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

**Date:** Thursday, October 8, 2020

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

**Place:**  Zoom Meeting

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

**Absent:** Roland A. Ochsenbein

Commissioner Madell left the meeting at 11:49 A.M.

**Staff Present:**

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

**Observers Present:**

Rich Allen, Chair of Winthrop Library Staff Association Union; Catherine Halpin, Collaborative Library Services Coordinator, Boston Public Library (BPL); Jeannette Lundgren, Network Administrator, CW MARS, Inc.; Sharon Shaloo, Executive Director, Massachusetts Center for the Book; David Slater, Network Administrator, Old Colony Library Network (OCLN); Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS); Jessica Vilas Novas, Library Director, Lawrence Public Library

**Meeting called to order by Chair Cluggish**

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

**Approval of Minutes from the regular monthly meeting: September 3, 2020**

The minutes from the September 3, 2020 Regular Monthly Board Meeting need further work so they were tabled until the November 5, 2020 Board Meeting.

**Chair’s Report**

Chair Cluggish presented the following report:

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

* Trustee orientation recording session
* Strategic Planning Session
* Building Literacy: Public Library Construction Podcasts
* Construction Team virtual meeting
* Executive board virtual meeting

Congratulations to Andrea Bunker and Lauren Stara on going “national” with their webinar “The Accidental Facilities Manager” on WebJunction in November. I was told that Tracey Dimant turned into Wonder Woman with an unparalleled execution of all organizational requirements for the staff move to new offices on Canal St. Ironically, the move was delayed a week, so staff are still unpacking this week while keeping the MBLC running. It sounds like a herculean effort, and they all deserve virtual applause.

Les Ball spoke at the Weymouth Tufts Library dedication. To my knowledge, this is the first new library dedication since the state began COVID-19 precautions.

When I participated in the Trustee Orientation recording session, I found much of the information so compelling that I sent an email to James suggesting that the recording could be used as a standard part of Commissioner orientation. The portions about State Aid and Advocacy are far beyond anything presented currently during Commissioner orientations. I recommend the current Trustee orientation to all of the Commissioners, especially those who have never served as a Trustee. Maura Deedy announced dates for several sessions yesterday.

Clarification and some specifics on how the MBLC operates is also useful to ensure we each understand our role. This understanding must be of a consistent basis for our discussions and decisions to be of value to the libraries we serve.

To begin, the Board of Library Commissioners is the agency of state government with the statutory authority and responsibility to organize, develop, coordinate and improve library services throughout the Commonwealth. The Agency staff advises municipalities, directors and library trustees on the operation and maintenance of public libraries, including construction and renovation.

The Commissioners represent the library community as a whole. Commissioners do not represent one community, one region, one group of libraries or one constituency. The Commissioners adopt policy and advocate for the agency, the affiliates, the partners, and the library community. Also, to be effective as a Board, we speak with one voice.

The MBLC administers state and federal grant programs for libraries and promotes cooperation among all types of libraries through the Massachusetts Library System, the networks, and resource sharing.

But, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners is not a state library. It is a state agency with statutory authority, but does not interfere with local communities and the manner in which they wish to run their libraries. The MBLC cannot and does not attempt to override local community decisions and must be respectful of local decisions. The staff does extensive communications across the state with libraries to inform them of and encourage best practices. The MBLC does write and enforce regulations with the purpose of establishing high standards of library operations across the state.

An example is the MBLC's lengthy set of statute, regulations and policies surrounding the State Aid program. Following approved requirements, the Commissioners vote to certify and award State Aid to Public Libraries revenue and certification to a municipality and its local library. Conversely, if the municipality is not in compliance with State Aid requirements, once again following statute, regulations, and policies, the Commissioners may vote not to certify. The community has the option of appealing the decision, or locally deciding to live with the consequences. It can also add additional funding to the library appropriation and possibly gain or regain certification. The community may win or lose on appeal. The consequences of not being certified are a loss of State Aid to Public Libraries revenue and a high chance that patrons will not be able to borrow materials from other libraries in the state.

Because there is a financial reward for following MBLC requirements and more importantly reciprocal borrowing privileges for their patrons, there are processes in the requirements that encourage a community to bring their library into compliance with the statute, regulations and policies.

We will take up the annual State Aid review process in the next few months. Today we will approves eight policies for the 2023 State Aid to Public Libraries Program.

Massachusetts regulations for State Aid to Public Libraries and the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program, which are highly detailed in an attempt to cover every situation, have been in place for many years and are reviewed regularly and when needed are updated to meet current conditions. Staff bring updated regulations to the Board for review and adoption and then to the library community for input. The review of and updating regulations process is slow and thoughtful and for State Aid, takes into account factors such as population, circulation, property values equalization, director qualifications, hours open, materials, and current technology. When regulations are revised, the MBLC must make sure that a change that benefits some libraries does not cause harm to others. In many ways it is a delicate balancing act. State laws must be followed when creating and approving regulations.

It is important to note that both the State Aid to Public Libraries Program and the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program are both voluntary. There is no law or regulation requiring a community to participate in either program.

The MBLC, like other similar state agencies, does not insert itself into local decisions because of Massachusetts home rule, which affirms the right of local municipalities to self-government and to the local exercise of powers as long as they are consistent with state law.

**Commissioner Reports**

**Commissioner Abraham**

* September 24- Participated in the Construction Meeting

**Commissioner Ball**

* September 17- Attended a walk-through on the Weymouth Public Library
* September 22- Participated in the Executive Committee Meeting
* September 28- Spoke at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at the Weymouth Public Library

**Commissioner DeBole**

* Emailed Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito about Broadband to Royalston
* October 8- Will be participating in Trustee Meeting after Board Meeting

**Commissioner Kronholm**

* Along with Commissioner Resnick began recruiting new commissioners from Western Mass
* Joined Association of Rural and Small Libraries

**Commissioner Perille**

* September 09 - Libraries Promoting Voter Engagement • MLS webinar
* September 24 - Strengthen Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Practice • WebJunction Webinar featuring Multnomah County
* September 24 - Kathy Dempsey's Crash Course in Communications for Library Supporters • VTLIB2020 Trustees and Friends Conference
* September 28 - Responding When COVID Comes to Your Library • ALA Webinar
* October 07 - Mission, Vision, Values subcommittee meeting for the MBLC strategic plan

**Commissioner Resnick**

* September 9- Participated in Strategic Planning Meeting
* September 10- Participated in the Western Mass Library Association (WMLA) Board Meeting. Spoke with Commissioner Kronholm about need for new commissioners from Western Mass
* October 29- WMLA Annual Meeting will be held virtually.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

Meetings/activities since the last monthly Board meeting:

* September 4 & October 2— Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Engagement Group meetings
* September 8—State Aid to Public Libraries workshop, virtual
* September 9—State Aid MAR Waivers workshop, virtual
* September 9—MBLC Strategic Planning Committee meeting, virtual
* September 10—Call with Jon Hardie, IT Director and Broadband Committee Vice Chair, Royalston re: broadband for Phinehas S. Newton Library
* September 14— MLS Executive Board meeting, virtual
* September 21-23—COSLA Fall Meeting, virtual
* September 24—Presented as part of Grow with Google online workshop: *Power Your Job Search with Google Tools*
* September 24—Construction Team meeting, virtual
* September 25—Call with Commissioner Ochsenbein and Paul Kissman re: broadband for Phinehas S. Newton Library
* September 25—MLA Legislative Committee meeting, virtual
* September 28—Virtual meeting with Dept. of Revenue staff re: distribution of tax forms/booklets for public libraries
* September 29—Presented MBLC update at CWMARS Users Council meeting, virtual
* October 1—Call with Sharon Sharry, Jones Library, Amherst re: federal funding initiative
* October 5— MLS Executive Board meeting, virtual

**State Budget**: We are currently working under a level-funded interim budget that the Governor signed to fund state government through October 31.  The House and Senate Ways and Means committees, along with Administration and Finance Secretary Michael Heffernan, will be meeting with economic experts on October 7 to help forecast tax revenues for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Senate Ways and Means Chair Michael Rodrigues recently stated that his goal was to have a budget passed and on Gov. Baker's desk by the end of the month when a three-month, $16.5 billion interim budget expires. A few days later, Senate President Karen Spilka told local officials that the budget is unlikely to be passed until after the November election. She also said that Gov. Baker may be planning to file an updated version of the fiscal 2021 spending plan he put forward in January, which would become the jumping off point for the House and Senate to craft their own budgets for the fiscal year that began on July 1.

Senate Ways and Means Chair Michael Rodrigues recently stated that he expects a $5 billion revenue loss this fiscal year and that lawmakers will need to draw on state reserves (currently $3.5 billion) unless new federal aid arrives from Washington. In April, forecasters told lawmakers to anticipate fiscal 2021 collections would be lower by between $4 billion and $6 billion. An updated projection produced from the Center for State Policy Analysis at Tufts University estimates an approximately $1.6 billion reduction in anticipated tax revenues.

