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

**Date:** Thursday, February 4, 2021

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

**Place:**  Zoom Meeting

**Present:** Mary Ann Cluggish, Chair; Les Ball, Vice Chair; N. Janeen Resnick, Secretary; Deb Abraham; Vicky Biancolo; Debby Conrad; Stacy DeBole; Mary Kronholm; 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; Maura Deedy, Library Advisory Specialist; Tracey Dimant, Head of Operations & Budget; Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development; Paul Kissman, Library Information Systems Specialist; Evan Knight, Preservation Specialist; Rachel Masse, Assistant to the Director; Matthew Perry, Communications Specialist; Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs / Government Liaison; Aparna Ramachandran, Data Analyst/ IT Support Specialist; Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist

**Observers Present:**

Jennifer Callahan, Town Manager, Town of Oxford; Andrea Capone, Library Director, Canton Public Library/ OCLN President; Eileen Chandler, Administrator, Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing Network (CLAMS); Jeanne Cianciola, Library Trustee Chair, John Curtis Free Library, Hanover; Rocco Ciccarello, Trustee Chair, Stoneham Public Library; Joseph Colangelo, Town Manager, Town of Hanover; Emily Curtin, Library Trustee, Kingston Public Library; Patricia DiPietro, Library Trustee, Stoneham Public Library; Roberta Flashman, Library Trustee, Ashby Free Public Library; Jane Francis, Trustee Vice-Chair, Stoneham Public Library; Ron Gagnon, Executive Director, North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE); Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator, Boston Public Library (BPL); Alysa Hayden, Assistant Director, Peabody Institute Library, Peabody; Virginia Johnson, Library Director, John Curtis Free Library, Hanover; Nicole Langley, Library Director, Stoneham Public Library; Marie Letarte, Library Director, Bigelow Free Public Library, Clinton; Pat Levine, Trustee Chair, Bushnell-Sage Library, Sheffield; Jeannette Lundgren, Network Administrator, CW MARS, Inc.; Kathy Mahoney, Library Director, Mashpee Public Library; Catherine Mardula, Library Trustee, Tyringham Free Public Library; Carl McCoy, Finance Director, Town of Kingston; Brittany McDougal, Library Director, Oxford Free Public Library; Krista McLeod, Library Director, Nevins Memorial Library, Methuen/ Board Member, Massachusetts Center for the Book (MCB); Cate Merlin, Library Director, Peabody Institute Library, Peabody; Sharon Shaloo, Executive Director, Massachusetts Center for the Book; Dennis Sheehan, Town Administrator, Town of Stoneham; David Slater, Network Administrator, Old Colony Library Network (OCLN); Mike Slawson, Library Director, Kingston Public Library; Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS); Chelsea Stevens, Interim Finance Director, Town of Hanover; Cathleen Sullivan, Assistant Director, Oxford Free Public Library; Nancy Tracy, Salem Resident, Salem Public Library; Lisa Warren, Library Trustee, Kingston Public Library; Harry Roger Williams III, Library Trustee, Oxford Free Public Library

**Meeting called to order by Chair Cluggish**

Chair Cluggish called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Chair Cluggish welcomed everyone and described the meeting process under the Open Meeting Law for remote meetings.

Chair Cluggish also explained that she would be making a motion for a consent agenda. A consent agenda is a board meeting practice that groups routine motions into the consent agenda. If there are no objections, the Chair can declare a motion passed, rather than counting votes for each motion separately.

Chair Cluggish moved to adopt a consent agenda for this meeting for agenda items #2, approval of minutes, and item #16 to Adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Abraham seconded.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner Cluggish- YES | Commissioner Kronholm- YES |
| Commissioner Ball- YES | Commissioner Conrad- YES | Commissioner Perille- YES |
| Commissioner Biancolo- YES | Commissioner DeBole- YES | Commissioner Resnick- YES |

**Approval of Minutes from the regular monthly meeting: January 7, 2021**

Commissioner Abraham moved to approve the minutes under the consent agenda. Commissioner Perille seconded the motion.

Commissioner Perille stated that she would like the record to show she requested the Library for the Commonwealth to report back on the BPL's intentions around a new strategic plan because the BPL Compass – their last plan is turning 10 this year.

Chair Cluggish asked for a motion to accept the minutes under the consent agenda

Chair Cluggish stated that the updated minutes will reflect Commissioner Perille’s request.

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 Virtual Events:

* Waiver webinar as presented by Liz Babbitt and Mary Rose Quinn
* Mass Municipal Conference
* Gina Perille Exit Interview with James Lonergan
* Executive board meeting

I hope you all had the opportunity to read the Roles and Responsibilities document that we sent last month.  Continuing with this effort, it seems that there is still some confusion about the structure of the Agency and the functional relationship between the Board, the Director and Staff.  Here is a link to the Trustee Handbook created by the MBLC.  <https://mblc.state.ma.us/for/2018-handbook.pdf>  Please scroll down and read pages 19-22. It's mostly bullet points and it's fast, but important reading.

Commissioners essentially have the same relationship to our Director as Trustees do to Library Directors. When you read those pages, simply substitute the word Commissioner for the word Trustee, and ignore references specific to Libraries.  A library's Trustees have one employee, the Director, that they make requests of. The Director in turn, supervises and manages the staff. Similarly, Commissioners do not direct or supervise staff. It is important that everyone understand the functional relationships.

Today is Gina Perille's last meeting with the Board of Library Commissioners. We wish her all the best as she starts an exciting new chapter in her life.

When Gina came to the board she brought with her ideals of fairness and equity evident in her work as chief operating officer at the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate. One of the most powerful exhibits at the Institute has been “A Seat at the Table” inspired by Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm’s words: “If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.” Gina’s work serves as an exemplar for being civically engaged.

I first became familiar with Gina's work when she wrote the prize-winning Boston Public Library Strategic Plan entitled “Compass”.

Gina will be greatly missed on this board. She will tell you about where she's going and what she will do during Commissioner Reports. But before that I want to thank Gina for her contributions to the MBLC.

While on the MBLC she served as Board liaison to SACL and also on the Statewide PR Committee. Her ongoing contributions to the Agency were timely and helpful but I especially want to thank her for her invaluable role in helping to create the new MBLC Mission, Vision and Principles Statements which are the foundation for what we do.

Gina – Congratulations on your new role. We look forward to seeing more great things from you.

Before we begin, it's important to acknowledge the work of the State Aid Team. Mary Rose, Liz, Uechi, and Aparna. They have been working with municipalities since this past spring; Mary Rose and Liz Babbitt have met with Library Directors, Trustees, Town Managers, and Finance Directors. They have spoken to, Zoomed and emailed back and forth with every municipality on the Waiver List and dozens of others that needed help. I'm sure that this year required at least double the usual effort.

**Commissioner Reports**

**Commissioner Abraham**

* Attended the January 12 State Aid Municipal Appropriate Requirement (MAR) Waiver Webinar
* Attended PR Committee meeting
* Attended PPE Staying afloat webinar
* Participated in Virtual Valentine Kick-off

**Commissioner Ball**

* Attended the January 12 State Aid Municipal Appropriate Requirement (MAR) Waiver Webinar
* Participated in MLS Executive Board Webinar
* Participated in MBLC Executive Committee Meeting

**Commissioner Biancolo**

* Attended the January 12 State Aid Municipal Appropriate Requirement (MAR) Waiver Webinar
* Participated in BPL’s Repairing America Webinar
* Participated in MLS eBook Collection Webinar

**Commissioner Conrad**

* Attended the January 12 State Aid Municipal Appropriate Requirement (MAR) Waiver Webinar
* Spoke at CLAMS Virtual Luncheon

**Commissioner DeBole**

* Attended the January 12 State Aid Municipal Appropriate Requirement (MAR) Waiver Webinar

**Commissioner Kronholm**

* Attended the January 12 State Aid Municipal Appropriate Requirement (MAR) Waiver Webinar
* Participated in discussion with members of the Statewide Public Relations Advisory Committee about how to better coordinate between school and public libraries around literacy, especially early literacy. Given the school closures and remote learning there’s concern that learning gaps have widened.

