**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS MONTHLY REGULAR MEETING**

**Date:** Thursday, July 9, 2020

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

**Place:** Zoom Teleconference

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

**Staff Participants:**

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

**Observers Participants:**

Sharon Bernard, Library Director, Fitchburg Public Library; Jean Canosa Albano, Assistant Director for Public Services, Springfield City Library; Margaret Cardello, Library Director, Marlborough Public Library; Kent Faeber, Friends of Jones Library, Jones Library Inc., Amherst; Lynn Griesemer, President, Amherst Town Council, Amherst; Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator, Boston Public Library (BPL); Jennifer Inglis, Library Director, Lynnfield Public Library; Alex Lefebvre, Trustee, Jones Library Inc., Amherst; Marie Letarte, Library Director, Bigelow Free Public Library, Clinton; Jeannette Lundgren, Network Administrator, CW MARS, Inc.; Kathy Lussier, Executive Director, SAILS, Inc.; Libby O’Neill, Library Director, Norfolk Public Library; Jaclyn Powers, Assistant Director, Wakefield; Sharon Shaloo, Executive Director, Massachusetts Center for the Book; Sharon Sharry, Library Director, Jones Library, Inc., Amherst; Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS); Cynthia St. Amour, Library Director, Brewster Ladies Library, Brewster

**Meeting Called to Order by Chair Ochsenbein**

Chair Ochsenbein called the meeting to order at 10:01 A.M.

**Approval of Minutes from regular monthly meeting: June 4, 2020**

* Page 21, line 23- Include in motion that Executive Committee worked with Communications Team and Commissioner Perille to develop a statement.
* Page 21, line 30- Remove statement since it wasn’t available until after the meeting.

Commissioner Resnick moved and Commissioner Abraham seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the minutes for the monthly business meeting on June 4, 2020 with corrections stated.

Board Clerk, Rachel Masse asked for a Roll Call vote of the Commissioners.

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

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**Approval of Minutes from special meeting: June 5, 2020**

Remove all the comments. Only include the questions.

Commissioner Ball moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the minutes for the special meeting on June 5, 2020 with corrections stated.

Board Clerk, Rachel Masse asked for a Roll Call vote of the Commissioners.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner DeBole- NO | Commissioner Ochsenbein- YES |
| Commissioner Ball- YES | Commissioner Kronholm- YES | Commissioner Perille- NO |
| Commissioner Cluggish- YES | Commissioner Madell- YES | Commissioner Resnick- YES |

**The motion passes.**

**Chair’s Report**

Chair Ochsenbein presented the following report:

**Activities for the month included:**

* attending the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) Virtual Annual Meeting on June 11
* participated in the MLS Virtual Town Hall on June 17, part of MLS strategic planning initiative
* participated the MBLC Strategic Planning Committee check-in on June 18. We are scheduled to receive a rough first draft of the plan tomorrow (Friday) for internal review.
* participated the Executive Committee meeting on June 23
* attending the open Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) board meeting and discussion on June 26: The Library’s Role in Ensuring Equity and Access to Knowledge and Information for All. Speakers included ALA Executive Director Tracie D. Hall, and MacArthur Foundation President John Palfrey.

So, we have reached month four of the COVID-19 era and we are beginning to see the stirrings of recovery and reopening, which is both welcome and concerning. We’ve entered Phase 3 of the reopening process. On Monday, the Reopening Advisory Board offered sector specific guidance with respect to libraries. I think we’re all still sorting through and absorbing some of the details. The bottom line is that reopening to the public will come with many restrictions, and will be done slowly, carefully, and deliberately by following all the guidelines, some of which are onerous to be sure. It is not a time to be bold. Pilots have a saying: there are old pilots and there are bold pilots, but there are no old bold pilots. Safety is the #1 priority above all. I urge responsible caution. More on this I’m sure in the Director’s report and on item 14 of today’s agenda.

We’ve also seen movement this month on the construction bond bill and a decision on the cap. More detail later in the agenda on that as well. The bill is in conference committee at $115 million from both the House and the Senate. For me, I would say it’s a bit disappointing but not unexpected on both counts. And in some ways, it is a victory, in that it appears we will emerge, in this climate of state fiscal uncertainty, with our basic needs covered. For the bond bill, we still need final House and Senate votes and it will need to be signed off by the Governor, so it’s not over just yet. A special thank you to all those who wrote/called/communicated with their legislators and the governor on this. And a special thanks to Sen. Eric Lesser and his staff for filing the amendment to increase the funding to $150 million per our request. Thank you as well to the Senators who signed on as co-sponsors: Senators Gobi, Welch, Crighton, Tran, Eldridge, O’Connor, Comerford, Moran, Rausch, and Rush.

We will elect a new Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary at the end of today’s meeting, as we do every year. Accordingly, this is my last meeting presiding as Chair of this board and I want to say that it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve in this capacity these past 2 years. Thank you all. Of my time as Chair, the last four months were—I can say-- very different than the first 20 months. Some highlights for me over the 2 years:

1. The work on the Ecosystem study – This is very important work that I hope continues to move forward and inform how we think about all of our programs. Same goes for the work on the new Strategic Plan.
2. Summer Reading – the partnership with the Boston Bruins on Summer Reading and the PJ drive is really special. With a total participation of some 2 million children and adults over the decade that the partnership has been in place, it is an extraordinary program with wide impact. And it is so fun to be at the kick-off or any of the events! I’ve been pleased to see the innovative ways that are in place to continue a form of the program this summer, but I sure hope it can return to in-person events next year.
3. During my tenure as Chair, there were eight library groundbreakings and eight library grand openings, for projects funded in part by grants from the wonderful Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program. I was fortunate enough to attend and speak at three of the groundbreakings and three of the grand openings. Certainly, these are on the highlight reel for me. Nothing in this business is more satisfying than helping cut the ribbon for new library!
4. While I have been Chair, we have said farewell to Commissioner Carol Caro, Commissioner and former Chair George Comeau, and Commissioner Alice Welch. And we have said a sad final goodbye to Commissioner and former Chair, Frank Murphy, and Commissioner and former Chair, Greg Shesko. Both of these men served with distinction and passion on this board for a decade. We also paid final respects to long time staff member Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, who had a distinguished career of over 30 years at the MBLC.
5. On the brighter side, I was pleased to be in this chair to welcome no fewer than five new Commissioners to this board: Commissioners Ball, Abraham, Perille, DeBole, and Madell. That is probably some kind of record, for sure!
6. Our FY 2020 budget was a highlight—years of advocacy on the part of so many, communications, and hard work building relationships with legislators and their staffs, combined with the tailwind of a good revenue year on the state level, paid off with the MBLC getting the biggest increases in many budget line items that we’ve seen in years. Couldn’t be more pleased about that. We also saw fewer waivers these past couple of years than we’ve seen in a long time—indicating strong local support and a strong economy.
7. And then of course, the last four months have been defined by the pandemic. Everything changed. I join Charles F. D. Belden, chair of this board in 1918, as the only other chair in the 130-year history of this agency to have the distinction of recommending that all libraries in the state close their doors to the public. It’s a distinction that I’m not particularly proud of but a distinction, nonetheless. I am however very proud of the way that management and staff have stepped up during this stressful and historic time--to provide support, help, guidance, and direction to the library community as we are able.
8. And there are a few pieces of unfinished business — we had hoped to have the strategic plan wrapped up by the new fiscal year and we had hoped to have a completed review of the bylaws, together with an accompanying update of policies, in the works as well—both of them delayed due to the all-hands-on-deck response to COVID-19. The strategic plan work continues apace, and we should pick up the bylaw project later in the summer or fall as things quiet down (we hope).