**COSLA Fall Meeting**: The Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) were scheduled to meet in Austin, TX, in September, but instead we gathered virtually for three afternoons of sessions. On Monday (9/21), we held conversations with Senator Jack Reed (RI) and Representative Andy Levin (MI) to discuss federal recovery/stimulus funding for libraries, and we also met with IMLS Director Crosby Kemper. We spent most of Tuesday (9/22) in an “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion” working session facilitated by NCXT, a Minneapolis consulting group. On Wednesday (9/23), we had a discussion with ALA President Julius Jefferson and ALA Executive Director Tracie Hall titled: “COSLA & ALA: Identifying our Common Ground and Actions” which was moderated by Maureen Sullivan, the acting Connecticut State Librarian and a former ALA president. We also held a business meeting and board elections.

As a follow-up to our **Grow with Google** **jobseeker workshop** on September 24 (in partnership with the Boston Public Library and the Berkshire Athenaeum), we announced applications for mini-grants through [*Libraries Lead with Digital Skills*](http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/google), an initiative of ALA and PLA sponsored by Google. Applications opened on Monday, September 28 and are due by Monday, October 26, 2020.

If libraries are selected, they will receive funds to host digital skills workshops for job seekers and small business owners in their communities. Details on how to receive $1,000, application deadlines, and the application itself are available at the [Libraries Lead website](http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/google). Selected libraries will also be eligible to apply to receive an additional $3,000. (Information on this second-stage award will be shared after the initial application.)

**MPLCP**: Commissioner Ball spoke at Weymouth’s **Tufts Library** dedication on Monday, September 28. The Tufts Library is newly constructed and replaces a 33,000 sq. ft. building with a new 50,296 sq. ft. facility. Estimated Total Project Costs were $33,061,309; estimated Eligible Project Costs were $29,346,196; and our grant award was $12,085,184.

The major features of the new facility include an expanded Children’s Services Department; a suite of five meeting rooms that have capacities ranging from 12 to 196 and are designed for after-hours use; a local history center that provides secure storage for a nationally significant collection and space for its use by historians and genealogists; programming spaces for all ages to match growing library offerings; and a technology infrastructure and hardware designed for flexibility and expansion. This project may also qualify for an MPLCP Green Library Incentive following completion of construction, if official LEED certification from the US Green Building Council is attained.

Lauren and Andrea (with Lynn Piotrowicz) will be presenting their webinar “The Accidental Facilities Manager” via WebJunction on November 10 (<https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/accidental-facilities-manager.html>). The webinar will offer a primer on building systems and issues, along with tools for preventive maintenance, energy assessments, optimizing ventilation and filtration, and more.

On September 22, Evan facilitated a discussion at **COSTEP MA**’s disaster training workshop. Hypothetical disasters were presented, and attendees worked in small groups discussion rooms to outline responses. Participants included Fitchburg State Library, Hanover Public Library, two Historic New England properties (Eustis House and Otis House), as well as the Boston Office of Emergency Management, Boston Department of Public Health, Team Rubicon, MEMA, and others. Observers from Washington DC, Puerto Rico, Spain, and Florida also tuned in. The high-water mark of attendees was 35. In conjunction with the event, a series of blog posts about updating or drafting disaster plans was released over the past month. This content, and more, is available in a recent COSTEP email. <https://mailchi.mp/f5771e2f9673/new-guide-resources-and-events-for-emergency-planning>.

Evan also published “Project REALM Findings and Their Impact” on the MBLC Blog: <https://mblc.state.ma.us/mblc_blog/2020/08/31/919/>.

Shelley has ventured out on several socially-distanced visits to libraries. She visited Wayland and met with Lisa Castoldi at the Souza Baranowski Correctional Facility in Shirley. At this visit she was able to deliver six boxes of books that had been donated over the summer. She learned that DOC librarians are back working M-F but after not being in the institution for five months they returned to empty shelves and a lot of chaos. Also, there is no programming being provided by library or education staff, including book discussions, poetry writing and any of the other of the creative programs that were offered prior to March.

Rob conducted socially-distanced visits to the Stoneham Public Library on September 23 and the Groton Public Library on September 24.  Sarah Sogigian joined Rob for the Groton visit. At both libraries he was able to see how they were coping with life during the pandemic. Both libraries are offering curbside service. Groton is allowing patrons to be in the library but not to browse the stacks.

On September 30 Rob attended a COSLA Inclusive Services Zoom chat. Representatives from New Jersey, Alabama, Wisconsin, Texas and South Carolina discussed their state library agency’s activities in providing equity, diversity and inclusion services to their libraries and what they are doing in-house with staff. This was the first meeting of the group, which plans to meet on a monthly basis.

**From MLS**: The following program may be particularly helpful for anyone who will be involved in rewriting Board policies early next year:

**Upcoming Classes: Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines - Oh My!**

Strong policies ensure smooth operation of the library and provide protection for employees, management, and patrons. However not everything you need to implement will be in your policy, which is where procedures and guidelines come in. Each control has a unique role, and understanding those roles will enable libraries to create and implement effective processes. There will be time for discussion and questions during the session. (Please note: the word control is referring to the policy, procedures, and guidelines. Each establish a control that support the other but have their own processes and frameworks to not be used interchangeably.)

Objectives:

* Distinguish between policies, procedures, and guidelines
* Evaluate guidelines for best integration into policy and procedures
* Create effective and essential policies and procedures for your library
* Review and modify current documentation for effective processes for administration and staff

After these webinars, participants will have the opportunity to register for one of two policy workshop sessions that will be held at the end of 2020. Participants in this optional workshop who are struggling to write or revise policies will have a devoted online space, feedback and time for editing/writing, and resources from the instructor.

**Office move update**: We have moved to 90 Canal Street, Suite 500, and are currently unpacking. Despite the one-week delay for unpacking due to waiting for an inspection from the Boston Fire Department prior to obtaining our certificate of occupancy, all has been going relatively smoothly so far. Thank you to all managers and staff for their hard work around packing and unpacking, and a special thank you to Tracey and our Business Office staff for coordinating the move, and to Aparna, Mary Rose, and our consultant Jonathan for taking care of the IT aspects of our move.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

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

According to the Department of Revenue (DOR), tax revenues for September were down 1.4% when compared to the same month last year. Overall, through the first three months of the Fiscal Year, revenues were $7.27 billion, up one percent, or $69 million more than a year ago. Prior to the pandemic, State officials expected revenue to grow 2.8% in 2021. Fiscal Year 2020 ended with a nearly $700 million budget deficit, mostly driven by lower sales tax revenues as a result of the statewide emergency declaration and shutdown. The Administration plans to cover the deficit with carry over unexpended budgets and capital gains funds not directed to the Rainy-Day Fund.

On October 7, 2020, House and Senate Ways and Means Chairs, Representative Aaron Michlewitz and Senator Michael Rodrigues, along with Administration and Finance (ANF) Secretary, Michael Heffernan, convened a meeting of state officials and economic experts to discuss the Commonwealth’s revenue situation and budget outlook for FY 2021 and 2022. The forecasts ranged from a decline in revenue between $2 billion and $5 billion. DOR Commissioner Geoffrey Snyder projected that revenues would fall between $2.76 billion and $5.23 billion below the numbers anticipated back in January before the Governor’s original House 2 Budget Proposal, a drop of 4-12% below Fiscal 2020.

Chairman Michlewitz listed options for balancing the FY 2021 budget including:

* Cutting discretionary spending
* Raising taxes
* Utilizing the Rainy-Day Fund
* State borrowing
* Federal aid funding

State Treasurer Deborah Goldberg discussed the health of the Pension Fund and detailed initiatives offered though Federal stimulus funding. The Committee heard from several groups, including the business focused Massachusetts High Tech Council, the Center for Policy Analysis at Tufts University, the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, the Beacon Hill Institute, the Mass Budget and Policy Center, Northeastern Professor Alan Clayton Matthews, and Boston Federal Reserve Chair, Jeffrey Thompson. The speakers were in agreement that revenues would decline but could not reach consensus on the percentage of the decline. They also disagreed on how to advise Ways and Means on preparing FY 2021 and FY 2022 budget plans.

The group also discussed the need for additional stimulus funding for states and municipalities, small businesses, and individuals. They agreed that fiscal uncertainty would continue into the next budget cycle through most of FY 2022 and that Federal funding would be a critical part of the Commonwealth’s economic recovery. All speakers expected the budget outlook and a path forward would be clearer after the November 3 election.

The Governor is expected to submit a revised House 2 budget proposal by October 15, which will update the plan he proposed last January. House and Senate leadership plan to outline their budget process and timeline within the next few weeks. Without a spending plan in place by the end of October, which now appears unlikely, the House and Senate will need to pass another one-twelfth budget for November.