**Commissioner Perille**

* Attended the January 12 State Aid Municipal Appropriate Requirement (MAR) Waiver Webinar
* Exit interview on January 26 with Chair Cluggish and Director Lonergan
* Attended February 3 MBLC Library Lover's Valentine Month intro/explainer program

Commissioner Perille Stated that it has been a genuine honor to serve the Commonwealth and the library community in this manner.

I was taught from a young age about the importance of civic participation and civic engagement. My parents were very active in the community of my hometown in Illinois. My father was a precinct captain and as soon as I was tall enough to reach the screen door handle, he sent me out with one hand full of flyers and the other hand full of rubber bands so that I could attach election day reminders to the screen doors of other people’s houses in the neighborhood.

It is through the civic lens that I was reintroduced to libraries as an adult. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work in the state’s two largest library systems and it changed my life. Libraries are civic anchors, community cornerstones, and some of the most visible, accessible, understandable, and essential manifestations of everyday democracy.

All of these experiences and concepts came together for me when I was appointed to this board.

The responsibilities that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners holds are significant and serious.

I truly believe that the people and entities and agencies that are entrusted with resources, especially public resources, have an obligation to make wise and equitable investments that sustain and inspire excellence.

I am indebted to the very talented staff for their thoughtful and professional efforts to do this.

I am happy to report that I will continue as a member of the Statewide Public Relations Advisory Committee and will certainly be available to the board and staff for consultation and conversation.

I do sincerely thank Governor Baker for the opportunity to serve on this board. And finally, thank you to my fellow board members for making space for me among your ranks.

**Commissioner Resnick**

* Attended the January 12 State Aid Municipal Appropriate Requirement (MAR) Waiver Webinar
* Participated in MBLC Executive Committee Meeting
* Attended WMLA Board Meeting
* Attended MCB Board Meeting

**Commissioner Resnick**, liaison to the Massachusetts Center for the Book (MCB) reported about the quarterly meeting of the MCB on January 14, 2021 at 3 P.M.

Standard business meeting.

The Board uses DropBox to share all documents.

The Board discussed financials from several different angles: potential funds through the Cares Act, loan forgiveness, donations, and the MBLC Legislative Agenda.

Office space is very limited. MCB rents storage facilities to store materials. I suggested that MCB check with UMass local history - they have accepted documents from the Western Mass. Library Club and the Western Mass. Regional Library System. Maybe the Archives could help alleviate some of the storage issues. MCB will be distributing some of their files and materials.

There was a brief conversation about additional types of books that might be added to the awards categories.

The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing Board and Council recruitment. Members will be announced at a later date.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

Meetings/activities since the last monthly Board meeting:

* January 5—MLA Legislative Committee meeting, virtual
* January 11—MLS Executive Board meeting, virtual
* January 12—State Aid MAR Waiver webinar
* January 13—Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast (COSLINE) meeting, virtual
* January 13—MBLC/MLS CARES Act meeting, virtual
* January 14—Open Feedback Session on Statewide Databases, virtual
* January 20—Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Engagement Group meeting, virtual
* January 21—Virtual Fireside Chat with Eric Klinenberg, author of “Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life”
* January 22—Presented during CLAMS Legislative Luncheon, virtual
* January 26—United for Libraries “Fighting Budget Cuts and Finding Funding” webinar
* January 26—Exit Interview/conversation with Commissioners Perille and Cluggish
* January 26—Governor Baker’s “State of the State” address
* January 27—MLS Sustainable Funding Committee meeting, virtual

The Governor’s **House 1 FY2022 budget** **proposal** level-funds almost all our budget lines at FY2021 levels, with a small increase to our agency’s administration line. Mary Rose will provide more detail on this in her legislative report.

**Virtual Programming for Distance Learning Grants** are one way the MBLC is using **CARES Act** funds to assist libraries. The purpose of these grants is to support increased public access to virtual library programs. Funds can be used to purchase equipment and supplies for library-created programming, pay virtual performers or presenters, or to purchase materials for developing remote learning kits. Libraries of all types were eligible to apply for funds ranging from $1,500-3,500.

* 78 libraries applied from all over the state requesting nearly $190,000 in funding for projects
* 20 libraries received $54,900 in funding this round. The first grant round awarded $71,261 to 26 libraries in July 2020.
* Trends in the applications included projects focused on screen-free educational activities for young children, opportunities to get outdoors, and meeting a growing interest in genealogy and local history.

The MBLC is providing MLS with $300,000 in **CARES Act** funds to provide school libraries expanded access to eBook content to support and enhance in-person and distanced learning. MLS will purchase individual eBook titles, eBook content sets, simultaneous use licenses, and licenses for high demand items on the **Overdrive Sora platform.** These funds will have an immediate impact on curriculum support as well as a lasting impact throughout the summer months giving school librarians, teachers and students increased access to K-12 eBook content.

**FY2022 LSTA Grant Round Writing Workshops**: Shelley Quezada and Lyndsay Forbes recently delivered 3 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Direct Grant writing workshops with a total attendance of 83 participants. Attendees represented libraries that submitted a letter of intent to apply for an LSTA FY22 Direct Grant. The workshops are designed to walk attendees through the application process while helping them to refine their grant ideas and concepts to create the strongest grant application possible.

This year’s workshop highlighted the new application category of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). For the first time grant applicants will be scored on how well they demonstrate EDI awareness and program responsiveness in the context of their grant program.

**Preservation Assessment Grants**: The MBLC awarded $33,600 in LSTA funds to eight libraries across the Commonwealth for formal assessments of their community memory collections. The Preservation Assessment Grant program awards $4,200 to libraries of all types that successfully complete the eligibility requirements. The complete list of FY21 Preservation Assessment grant recipients is below, followed by a few highlights of this year’s grant round:

Dedham Public Library
Longmeadow - Richard Salter Storrs Library
Stockbridge Library, Museum & Archives
Tyringham Free Public Library
West Falmouth Library
Wilbraham Public Library
Dedham Public Library
Olin College of Engineering Library

Community collections at **West Falmouth Library** illustrate the town’s long and evolving history. Documents in the collection include deeds, wills, journals, notebooks, land transfers, and business records dating from 1670 to 1970. Photographs date from the 1800s to 1980s. Smaller collections of distinction include oral histories (VHS, CD, and digital formats), local biographies, negatives, rare books, a 19th century whaling logbook, and a few pieces of fine and decorative arts.  Archives Librarian Renee Voorhees and Library Director Jessica O’Connor note that West Falmouth’s diverse groups of people with shared histories are vital connections to a past that continues to resonate in the present.

**Tyringham Free Public Library** will identify the immediate preservation needs of their historic collections and develop a list of preservation priorities that will align with their internal and town-wide strategic plans. The library preserves and shares a large collection of photographs, from daguerreotypes and ambrotypes from the mid-1800s to recent prints and slides depicting the town’s 250th anniversary celebration in 1989. The library also has hundreds of oral history interviews on cassette tapes. The textile collection includes an 1829 sampler by a 13-year old youth, a nightgown from 1870, and a beloved quilt handmade by local women toward the end of the 1990s.

The **Dedham Public Library** has preserved extensive records from its earliest days of European colonization, dating back almost 400 years. The collections, which include maps, deeds, manuscripts, printed works, photographs, and more, have been used and cited in academic and popular literature for many years, demonstrating their importance to scholars of North American history as well as local residents. The library will use the grant to identify archival collections at potential risk of immediate damage, identify further ways to mitigate collection risks, and to support increased outreach with the collections to engage all members of the diverse community.

In Evan Knight’s position as Board Member of the **Mass Archives Advisory Commission** he is serving on the planning group for the 2021 Veteran’s Heritage grants ($200,000 total). These state funds were not expected so planning has been fast paced. The grant announcement and application can be found here: (<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcshrab/shrabidx.htm>).

Evan has also been co-leading a working group on improving **State Historical Records Advisory Board** (SHRAB) communications, including updating the website to be easier to navigate and so that it includes more grant program information.