On a personal note, this marks my twentieth year of volunteer service in the library community. I’ve been a trustee, I co-chaired a nine year library expansion and renovation project in my hometown, I served a couple of terms on the State Advisory Council on Libraries (SACL), I was a grant reviewer for two rounds of construction grants, and this is my sixth year as a commissioner on this board, having additionally served as secretary, vice chair, and chair. I will be stepping off the board by the end of this year, sooner if a replacement is named. Lifestyle changes – good ones – loom for me and my wife. Next year she will join me in retirement, and there are travel, probable relocation, and other endeavors in our future. So, I think 20 years is a good number to finish off this chapter. The work has been gratifying beyond words. Some of the proudest moments of my life occurred doing this work, such as the day our renovated and greatly expanded library in my hometown was opened and rededicated. It’s been a great run and I thank all of you.

Finally, later today I will be speaking at a groundbreaking ceremony in Littleton. I cannot think of a more fitting way to close out my last day as chair than by helping to break ground on a brand-new library for a great Massachusetts community. I couldn’t have asked for a better way to end this day.

**Commissioner Reports**

**Commissioner Resnick**

* Participated in the Board Strategic Planning Focus Group on June 5
* Participated in the Massachusetts Center for the Book Board Meeting that was held on June 4, 2020 via Zoom. Below is summary of meeting.

The MCB Board met via Zoom on June 4, 2020. In attendance were: James Wald (Chair), Em Claire Knowles (Clerk), Alexandra Marshall, Krista McLeod, Moying Li, Sharon Shaloo (Executive Director). Observing: Jan Resnick, MBLC Liaison.

The first portion of the meeting was devoted to expressions of gratitude and recognition of Em Claire Knowles’ career and service to libraries and the Center for the Book. Em Claire has retired from Simmons and is by now back home in California. She has also resigned from the MCB Board of Directors.

The Board agreed that the Center will need a new Plan of Service for the coming year. The Board then engaged in a detailed discussion of board composition. Two prospective members will be approached over the summer. In addition, the Board’s next focus will be on inviting 10 members to join the Center’s Council. This group would serve for three years and would advise the board on its strategic plans. This freshman group, together with the board, will invite the next 10 members to join the Council for the next year. At the end of 3 years the Council will achieve its preferred number of 30 members.

The goal is to have two new board members and 10 Council members by the time of the Annual Meeting, in late September or early October 2020, and to engage the expanded experience of these new contributors as MCB implements its action plans for change.

The board nominated and elected unanimously Krista McLeod as the Clerk of MCB. Her term began on July 1, 2020, at the resignation of Em Claire Knowles.

As its final discussion item, the board engaged in a detailed discussion of the FY 2021 Plan of Service. As the Center shifts from a public programming organization into a more virtually oriented one, there will be necessary shifts in the priorities of the organization.

The Board agreed that it was important for the Center to celebrate this year’s Massachusetts Book Awards as well as to devise a method for launching the program for 2021. NOTE: MCB may need to reconsider its awards in a virtual environment.

The Board also approved of the refocusing of Letters About Literature for 2021 so as to invite students to write about a book that has most helped them get through the quarantine and/or the social unrest in which we find ourselves. Beyond those two programs, the Center must create a variety of programming strategies so as not to over-rely on Zoom events as a replacement for in person gatherings.

The Board will communicate via email discussion over the summer and come together for the annual meeting of the Center in the last week of September or first week of October.

**Commissioner Cluggish**

* Participated in Executive Committee Call
* Participated in the Board Strategic Planning Focus Group on June 5
* Library Journal webinar: Designing Libraries for Safety in the Age of COVID-19 on June 17

**Commissioner Abraham**

* Participated in the Board Strategic Planning Focus Group on June 5
* Attended ALA Annual Virtual Council Meeting

***At this time Commissioner Abraham asked for a moment of silence in memory of former Commissioner Greg Shesko who passed away.***

**Commissioner Ball**

* Participated in the Board Strategic Planning Focus Group on June 5
* Participated in Executive Committee Call

**Commissioner Kronholm**

* Participated in the Board Strategic Planning Focus Group on June 5
* Participated in Executive Committee Call

**Commissioner Perille**

* June 05 – MBLC Commissioners' strategic planning discussion
* June 09 – Massachusetts Attorney General's office training: Open Meeting Law
* June 11 – 2020 Massachusetts Library Association annual meeting
* June 12 – State Advisory Council on Libraries discussion/special meeting on CARES Act funding
* June 17 – Library Journal webinar: Designing Libraries for Safety in the Age of COVID-19

**Director’s Report**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

**Meetings/activities since the last monthly Board meeting:**

* June 5—MBLC Commissioners Strategic Planning focus group
* June 8— MLS Executive Board meeting, virtual
* June/early July— Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) and Council of State Library Agencies (COSLINE) weekly virtual check-ins during COVID-19 crisis
* June 11—Presented “State of the State” at MLA Annual Conference Business Meeting, virtual
* June 12—COSLA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, virtual
* June 12—State Advisory Council on Libraries (SACL) CARES Act discussion, virtual
* June 16—Presented MBLC Update during CW MARS, Inc. Users Council meeting, virtual
* June 16—MLS Strategic Planning Virtual Town Hall
* June 24—Visited 90 Canal with Tracey and Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) rep
* June 24—Strategic planning call with Abby Straus
* June 26—Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) Board Meeting, virtual
* June 26—Library 2020 Small, Rural, and Independent Libraries Conference, virtual recording
* June 29—Call with Grow with Google representatives

The Senate passed the IT bond bill on July 2. The bill includes $115 million for the MPLCP, the same amount that is in the House version. Senator Lesser introduced an amendment to increase our funding to $150 million, but the amendment failed, most likely due to COVID-19 related funding needs, including supporting schools with remote learning. The Senate will now negotiate their version of the bill with the House, hopefully by July 31, which is when formal sessions are slated to end. The Governor may veto or reduce line items in bond bills, which the legislature can override with two-thirds majorities in both houses.

Maya Jonas Silver, the Director of Capital Planning and Long-Term Obligations at the Executive Office of Administration and Finance (A&F) let us know in mid-June that our cap will remain at $20 million for FY2021. Maya said the FY2021 Capital Plan is a maintenance plan for the Commonwealth, primarily due to COVID-19 related obligations. They are level-funding most lines for the coming fiscal year.

While the IT bond bill including authorization for MPLCP funds has not been finalized, we will pause offering new provisional awards for FY2021, given the challenging economic situation most municipalities will be experiencing for the next fiscal year. We will fund the three communities that have already started construction projects (Boston and Grafton) or have recently completed projects (Cambridge) using their own local funds. The Commissioners will vote on these contractual awards at the Board meeting following passage of the IT bond bill into law.

