata coordinator working on the Digital Commonwealth project be over and above the 50% personnel costs allowed in the LFC budget.

**Libraries and COVID-19 Discussion**

Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development stated that he participated in a pubdir drop-in session. He said libraries are stuck in an awful in between time. They can’t do anything without a budget. They are feeling underappreciated by their towns. People are in a fragile place right now and especially with the holidays coming. Anxiety, stress, fatigue is all settling in.

Liz Babbitt, State Aid Specialist spoke about the survey that is sent out to public libraries. She said that questions won’t be changed right now but, in the future, they will ask when and how they did limited services and what the limited services were.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**MBLC Years of Service Pins**

1. Matt Perry, 5 Years
2. Amy Clayton, 20 Years
3. Rachel Masse, 20 Years
4. Paul Kissman, 25 Years

**List of documents for the November 5, 2020 Regular Monthly Board Meeting:**

1. Agenda for the December 3, 2020, 2020 Regular Monthly Board Meeting
2. Draft Minutes of the November 5, 2020 Regular Monthly Board Meeting
3. Agenda Item 9, FY2022 Massachusetts Library System Plan of Service and Program and Budget
4. Agenda Item 10, FY2022 Library for the Commonwealth Plan of Service and Program and Budget

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Cluggish moved to adjourn the December 3, 2020 monthly business meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners at 1:00 PM under the consent agenda.

Hearing no objections, the motion passes.



N. Janeen Resnick

Secretary