Also, Evan would also like to mention that **COSTEP MA** (Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness) is running a self-directed and collaborative disaster-response training on the Incident Command System (ICS) that specifies formal methods of communication of responders in any emergency. Our emergency response partners in COSTEP *always* recommend that administrators and response staff of any organization familiarize themselves with ICS. This is a great opportunity for municipal libraries and staff to become familiar with ICS. For more information: <https://mblc.state.ma.us/costepma/index.php/2020/11/30/learn-with-costep-a-study-group-to-apply-the-incident-command-system-ics-to-your-cultural-institution/>

Maura Deedy has launched the **Spring 2021 Friends Sharing with Friends Coffee Hours**. The first session will be held on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 10:00 am to talk about Library Giving Day (Register: [https://mblc.libcal.com/event/7495526](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/mblc.libcal.com/event/7495526__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!z9UIXMQVwET7N82ecKYsxk367X5MNeGVcwqAEFV7jdqsDhjVs20AI13Oefu2Zx3xZ0Dp8Q$)). What is Library Giving Day? “Library Giving Day started as an idea generated by the Seattle Public Library Foundation. The concept was to create a national day of giving that public libraries would rally around and that the public would embrace.” Learn more about: [https://librarygivingday.org/](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/librarygivingday.org/__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!z9UIXMQVwET7N82ecKYsxk367X5MNeGVcwqAEFV7jdqsDhjVs20AI13Oefu2Zx1s3ron7w$)

The full schedule of Friends Sharing with Friends coffee hours is below. Topics will be shared as they are scheduled.

* Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 10:00 AM
Register: [https://mblc.libcal.com/event/7495526](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/mblc.libcal.com/event/7495526__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!z9UIXMQVwET7N82ecKYsxk367X5MNeGVcwqAEFV7jdqsDhjVs20AI13Oefu2Zx3xZ0Dp8Q$)
* Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 6:00 PM
Register: [https://mblc.libcal.com/event/7495529](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/mblc.libcal.com/event/7495529__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!z9UIXMQVwET7N82ecKYsxk367X5MNeGVcwqAEFV7jdqsDhjVs20AI13Oefu2Zx105JqAUA$)
* Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 10:00 AM
Register: [https://mblc.libcal.com/event/7495531](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/mblc.libcal.com/event/7495531__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!z9UIXMQVwET7N82ecKYsxk367X5MNeGVcwqAEFV7jdqsDhjVs20AI13Oefu2Zx1aMTMexw$)
* Thursday, May 13, 2021 6:00 PM
Register: [https://mblc.libcal.com/event/7495541](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/mblc.libcal.com/event/7495541__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!z9UIXMQVwET7N82ecKYsxk367X5MNeGVcwqAEFV7jdqsDhjVs20AI13Oefu2Zx3Ftc-6wg$)
* Tuesday, June 22, 2021 at 3:00 PM
Register: [https://mblc.libcal.com/event/7495544](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/mblc.libcal.com/event/7495544__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!z9UIXMQVwET7N82ecKYsxk367X5MNeGVcwqAEFV7jdqsDhjVs20AI13Oefu2Zx2dA9eLOw$)

Paul Kissman has been working with the **Social Law Library** and the **Massachusetts Trial Court Libraries** to hold the *Providing Access to Justice for Public Library Patrons: Navigating the statewide Trial Court Law Libraries & Court Service Centers* webinar on Wednesday February 10th. Presenters include Kathleen Ludwig, Head Law Librarian, Franklin Law Library and Mary G. Klaes, Esq., Manager, Greenfield Court Service Center. With reference to real-life situations, their webinar will show how the statewide network of Law Libraries and Court Service Centers can support your efforts to provide “access to justice” for the patrons who depend on your public library for useful resources, reference advice and referrals. At last check over 69 people have signed up. For more information and to register: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\_uRiFnir-Q\_261nM-SW0ATA](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_uRiFnir-Q_261nM-SW0ATA__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!wZZ6W-eXVsnXJKoJd_cYGMq1RJFak-q0uLKFWb9mRAURgElvlnHlKUL1bQ7dXvjhgXw$)

**Staff News**: Maryellen Osborne, the MBLC’s Contracts Specialist, has accepted a job at the Appellate Tax Board and will be leaving our agency on February 12. Maryellen recently received a Citation for Outstanding Performance and has done excellent work in her nearly four years at the MBLC. We thank Maryellen for her dedicated service to the MBLC and to the Commonwealth’s libraries and we wish her all the best in her new position!

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

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

From the Department of Revenue: January is a significant month for revenues because many personal income taxpayers are required to make quarterly estimated payments. January generally produces about 10.2% of annual revenue, making it the fourth largest revenue month of the year.

**Total Tax collections for the month-to-date period were $1.539 billion, up $313 million or 25.5%** versus the same period in January 2020. **Income Taxes** totaled $1.234 billion, up $223 million or 22.1% versus the same period in January 2020. **Sales & Use Taxes** were $128 million, up $36 million or 39.5% versus the same period in January 2020. **Corporate & Business Taxes** were $65 million, up $13 million or 25.5% versus the same period in January 2020. **Other Taxes** totaled $112 million, up $40 million or 54.6% versus the same period in January 2020. The links and information below regarding revenues and budget were shared last month as well.

 **Department of Revenue**: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-revenue> (DOR) In addition to the revenue reports, there is a very helpful section called “The Division of Local Services” with information for local municipal governments, departments, and agencies.

**Massachusetts Legislature**: <https://malegislature.gov/> New site with FY 2022 budget process and 192nd General Court information. The Governor’s House 1 budget is available on this site now.

**Mass Budget and Policy Center**: <https://massbudget.org/> Provides in depth analysis of the state budget and the state of the Massachusetts economy in general. There are charts that include details of the MBLC budget lines, current and historic.

The Governor’s House 1 budget proposal provides a very slight increase to the MBLC Agency line, otherwise the lines are level funded to the final FY 2021 budget for a total of $33,941,058 for FY 2022.In addition to the budget link at the Legislature site, House 1, the Governor FY 2022 budget, is available at <https://budget.digital.mass.gov/govbudget/fy22/> .

FY 2022 State Budget Summary:<https://budget.digital.mass.gov/govbudget/fy22/appropriations>
FY 2022 Line Item Budget: <https://budget.digital.mass.gov/govbudget/fy22/line-item>

Governor Baker proposed a $45.6 billion state budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1 that cuts total state spending. The budget does not include any tax increases on residents and would reduce spending by about $300 million or 0.7 percent while state tax revenue is expected to rise 3.5 percent over the current budget year. The budget bill is built on a base of $30.12 billion in state revenue and supplemented by an estimated $12.47 billion in federal funds, and revenue generated by state departments and agencies, fees, and other sources. House 1 also relies on up to $1.6 billion in one-time revenues drawn from the Commonwealth's rainy-day fund. The current year’s $45.9 billion budget is dependent upon one-time revenues, including more than $2.76 billion in federal COVID-19 funding and $978 million from the state's reserves. Unlike the Federal Government, the Commonwealth, by law, requires a balanced budget.

The MBLC budget lines are listed below:

**MBLC Budget Lines in House 1 FY 2021**

[7000-9101](https://budget.digital.mass.gov/govbudget/fy22/appropriations/independents/library-commissioners/70009101) Board of Library Commissioners: 2021    1,579,876 2022    1,585,251

[7000-9401](https://budget.digital.mass.gov/govbudget/fy22/appropriations/independents/library-commissioners/70009401) Regional Libraries Local Aid: 2021    12,516,000 2022    12,516,000

[7000-9402](https://budget.digital.mass.gov/govbudget/fy22/appropriations/independents/library-commissioners/70009402) Talking Book Program Worcester: 2021    482,264 2022    482,264

[7000-9406](https://budget.digital.mass.gov/govbudget/fy22/appropriations/independents/library-commissioners/70009406) Talking Book Program Watertown: 2021    2,745,774 2022    2,745,774

[7000-9501](https://budget.digital.mass.gov/govbudget/fy22/appropriations/independents/library-commissioners/70009501) Public Libraries Local Aid: 2021    12,000,000 2022    12,000,000

[7000-9506](https://budget.digital.mass.gov/govbudget/fy22/appropriations/independents/library-commissioners/70009506) Technology/Resource-Sharing: 2021    4,386,770 2022    4,386,770