Regarding our FY2021 operating budget, Massachusetts began the new fiscal year with a $5.25 billion interim budget. With the FY21 budget not in place, we have been given a one-twelfth budget based on our FY 2020 budget. Legislative leaders are waiting to see how tax collections perform in the wake of the decision to push the annual tax-filing deadline forward from April 15 to July 15. They are also waiting to see when and whether Congress will pass another major recovery/stimulus bill providing additional support to individuals, businesses, and state and local governments struggling due to the pandemic's impacts.

**Summer Software Grants:** We are using $47,500 in CARES Act funds to purchase an additional 75 Beanstack licenses for public libraries. Beanstack is an online tracking system for reading programs. MBLC had purchased 56 licenses with LSTA funds earlier this year prior to COVID-19.

**Virtual Programming for Distance Learning Grants:** These grants are one of the ways the MBLC is using CARES Act funds to assist libraries. The purpose of these grants is to support increased public access to library virtual programs. Funds could be used to purchase equipment and supplies for library-created programming, pay virtual performers or presenters, or purchase materials for developing remote learning kits. Libraries of all types were eligible to apply for funds ranging from $1,000-$3,500.

* 135 libraries applied from all over the state, requesting nearly $340,000 in funding for projects.
* 27 libraries received $72,461 in funding this round. A second grant round with the remaining $32,539 will be held later this year.
* Libraries were encouraged to work with local museums and local cultural institutions. Funded projects involve working with museums and institutions including the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy, Buttonwoods Museum, Easton Historical Society and Museum, EcoTarium, Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Guerilla Opera, Mass Audubon, Museum of Russian Icons, National Marine Life Center, Peabody Essex Museum, Public Health Museum, and Tower Hill Botanic Garden.
* Several funded projects include programming related to jobs and career assistance, racial justice issues, and exploring nature.

Recorded sessions will be uploaded to the statewide video library. All virtual events will be included in the statewide calendar to help increase awareness and participation.

We held the final **virtual trustee orientation** on June 17 with Maura Deedy, Liz Babbitt and Rob Favini presenting. Commissioner Kronholm welcomed the 27 attendees from across the state. Due to the popularity of these virtual sessions, we are planning Trustee Check-in sessions to concentrate on developing information around COVID-19, the state reopening guidance, and other related library issues. Dates and times TBD.

Rob Favini and Shelley Quezada met with the **Massachusetts Library Aid Association** (MLAA) virtually on June 4. The MBLC has had a long-standing relationship with this organization as a participant in their Library School scholarship review. The meeting was held to discuss future sustainability of the group due to the recent retirement of most of their Board members. The MLAA recently transferred the management of their funds to the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts, which has agreed to take on a more substantial management role in running the scholarship. The MBLC will continue to help in the promotion and review of the scholarship application process.

Evan Knight moderated a Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness (**COSTEP)** program on 2020 hurricane preparedness on June 16 that featured Matthew Belk, a Lead Meteorologist for the National Weather Service, Boston. The event had 120 registrations with 90 attending. 55 registrations came from Massachusetts with 21 of those coming from public libraries.   A recording of the event is available on the COSTEP MA website: https://mblc.state.ma.us/costepma/index.php/about/events/

**Handling Patron's Legal Questions During the Pandemic:** The MBLC and the Social Law Library hosted a legal reference update webinar on July 7. Just as COVID-19 has changed the way that libraries deliver services, it has also affected the Massachusetts Court System and the legal support network for Massachusetts residents.  This webinar updated library staff on how to

help patrons find answers to their legal questions when walk-in service to the trial court law libraries and court service centers may be limited.

For the past two years, Shelley Quezada has served as part of the state **Family Engagement Coalition** for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to develop a comprehensive framework for family engagement.  Final touches on this framework were taking place leading up to the statewide shutdown and even in the face of the pandemic a working document was completed and is now ready for implementation.

We are pleased that libraries are specifically named in the framework which acknowledges how libraries embrace the entire family and are a place that serves all generations.  The framework includes a link to an important PLA document on its resource list: http://www.ala.org/pla/sites/ala.org.pla/files/content/initiatives/familyengagement/Public-Libraries-A-Vital-Space-for-Family-Engagement\_HFRP-PLA\_August-2-2016.pdf

As stated in the framework, “Family engagement that connects families, children, youth, and practitioners at all levels is systemic (incorporating engagement strategies into all systems and services) and intentional (incorporating purposeful and deliberate engagement strategies). Effective family engagement involves connecting with families, interacting with them as equal partners, and establishing with them strong two-way communications channels.”  The Board of Library Commissioners is identified as a member partner in this effort, and we plan to use the guiding principles outlined in the implementation of a variety of programs and services. These include but are not limited to the LSTA direct grant program and possibly other efforts such as summer reading.  We plan to promote the framework with MLS and encourage their consulting staff to highlight the principles outlined with member libraries.

We are in talks with American Library Association (**ALA**) and **Grow with Google** about hosting/co-hosting a virtual digital skills workshop in the next few months. Grow with Google had initially proposed holding a few in-person workshops around the state back in March, either for job seekers or small business owners, but this has been replaced with a virtual workshop due to COVID-19. The workshop they are now proposing is called “Connect with Customers and Manage Your Business Remotely.” This workshop will help small businesses manage remotely during the COVID-19 crisis. ALA has allocated $15,000 in grants for this program.

**Legislative Report**

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

The Senate passed bond bill S 2790 that contains funding for the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP). Sen. Eric Lesser’s amendment to increase library construction funding from $115 million to $150 million did not pass. We are very grateful to Sen. Lesser for the work on this amendment and for all the support we receive for the Commonwealth’s libraries. There were eleven co-sponsors on the amendment. The bond bill now goes to a Conference Committee to reconcile any difference between the Senate and House funding amounts. It will then be voted on separately in the House and Senate before going to the Governor for his signature. Administration and Finance has set the annual bond spending cap for library construction at $20 million again this year.

The $115 million figure for library construction included by both the Senate and the House will cover the projects on the waitlist, which is positive news considering the uncertainty surrounding the budget picture and the revenue outlook for this new fiscal year. There are some additional sections of the IT Bond bill that will help libraries, beyond the construction funding, including broadband upgrades to municipal buildings. Furthermore, the Senate approved an amendment in a separate section of the bond bill for $495,000 for a mobile WiFi hotspot, Wi-Fi connected laptop or tablet lending program for the libraries in Attleboro, Mansfield, Norton, Rehoboth, Seekonk, Foxborough, Medfield, Sharon, and Walpole.

There is growing concern among House and Senate Leadership and their respective committees on Revenue and Ways and Means that projections for revenue may be even lower than the previous $6 billion predicted only a month ago. The Revenue Chairman, Mark Cusack testified that the figure could be as high as $8 billion currently. There is still no word on the FY 2021 Budget other than that it is still in committee. The Agency can expect one-twelfth budgets for at least the next few months or until the legislature is in a position to propose and adopt a permanent budget. There is also no clear sense of what the annual budget will look like. All of the Affiliates have been notified about submitting month to month funding requests. These temporary spending measures are based on the FY 2020 budget.