**Communications Update**

Communications Director Celeste Bruno started her report by highlighting a few of the year-round legislative activities. These activities are important because they help build a relationship with legislators beyond the annual legislative ask and enhance the work of the commissioners and Mary Rose Quinn.  
  
The monthly Libraries in the News, which highlights media stories about libraries, is sent to legislators. The MBLC Service Update is important because it demonstrates that MBLC has not only continued its services but in some cases expanded them during the pandemic. It is also sent to legislators. Press releases about construction awards are sent to legislators. Information about LSTA grant awards, CARES Act grant awards, and Summer Learning grants are also sent to legislators so they can see which of the communities they serve has received MBLC support. In response to the most recent email to legislators, we were pleased to see news stories from Representatives Linsky and Gregoire**.**  Also, in a typical summer, legislators would be invited to Bruins events across the Commonwealth.

In terms of summer, despite most library doors being closed to the public during the summer because of the COVID-19 pandemic, over 435,000 Massachusetts residents participated in summer reading events across the state. This total was made possible by libraries adapting to the circumstances and offering online reading tracking, virtual events, and socially distanced in-person events.

In total, there were nearly 13,000 library events that took place during June, July and August. Many libraries offered take home kits that could be picked up by participants and then used at home during an online event. Kits that were used included cooking, science, and crafts for all ages. Virtual events were supported through the newly created MBLC Online Virtual Calendar on the MBLC Public Portal. The calendar allows Massachusetts residents to see what events are happening around the state and attend them no matter which library is hosting.

Massachusetts residents also read over 1.7 million minutes as part of the first ever First Lady of the Commonwealth and Blades Summer Reading Challenge, a program that was developed by the MBLC. It is important to note that the success of the statewide summer library program is due to the MBLC’s collaboration with MLS’s Christi Farrar and April Mazza.

MBLC grants supported summer programming as well. Over 100 libraries received grant funding from the MBLC to offer the online program Beanstack. The MBLC also awarded $20,000 in Summer Learning grants. These grants support expanding the concept of summer learning in libraries beyond reading. Ms. Bruno recognized Lyndsay Forbes, MLS’s Christi Farrar and April Mazza for their work on both these grants. The grants were funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the CARES Act Funds.  
  
While the MBLC was not able to conduct Bruins visits in libraries, Bruins prizes were awarded as part of the summer library program and as part of the First Lady of the Commonwealth and Blades Summer Reading Challenge. Forty libraries received prizes that include in-game experiences like riding the Zamboni, and signed jerseys and pucks. The MBLC also provided these libraries with template news releases for use with local media. The MBLC created Bruins Player posters with local hero Charlie Coyle, outstanding reader certificates and new this year, player trading cards. It was tricky to get these to libraries—some to librarians’ homes. Here’s what one librarian said about the materials: “Bruins Posters and trading cards were completely awesome! We made "Bruins Fan Bags" for a Grab and Go/ giveway at the door when they made it to play-offs in Aug. Was a wonderful "extra" to give out during these difficult times! Big Thanks!!!

Managing patron expectations has become even more important during the pandemic. The Commonwealth Catalog or ComCat, like many services experienced a shut-down, a ramping up, and a return to mainly normal services. The communications team worked with Paul Kissman and the ComCat network group to develop graphics and messaging for every phase and to update the ComCat website.

At the end of this month voting will begin as part of Kids Cast Your Vote. With the presidential election as a backdrop, this fun campaign was designed to give kids the experience of participating in an election. They’ll vote for book-candidates or write in a candidate. The campaign will bring awareness to statewide eBooks through LEA and to draw attention to online learning opportunities through libraries as well as children and teen services.  
It’s easy for libraries to participate. They simply post the ready-made social media graphics with the # and the website. The MBLC is- hosting a zoom session on October 14 for people to ask questions about the campaign. It will also be an opportunity for librarians to discuss some of the marketing and PR challenges that they’re experiencing. A few members of the PR Committee and Anna Popp from MLS will be joining the discussion.

And lastly, as a reminder, the Boston Book Festival launched on Monday—it will run through October 25. The MBLC is featured in the Virtual Marketplace. Visit Bostonbookfestival.org

**Consideration of approval of policies for the FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries Program**

Liz Babbitt, State Aid Specialist presented the Board policies related to the FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries program: a) Extending a Grace Period for Increased Population-based Minimum Standards; b) Minimum Standards of Hours of Service for Public Libraries; c) Minimum Materials Expenditure Standard Calculation; d) Materials Expenditure and Hours Open Accommodation Policy; e) Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) Calculation; f) Determining Eligibility for a Waiver of the FY2023 Municipal Appropriation Requirement; g) The Closure of a Public Library; h) Five Year Waiver Plan Policy.

**EXTENDING A GRACE PERIOD FOR INCREASED POPULATION-BASED**

**MINIMUM STANDARDS**

1) To be eligible for the extension of a grace period for increased population-based requirements due to new population figures, the library must:

1. be in compliance with or receive a waiver of the FY2023 Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MGL, c.78, s.19A).

b. meet the other minimum library standards required for receipt of FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries (MGL, c.78, s.19B):

*(1)* *“be open to all residents of the commonwealth,*”

*(2)* *“make no charge for normal library services*,”

*(6)* *“lend books to other libraries in the commonwealth and extend privileges to the holders of cards issued by other public libraries in the commonwealth on a reciprocal basis.*”

2) If a municipality is in a different population group according to the population estimates mandated by the General Court for use with the FY2023 State Aid program, it is eligible for a grace period of up to three years to meet the increased standard for hours open or materials expenditure. This grace period is for the FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries grant round. Compliance for State Aid to Public Libraries in the FY2023 grant round is measured by library performance in FY2022. To be eligible for this grace period the library must be meeting the prior lower standard.

3) A library director whose educational requirement is now “graduation with a degree from an approved library school” because the population of his or her community has gone above 10,000 will be exempt (*grandfathered*) from the increased requirement. However, any work in progress by the director on prior educational/professional requirements of the Basic Library Techniques must be completed within the previously established time limits. When a *grandfathered* director leaves the library, his or her replacement must meet the changed requirement at the time of appointment as library director.

**Initial Approval of Policy: January 9, 1997**

**FY2023 Approval Date: October 8, 2020**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

**MINIMUM STANDARDS OF HOURS OF SERVICE FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

Minimum Hours Open Per Week:

In keeping with the regulation that "library service should be available to the community a minimum number of hours per week," (605 CMR 4.0) the minimum hours requirement will apply during each week of the compliance period. To meet the requirement, a public library must be open the required hours, days and evenings during each week of the compliance period.

Compliance Period

The compliance period will be defined as 38 consecutive weeks per year. The 38 weeks may span two fiscal years if compliance includes summer months.

Massachusetts Legal Holidays:

Libraries may close on Massachusetts legal holidays and local municipal holidays, and not affect their compliance with the hours of service standards.

**Initial Approval of Policy: February 4, 1993**

**Revision of Definition: March 22, 2017**

**FY2023 Approval Date: October 8, 2020**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

**MINIMUM MATERIALS EXPENDITURE STANDARD CALCULATION**

The minimum materials expenditure standard is computed for all municipalities using the amount appropriated by the municipality to the library for operations and the percentage requirement as stated in regulation. (MGL, c.78, s.19B; 605 CMR 4.01(5))

Operating expenditures include:

1. Personnel

*Salaries only.*

2. Library Materials

*The cost of books, serials, audio materials, electronic, and other non-print materials that circulate to library patrons or are used by library patrons within the library. Included are online costs, (including money paid to networks for electronic content), and museum passes. Supplies used to prepare library materials for circulation are not included (e.g. bar codes, book pockets, etc.) and the monetary value of donated books may not be included.*

*Up to 10% of the materials expenditure requirement may be used to purchase hardware for direct patron use. This includes but is not limited to hard drives, laptops, peripherals (mouse, keyboard, etc.), adaptive technology, and scanners.*

3. Other Operating Expenditures

*The current and recurrent costs necessary to support the provision of library services. These include expenditures made by the library that are not capital, personnel, or for library materials. Other operating expenditures include building maintenance, energy and utilities, network membership, supplies, repair or replacement of existing furnishing and equipment, and other miscellaneous expenditures.*

Please note: Only materials that circulate to all residents of municipalities certified for State Aid to Public Libraries count toward meeting the Minimum Materials Expenditure Standard unless there are special circumstances, such as a stipulation in a vendor contract or a Trust that is designated for special purposes.

**Initial Approval of Policy: January 9, 1997**

**Revision of Policy: October 3, 2019**

**FY2023 Initial Approval Date: October 8, 2020**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

**MATERIALS EXPENDITURE AND HOURS OPEN ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

The Board of Library Commissioners recognizes the necessity of continuing the policy of accommodation of the standards of the State Aid to Public Libraries program. This policy for the accommodation of the Materials Expenditure and the Hours Open standards seeks to certify as many municipalities as possible while still reinforcing the principles of library service represented by the minimum standards of public library service.