[7000-9508](https://budget.digital.mass.gov/govbudget/fy22/appropriations/independents/library-commissioners/70009508) MA Center for the Book: 2021    225,000 2022    225,000

**TOTALS** 2021 33,935,684 2022 33,941,058

## [FY 2022 Budget](https://malegislature.gov/Budget) Calendar

1. [Governor's Budget:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/GovernorsBudget)  House 1 budget due out before the end of January, usually in conjunction with the governor’s State of the Commonwealth speech.
2. [House Ways & Means Budget:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/HouseWaysMeansBudget) The House Committee on Ways and Means examines the [Governor's Proposal](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/GovernorsBudget) and releases its own recommendations for the annual budget for deliberation by the House of Representatives. Prior to release of the House Ways and Means Budget, Joint Ways and Means Committee budget hearings are held across the state.
3. [House Debate:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/HouseDebate) The full body of the House of Representatives considers amendments to the [House Ways and Means recommendations](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/HouseWaysMeansBudget), and debates their inclusion in the bill. This is a very busy time for the House of Representatives, as the Representatives and their staffs are constantly working to make sure the concerns and needs of their constituents are addressed in the final budget.
4. [House Budget:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/HouseBudget) After debate on amendments to the [House Ways and Means recommendations](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/HouseWaysMeansBudget), the House of Representatives then approves a final, amended version of the bill which is then sent to the Senate for consideration.
5. [Senate Ways & Means Budget:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/SenateWaysMeansBudget) The Senate Committee on Ways and Means examines both the [Governor's proposal](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/GovernorsBudget) and the [House proposal](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/HouseBudget) and releases its own recommendations for the annual budget for deliberation by the Senate.
6. [Senate Debate:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/SenateDebate) The full body of the Senate considers amendments to the [Senate Ways and Means recommendations](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/SenateWaysMeansBudget), and debates their inclusion in the bill. This is a very busy time for the Senate, as the Senators and their staffs are constantly working to make sure the concerns and needs of their constituents are addressed in the final budget.
7. [Senate Budget:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/SenateBudget) After debate on amendments to [Senate Ways and Means recommendations](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2022/SenateWaysMeansBudget), the Senate then approves a final, amended version of the bill which is then sent to a Conference Committee for review.
8. [Conference Committee:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/ConferenceCommittee) The House and Senate appoint three members each to a "Conference Committee" to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate proposals. One member of the minority party must be appointed by each branch. The Conference Committee reports a final compromise bill to the House and Senate for a final vote of acceptance in each branch.
9. [Final Budget:](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FinalBudget) The Governor has 10 days to review the budget and take action to either approve or veto the budget. The Governor may approve or veto the entire budget, veto or reduce specific line items, veto outside sections or submit changes as an amendment to the budget for further consideration by the Legislature. Following any legislative overrides to the Governor's actions, the budget is finalized and is commonly referred to as the "General Appropriations Act" (GAA) for the upcoming fiscal year. (<https://budget.digital.mass.gov/summary/fy21/> Final FY 2021 budget).

The Massachusetts Library Association’s (MLA) Legislative Committee continues to plan for both Virtual Library Legislative Day in March and an online program for the MLA Conference in May. The first Virtual Legislative Event was held on January 22, 2021. The event agenda was focused on the Cape and Islands libraries. Director Lonergan and Commissioner Conrad spoke. Commissioners will receive information about these and various other library legislative events as details are finalized.

**Consideration of approval of the municipalities meeting the requirements for the FY2021 State Aid to Public Libraries based on eligibility established in FY2021 for the Municipal Appropriation Requirement and in FY2020 for the minimum standards**

Liz Babbitt, State Aid Specialist, presented for certification 294 municipalities meeting the requirements for the FY2021 State Aid to Public Libraries program.

Ms. Babbitt reminded the Commissioners that these awards are half payments. The remainder is paid at the end of the grant cycle. The total first half payments for the first group of municipalities is $4,451,640.31.

Commissioner Resnick moved and Commissioner Perille seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners certifies that the communities presented in agenda item 7 have met minimum standards of free public library service and awards each a FY2021 Library Incentive Grant (LIG), a FY2021 Municipal Equalization Grant (MEG) and a FY2021 Nonresident Circulation (NRC) offset in the indicated amounts, totaling $4,451,640.31, and authorizes any additional FY2021 State Aid to Public Libraries disbursements that may be possible toward the end of the grant cycle.

Chair Cluggish called the roll for the vote.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner Cluggish- YES | Commissioner Kronholm- YES |
| Commissioner Ball- YES | Commissioner Conrad- YES | Commissioner Perille- YES |
| Commissioner Biancolo- YES | Commissioner DeBole- YES | Commissioner Resnick- YES |

**The motion passes.**

**Review of municipalities requesting waivers for the FY2021 municipal appropriation requirement in the FY2021 State Aid to Public Libraries Program within the 10% threshold**

Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs/ Government Liaison presented the 52 libraries that were petitioning the Board for a Waiver of the MAR that were below the ten percent threshold set by the Board at the January Board Meeting for not being disproportionately cut in relationship to other departments within their municipality. These 52 municipalities are Adams, Amesbury, Ashby, Avon, Barnstable, Bellingham, Beverly, Boxford, Brockton, Brookline, Buckland, Dracut, Duxbury, Everett, Fall River, Framingham, Gill, Greenfield, Hanover, Hardwick, Haverhill, Hopedale, Kingston, Lawrence, Leyden, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Marblehead, Medfield, Montgomery, Newbury, Newton, North Adams, Orange, Oxford, Palmer, Peabody, Plymouth, Quincy, Salem, Southampton, Stoneham, Walpole, Waltham, Ware, Warren, West Springfield, Weymouth, Windsor, Winthrop, and Yarmouth.

Board will vote on waivers at the March 4, 2021 meeting.

**Review and presentations of petitions for waivers of the municipal appropriation requirements for the FY2021 State Aid to Public Libraries above the 10% threshold**

**Stoneham (11.35%)**

Presenters: Nicole Langley, Library Director; Dennis Sheehan, Town Administrator; Rocco Ciccarello, Chair of Stoneham Public Library Board of Trustees; Jane Francis, Vice-Chair of Stoneham Public Library Board of Trustees; Patricia DiPietro, Stoneham Public Library Board of Trustees

**• What specifically has been cut or reduced?**

The Stoneham Public Library lost two positions, the FT Assistant Director position and also PT Page position that was open at the time. A third position, a FT Technician position in the Junior Room (children’s area) of the Library was only funded for half of FY21. This position was open at the time and was filled by Feb 1. Furthermore, this position is anticipated to be fully funded in FY 22 (an $23,000 approximate increase)

**• If the hours and materials expenditure requirements had not been suspended due to COVID 19, would the library have been able to meet the standards this year with the municipal budget provided? for hours? For materials?**

The Stoneham Public Library would not have met the Hours Requirement for FY21, as we closed on Fri March 13th and have yet to reopen to the public. The Library is providing our version of curbside pickup, which has included prints and photocopies, notary services, library item pickups, phone reference / readers advisory services, and a number of virtual programs, both done by staff and presented by outside individuals and groups. Our wireless is also on 24/7.

The Stoneham Public Library should meet the Materials Expenditure requirement, as that account line was not cut for the FY21 budget.

In terms of the Hours Requirement, even if the Library were open for appointments, as is the goal as soon as possible, we will lose one evening each week and at least one Saturday a month. Furthermore, there will be approximately 10-12 hours per week where the Reference Desk will not be staffed. The Library only has one FT Reference Librarian, and the Assistant Director previously covered 10-15 hours per week on the Reference Desk.

Currently, Library staff are whittling down our final to-do list of things that need to be done before appointments can be made which will increase the Library’s in person service levels beyond that of many surrounding communities.

**• Any additional information you want to share with the Board**

The priority town-wide during the summer was to maintain safety of staff and residents while continuing to provide a high level of service. The Town Administrator was supportive and willing to meet with myself and Trustees on a routine basis about budget cuts last spring and has met with myself and Trustees other times over the fall and winter as well. It was through these discussions that the single largest adjustment in 2021, the Assistant Library Director position, was mutually decided on. Due to the fiscal climate and the structure of the Library at the time, it was decided that a single larger cut would still allow the Library to provide a high level of service while the building was closed. This cut of $70,000 (approx..), represented the majority of the Library’s total adjustment. The Town and Library continue to evaluate options for the future organizational structure of the Library beyond the pandemic. These discussions have included developing promising staff and the need for additional administrative staff to further develop the technology, branding, management and communication of the Stoneham Public Library. These conversations are ongoing.