The Department of Revenue (DOR) has not posted the monthly revenue report for June or the final revenue numbers for FY 2020. Total Tax collections for the month-to-date mid-June report were $1.207 billion, down $609 million or 33.5% versus the same period in June 2019. Income Taxes totaled $697 million, down $342 million or 32.9% versus the same period in June 2019. Sales & Use Tax collections were $86 million, down $44 million or 34.0% versus the same period in June 2019. Corporate & Business Taxes were $379 million, down $166 million or 30.4% versus the same period in June 2019. Other Taxes totaled $46 million, down $57 million or 55.5% versus the same period in June 2019. The Massachusetts income tax filing deadline was postponed from April 15 to July 15. Lawmakers are hoping to have a better understanding of the revenue picture once the receipts are tabulated.

**Communications Update**

Celeste Bruno, Communications Director presented the following report:

Communications Director Celeste Bruno presented an overview of communications work. She prefaces the report with a reminder that, for the most part, any work needs to be tied to an LSTA funded product or initiative.

The work the communications team does is based on the three-year marketing plan which is developed with input from the 17-member statewide Public Relations Advisory Committee. The plan and the list of committee members is on the agency website. The committee consists of librarians from across the state, network representatives, a representative from MLS, and three commissioners: Mary Ann Cluggish, Gina Perille, and Mary Kronholm. The plan’s goals align with goals in the strategic plan as well as the five-year LSTA plan.

In terms of the issues raised during the strategic planning session:
It was suggested that the MBLC run television ads before the news.
The MBLC does run ads—video ads—that appear on streaming platforms, which is increasingly where people are, especially the target audience.
Traditional ads are expensive—for summer reading we went from spending $90,000 (or more) on traditional summer ads before Ms. Bruno came to the Board, to spending between $30-$40,000 with digital campaigns that appear only to our target audience. MBLC’s campaigns are working because the click through rate on ads is well above average. Participation in summer programming, for example, has increased 55% since 2010.

Running an ad on TV or a print ad for eBooks or databases may not be the best option. It may make more sense (and is cheaper) to run a digital ad that leads a person right to the eBooks or databases in one click. They can immediately use the service. When the MBLC purchases broadcast or cable TV, we must target individuals by only location and programming: i.e. we can run ads on WCVB and reach people in the Boston DMA who are watching WCVB. On the other hand, when we purchase streaming TV, we can target individuals based on age, demographics, location, interests, etc. In this case, we could potentially target all parents of children under 16 regardless of what show they are watching and/or even get so granular as to target individuals who are in a household that shares an IP address with a device that we tracked as having visited a library in the past 2 years. Using advanced targeting available with streaming TV allows us to avoid wasting money on individuals that are not in our target demographic and as such significantly improves our ROI.

It was repeatedly stated, that no one knows about library services—however, usage in all areas, but databases are way up in just the past 5 years. Databases are a struggle for most states to promote—that’s certainly true for us. The MBLC has conducted focus groups with both residents and library staff. In Massachusetts, many public librarians don’t fully understand the databases. And we’ve heard over and over again, that patrons typically need some librarian help to get the real benefits of the databases.  So, it would make no sense for us to run a statewide campaign about databases, when a patron could very likely walk into a library and encounter library staff who are not comfortable with database questions. Instead, we create posts that link users directly into the database articles while giving the local library the usage statistic. Libraries can use these when it’s right for them; when they have staff that can answer patron questions. We’ve heard from many librarians that they really like this approach. Last year there were over 7 million full text downloads from databases.

It was stated that the MBLC should be helping local libraries market themselves. We do that in spades. We created the Awarehouse for just that purpose—it’s a website that contains ready-made promotional materials for libraries. For statewide services, we typically create print materials, social media and template press releases- to help libraries cover their social media channels, local media, and people who come into the library. Having these created by the MBLC helps ensure continuity of design, message, and helps consumers recognize the service no matter what library they are using. We’ve done this for eBooks, Comcat, statewide summer, and databases. We also create social media that helps demonstrate usage like the posts we did for meeting room usage and the mini-social campaign that compared library usage to landmark Massachusetts locations. There has been a 47% increase in registered users of the Awarehouse since 2018. Last year more than 10,000 items were downloaded and over 70,000 items were ordered and delivered to libraries.

During the COVID-19 shutdown, we have become teachers and adult daycare givers and like everyone else tried to cope with what was happening, we still are. But we also created new virtual opportunities for libraries to showcase their services. We created the new video library that features hundreds of educational and entertaining videos from local librarians. The First Lady of the Commonwealth’s story time video that she recorded specifically for the site is featured on the site’s landing page. In less than a month, over 1,000 patrons have visited the site. We worked with our colleagues Paul Kissman and Kate Butler on the calendar of virtual library events. With the huge increase of free-for-now services and other resources for the public, to help people make sense of it all, we created the “We’re in this Together” digital library that’s a one-stop place for residents to go. We created and sent out five new database series that featured Kids Science, DIY, Wellness, Healthy Aging, and Dogs. We also created “From the Heart” a way for libraries to upload their stories about services and experiences during the pandemic. Libraries were wondering how to run a summer program this year. Our statewide reading challenge with the First Lady and Blades has been the answer for many. For all of our new services we created template press releases for libraries to use with their local media which do get used and published very frequently. The entire consumer portal is a way to bring in new users to libraries and Matt has been constantly updating it.

The communications team does awareness campaigns that help legislators see how valued libraries are. Over and over it has been stated that personal notes/emails are more effective than email blasts. Our Library Lovers campaign yielded over 8,000 personal Valentines from patrons to legislators in just two February-based campaigns. We worked with OCLN on the Miles to Reach You campaign which yielded 700 patrons to legislator contacts. What’s Your Four has had many local celebrities and legislators—including the Governor and Lt. Governor—participate.

Our partnerships—the Boston Bruins, the First Lady of the Commonwealth, DCF, and the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum —are high profile and bring a lot of recognition to the agency and to libraries. Ms. Bruno personally started the partnership with the Bruins in 2009 which lead to the other partnerships.

The team has worked with networks to develop the materials for LEA—digital ads ran through the month of June—we switched from running summer ads to ads for digital resources (because we only have the budget to run one paid campaign) and put that campaign together in record time to take advantage of the need we knew was out there. In just a few weeks, this campaign drove over 7,500 patrons to the portal to learn more about our digital resources. And we’ve worked with networks on other campaigns as well.

We’ve developed legislative materials for the entire state, including a website; created specific materials for trustees and created the district-specific materials that go to national library legislative day.

In terms of media, we write every single press release and social media post and in just the past few weeks have worked with reporters from CBS, the Boston Globe, WGBH, Boston.com, Statehouse news, and Library Journal. And we appreciate staff like Rob, Evan, Andrea and Lauren who are able to serve as experts for the media.

Matt Perry and Ms. Bruno have done workshops, done programs at MLA and NELA, gone to network meetings, and WMLA meetings to get the word out about services

The team does everything for booths at MLA, the Boston Book Festival, and Bruins Fanfest and while we may not be the point people for MMA, we set it up and it’s all our work that sits on that booth’s table.

Print publications that we do include: the annual report, legislative agenda, LSTA Guide, State Aid Guide, Who to Contact at the MBLC, LSTA Fact sheets, Construction materials (map, waitlisted project fact sheets, program sheets), all the materials for summer reading (poster, booklist, certificate, promo flyer, bookmark) the new magazine and more. Not to mention online publications like Libraries in the News and the agency blog.