A municipality will receive certification for FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries if it:

meets the FY2023 Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR), or receives a waiver of the FY2023 MAR,

meets the materials expenditure and hours open standard at either a full (100%), or mid-level (90%), meets all other statutory and regulatory requirements for State Aid to Public Libraries as contained in 605 CMR 4.01.

**NOTE: Prior to FY2020, accommodation of the Materials Expenditure or the Hours Open standards included a minimum level of compliance (80%). Municipalities who received an accommodation at the minimum level (80%) in FY2019 (hours open in FY2018 reported in FY2019.) can remain at that level until FY2023 (hours open in FY2022 to be reported in FY2023.) A reduction of 12.5% for each level of accommodation shall still be in effect. The 80% level for accommodation for materials is no longer in effect since all municipalities are currently at 90% or higher.**

State Aid to Public Libraries grants will be awarded to all certified municipalities.

A municipality may meet a reduced standard of as low as 90% of the materials expenditure and hours open requirement contained in regulation (605 CMR 4.01), while continuing to remain certified and receive State Aid to Public Libraries. Award amounts will be unchanged for municipalities meeting 100% of both standards.

Awards for municipalities meeting adjusted standards will be reduced according to compliance with reduced standard, and will be no less than 75% of the full award for meeting the minimum (90%) of both standards. Each standard that is met at a lower level will result in a 12.5% reduction to the full award for each level of reduction. Awards may be made in amounts of; 100%, 87.5%, 75%. If funds remain at the end of the FY2023 grant round, no additional award of State Aid to Public Libraries will be made to a municipality using this policy of accommodation.

Example: Library A

Library A has a population of 17,000 and is meeting its MAR. It is required to be open 50 hours each week and expend 15% of its municipal appropriation on materials. It was only open 46 hours and spent 14% on library materials, mid-level compliance for both standards. As a result, the FY2023 State Aid award will be reduced to 75% of the Cherry Sheet total.

**Initial Approval of Policy: April 3, 2003**

**FY2023 Approval Date: October 8, 2020**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

**Adjusted Awards**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Award Amount** | **Level of Compliance with Materials Expenditure Requirement and Hours Open** **Standards** |
| **100%** | **Full** (100%) compliance with both standards. |
| **87.5%** | **Full** (100%) compliance with onestandard and **Mid-level** (90%) compliance with the otherstandard. |
| **75%** | **Mid-Level** (90%) compliance with both standards. |

**Materials Expenditure Requirement**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Population Group** | **Full**  **Compliance**  **(100%)** | **Mid-Level**  **Compliance**  **(90%)** |
| Under 2,000 | 20.00% | 18.00% |
| 2 – 4,999 | 19.50% | 17.55% |
| 5 - 9,999 | 19.00% | 17.00% |
| 10 - 14,999 | 16.00% | 14.40% |
| 15 - 24,999 | 15.00% | 13.50% |
| 25 - 49,999 | 13.00% | 11.70% |
| over 50,000 | 12.00% | 10.80% |

**Hours Open Requirement**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Population Group** | **Full Compliance (100%)** | **Mid-Level Compliance (90%)** |
| Under 2,000 | 10 hours, including some evening | 9 hours, including some evening |
| 2 - 4,999 | 15 hours, including some evening | 13.50 hours, including some evening |
| 5 - 9,999 | 25 hours, including some evening | 22.50 hours, including some evening |
| 10 - 14,999 | 40 hours, 5 days, including some evening | 36 hours, 4 days, including some evening |
| 15 - 24,999 | 50 hours, 5 days, including some evening | 45 hours, 4 days, including some evening |
| 25 – 49,999 | 59 hours, 6 days, including some evening | 53 hours, 5 days, including some evening |
| over 50,000 | 63 hours, 6 days, including some evening | 57 hours, 5 days. Including some evening |

**MUNICIPAL APPROPRIATION REQUIREMENT CALCULATION**

The Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) for each award year is computed using figures for the three prior fiscal years. For each of those three years that a municipality received a State Aid to Public Libraries award, the figure used will be either the MAR or Total Appropriated Municipal Income, (TAMI), whichever is higher. If the municipality was not certified for State Aid to Public Libraries in any year, the actual TAMI for that year will be used.

For the **FY2023** grant round:

The **FY2020** figure will be either the **FY2020 MAR** or the **FY2020 TAMI**, whichever is **higher**. If the municipality was not certified for State Aid to Public Libraries in FY2020, the actual final FY2020 TAMI will be used.

The **FY2021** figure will be either the **FY2021 MAR** or the **FY2021 TAMI**, whichever is **higher**. If the municipality was not certified for State Aid to Public Libraries in FY2021, the actual final FY2021 TAMI will be used.

The **FY2022** figure will be either the **FY2022 MAR** or the **FY2022 TAMI**, whichever is **higher**. If the municipality was not certified for State Aid to Public Libraries in FY2022, the actual final FY2022 TAMI will be used.

FY2023 Municipal Appropriation Requirement Calculation:

(FY2020 + FY2021 + FY2022) / 3 = average of three years

average x 1.025 = FY2023 MAR (average of three years plus 2.5 %)

**Initial Approval of Policy: August 8, 1991**

**FY2023 Approval Date: October 8, 2020**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

**DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR A WAIVER OF THE FY2023 MUNICIPAL APPROPRIATION REQUIREMENT (MAR)**

The Board of Library Commissioners will consider requests for waivers of the FY2023 Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) from municipalities that demonstrate fiscal hardship. Requests for waivers must include the following documentation and must be received by the MBLC State Aid and Data Coordination Unit **with a postmark no later than October 7, 2022:**

1. a signed *Petition for Waiver of the FY2023 Municipal Appropriation Requirement.*

**And…with a postmark no later than November 4, 2022:**

**For Municipalities applying for a waiver of the FY2023 MAR that met full requirements (no waiver) of the FY2022 MAR):**

2. a completed *FY2022/FY2023 Total Municipal Operating Budget Worksheet*, and

3. supporting municipal budget document(s) (such as copies of warrant articles or summary pages from the municipal budget), listing for FY2022 and FY2023 both the total operating and departmental budgets for the municipality,

4. a statement from a senior municipal official:

a. citing the fiscal hardship surrounding the municipality’s inability to meet the FY2023 MAR,

b. explaining the municipality's FY2023 budget process regarding the library,

c. providing evidence that any reduction to the library budget is not disproportionate relative to changes in other municipal departments and the overall municipal budget.

5. a cover letter from the library director and trustee chair, with enclosures if appropriate, explaining the library's FY2023 budget process and reasons why the community did not comply with the FY2023 MAR. (Examples of enclosures include: narratives from municipal officials describing the fiscal situation, text of referenda.)

**For Municipalities that received a waiver of the FY2022 MAR, in addition to documents 2-5 as listed above:**

6. Five Year MAR Waiver Plan (Year Two) or update (Year Three) written by a senior municipal official in conjunction with library director and trustees.

**NOTE: Municipalities are limited to 5 consecutive fiscal years as a waiver applicant. Commissioners have the discretion to request that any waiver applicant present their petition in person.**

**The Waiver Review Process**

According to Massachusetts General Laws, c.78, s19A:

No city or town shall receive any money under this section in any year when the appropriation of said city or town for free public library services is below an amount equal to the average of its appropriation for free public library service for the three years immediately preceding, increased by two and one‑half per cent of said average. Said board may, upon petition of a community, waive aforesaid requirement upon demonstration of fiscal hardship.

The number of waivers available for FY2023 will not be determined until the budget language is final for FY2023.

1. Petitions for a waiver will be reviewed by the Board of Library Commissioners at their January 2023 meeting.

2. All petitioners for a waiver determined to have a disproportionate cut to their budget must present their petition in person at the January 2023 meeting.

3. All petitioners for a waiver who received a disproportionate cut in the prior fiscal year must present their petition in person at the January 2023 meeting.

4. The Board will review FY2023 MAR Waiver Petitions based on:

a. evidence of municipal fiscal hardship, and

b. demonstration by the municipality that the library’s budget was not disproportionately reduced.

5. The Board will vote on the petitions for waivers of the FY2023 MAR at their February 2023 meeting.

6. The Board will hear any appeals of the denial of an FY2023 MAR waiver at their March 2023 meeting.

7. The Board will act on any appeal at their April 2023 meeting.

8. The FY2023 State Aid to Public Library Program officially concludes at the conclusion of the April 2023 Board of Library Commissioners meeting.