The preponderance of departments budgets changed + or – 2 to 3%. Because some of those departments, like Police, Fire, and Public Works, are much larger, the dollar value is drastically different from the percentage for each department. Despite the dramatic budget adjustments needed both in terms of percentage and total dollar amounts for multiple departments, it is worth nothing that these changes throughout the Town were made with the support of the unanimous support of ALL of the following: the Library Trustees, the Stoneham Select Board, School Committee, Finance and Advisory Board, Capital Committee and also the unanimous support at our open Town Meeting.

While we continue to be disheartened by not having our patrons in the building, and despite the challenges the Stoneham Library currently faces, we have many reasons to be optimistic about the future. Library staff signed up to help distribute food and services to at-need populations during the height of the pandemic and assisted many departments during shifting needs as the pandemic developed-their commitment to the community at large and ability to adapt cannot be overstated. The Library’s online presence and creative service deliveries will be new additions beyond the pandemic. Additionally, the Library has filled the Full Time Library Technician position and settled a two-year contract with the Library union.

On behalf of the Stoneham Public Library and the Town of Stoneham, we continue to be grateful for the support of the Board of Library Commissioners and we look forward to continuing our positive and collaborative relationship going forward.

**Kingston (12.45%)**

Presenters: Mike Slawson, Library Director; Carl McCoy, Finance Director

**Budget Cuts**

As you have seen from our previously submitted documentation, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the town experienced several revenue deficiencies. This included meals tax, room occupancy tax, and payment of other excise and property tax.

As a result of these deficiencies, the Town revisited the FY21 budget to determine where offsetting decreases could be sustained in the community. It was determined that without actionable information about State Aid or the duration of the pandemic, it was necessary to reduce the Library's budget by laying off staff.

At the end of March, the Library was informed that cuts would be made, and in June four of the Library's 10 staff members were notified that their positions were being cut. A fifth position was left open as that employee was about to be hired as Acting Library Director. The following positions were cut:

* 2 full time Library Technicians
* 1 Full time Head of Youth Services
* 1 part time Library Technician

The staff cuts led to a large reduction in Library budget and dropped our total municipal appropriation to $512,438 - a 26.92% decrease from the previous year.

**Impact on Services**

Library services have been severely impacted by the reductions in the Library's budget and subsequent loss of staff members. Without sufficient staff, the Library was unable to maintain our typical hours of operation. Our weekday hours of service were cut by approximately 15 hours a week, and the Library has been closed on Saturdays since the layoffs occurred. If the hours requirements had not been suspended, we would have fallen short of our required hours open. Additionally, with such a limited staff, the Library was forced to decide between opening the building for limited service, or keeping the building closed and focusing only on curbside pickup. With so few staff members at the Library, we could not do safely do both. I determined that with the popularity of curbside pickup that keeping the building closed to the public and focusing on remote services would allow us to serve the most people possible. This meant that for our patrons, regular library services like computer use, copier and fax use, browsing, and in-building programming were not possible.

Without sufficient staff in place, programming for Teens and Children was greatly reduced. With the loss of our Head of Youth Services, and the Library Technician that supported her work, Children's programming and services declined substantially. Additionally, the part-time staff member charged with developing and running Teen services and programs was needed in other areas of the library, allowing her limited time for teen services or programming. The Library staff did the best they could and planned, and ran programs when time allowed. They also enlisted a number of local volunteers to run and manage programs, but overall, the quality and frequency of Teen and Children's programming fell far short of where it should have been for the first half of FY21.

Fortunately, the Library's materials budget remained consistent with previous years. Materials purchasing in FY21 went on as normal and our other services - online databases, eBook and eMagazine services, online newspapers, and more - have been accessible to our patrons throughout FY21.

**Budget and Staff Restoration**

In November 2020, in coordination with the Library Trustees and the Library Foundation, I presented a plan for restoring staff to allow for a return to full services. The initial plan consisted of the following:

* The staff member formerly in the part-time library tech position that was laid off would return and take one full-time library tech position.
* Hire a new staff member for the Head of Youth Services (the staff member that was cut found other employment)
* Hire a new full time Teen and Emerging Technology Librarian in place of hiring a second full time library tech. The staff member who held the library tech position at the time it was cut decided to retire.

The initial plan allowed for the Head of Youth Services and the Teen and Technology Librarian to be hired in a salary range between step 1and step 3. This plan was approved by the Town Administration and unanimously supported by the Board of Selectmen. The Finance Committee did not approve of the plan and took particular issue with hiring above step 1. After further discussions with the Town Administration, the Board of Selectmen, and the Finance Committee, I agreed to reduce the ask to step 1 only, hoping to gain full support of the Finance Committee and present a united front to the public at the upcoming town meeting. Unfortunately, the Finance Committee voted unanimously against restoring the Library budget even after concessions were made.

Funding the three positions from January 2021 through June 2021 at step 1 adds the following to the Library budget in FY21

* Teen and Emerging Technology Librarian - $21,103
* Head of Youth Services -$21,103
* Library Tech - $22,550

Total: $64,756

Throughout November and into the beginning of December, the Library, with the support of the Foundation and the Trustees launched a public outreach campaign to inform residents of Kingston about the situation at the Library, as well as the consequences if the Town were to lose certification. This included speaking at Board of Selectmen meetings, participating in local TV interviews, and sending out a town-wide mailer with information about library services and how they would be impacted.

At Town Meeting on December 8, 2020, the revised 2021 budget was presented to the town and received a positive vote from residents. The returning staff member taking the full-time Library Tech position started on the 1st of January 2021, and we are currently in the process of interviewing candidates for the Head of Youth Services and the Teen and Emerging Technologies Librarian. I expect to have the positions filled within the next 2 to 3 weeks.

**Meeting the MAR and Library Services**

The restoration of staff will allow the Library to return to full services and open the building safely with some restrictions. Additionally, the hiring of a Teen and Emerging Technology Librarian will help the Library to reach out to and engage a long-underserved population in our community - Teens.

Although I expect services to be fully restored, we will still fall short of meeting the municipal appropriation requirement in FY21. There are several reasons for this.

* The new director's salary is considerably less than the previous director of 29 years
* The new hire for the Head of Youth Services position will be making less than the previous employee in that position who was here for 9 years
* The new hire for the Teen and Emerging Technology Librarian will be making less than the Library Technician of 30+ years that was laid off/retired.
* We did not re-hire a part time (14 hours a week) Library Tech.

Although we have not met the MAR for FY2021, I believe the Town has made a good faith effort to restore Library services. With the new Teen and Technology Librarian, in some ways the Library will be able to adequately serve more of the residents of Kingston than before the cuts. Once the new staff members are in place, I expect the Kingston Public Library to return to a full schedule of virtual programming for all ages, and to open the building (with some limitations) to the public once again.

**Municipal Official Remarks - Carol McCoy Town Finance Director**

As a result of overall budget cuts and the retirement and layoff of several positions, the Kingston Library Department's FY21 Budget was substantially decreased. Efforts to meet the MAR came from our Fall Town Meeting where two of the three of the positions that had been decreased were reinstated for the rest of the fiscal year and beyond. If those positions had been reinstated at the beginning of this fiscal year, the amount of increase to the budget would have been an additional $42,206, which would have had a positive effect on the MAR percentage.

Some extenuating circumstances are as follows: The Retirement of our long-time library director and promotion of Mike Slawson to that position decreased the library budget by approximately $30,000. In addition, only one of the people that were laid off at the beginning of the fiscal year came back when the Town voted to reinstate the budget for the positions at Town Meeting. New hires will be at a lesser rate that those people that were not reinstated.

As a result of the efforts to restore personnel to the library by the administration and the public at large, the Town of Kingston should be granted a waiver of the FY2021 MAR. The Town of Kingston is planning to meet the FY2022 MAR as a result of the rehiring of laid off personnel. No other library budget expenses had been reduced. FY2022 will show a lower personal services budget than that of FY2020 as a result of the aforesaid retirement and new hires for the positions.