And we help our amazing staff get the word out about their good work: We worked with Shelley and did all the social graphics, poster, agenda and promoted the Opioid symposium. We were in the process of working with Lyndsay on the small libraries’ forum when COVID-19 hit, but in past years we created the same sort of materials for the forum. We worked with Rob to develop an entire campaign around LSTA that resulted in the largest number of applications that have been received in recent years.

As soon as we knew there were CARES Act funds, we pushed to get those funds for summer and wrote the grant descriptions that are currently being used to promote them to libraries—we turned that around in days. These are the only CARES Act grants that are currently being offered to libraries.

The communications staff is Matt Perry and Celeste Bruno. They are joined by Rachel Masse for summer and the Boston Bruins since that partnership and summer participation has grown greatly over the years. The team works with Buyer advertising to develop campaigns as well as graphics and publications.

**Consideration of approval of the FY2021 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant Awards**

Board Chair Ochsenbein stated that the votes for the LSTA Grants for FY2021 will be different this year. He will read all the motions and then the Commissioners will vote for all grants at the end. As each item was called, Commissioners would have the opportunity to request a hold.

Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development presented the recommendations of the State Advisory Council on Libraries (SACL) for grants for forty projects under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) program for Fiscal Year 2021. There was $500,000 budgeted for this grant round and all awards total $454,305. There are also three new grants this year; At the Table, Protecting Priority Collections, and Strength in Families (which was offered last year but no applications were received).

Mr. Favini also extended many thanks to the members of SACL for their hard work and dedication.

**Access for All**

**Program Abstract:** The MBLC identified issues for libraries seeking to provide service for people who face special challenges using libraries. Many residents cannot fully utilize libraries for a variety of reasons including disabling conditions such as visual, hearing, mobility, and cognitive impairments. Libraries are encouraged to consider their role as an information access point for all, including those members of the community who are traditionally underrepresented among library users.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Access for All Grant totaling $14,235 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** | **FY21** | **FY22** |
| Gleason Public Library, Carlisle | $14,235 | $11,935 | $2,300 |
| **Total:** | **$14,235** | **$11,935** | **$2,300** |

**Anytime STEM Learning**

**Program Abstract:** Libraries offer hands-on, inquiry-based experiential learning and connect STEM to everyday life outside of formal educational settings. Programs introduce young children to a range of opportunities that will promote the next generation of engineers and technologists. Library programs that support the importance of science and technology can help encourage children to take an early look at “frontier occupations” such as alternative energy, green transportation, biotechnology, and robotics.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Anytime STEM Learning Grants totaling $7,500 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** |
| Georgetown Peabody Library, Georgetown | $7,500 |
| **Total:** | **$7,500** |

**At the Table**

**Program Abstract:** It is vital for people to understand the role of food in their lives and cultures. Culinary literacy can help communicate the impact that food has on one’s health, environment, and community. Libraries can offer opportunities for people to learn how to cook and gain practical life skills as well as use cooking as a way to advance multiple types of literacy, such as reading, math, cultural, and health. Through the cooperative nature of cooking, libraries can have a unique platform with which they can build and sustain their community.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following At the Table Grants totaling $20,000 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** |
| Bigelow Public Library, Clinton | $10,000 |
| West Tisbury Free Public Library | $10,000 |
| **Total:** | **$20,000** |

**Citizenship Corners and Expanded Language Services**

**Program Abstract:** This grant will help develop a range of services for New Americans. Libraries may choose to set up Citizenship Corners that provide dedicated space for circulating materials and informational resources on citizenship and other immigration related topics. This would include offering a series of workshops at least twice a year to understand the naturalization process.

Should the library seek to expand existing English as a Second Language classes or create a Conversation Circle program they could apply for the higher range of funds. This funding could be used for a part-time volunteer coordinator and to pay for support materials on English language instruction. Libraries would need to commit staff time to organizing and training volunteers and agree to designate at least one staff member as support for this program. In addition, the library would set up a Citizenship Corner and offer informational workshops. Libraries applying for the ESL support program would need to commit to a two-year time frame.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Citizenship Corners and Expanded Language Services Grant totaling $13,305 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** | **FY21** | **FY22** |
| Somerville Public Library | $13,305 | $6,653 | $6,652 |
| **Total:** | **$13,305** | **$6,653** | **$6,652** |

**Civic Hub**

**Program Abstract:** Libraries can strengthen their role as a source for dependable print and media resources while serving as trusted spaces to start and continue community conversations. By serving as public forum and civic engagement ‘incubators’, libraries can support informed, issue-oriented public programs and structured opportunities for discussion. Promoting civic literacy requires active engagement around issues specific to each community. Paramount to the vision of an informed community is the democratic values of openness, inclusion, participation, empowerment, and the common pursuit of truth and the public interest.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Civic Hub Grants totaling $22,500 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** |
| Framingham State University/Henry Whittemore Library | $7,500 |
| Morrill Memorial Library, Norwood | $7,500 |
| Lucius Beebe Memorial Library, Wakefield | $7,500 |
| **Total:** | **$22,500** |

**Dig In**

**Program Abstract:** Gardens present a variety of learning opportunities as well as benefits to a community. Libraries can use a garden to offer activities and programs that provide opportunities for all ages and abilities to explore science and nutrition, develop DIY skills, and improve social-emotional learning. Libraries may also use a garden to help promote and support healthy living in their community. There is increasing evidence of positive health outcomes from gardening.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Dig In Grants totaling $33,966 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** |
| Cotuit Library, Barnstable | $8,975 |
| Griswold Memorial Library, Colrain | $5,000 |
| Eastham Public Library | $9,991 |
| Southborough Library | $10,000 |
| **Total:** | **$33,966** |

**Go Local**

**Program Abstract:** Libraries have a key role to play in capturing, collecting, and making community stories available and meaningful. They serve as the center of community celebrations and historic events and create valuable records of those events in traditional and new formats. Libraries may draw on their strength in this unique niche by developing projects that use historical documents and artifacts to make new stories and/or generate new records by creating and participating in community events that build the local story.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Go Local Grants totaling $40,000 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** | **FY21** | **FY22** |
| Ames Free Library, Easton | $10,000 | $6,510 | $3,490 |
| Forbes Library, Northampton | $15,000 | $7,500 | $7,500 |
| Oak Bluffs Public Library | $15,000 | $7,685 | $7,315 |
| **Total:** | **$40,000** | **$21,695** | **$18,305** |

**Health and Wellness**

**Program Abstract:** Health and wellness can have a tremendous impact on one’s daily life, particularly among more vulnerable and marginalized populations. Libraries can use their position as a trusted resource to help their communities explore ideas and navigate the complex issues related to this topic.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Health and Wellness Grants totaling $45,000 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** |
| Beverly Public Library | $7,500 |
| Billerica Public Library | $7,500 |
| Chelmsford Public Library | $7,500 |
| New Bedford Free Public Library/Wilks Branch | $7,500 |
| Northborough Free Library | $7,500 |
| Pembroke Public Library | $7,500 |
| **Total:** | **$45,000** |

**IdeaLab**

**Program Abstract:** As a unique place to design and create, the IdeaLab serves as a discrete learning space to use new tools and material not available at home. It can be a place to produce videos, learn about electronics, or try out new skills. Community-based technology centers in libraries provide access for people of all ages to pursue their interests, gain expertise, share municipal information and have meaningful experiences.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following IdeaLab Grants totaling $27,000 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** |
| Blackstone Public Library | $12,000 |
| Norfolk Public Library | $15,000 |
| **Total:** | **$27,000** |