**Initial Approval of Policy: February 7, 2002**

**Revision to the Policy: October 3, 2019**

**FY2023 Approval Date: October 8, 2020**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

**THE CLOSURE OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners considers any municipality that closes its main public library or ceases offering library service to the public for any reason other than the undertaking of a project to improve library services (such as construction, automation preparation or inventory) or the occurrence of a natural catastrophe (including a limited emergency closing due to illness or death) to be, as of the date of that termination of service, no longer a certified participant in the State Aid to Public Libraries program.

The Commissioners will confirm the municipality's loss of certification at their next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Once the municipality has lost certification, it cannot be recertified as meeting the minimum standards of public library service for State Aid to Public Libraries (as set forth in MGL c.78, s. 19A and 19B, 605 CMR 4.0, and current budget language) until the municipality's library has been meeting the standards for one complete fiscal year (July 1 through June 30) and proper application for State Aid to Public Libraries is made to the Board of Library Commissioners.

**Initial Approval of Policy: March 5, 1993**

**FY2023 Approval Date: October 8, 2020**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

**FIVE YEAR MAR WAIVER PLAN POLICY**

The Board of Library Commissioners recognizes that municipalities that demonstrate fiscal hardship may need to request a waiver of the FY2023 Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR). Requests for waivers must include documentation as outlined in the *DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR A WAIVER OF THE FY2023 MUNICIPAL APPROPRIATION REQUIREMENT (MAR)* policy.

**NOTE: Municipalities are limited to 5 consecutive fiscal years as a waiver applicant. Commissioners have the discretion to request that any waiver applicant present their petition in person.**

For Municipalities that received a waiver of the FY2022 MAR (Year One), and are petitioning for a waiver of the FY2023 MAR (Year Two), a plan must be submitted, written by a senior municipal official in conjunction with the library’s director and trustees. This plan outlines the steps to be made in FY2023 (and for the next three fiscal years) which will bring the municipality’s library appropriation back to the required level of funding, the MAR.

For Municipalities that received a waiver of the FY2021 MAR (Year One), and FY2022 (Year Two) and are petitioning for a waiver of the FY2023 MAR (Year Three), an update to the plan created in Year Two must be submitted, written by a senior municipal official in conjunction with the library’s director and trustees. This update reviews the steps that were made in FY2022 (and outlines the steps to be made for the next two fiscal years which will bring the municipality’s library appropriation back to the required level of funding, the MAR.)

For Municipalities that received a waiver of the FY2022 MAR with reservation, i.e. the library’s budget was DISPROPORTIONATELY CUT in FY2022, and are petitioning for a waiver of the FY2023 MAR, a plan or update as described above must be submitted, written by a senior municipal official in conjunction with the library’s director and trustees, and IN ADDITION, they must present their petition in person at the Board of Library Commissioners meeting in January, 2023.

**Initial Approval of Policy: October 4, 2018**

**Revision to the Policy: October3, 2019**

**FY2023 Approval Date: October 8, 2020**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

Board Chair Cluggish requested a motion from the Commissioners to read all motions of the eight policies as a whole.

Commissioner Resnick moved and Commissioner Kronholm seconded that that Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners votes all State Aid to Public Libraries Policies be read as one motion by the Chair, Mary Ann Cluggish.

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

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

1. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Extending a Grace Period for Increased Population-Based Minimum Standards.
2. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Minimum Standards of Hours of Service for Public Libraries.
3. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Minimum Materials Expenditure Standard Calculation.
4. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Materials Expenditure and Hours Open Accommodation Policy.
5. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Municipal Appropriation Requirement Calculation.
6. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Determining Eligibility for a Waiver of the FY2023 Municipal Appropriation Requirement.
7. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: The Closure of a Public Library.
8. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2023 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Five Year Waiver Plan Policy.

Commissioner Kronholm moved and Commissioner Abraham seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt the eight State Aid to Public Libraries Policies for FY2023 as presented in agenda item 7.

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

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**Consideration of appointments to the State Advisory Council on Libraries (SACL)**

Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development presented the appointments to the Board.

The State Advisory Council on Libraries (SACL) is an advisory group appointed by the Board, whose purpose is to involve libraries and library users throughout the Commonwealth in policy decisions regarding implementation of Library Services and Technology Act. As part of this responsibility, SACL members review and evaluate grant applications and make funding recommendations to the Board of Library Commissioners.

To insure input from all types of libraries, SACL consists of 16 members with representation from public, academic, school, special, and institution libraries, as well as libraries serving the blind and physically handicapped. In addition, five members of the council represent users of all types of libraries.

Special thanks to Megan Allen, Anne Gancarz, Beth Linker, Patricia O’Leary, and Karen Traub who all just completed their terms on SACL.

New Appointments:

* Library user: Chris Chanyasulkit, Brookline
* Library representative serving traditionally under-represented populations: James Gleason, Deputy Director, Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library
* Library user: Dominic Paulo, Weymouth
* Public librarian represented serving a community of 50,000 plus: Jessica Vilas Novas, Library Director, Lawrence Public Library

Commissioner Perille moved and Commissioner Ball seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners appoints Chris Chanyasulkit, Brookline and Dominic Paulo, Weymouth representing library users; James Gleason, Deputy Director, Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library representative serving traditionally under-represented populations; Jessica Vilas Novas, Library Director, Lawrence Public Library Public librarian represented serving a community of 50,000 plus, to a three year term on SACL starting on October 8, 2020 ending September 30, 2023.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Abraham- YES | Commissioner DeBole- YES | Commissioner Ochsenbein- Absent |
| 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 partial grant awards under the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP)**

Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist presented to the Commissioners a Provisional Grant Award for the Boston Public Library, Roxbury (formerly Dudley) Branch and the Cambridge Public Library, Valente Branch. Ms. Stara stated that Boston and Cambridge are eligible for partial payment under 605 CMR 6.10(5), which states: In order to meet spending targets established in the five-year capital plan, the Board may offer a provisional grant award to a project further down the Waiting List if that project already has local funding in place or if that project is already under construction. Boston Public Library, Roxbury Branch and Cambridge Public Library, Valente Branch are both being recommended to receive a partial grant award.

Commissioner Perille moved and Commissioner Madell seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves a partial provisional grant award totaling $281,325 to the Boston Public Library, Roxbury (formerly Dudley) Branch construction project. The date by which the City of Boston must sign a contract with the MBLC is November 30, 2020.

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

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

Commissioner Perille moved and Commissioner Kronholm seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves a partial provisional grant award totaling $281,324 to the Cambridge Public Library, Valente Branch construction project. The date by which the City of Cambridge must sign a contract with the MBLC is November 30, 2020.

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

**Board voted unanimous approval.**

**Report from the Massachusetts Library System**

Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director presented the following report:

I have begun conducting socially distanced site visits with our members, in an effort to better support them as they navigate through the pandemic. I’ve enjoyed seeing the changes they have made to the regular processes in an effort to serve their communities safely. It’s been difficult to go to visit our schools, specials, and academics, but I’m in touch with representatives from these types as well to extend the offer to visit either in person or virtually. Pictures and “did you know” facts are posted after each visit on my Twitter account (@sarahsogigian) and retweeted to the MLS account (@masslibsystem).

August site visits:

Morrill Memorial Library, Norwood

Westborough Public Library

Lawrence Library, Pepperell

Planned September site visits:

Thomas Crane Library, Quincy

Goodnow Library, Sudbury

Stoneham Public Library (with Rob Favini, MBLC)

Belmont Public Library (virtual visit)

Charlotte Canelli, Director of the Morrill Memorial Library, sent this message out to the MLS-Directors listserv about my visit:

**From:** <mls-pubdir-discussion-request@mblc.state.ma.us> on behalf of Charlotte Canelli <CCanelli@minlib.net>

**Reply-To:** Charlotte Canelli <ccanelli@minlib.net>

**Date:** Thursday, August 27, 2020 at 10:05 AM

**To:** "mls-pubdir-discussion@mblc.state.ma.us" <mls-pubdir-discussion@mblc.state.ma.us>

**Subject:** [mls-pubdir-discussion] Good Morning

Dear Directors,

Sarah Sogigian, MLS Executive Director, visited me yesterday here at the Morrill Memorial Library in Norwood. We took a socially-distanced tour of our library operations since we “reopened." She also got a chance to see how our staff are holding up in this strange time of online programming, curbside contactless pick-up (afternoons), and very limited browsing/computer use (mornings.) We chatted about MLS and the importance of delivery to Norwood's patrons, especially now that they are staying close to home. We also talked about professional development and networking needs now that our staff is all working together in the building.

Sarah is interested and enthusiastic about reaching out to Massachusetts directors across the state and learning from them what MLS can do to ease the burden of the pandemic on Massachusetts Libraries and their communities. We know we are looking at a year when library conferences and meetings will be online without the personal contact with our colleagues that we all crave. NELA, ALA MidWinter, MLA, etc. have announced that their conferences will be remote going forward into 2021.