**Hanover (12.52%)**

Presenters: Virginia Johnson, Library Director; Jeanne Cianciola, Library Trustee Chair; Joseph Colangelo, Town Manager; Chelsea Stevens, Interim Finance Director

Thank you for granting the Town of Hanover and the John Curtis Free Library an opportunity to apply for a Fiscal Year 2021 waiver.  Admittedly, the reduction to our Library Department budget from Fiscal Year 2020 to Fiscal Year 2021 looks staggering; however, there are a few important points we hope you take into account when examining our budget reduction in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please review the table below.  It outlines Hanover’s Library budget in FY2020, the original budget proposal from the Town Manager submitted on February 1, 2020 in anticipation of a May 4, 2020 Annual Town Meeting, and the budget that was ultimately provided to and approved by voters at the Annual Town Meeting on June 29, 2020.  As the table makes clear, the original budget proposal – prior to the COVID-19 pandemic – increased the library budget by approximately 0.95%, while the budget ultimately approved at Town Meeting – factoring in the COVID-19 pandemic – dropped the library budget by 12.28%.

The two (2) most significant reasons for this reduction to the library budget were, first of all, a decision made by the Town Manager to furlough all library staff (with exception to the Director) from April 23, 2020 until August 3, 2020; therefore, factored into the budget passed at Town Meeting was the anticipated wage savings during this fiscal year as a result of the furlough.  Moreover, the decision to furlough library staff was not made simply as a budget reduction method but a measure that placed the health, safety, and welfare of staff as the primary motivations.  During the time of the library staff furloughs enhanced unemployment benefits available from Congress guaranteed all library staff personnel who were furloughed would be as well-off, or actually better-off, financially as a result, and ensured library staff would not be in the library building until we were able to purchase proper protective equipment and make necessary building improvements prior to their arrival back to work.  Secondly, the budget passed at the Annual Town Meeting on June 29, 2020, froze the hiring of an unfilled Library Technician full-time position in anticipation that the building would likely be closed to the public for all or most of the fiscal year.

Furthermore, this decision, as a cost savings measure to the FY2021 budget enabled us to protect all current library employees from possible budget cuts that could have eliminated jobs. Additionally, library services during our response to the pandemic have been enhanced in a number of ways.  For example, we started a successful curb-side pick-up/drop-off program, and we even funded – via CARES Act monies – a car for use as a delivery service.  It’s fair to say that both of these enhanced services we hope to continue and improve upon once we return to normal (or the “new normal”).  Finally, the FY2022 budget submitted just a few days ago increased the Library Budget back to $600,612 with the full expectation that library services in Fiscal Year 2022 will look exactly like they did prior to the pandemic, with the addition of some of the new service delivery platforms we successfully provided for during the pandemic.

We hope the information provided to you with our waiver presentation provides the Board of Library Commissioners confidence in Hanover’s commitment to library services and that our explanation for a one-year reduction to the library budget is a product of an extraordinary situation and not indicative of any reduction in our desire to provide Hanover residents with exceptional library services now and in the future.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FY2020 | FY2021 (February) | FY2021 (June) |
| $606,443 | $612,234 | $541,996 |

**Oxford (18.01%)**

Presenters: Brittany McDougal, Library Director; Jennifer Callahan, Town Manager

Statement by Brittany McDougal, Library Director:

Due to the reduction in the Oxford Free Public Library’s budget, the impact the library has faced in regards to library services has solely been staffing. Due to these cuts, two full-time positions, along with the equivalent of two part-time pages, were eliminated.

While other library services we are offering have been affected this year, it has not been in correlation with the loss of staff positions – they have been affected due to the restrictions of this pandemic. The library has stayed closed not due to being shorter staffed, but out of an abundance of caution that I, along with my Board of Trustees, have taken to keep both our staff and patrons safe. We have been offering lobby pick-up since July 20 to our patrons and are able to offer copying and faxing services along with wireless printing through the lobby as well. The lobby is available 5 days a week with two evenings available. We have put a hold on Saturday hours, until we are ready to begin allowing patrons into the building once again. We continue to offer support over the phone, including reference questions and assistance to patrons when accessing their library account.

If the MBLC had not suspended the hours and materials expenditure requirements for this year, the library would not be able to meet the hours requirement, having been only offering lobby pick-up hours since July 2020 until present and as we know, lobby hours are not considered “open” when reporting. As for the materials expenditure requirements, I do anticipate the library being able to meet these requirements, as the materials line item was not reduced in the library’s budget.

I have been working closely with Town Manager Jennifer Callahan this past year in regards to the library budget and I know we will continue to work together to get the library back on track – this also includes working together to develop a new, future position at the library which will help the library to function in the “new normal”. I would like to thank you for the time you have allowed me to give insight into the library’s current situation and I know Town Manager Callahan will be able to shine more light on the reasoning to why these cuts were made and where she sees the library heading in the future.

Jennifer Callahan, Town Manager

I would like to thank you and the Commission for allowing the Town of Oxford the opportunity to appear before you to provide testimony to support our request for a waiver of the Fiscal Year 2021 Municipal Appropriation Requirement for the State Aid to the Public Libraries Program. I want to inform the Commission of the recent productive meeting the Town had with the Commission’s Government Liaison, Mary Rose Quinn, to both review the budget reductions which were made and to reaffirm Oxford’s commitment to its public library.

As Town Manager, I want to impress upon the Commission several factors which precipitated the reduction in municipal appropriation this fiscal year and they all relate to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Prior to and after adopting our FY21 Budget, our Finance Team took very seriously the recommendations from state officials to plan on a 20-30% reduction below level funding in local aid due to the negative revenue impacts of the pandemic on the state’s economy. All departments were consulted and each department head worked with me in identifying budget reductions which resulted in $1.1M being removed from the budget in preparation for the worst scenarios projected. The Library reduction totaled $68,789 and basically accounted for the reduction in workforce of two full-time circulation clerks and part time pages. All of the other positions were maintained and no reductions were made in any other library line items.

We anticipated these reductions would be temporary in nature and all might be restored after the pandemic impacts decreased in a matter of months. However, the quick dissipation of the pandemic has not occurred as we all had hoped. For Oxford, this has led to unanticipated Covid-19 Pandemic related expenses totaling more than $600,000 in the areas of public health, fire and emergency services, remote schooling and pandemic preparedness. It has also meant our library has remained closed to the public with only curbside service being offered.

Our Library Director, Brittany McDougal, will confirm this current operational structure as well as the staffing plan is supported by the Trustees, library staff and Town Manager in an effort to keep personnel and the public as safe as possible. It is not anticipated that this current status will change prior to the end of this fiscal year. Consequently, Director McDougal, myself and our Finance Director are planning on restoring funding for next fiscal year, but with an eye towards restructuring the former two circulation clerk roles with a new Cataloging & Technology Librarian position. We believe this position will fulfill a more immediate need for the library to address the changing technology demands placed upon it due to the pandemic as well as to be responsible for maintaining all digital resource collections and cataloging materials into the Evergreen System.

In addition to finishing two major capital library projects this past year (a major MHC Building Repair & Green Communities LED conversion) my office made possible by writing and obtaining two successful matching grants, I want to assure the Commission the Town of Oxford remains committed to funding our Library’s operational budget as well. Please know I will be providing for an increase to the Library’s budget in the upcoming FY2022 budget of at least 11%. Also we will be working with Mary Rose Quinn to review our mutual concerns regarding an outlier year for our library expenditures which was used in the MAR formula calculation that the Commission relies upon to determine disproportionate cuts to public libraries receiving state aid. This one year makes the Town’s budget reduction actually look much more severe than it would appear to be operationally for the library to absorb.

In closing, I would like the Commission to know I do not anticipate having to request any waiver for next year’s budget at all. However, I would like to request the Commission grant the waiver for this current fiscal year for all of the reasons I have outlined above and will address personally at the February 4 meeting. I would like to thank the Commission in advance for its thoughtful consideration and hopeful granting of the Town of Oxford’s MAR waiver request for Fiscal Year 2021.