**Mind in the Making**

**Program Abstract:** This grant allows public libraries to carry out a program to establish or enhance play spaces for children ages 0-6 in public libraries. These play spaces are aimed at early learning and social interaction among children and their caregivers. Funds may be used to support a limited amount of additional staff hours.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Mind in the Making Grants totaling $47,463 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** |
| Charlton Public Library | $10,000 |
| Kingston Public Library | $10,000 |
| Wayland Free Public Library | $9,963 |
| Whitman Public Library | $10,000 |
| Worcester Public Library | $7,500 |
| **Total:** | **$47,463** |

**Open**

**Program Abstract:** This category is being offered to allow librarians to satisfy needs that are not now being met by current programs. It has always been a priority of the federal program to encourage innovation and risk taking. It is also an interest of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to provide librarians with opportunities to help fulfill their long range plan goals and objectives. The Innovativeprogram will allow applicants to apply new methods to solve problems, build programs, and best carry out their library’s mission and plan. These projects must meet the needs of a specific target audience. Applicants can seek awards for projects that otherwise do not fall under the current LSTA program offerings, whether the project is innovative or a project that is being adapted. The InnovativeProgram offers libraries an opportunity to exercise maximum creativity to implement unique services in a flexible and collaborative grant-making environment.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Innovative Grants totaling $14,100 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Title** | **Amount Recommended** |
| Maynard Public Library | Enhancing YA and New Adult Engagement with Tabletop Games | $5,000 |
| Sharon Public Library | Sewing Threads of Diversity | $9,100 |
| **Total:** |  | **$14,100** |

**Pathways to Success**

**Program Abstract:** Libraries have traditionally provided resources for career development and job information. This grant enables libraries to jump-start or expand this increasingly important role. Libraries will collaborate with local agencies, organizations, and businesses to initiate special focused programming and outreach activities including workshops on topics such as changing careers, networking, and continuing education.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Pathways to Success Grant totaling $7,500 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** |
| Gloucester Lyceum & Sawyer Free Library, Gloucester | $7,500 |
| **Total:** | **$7,500** |

**Protecting Priority Collections**

**Program Abstract:** This grant will support the implementation of recommendations from previous Preservation Assessments, and specific preservation and access needs for collections of distinction. Appropriate activities are collection-level investments of various types, including but not limited to: the purchase of equipment (e.g. dehumidifiers, data loggers, etc.), increased staff hours in direct support of their collections, or expert assistance.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Protecting Priority Collections Grant totaling $10,786 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** |
| Porter Memorial Library, Blandford | $5,088 |
| Mass Eye and Ear/Howe Library, Boston | $5,698 |
| **Total:** | **$10,786** |

**Serving ‘Tweens and Teens**

**Program Abstract:** Across Massachusetts, eager and hopeful teens enter the library each afternoon, looking for a place to be with their friends, to relax, and to work on homework. They may also be seeking a place to expand their world, to volunteer in the community, and to pursue new projects. The need for programs and services for middle school and senior high school age students is apparent. The average school day ends between two and three in the afternoon and almost every teenager in America must find somewhere to go and something to do after school. At-risk, underserved youth need programs that intervene before these adolescents get into trouble. The purpose of this LSTA program is to help public libraries develop innovative programs and strategies to serve their “tweens and teens.”

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Serving ‘Tweens and Teens Grants totaling $37,100 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** | **FY21** | **FY22** |
| Stevens Memorial Library, Ashburnham | $17,100 | $10,400 | $6,700 |
| Canton Public Library | $20,000 | $9,450 | $10,550 |
| **Total:** | **$37,100** | **$19,850** | **$17,250** |

**Strength in Families**

**Program Abstract:** This grant will encourage libraries to create or build on existing partnerships with community organizations that provide family support. A key element in this effort would be to elevate the family voice in designing library services to those previously underserved in their communities including groups with a number of risk factors such as low-level parental education, transitional residential mobility and housing and food insecurity. The library will serve as a resource for families to find information and services in education, job and housing searches, health and well-being, and social networking.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Strength in Families Grant totaling $10,000 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** |
| Springfield City Library | $10,000 |
| **Total:** | **$10,000** |

**Town-Wide Preservation Assessment**

**Program Abstract:** This program provides the first step in the process of preserving, arranging and describing, and eventually digitizing historically significant local collections in Massachusetts for access through the Digital Commonwealth. Through this program, the public library and other local repositories will receive an assessment conducted by a certified preservation consultant.

Commissioner Ochsenbein moved to approve the following Town-Wide Preservation Assessment Grants totaling $103,850 to start no earlier than October 1, 2020.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agency** | **Amount Recommended** |
| Acton Memorial Library | $30,000 |
| Montague Public Libraries | $30,000 |
| Sutton Free Public Library | $17,350 |
| Swampscott Public Library | $26,500 |
| **Total:** | **$103,850** |

Commissioner Madell moved and Commissioner Abraham seconded that all LSTA Grants presented in agenda number 7a-p be awarded totaling $454,305.

Commissioner Kronholm abstained from agenda item 7m, Protecting Priority Collections, Porter Memorial Library, Blandford.

Board Clerk, Rachel Masse asked for a Roll Call vote of the Commissioners.

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

**The motion passes.**

**Consideration of appointments and reappointments to the PR Committee**

Celeste Bruno presented the appointments and re-appointments to the PR Committee.

Several members of the Public Relations (PR) Advisory Committee have terms that expired in June. The following members wish to be reappointed to serve another two-year term: Jason Homer, Director of the Morse Institute Library in Natick; Olivia Melo, Director of the New Bedford Public Library; and Lisa Pollack, Chief of Communications at the Boston Public Library.

Current members Charlotte Canelli, Director of the Morrill Memorial Library in Norwood and Kirsten Underwood, Head of Reference Services at the Nevins Memorial Library are retiring from their current librarianship. Jeanette Lundgren, Executive Director of the CW MARS Library Network and Jean Canosa Albano, Assistant Director for Public Services of the Springfield City Library both wish to be appointed.

Commissioner Abraham moved and Commissioner Resnick seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners reappoints Jason Homer, Director of the Morse Institute Library in Natick; Olivia Melo, Director of the New Bedford Public Library; and Lisa Pollack, Chief of Communications at Boston Public Library to serve on the statewide Public Relations Advisory Committee for a two-year term ending in June, 2022. Commissioners also appoint Jeanette Lundgren, Executive Director of the CW/MARS Library Network and Jean Canosa Albano, Assistant Director for Public Services of the Springfield City Library to a two-year term ending in June 2022.

Board Clerk, Rachel Masse asked for a Roll Call vote of the Commissioners.

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

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**Consideration of approval of two Board Policies**

Director Lonergan reported that the Board currently has 2 policies that have expired and need to be renewed. They are: 1) Board Liaisons (expired July 9, 2020) and 2) Sponsorships and Partnerships (expired July 9, 2020).

After some discussion it was decided to table these policies until the August Board Meeting. The Executive Committee of the Board and Commissioner Perille will be considering possible revisions for the Sponsorship and Partnership Policy.