It was great to see masked Sarah in person. We even got a chance to walk to Norwood's Town Common for Daddy's Dairy ice cream and continue our conversation there outside and safely-distant.

I hope you'll invite Sarah to your library for a visit, if that is within your comfort range, while we figure out our new normal and the future of our library services.

Charlotte

--

Charlotte Canelli, MLS, CPLA

Library Director, Morrill Memorial Library

Norwood, MA 02062

I’ve also been contacted to be interviewed/provide info for a few news stories:  
  
[**Disinfectant, Gloves And Quarantined Books: How Massachusetts Libraries Are Coping As They Slowly Reopen**](https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2020/07/31/disinfectant-gloves-and-quarantined-books-how-massachusetts-libraries-are-coping-as-they-slowly-reopen)

# ['Libraries are about being together.' So what now?: As public health crisis drags on, they're rewriting the rule books](https://search.proquest.com/bostonglobe/docview/2434324610/EA2D69AB48C641E2PQ/5?accountid=51124)

**MLS Strategic Planning Update**

August was a busy month for strategic planning. Our committee worked through the week of August 10 to prioritize, discuss, and make recommendations to our planning consultant, Stephanie Chase. Stephanie and I hosted our second round of virtual town halls with members. Staff also continued to conduct 1 on 1 interviews with staff at members libraries and partner organizations. Stephanie will present a draft of our plan at our Sept Board meeting.

**New and Returning Members**

New Librarians/ Members

Monthly Update- August 2020

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Librarian Name** | **Library** | **Town/ City** | **Email** |
| Julie Turner | Thoreau Elementary School Library | Concord | juturner@concordps.org |
| Martha Bradford | Priest Street School Library | Leominster | Martha.bradford@leominsterschools.org |
| Mary Beth Smith | Collins Middle School, Mary A. Manning Learning Center | Salem | [msmith@salemk12.org](mailto:msmith@salemk12.org) |
|  |  |  |  |
| This color print= new members | | | |
| This color print= new librarians | | | |
| This color print= returning schools | | | |
| This color print= temp. librarian | | | |

**Consulting and Training Services report**

Terry McQuown, Consulting and Training Services Director

MLS consultants are busy preparing for their Fall continuing education classes. All classes will be held online. Classes will mostly begin in October, with topics including:

* Civic engagement
* Job-seeker resources and programs
* Policies, procedures and guidelines
* Spotlight on literature
* Using connected learning for teen programs and services
* Improving library marketing

During the month of August, we offered the following live virtual programs:

* The Art of Employee Communication: 8/31 (17 attendees)
* Health Sciences & Special Librarians Check-In: 8/20 (8 attendees)
* Virtual Check-In: Small Libraries: 8/14 (17 attendees)
* Virtual Check-In: Youth Services: 8/6 (37 attendees)

Our LibGuides continued to receive a large number of views in August:

* [Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Massachusetts Libraries](about:blank) 7822 August views [Climate Preparedness Week 2020](about:blank) 829 August views
* [The Art of Employee Communication](about:blank) 815 August views
* [Anti-Racism for School & Youth Services Librarians](about:blank) 761 August views
* [Social Justice and Libraries](about:blank) 459 August views

Similarly, our recorded webinars on Vimeo received significant use during August:

* 1106 August views
* 188 August finishes

Other significant activities coming up in September:

* MLS signed up as a Community Partner for National Voter Registration Day (9/22). Michelle Eberle is planning a webinar with speakers from National Voter Registration Day, the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s Office, and a couple librarians to highlight the opportunity for libraries to get involved with National Voter Registration Day. This is a non-partisan civic holiday celebrating our democracy.  ALA is also a partner.
* MLS is partnering with Communities Responding to Extreme Weather and the Blue Marble Librarians to develop a social media toolkit to promote key virtual events for Climate Preparedness Week (9/24 – 9/30).  There are five key events with a focus on how climate resilience is social resilience.  There are also several events that address climate resilience with a focus on racial justice.  The kick off event is a discussion with Eric Klinenberg, author of *Palaces of the People* and *Heatwaves*, who coined the term “social resilience.”  About 40 libraries across Massachusetts are registered to partner with CREW on the virtual programs or host their own programs.  Michelle Eberle is coordinating MLS support for this project.

Mark your calendar for these upcoming events:

* Teen Summit: 10/2
* Small Library Forum: 11/17 – 11/18 (supported by a grant from the Manton Foundation)

**Resource Sharing Report**

Scott Kehoe, Library Resources Director

As always, my appreciation to the Resource Sharing and IT staff. Morale is holding steady as we saw an increase in activity from K-12 schools and academics in August, prepping for the coming school year. The following statistics and commentary below illustrate the hard work of the Library Resources staff.

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

**2020 vs 2019: 1 March – 31 August**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Support Area:* | *2020* | *2019* |
| Interlibrary Loan | 2,444 | 3,819 |
| Commonwealth eBooks | 625 | 257 |
| State-wide Databases | 195 | 130 |
| MassCat | 315 | 97 |

* **Interlibrary Loan (ILL)** – August was the first full month of the ILL team physically processing items at the Marlborough office. ILL continues to come back in fits and starts in Mass., the United States, and internationally. MLS member libraries have been exceedingly generous with their gratitude to be able to at least place requests and supportive of the ILL staff efforts to find lenders. As stated previously will be the norm for the foreseeable future. The ILL staff will be hosting an open “check in” webinar for library staff with questions or to just touch base with MLS staff and colleagues across the state. We will continue to run these through the coming year in lieu of on-site ILL trainings.
* **Commonwealth eBooks (CEC)** – As evidenced by the above statistics, a noticeable uptick in K-12 school queries to join CEC in August, most members indicating that they need to do this now to use currently available school budget monies.
* **Databases** - Still seeing considerably more support tickets helping libraries with online access issues compared with the same time period in 2019. Gale offered six well attended online workshops in August.
* **MassCat** –Eight of fifty member libraries are open for network sharing and on state-wide Delivery. Historically the last week of August starts the busiest time of year for MassCat as its school members return. This year, given the delayed openings/remote-starts, the normal avalanche of schools requesting to have student dates uploaded/updated and be turned back on, has not yet occurred, but bracing for September. I have also enlisted our newest Resource Sharing Assistant, Kate Bowen, to help with uploading school student data into the MassCat system. Most communication thus far with school members has been about their re-opening plans and availability.

**Business/HR Report**

Betsy Meaden, Business and HR Director

* Amanda Fauver, Membership/BT manager applied for a CARES Grant supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, administered by the MBLC, and received $3,000. The money will be used for a series of virtual programs related to job searching and career development. The virtual workshops will be free and presented under the BiblioTemps® service.
* MLS conducts an annual audit of our financials, usually in August. The Audit has been completed for this year and has been presented to our Executive Board. The annual audit is part of our fiduciary responsibility. No, it’s not connected to our Plan of Service…I will present that, along with the budget to the Commissioners at their December meeting that they vote on it in January

**Report from the Library for the Commonwealth**

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

**Digital Commonwealth**

Maintain and improve the statewide digital repository and collections website that provides 24/7 access for residents of the Commonwealth to the diverse, digitized collections of the state’s cultural institutions (www.digitalcommonwealth.org). Continue to promote and provide digitization to statewide cultural heritage partners.

**Digital Commonwealth Repository**

Goal 1: Continue to enhance the functionality of a statewide digital repository that stores and manages digitized collections.

Recent enhancements to the repository system include the ability to display video content via an embedded viewer, and the addition of links to help users identify public domain and Creative Commons-licensed images that can be downloaded and used for educational or research purposes.

Goal 2: Complete move to cloud storage to improve capacity to ingest large amounts of content such as historic video footage and newspapers.

Our main development focus has been on a complete rebuild of the back-end repository infrastructure to provide functionality to ingest, display, and manage files placed in cloud storage. This process is still underway; we anticipate the system will be ready by early 2021. We have already begun migrating some file assets and adjusting ingest workflows to use cloud storage; to date, approximately 29.3 TB of content has been moved to the cloud.

**Collections Site Development**

Goal 1: Configuration and implementation of online historic newspaper repository to compliment Digital Commonwealth.

This has largely been on hold due to the City’s hiring freeze. The new position that was created to help support this development has not been approved for filling. Waiting for a clearer picture from the state about the budget, past their current month-to-month status, before we decide to prioritize the position for approval with the City.

**Digitization and Metadata Consultation**

Goal 1: Continue to provide services to the Commonwealth’s cultural and historical organizations. These services include: image capture (scanning), workflow and metadata consultation, site visits, collection assessments, and delivery of materials to and from the BPL.