**Commissioner Biancolo** stated that she wanted to commend libraries and librarians for prioritizing the safety of library staff and patrons in this difficult time. She also hopes that we learn from this experience and remember how severe the consequences of a pandemic or natural disaster can be -- laid off staff, closed buildings, halted services. With our renewed attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion, she would hope that as we look to and plan for the future we all keep in mind how much closing buildings and suspending programming, especially certain programming, impacts all residents, but most especially our marginalized citizens.

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

Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, presented the following report:

Member Connections

**Site visits**

In person site visits will continue to be suspended for the next couple of months, due to the pandemic.

Virtual engagements with members are still being conducted.

**MLS Live! Livestream**

Beginning in January 2021, I will be piloting a new opportunity to connect with our members virtually. The purpose of this new series is to strengthen connections with our members and partners in our new virtual work environment. This series will offer attendees the opportunity to learn about and engage with MLS.

MLS Live Description.

On the last Tuesday of the month, join MLS Executive Director Sarah Sogigian and Membership Manager Amanda Fauver on MLS Live as we discuss a different MLS related topic each month.

Sessions will be hosted on Zoom and recorded; we invite you to participate by attending the live session or watch the recording on your own time. Our first session will be held on Tuesday, January 26 from 11- 11:30 AM. Sarah will discuss our plans for 2021, including a review of our new Action Plan, in support of our Strategic Plan. This series connects to our Action Plan S.I.1, G.1

Attendees will also have the opportunity to ask questions about these topics either using the chat feature in Zoom or by emailing sarah@masslibsystem.org in advance of the session (please note: this session will be recorded. Attendees will be muted to preserve audio quality).

**Monthly Newsletter**

Amanda Fauver, Membership/BiblioTemps® Manager has relaunched our monthly newsletter. Newsletters are sent out via our email list and posted on our MLS News Blog. This project connects to our Action Plan S.I.1, G.1

New and Returning Members

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Librarian Name | Library | Town/City | Email |
| Jason Homer | Worcester Public Library | Worcester | jhomer@mywpl.org |
| Wally Keniston | Franklin County Technical School, Library Media  | Turners Falls | wkeniston@fcts.us |
| Patricia Harding | Sarah Greenwood K-8 School | Dorchester | pharding@bostonpublschools.org |
| Erica Hout, Acting Director | Boylston Public Library | Boylston | ehout@cwmars.org |
| Karen Kohr | Washington Irving Middle School | Boston | kkohr@bostonpublicschools.org |
| Christina Hefler | Up Academy of Dorchester | Dorchester | chefler@upacademydorchestr.org  |
|  |
| This color print= new members |
| This color print= new librarians  |
| This color print= returning schools |
| This color print= temp/Acting librarian |
| This color print= returning school but not a new librarian (new color code this month)  |

Staff Celebrations

2020 marked MLS’ 10th birthday, and we recognize 3 current staff members who have contributed to our success since Day 1:

Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director

Scott Kehoe, Library Resources Director

Shirley MacLean, Members Services/Office Support

We also recognize Betsy Meaden, Business and HR Director, who celebrates 5 years with MLS in 2020.

Consulting and Training Report

We have finished our Fall 2020 training season and are preparing for Spring 2021, which will begin in late February/ early March. All trainings will be held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are the trainings we offered in December, and what’s coming up in January:

December 2020 Learning Opportunities

* Webinars
* Libraries and their Critical Role Serving Immigrant Communities (12/1/20)
* Special Collections in Smaller Libraries Series: Free Programs & Resources You Should Know About (12/14/20)
* Virtual Check-Ins
* Youth Services (12/3/20)
* Health Sciences and Special Libraries (12/11/20)
* Reference & User Services (12/15/20)
* Marketing (12/17/20)
* Career Resource Week
* Massachusetts Employment Landscape and Career Resources from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (12/7/20)
* Resources and Services from the Kirstein Business Library & Information Center (12/8/20)
* MA Wage & Hour Laws/Workers’ Rights (12/9/20
* Peterson’s Career Prep and MassHire Career Information System (12/10/20
* Virtual Career Programs and Services for Your Community (12/11/20)

January 2021 Learning Opportunities

* Virtual Check-Ins
* Youth Services (1/7/20)
* Reference & User Services (1/13/20)
* Health Sciences and Special Libraries (1/14/20)
* Marketing (1/22/20)

Hold the Date!

April Mazza and Christi Farrar are working with the Connecticut State Library and the Rhode Island Office of Library & Information Services to host the Tri-State Summer Summit on February 10 (afternoon) and 11 (all day). This virtual event will provide summer library program planners a forum to share and learn new things, get inspired, and plan for summer!

LibGuides

In December, the most viewed LibGuide was:

* Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Massachusetts Libraries: this LibGuide received 2,554 views in December. This guide has been viewed 110,962 times since it was created in March. Aside from the home page, the top viewed pages in December were:
* What Your Library Can Do Remotely – 696 views
* Reopening Your Library – 430 views
* Online Library Training – 149 views

Vimeo Recordings

We currently have 288 recorded webinars and videos published on our Vimeo channel. During the month of December, we had 725 views and 128 finishes.

Blog Posts

Michelle Eberle wrote a number of blog posts during the last couple of months of 2020, including the following:

* Climate Prep Week 2020 Recap (121 views)
* Civic Engagement at the Athol Public Library (272 views)
* HandholdMA.org: A New Website Helping Massachusetts Families (261 views)
* Announcing: Climate Prep Week 2020 Drawing Contest Winners (334 views)
* Eaglebrook School Library Partners with Books through Bars (574 views)
* Civic Engagement at the South Hadley Public Library (310 views)

Resource Sharing Report

As always, my appreciation to the Resource Sharing and IT staff for its good grace and patience with our membership, and each other, during the pandemic. I am proud to say that Resource Sharing staff has continued to adjust to their new normal. The following statistics and commentary below illustrate the continued hard work of the Library Resources staff.

Member Interactions / Support requests (email, phone):

2020 vs 2019: 1 March – 31 December

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Support Area: | 2020 | 2019 |
| Interlibrary Loan | 4,019 | 6,953 |
| Commonwealth eBooks | 1,169 | 443 |
| State-wide Databases | 322 | 300 |
| MassCat | 549 | 252 |

* **Interlibrary Loan (ILL)** – December is now the fifth month of the ILL team physically processing items at the Marlborough office. This month, the ILL team, led by Laura Bogart, held a successful online “check in” for library staff as well as a WorldCat.org webinar. These have been well attended and we’ve received many thank you’s from the library staff who have attended. After the new year, we are planning on “check ins” and additional trainings on Clio and WorldCat.org, the primary online resources used by member libraries to process ILL requests. December is only the third full month of Commonwealth Catalog being online. This impacts MLS ILL workload as it is the major tool in our mediated ILL operations requesting and lending and returning items to MLS member libraries. As stated since the spring, ILL activity is up and down in fits and starts in Mass., the United States, and internationally. As always, even with fewer requests from MLS members, ILL staff are busier than ever attempting to find lenders in state and nationally, while tracking down items sent out and returned. MLS libraries continue to be exceedingly gracious with their compliments to ILL staff. With the resurgence of the pandemic the past two months, we are expecting that there will be an increase to the number of lenders unable to participate in ILL nationally and in MA, but we will continue work with our member libraries to fill their requests.
* **Commonwealth eBooks (CEC)** – December was a relatively calm month for CEC, but as evidenced by the above statistics, and during the whole pandemic, unprecedented activity K-12 school activity for CEC as well as continued high ebook circulation rates. The CEC check-out rate for the entire collection continues to be well over 60%. The bottlenecks getting new members set up with OverDrive are lessening. Tressa Santillo, Electronic Resources Coordinator, continues to do a tremendous job navigating on behalf of our members with OverDrive, who is also in process of transitioning an account manager to the MLS.
* **Databases** – Database support requests continues to decline compared to last fall, although a downtick in activity is not unusual in the late fall. Of note, Tressa Santillo, Electronic Resources Coordinator, and Kate Butler, Electronic Services Specialist (MBLC) began holding online feedback sessions with academic, K-12 schools, and public library members. And are finding, not surprisingly, that different library types have different view and wishes for future database purchases. This outreach effort will continue throughout the coming year. The current database contract ends in FY22, June 30, 2022.
* **MassCat** –December has been a quieter month for MassCat support, a welcome respite. I continue to train Alison DeMers, Resource Sharing Librarian, to assist in MassCat member support. I have also enlisted the Resource Sharing staff in a project to update and revamp the MassCat training guides, a project we hope to complete by the early spring. Twenty-four members continue to share resources in-network, ten members in ComCat. Of returning K-12 schools, 12 of 28 are sharing in-network.