**State Aid Update/ State Aid Annual Stats LibGuide**

Mary Rose Quinn said that ARIS opened on July 1and usually closes in August, but we extended the deadline to October, which is when the financial report is due.

We’re planning to organize a meeting of the state aid team to discuss changes for 2021. We also plan to organize a meeting of the State Aid Advisory Committee to further discuss the needs of the library community. Liz is putting together a Financial Workshop specifically for Commissioners so that they can better understand the MAR and the waiver process.

Liz Babbitt provided the Commissioners an overview of the State Aid to Public Libraries Program:

State Aid to Public Libraries is an annual, voluntary program administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners that distributes local aid to municipalities. It encourages municipal support and improvement for public library service, bolsters reciprocal resource sharing among libraries, compensates for differences in municipal funding capacities, and offsets costs to libraries that circulate materials to patrons from other certified municipalities. Of the 351 municipalities in Massachusetts, 350 provide public library service to their residents.

**FY2020 State Aid to Public Libraries Summary Reports**

Of the 350 Massachusetts municipalities with public library services, 345 applied to the State Aid program for FY2020. Sixteen municipalities applied for a waiver of the MAR. 345 of the municipalities that applied were certified to receive State Aid awards for FY2020.

Hancock applied to the program for the first time since 1975 and was granted certification.

Funding totaled $9,901,081 for the State Aid to Public Libraries program. Additional funds were added as earmarks for specific libraries bringing the overall total to $10,059,081. One earmark

for $25,000 was not for a Massachusetts public library and, therefore, could not be disbursed. The money had to be returned to the Commonwealth.

In March 2020, with COVID-19 reaching pandemic proportions around the globe, Governor Baker issued a State of Emergency for Massachusetts and within a week library buildings closed to the public. Many libraries rose to the challenge and continued to offer services and resources virtually to their patrons. In response to the global pandemic, Commissioners voted in an emergency preamble to the FY2021 Hours and Materials Policies. This emergency preamble stated, in part, that municipalities had met the hours and materials requirements for FY2020 (reported in FY2021) as of March 10, 2020 when the Governor's State of Emergency went into effect.

**Discussion of action steps related to our pledge around social and racial justice**

There were three points that Commissioners suggested to move forward with our pledge.

The three points were:

* diversity on the board
* training: sensitivity and unconscious bias training
* incorporating broader goals within the strategic plan

With Commissioner Ochsenbein stepping down from the Board, members will start to reach out to people that could be interested in joining the Board. It was also stated that geographic diversity is also important.

**Statement developed with the Executive Committee, Commissioner Perille, and the Communications Team.**

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners stands with all who condemn racism and work for racial justice. We believe that Black lives matter.

Libraries are civic anchors, committed to access for all and strengthening bonds within and across communities. We stand firmly with all who battle the inequality, brutality, and failures of justice that have been laid upon Black Americans for centuries. We stand unequivocally for equity, justice, and opportunity. That said, libraries cannot stand solely on ideals. Libraries must find ways to encourage more diversity in our profession and recognize privilege in our everyday lives. We must listen to the communities that we serve and create opportunities for learning and action.

The United States of America can be the land of opportunity only when there is opportunity and justice for every member of society. We must speak out when there is injustice, but our words will mean little if they are not followed by action. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners pledges to make racial and social justice integral and ongoing in our services and programs.

**Report from Massachusetts Library System**

Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director presented the following report:

**COVID-19 info**

MLS staff continues to work remotely. Betsy Meaden is leading a committee to plan for our return to the offices. Our staff continues to lead check in meetings with members, allowing them to discuss and socialize around planned topics/service points. We've also begun sharing Delivery Updates beyond our Delivery contacts, to include the Netadmins, and library directors. I am including delivery news in my member update emails as well.

MLS and MBLC released our “Reopening MA Guidelines” which include a Narrative, Road Map, and Plan Template, which can be found on our Resource Guide, along with a summary of the project. Updates reflecting Phase III are coming very soon.

On April 2, 2020, we adapted our Continuing Education (CE) policy to allow for library workers from all Massachusetts libraries, or who have been employed by a Massachusetts library to attend our virtual offerings. We will continue to keep with this adaptation for the foreseeable future.

**Consulting & Training Services**

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

This report provides an update to our previous reports on the continuing response of the Consulting and Training Services Team to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Live Learning Opportunities

While it is not possible to offer live in-person classes at the moment, the Consultants have found innovative ways to bring live opportunities to library staff in an online environment:

***Online Check-Ins:*** While social distancing has kept library staff physically apart, we heard they wanted ways to get together virtually, build community, and share ideas on how to serve their communities during this time. In response, MLS consultants have been holding online “check-ins” where library staff can do just that. These online check-ins have been phenomenally popular, with 1,302 participants attending 28 check-ins between March 20 – May 31. Here are the check-ins from the month of May:

* Massyac Virtual Check-Ins
* 5/7- (61 attendees)
* 5/14- (53 attendees)
* 5/21- (63 attendees)
* 5/21- (48 attendees)
* YA Librarian Check-In
* 5/5- (54 attendees)
* 5/12- (60 attendees)
* 5/19- (54 attendees)
* 5/26- (25 attendees)
* Academic Librarian Check-Ins
* 5/1 (29 attendees)
* 5/6 (19 attendees)
* Virtual Check-In: Reference
* 5/5 (16 attendees)
* Virtual Check-In: Local History/Genealogy
* 5/1 (13 attendees)
* Virtual Check-In: All Library Staff
* 5/7 (57 attendees)
* 5/12 (7 attendees)
* 5/14 (37 attendees)

***Converting In-Person CE to Online:*** The Consultants have been busy converting in-person classes to online workshops. In May, content from two previously in-person classes was offered online:

* Basic Library Techniques (Collection Development & Maintenance: Part 2):
* 5/19 – 13 attendees
* 5/21 – 12 attendees
* 5/26 – 11 attendees
* 5/27 – 12 attendees
* Make Shift Happen: Weeding the Physical Collection:
* 5/5 – 20 attendees
* 5/7 – 21 attendees
* 5/13 – 19 attendees
* 5/18 – 17 attendees
* 5/28 – 17 attendees

***COVID-19 Related CE:*** The Consultants offered some webinars in May specifically to address issues that have been raised by the COVID-19 situation.

* Caring for Ourselves in Unprecedented Times, 5/8 (240 attendees)
* Trivia Pursued Remotely: Hosting Online Trivia Contests in a Time of Social Distancing, 5/12 (246 attendees)
* Storytelling for a Virtual Summer and Beyond, 5/13 (156 attendees)

***Other Online CE Opportunities:*** The Consultants also offered non-COVID-19 related trainings, to ensure library staff have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of their patrons now and into the future.

* World Languages Collections for Kids, 5/6 (77 attendees)
* Multilingual Storytime, 5/29 (43 attendees)

**Recorded Learning Opportunities**

In addition to live events, we have made a number of recorded learning opportunities available to library staff, so they can continue their professional development anytime, anywhere:

***Recorded Webinars:*** Over the past several years, MLS has been recording the webinars that it offers to members and has put the recordings on our MLS Vimeo channel. These 210+ recorded webinars are remarkably popular. We looked at the statistics of our recorded webinars from 3/17/2020 to 5/31/2020 and compared them to the 365-day period prior to the suspension of in-person CE. For comparison:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **3/17/2020-6/2/2020 (11 weeks)** | **3/17/2019-3/16/2020 (52 weeks)** |
| Plays | 15,885 | 3,699 |
| Finishes | 3,890 | 520 |

Teleworking Tips Videos: The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way that many people are working, at least temporarily. MLS staff shared their top tips for alternative work arrangements and shared them in a series of five entertaining videos. From April 1st through May 31, these videos received 2,045 views.