We have been able to continue work on collections that were already in-house at the time of the shutdown. These include the Sacco and Vanzetti case file from the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, a file migration from the American Antiquarian Society, and a large collection of photographic negatives from the Newburyport Historical Society. Outside of these collections, we have not been able to move forward with much else due to delivery and pick up restrictions. The metadata team has continued to work on a few BPL projects and corrections and enhancements to Digital Commonwealth descriptive records. The LFC- funded contracted photographers were shifted to a project with the Boston Arts Commission. They were deployed across the City to document public art from both the BAC database and any works that were more spontaneously created as responses to recent events of social equity, racial injustice, and the pandemic.

Goal 2: Crafting cooperative agreements with partners capable of supporting large scale, comprehensive digitization processes. Such as, explore potential collaboration with Commonwealth of Massachusetts departments to expand and improve access to searchable online government documents.

This lost some momentum as priorities from potential partners were readjusted due to the pandemic. Nothing new to present at this time.

Goal 3: Improve outreach to organizations not heavily represented in Digital Commonwealth, such as the arts and community organizations.

We have had some preliminary, productive conversations with the Boston MFA where we discussed both digitizing their own collections and leveraging their strong network to raise awareness of our program in other Massachusetts museums. The pandemic has hampered our ability to make any significant headway, however.

**Output Measures Q1**

Track and analyze:

# of item views for digital collections: 535,478

# of visitors to digitalcommonwealth.org: 212,467

# of items added: 24,341

# of new institutions added: 1

# of titles and pages added (for newspapers): 0 (\*nothing added to repository, see note below)

# of applications received: 16

# of site visits: 0 (Communicating remotely. Considering virtual “site” visits.)

\*We've been actively digitizing and uploading The Liberator and antebellum abolitionist newspapers from the BPL's collection. We're also working on some small-scale projects. We're paying to have a chunk of the Wayland Town Crier microfilmed. We are also paying to have a copy made of the Mashpee Enterprise so it can be sent on to My Heritage for imaging. Our ability to move forward with newspapers being added to DC is tied together with update above [Collections Site Development, Goal 1] and hiring of a developer specific to this project.

**Statewide Reference & Research**

Provide residents of the Commonwealth with reference and research resources both in person and through a variety of remote options.

**Supplemental & Remote Reference Services**

Goal 1: Continue to extend reference services to residents of the Commonwealth through online subject guides, the expertise of subject specialists, and access to subscription research and educational online resources, and remote telephone/email/chat assistance.

This is ongoing. Output measures can be found below. We have launched chat reference, during defined hours, using the LibChat platform.

**Online Research & Educational Resources**

Goal 1: Continue to evaluate and enhance collections of online research and educational resources, and additional online reference services.

Added a handful of new online resources, such as Headspace, as well educational resources for youth:

* Scholastic BookFlix (BookFlix is a literacy resource that pairs interactive, fictional video storybooks with related nonfiction eBooks for kids 3-9 years old.)
* Scholastic Teachables (An online hub of 30,000 ready-to-use printable learning resources for every subject, pre-K to 6th grade.)
* MakeMake (MakeMake has 300 Spanish-language eBooks for children. The collection includes picture books, read-along books and interactive books. The interface and search are also in Spanish.)

**Education & Outreach**

Goal 1: Continue to actively promote statewide resources to residents of Massachusetts.

In partnership with MLS, a webinar about LFC services is scheduled for Q2.

**Output Measures Q1**

Telephone: 3,970

Email: 4,687

Chat: 140

# of views of online subject guides: 22,987

# of presentations to libraries and at library conferences per year: 0, to date

**Education & Civic Engagement**

Offering programs and services for civic engagement, workforce development, and personal success through online and in person courses.

**Instruction**

Goal 1: Creation of Media Literacy and Journalism Librarian to help combat “fake news.”

Interviews have been completed and we hope to bring someone on soon. This is not a LFC funded position, however they will be another resource as a Subject Specialist and tasked with creating and curating information about Media Literacy that we hope will also be of use statewide.

Goal 2: BPL staff will develop online courses in collaboration with P2PU using collections and resources of local interest, with Massachusetts residents in mind, and make them available through an online platform developed by BPL and P2PU.Unfortunately, this goal will not be completed this Fiscal Year. We can review feasibility for next year. The Community Learning Department, who was charged with spearheading this initiative has had to reprioritize work and staff capacity based on changing needs and priorities in response to COVID-19 pandemic. We had allocated $10,000 in the budget to develop an online platform with P2PU for this work, but that money will now be redirected.

**Civic Engagement**

Goal 1: Train Massachusetts librarians on hosting facilitated conversations on issues that can be divisive, based on our work with the non- profit, Living Room Conversations.

This goal is facing similar challenges based on limitations listed above. We are considering options for scaled back work in this area in Q3/Q4, perhaps offering an online event or webinar with folks at Living Room Conversations in advance of National Week of Conversation, Spring 2021.

**Workforce Development**

Goal 1: Acquire online resources for developing soft skills and achieving personal success.

We had originally planned on acquiring Gale’s Peterson’s Career Prep, however the database Career Transitions, that was funded by the MBLC/MLS program was discontinued and replaced with Peterson’s. We will continue to evaluate other relevant online resources.

Goal 2: Offer in person workshops on workforce development, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy through the Kirstein Business Library & Innovation Center (KBLIC).

Due to restrictions in operations during COVID-19 pandemic, we have not been offering in person workshops. However, KBLIC has been offering online workshops with live attendees and also uploading these events to YouTube allowing for later viewing. In Q1 they have offered 68 programs in 5 key programmatically themed areas, with 2,515 attendees or YouTube views. See full breakout in Outputs section below.

**Output Measures Q1**

# of Learning Circles using curriculum developed by BPL: 0

# of Living Room Conversation trainings offered to librarians: 0

# of online job, career, skill- building resources: 18, (including Business Library specific)

# of workshops/attendees or YouTube Views of KBLIC programs:

Entrepreneurship & Business: 19/117

Financial Literacy: 4/166

Nonprofits & Philanthropy: 13/39

Software for Creatives: 16/1944

Workforce Development: 16/249

**Statewide Collection Development & Access**

To provide residents of the Commonwealth access to print, online, downloadable, and streaming collections not available in their local libraries.

**Print & Online Collections**

Goal 1: Use Collection HQ, a collection maintenance and analysis tool, to discover trends in patron usage, and analyze collection turnover and library stock levels. Streamline workflows and selection lists for staff to extend life and circulation of items already in our collection.

This is ongoing.

**Collections Discovery**

Goal 1: Promote new BPL catalog App which will make it easier for patrons to manage their library accounts.

BPL to Go App was launched mid-March, which happened to coincide with COVID-19 closure. See Output Measure listed below.

**Collection Access**

Goal 1: Continue to digitize BPL’s own collections based on curatorial selection and individual

user demand.

This is ongoing but because of limited staffing it has not been moving forward as much as it could be, or compared to normal capacity.

Goal 2: Continue retro-conversion pilot to create MARC records for uncatalogued materials in closed stacks.

Due to shutdown, this work was halted between March and June. We have since resumed and anticipate another 4-6 month of work before we have a final set of metrics to base a more comprehensive project plan on.

Goal 3: Work with Internet Archive to expand our participation in their controlled digital lending (CDL) program, which allows libraries to digitize a physical book and then lend it out through a “own one, loan one” model, therefore creating greater access to copyrighted materials owned by Boston Public Library.

This is ongoing. We are steadily adding more titles to the CDL program via our deaccessioning workflow and active digitization of the Houghton Mifflin collection. Last spring, we helped coordinate the creation of hyperlinked reading lists for any Massachusetts academic library who were able to share their course reserve ISBNs. This resulted in students being able to access several items that would have been otherwise inaccessible to them because of the shutdown. This activity inspired the Internet Archive to create the National Emergency Library where users were able to access in-copyright volumes without wait queues for a period of time.

**Output Measures**

# of checkouts and usage distribution of e-content platforms, such as:

OverDrive: 853,594

Hoopla: 86,701

RBDigital Audio: 11,625

\*acquired by company operating OverDrive. As of September 1, audiobook content merged to OverDrive

RBDigital eMagazines: 37,961

Kanopy: 46,066

# of App downloads and usage data (Reporting since launch 3/17/2020 through 9/30/2020) App Units: 5,550

The number of first-time app downloads made on the App Store

Sessions per Active Device (weekly average): 4.81

The number of times the app has been used for at least two seconds. Only users who opt to share data.

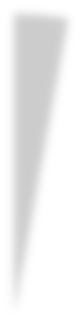
Impressions: 23,626

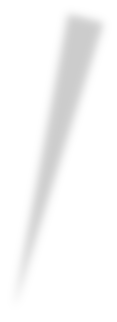
The number of times your app was viewed in the Featured, Categories, Top Charts, and Search sections of the App Store.