Resource Sharing Webinars in Response to COVID-19 Closings

In response to the COVID19 Resource Sharing have been working to provide webinars for our member libraries. Tressa Santillo, is working with Gale Cengage and OverDrive, while Laura Bogart and Alison DeMers are providing webinars related to Mediated ILL services.

December 2

Feedback Session on Statewide Databases for K-12 Schools

December 7

Virtual Check-In: ILL Library Staff Social

December 8

Feedback Session on Statewide Databases for K-12 Schools

December 14

Mediated ILL: WorldCat.org Webinar

December 16

Simplify Student Research with Gale

Find future offerings and register here: https://calendar.masslibsystem.org/

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

Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator presented the following report:

**Digital Services during COVID-19**

“Although the nature of what we have been able to work on has changed, I would say that we have been just as productive during the pandemic restrictions we have been dealt. Only recently [December] have we been allowed to accept collections from our partners into the building. Prior to that, we already had a good amount of items digitized that only need metadata work to become complete. This work continued from mostly at-home workstations.

Two of the more notable projects that have progressed nicely are The Sacco and Vanzetti case file from the Massachusetts SJC and a very large collection of historic photographs from The Newburyport Historical Society. Additionally, we have had people working on phase 2 of the antislavery manuscript transcription project where transcription are reviewed, edited, and finalized. The Associates of the BPL have generously funded this work in order for it to be completed with the full text, searchable, and machine readable by Spring 2022 in order to coincide with the reopening of our Rare Books facilities.

Further, we recently submitted an application to the NEH for inclusion in the Library of Congress National Digital Newspaper Program. This would provide funding every two years for at least 100,000 pages of digitized newspaper pages to be created and uploaded in their Chronicling America website. It will also be the early stage momentum for a much broader statewide effort to get comprehensively digitize Massachusetts newspaper publications for upload onto Digital Commonwealth.” Tom Blake, Content Discovery Manager

**Strategic Planning and Compass Update**

“We are currently finalizing a BPL Leadership and staff driven Strategic Roadmap Document, which is anticipated as an update to the Compass Strategic Plan with a 5 to 10 year outlook and a commitment to run a community survey and engagement process within the next couple of years.” David Leonard, President

The update to the plan is expected to be ready for presentation in late spring 2021.

**RB Digital and eMagazines**

As of February 1, 2021, BPL’s collection of ZINIO magazines from RBDigital have been transferred to OverDrive’s digital collections due to OverDrive’s acquisition of the platform. Patrons will still be able to also access these titles via RBDigital until March 31. BPL is currently evaluating our eMagazine offerings and is considering subscribing to EBSCO’s product, Flipster, which would include magazine titles we’ve previously not had digital access to before.

**New appointments to Boston Public Library’s Board of Trustees**

The Mayor has appointed five new Trustees, bringing the full board up to 15 members and filling all existing vacancies, including the one resulting from Bob Gallery’s resignation. Those individuals are as follows:

* Navjeet Bal, Managing Director of Social Finance Inc. and former State Commissioner of Revenue.
* Joe Berman, a former Associates Board member
* Joyce Linehan, the Mayor’s outgoing Chief of Policy
* State Senator Mike Rush, a long-term advocate for LFC Funding
* Christian Westra, also currently a LMEC Board member

**Libraries and COVID-19 Discussion**

Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development stated as we settle into February staff at the MBLC and MLS continue to monitor issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout January many areas of the country have experienced explosive numbers of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. In Massachusetts we experienced a surge following the holidays but are now returning to pre-holiday infection rates. The most up to date state COVID-19 status reporting can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting>

According to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Reopening Guidelines, libraries are currently operating under the mandates of Phase 3 Step 1: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/safety-standards-and-checklist-libraries>. Please note that these guidelines are operating under temporary capacity restrictions that went into effect on December 26, 2020 and are set to expire pending review on February 8, 2021 <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/temporary-capacity-and-gathering-limits>.

We know that some libraries are looking for restated quarantining guidance for library materials. Throughout the pandemic the MBLC and MLS have been passing along guidance from several trusted sources. Our lack of inhouse scientific and medical expertise prevents us from issuing our own recommendation. Over the past several months guidance has narrowed as many sites that used to provide guidelines no longer do so. An example is the CDC that now only states that surface transmission of the virus is not the primary form of spread. Other sites simply point to the REALM Project for guidance. Locally we have seen that the common drivers of quarantining policy are building layout/workflow design and the comfort level of staff who handle materials.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Reopening Guidelines do provide the following quarantining recommendation: “Books and other materials should be placed in marked containers after patron handling or return and subject to 24-hour quarantine before being returned to shelves by library workers” as part of their industry specific guidance: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/safety-standards-and-checklist-libraries>. PLEASE NOTE: Do not use Statewide Delivery bins for quarantining. Delivery efficiency is seriously compromised when bins are taken out of circulation.

On Friday January 29, 2021 the REALM Project held an update that reviewed findings, reported on future testing, and highlighted their ongoing literature review. You can find a recording of the webinar here: [http://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/realm-update-reflections.html](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http%3A/www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/realm-update-reflections.html__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!0mluNcgcHbADUIY6wyCQFZoSaWnLGD9Uv-VhYnW7NBD3xfsh68FnkJcFz53YEcEL1lzZ$). A handy American Libraries infographic that charts quarantining time by material can be found here: [https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/REALM.pdf](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/americanlibrariesmagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/REALM.pdf__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!0mluNcgcHbADUIY6wyCQFZoSaWnLGD9Uv-VhYnW7NBD3xfsh68FnkJcFz53YEYrKDUxM$) .

Finally, the state has begun their vaccine rollout program. The most up to date information regarding vaccine distribution including an FAQ can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine>.

Many have voiced concern about the availability of vaccine for front line library workers. The Massachusetts Library Association recently sent a [letter](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/www.masslib.org/resources/Documents/Official%2A20Statements/Letter%2A20to%2A20Governor%2A20Baker%2A20to%2A20Add%2A20Library%2A20Workers%2A20to%2A20Phase%2A202%2A20of%2A20Vaccination%2A20Plan.pdf__;JSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSU!!CUhgQOZqV7M!0mluNcgcHbADUIY6wyCQFZoSaWnLGD9Uv-VhYnW7NBD3xfsh68FnkJcFz53YEXCJaou0$) to Governor Baker asking him to include librarians in Phase 2 of the vaccine rollout. The MBLC has reached out to the Department of Public Health (DPH) to express the concerns of library staff but they have not responded. We will continue to monitor all agencies and task forces that make up the Governor’s COVID-19 response for updated information and opportunities to voice the concerns of the library community.

In addition to keeping close watch for state developments, we strongly recommend that libraries keep in close communication with their local boards of health to keep informed of any municipal vaccination rollout plans.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**List of documents for the February 4, 2021 Regular Monthly Board Meeting:**

1. Agenda for the February 4, 2021, Regular Monthly Board Meeting
2. Draft Minutes of the January 7, 2021 Regular Monthly Board Meeting
3. Agenda 7, State Aid to Public Library Awards
4. Agenda 8, State Aid Review of Libraries within in the 10% threshold
5. Agenda Item 9, Review and Presentations from 4 libraries
6. Stoneham
7. Kingston
8. Hanover
9. Oxford
10. Agenda Item 10, Report from MLS
11. Agenda Item 11, Report from LFC

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Cluggish moved to adjourn the February 4, 2021 monthly business meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners under the consent agenda. Commissioner Resnick seconded.

Hearing no objections, Chair Cluggish adjourned the meeting.



N. Janeen Resnick

Secretary