**LibGuides**

Finally, the Consultants have made a lot of information available on LibGuides to provide library workers with information about the COVID-19 pandemic and external professional development opportunities:

***COVID-19 LibGuide:*** In collaboration with MBLC, MLS created and launched the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Massachusetts Libraries guide on March 12. The guide includes 14 pages of information, on topics as diverse as “Academic Libraries,” “Pandemic Planning,” and “Financial Assistance.” Through May 31, the guide received a staggering 50,038 views. After the guide’s homepage, the most viewed pages are “Reopening Your Library” (7,791 views), followed by “What Your Library Can Do Remotely” (3,795 views), and “COVID-19 Webinars & Forums” (3,477 views). The guide is continuing to be updated by the Consultants as events unfold and member library needs change.

***Online Training Resources Page:*** We received several requests for additional resources for online learning opportunities. In response, MLS created and launched the Online Training Resources page on March 25. That page provides links to both MLS resources and other external resources that provide online training opportunities to library staff. Through May 31, the page received 4,826 views.

**Resource Sharing**

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

2020 vs 2019: 1 March – 31 May

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Support Area: | 2020 | 2019 |
| Interlibrary Loan | 1,391 | 1,919 |
| Commonwealth eBooks | 345 | 183 |
| State-wide Databases | 132 | 59 |
| MassCat | 177 | 61 |

* **Interlibrary Loan** is still effectively shut down for libraries in the United States and internationally. Staff continue to deal with loans in transit, overdue and due date extensions. The 2020 stats continue to be on par with the same time period in 2019. We are hoping to physically process items if the Marlborough office opens in June.
* **Commonwealth eBooks** open enrollment continues to roll on. OverDrive access to our K-12 members during the school closures, continue to double the support interactions compared with a year ago. The gratitude from K-12 school library members has been welcome to a very busy Tressa Santillo.
* **Database** support has tapered off as school distance education efforts have started to slow with the school year ending. Still seeing double the number of support tickets helping libraries compared with same time period in 2019.
* **MassCat** support continues on pace with last year, as schools need year-end reports, and publics are providing curb-side service needing tweaks to their circulation settings. I have discovered that at least three MassCat public libraries have had their staff furloughed. I have had some indication that there may be some K-12 library directors leaving and their MassCat membership may be in jeopardy. But this is not unusual at the end of every school year, and often not resolved until the following Fall.

**Webinars in Response to COVID-19 Closings**

In response to the COVID19 related school and library closings, Tressa Santillo, worked with vendors Gale Cengage and OverDrive to provide timely workshops for our member libraries.

Further webinars continue to be scheduled: https://calendar.masslibsystem.org/

**Work-from-home: the new normal.**

Other than Commonwealth eBooks, member interactions have slowed a smidge for most of the Resources Sharing departments. The seven staff who work in Interlibrary Loan, Commonwealth eBooks, Database support, MassCat, and IT continue to rise to the occasion with quick turn-around answering questions and support requests. Resources Sharing staff has also been helping out with re-opening FAQ and cataloging comment trends from check-in webinars with members. It continues to be a pleasure to work with my staff on tackling and solving issues for our members during this unprecedented change to our work lives brought by COVID-19.

**Report from Library for the Commonwealth**

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

**Reopening physical library spaces**

* We had an initial launch for curbside holds-pick only at the Central Library and 4 branches beginning on June 22. We added an additional 5 branches on July 6. Plans are to open 6 more the following week, and the remainder of branches the week following that. (The exception being the handful of buildings that are under construction, or where safe distancing cannot be maintained.)

**Digital Collections**

* The initial batch of handwritten Anti-slavery Manuscripts that were uploaded to Zooniverse for crowdsourced transcription has been completed. (Tom Blake spoke to the success of this project at the March MBLC meeting, when it was still ongoing.)
* The project launched on January 23, 2018 (National Handwriting Day). 11,742 handwritten letters were presented for volunteers to transcribe collaboratively. 881 days later, 22,447 different volunteers completed the project.
* It’s worth noting that the project was completed the weekend of Juneteenth – thanks in part to a call for participation that went out from the Associates of the Boston Public Library and was subsequently amplified by Mentalfloss and Lifehacker.
* We had ~500 more waiting in the wings that we just uploaded but based on the recent pace of transcription, the expectation is those will be done by the end of the month.
* Next steps are to review/approve transcription lines based on consensus score so we can upload into Digital Commonwealth. The goal is to enable full text searching and line-level highlighting of search terms of page images.

**Lynda.com**

* We have reupped our subscription to Lynda.com for the next year.

**e-Collections**

* Added over 2,000 new and additional copies of in demand titles related to Black Lives Matter and Antiracism, including titles for all ages (kids and adults). Many titles have been added using the cost per circ model so they are always available without a wait.
* We have seen over a 500% increase in checkouts and holds on the most popular titles appearing on multiple library and published lists, including:
* *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo
* *So You Want to Talk about Race* by Ijeoma Oluo
* *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
* *How To Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X Kendi
* *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander
* *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor* by Layla F. Saad.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**Election of Officers for FY2021**

Commissioner Perille stated that, after consultation with the current Executive Committee and all the Commissioners, she is presenting the following slate for Board consideration: Commissioner Cluggish for the office of Chair, Commissioner Ball for the office of Vice Chair, and Commissioner Resnick for the office of Secretary.

Hearing no objections, Commissioner Perille moved and Commissioner Abraham seconded that the Board of Library Commissioners’ Secretary cast one vote on behalf of the entire Board for the slate as presented.

Commissioner Cluggish was elected Chair, Commissioner Ball was elected Vice Chair, and Commissioner Resnick was elected Secretary for FY2021.

Board Clerk, Rachel Masse asked for a Roll Call vote of the Commissioners.

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

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**List of documents for the July 9, 2020 Regular Monthly Board Meeting:**

1. Agenda for the July 9, 2020 Regular Monthly Board Meeting
2. Draft Minutes from the June 4, 2020 Regular Monthly Board Meeting
3. Draft Minutes from the June 5, 2020 Special Strategic Planning Meeting
4. Agenda Number 7- FY2021 Library Services and Technology Act Materials including memo, project descriptions with motions, list of SACL members, map of awards
5. Agenda Number 8- Memo and Motion for the appointments and re-appointments to the PR Committee
6. Agenda Item 9- Memo, motion, and policies for Board Liaisons and Sponsorships and Partnerships
7. Report from Massachusetts Library System
8. Report from Library for the Commonwealth

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Abraham moved and Commissioner Ball seconded to adjourn the July 9, 2020 monthly business meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners at 1:24 P.M.

Board Clerk, Rachel Masse asked for a Roll Call vote of the Commissioners.

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

**Board voted unanimous approval.**



Mary Kronholm

Secretary