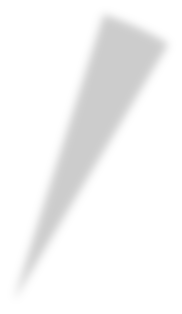
# of active e-cards: 132,461 (see chart below for distribution by MA County)

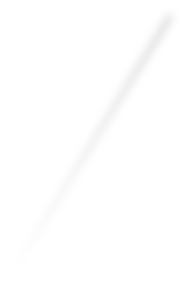
Analyze count of materials in the closed stacks vs the amount of time taken to create new MARC records to assist in creating scope for a capital project to complete the retro conversion of Boston Public Library’s uncatalogued materials.

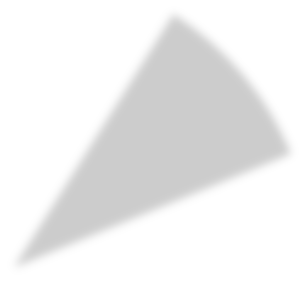
We have completed an exact item count of all old BPL call #s (non-periodical) and continue to monitor the production rates of the staff working on this. As mentioned above [Collection Access, Goal 2], we should be able to accurately predict cost, staffing level, and timeline after another few month of data collection and analysis.

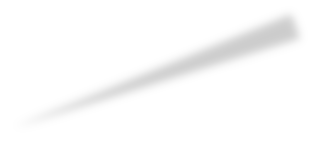


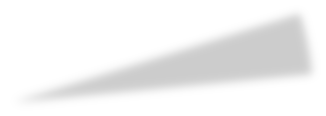


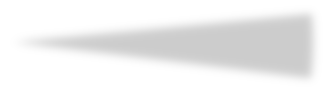


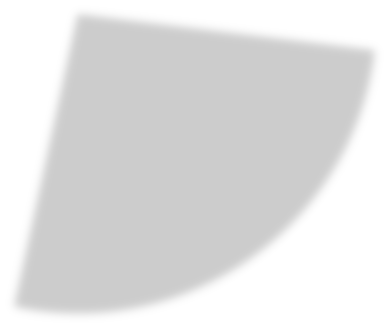


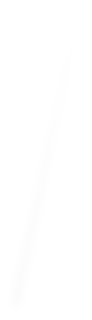


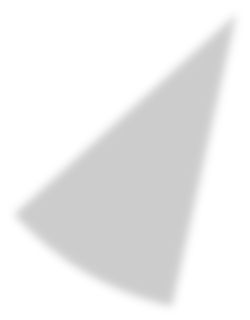


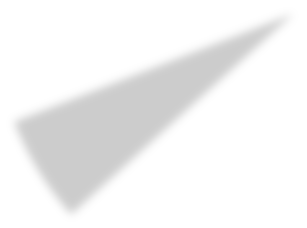


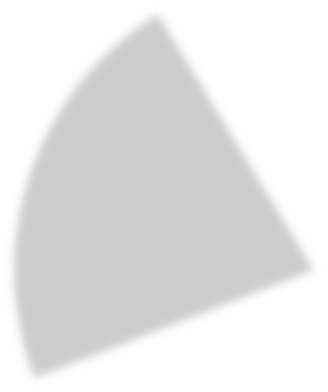


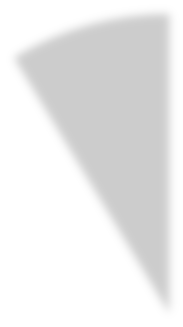












**ACTIVE ECARDS, DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTY**

**BARNSTABLE, 3%**

**WORCESTER, 9%**

**BERKSHIRE, 2% BRISTOL, 4%**

**DUKES, 0%**

**ESSEX, 10%**

**FRANKLIN, 1%**

**SUFFOLK, 22%**

**HAMPDEN, 3%**

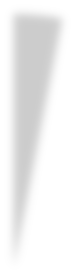
**HAMPSHIRE, 3%**

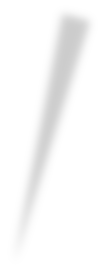
**PLYMOUTH, 6%**

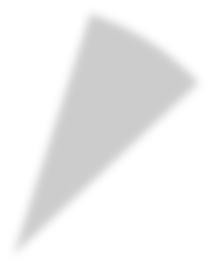
**NORFOLK, 10%**

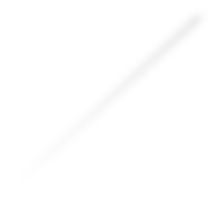
**NANTUCKET, 0%**

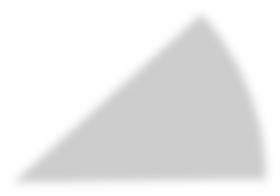
**MIDDLESEX, 27%**



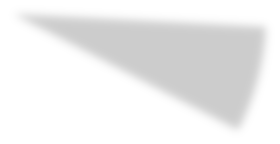


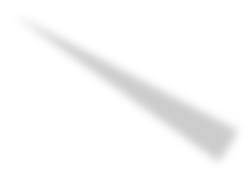


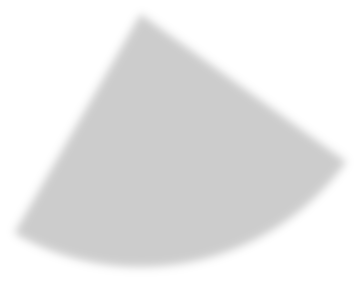


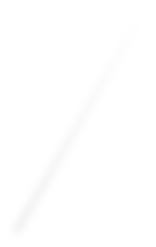


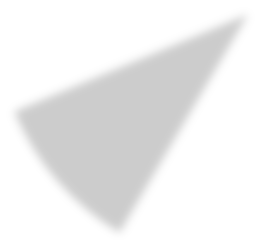


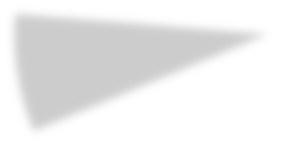


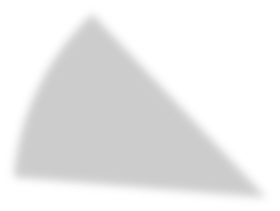


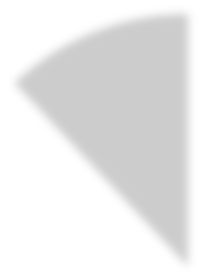












**MASSACHUSETTS 2019 POPULATION ESTIMATES BY** **COUNTY**

**UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU**

**WORCESTER BARNSTABLE 12% 3%**

**BERKSHIRE**

**2% BRISTOL**

**8%**

**DUKES**

**0%**

**SUFFOLK**

**12%**

**ESSEX**

**12%**

**PLYMOUTH**

**8%**

**NORFOLK 10%**

**NANTUCKET**

**0%**

**FRANKLIN**

**1% HAMPDEN 7%**

**HAMPSHIRE 2%**

**MIDDLESEX**

**23%**

**Libraries and COVID-19 Discussion**

During the discussion about COVID-19 and its impact on libraries Commissioners’ questions focused on the State Aid to Public Libraries program. State Aid staff Mary Rose Quinn and Liz Babbit informed Commissioners that some libraries are concerned about meeting state aid requirements, especially the hours open requirement. MBLC staff have been reminding libraries that safety is the primary concern as they strive to provide services and that as long as they are making their best effort to provide services, they’ll most likely be in compliance. The only time certification will be called into question is if a municipality keeps a library closed for financial reasons.

Commissioner DeBole asked for clarification on the process for determining whether a library is closed because of the pandemic or due to lack of funding.  MBLC staff informed Commissioners that the application and waiver process for the State Aid to Public Libraries program will illustrate which it is.

State Aid Statement:

State Aid Policies presented for approval by the Board at the September 2020 Monthly Meeting carry forward the regular policies approved annually through FY 2023. They do not include changes that will impact this fiscal year or next. There will be adjustments later in the current State Aid cycle to policies for both FY 2021 for reporting in FY 2022, especially to the Hours Open Requirement. The State Aid Unit has discussed internally, possible options for the Board to consider, including a suspension of the Hours Open as approved in the Emergency Preamble last April.

How libraries provide services to the public varies from community to community during this pandemic. What services and hours each library is able to offer is dependent on many factors, often outside of the library’s control. These include: the age, configuration, or size of the building, the age of the air handling or ventilation systems, sufficient space to quarantine materials, level of pre-COVID use of the facility, the number of positive COVID 19 cases in the community, and/or the decisions of local health officials affecting the entire city or town. Many libraries have opted to remain in Phase 2, offering curbside services instead of opening their buildings to browsing and other in library services.

Without overstepping Commissioner authority, the State Aid Team has tried to reassure concerned Trustees, Directors, and Town Officials that the Board would not deny certification to municipalities with libraries that were funded, staffed, and providing services to their communities to the best of their ability, even at reduced hours or levels of service, if the reductions were made to ensure the health and safety of their staff and patrons.

**COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES**

Commissioner DeBole

* Participated in Diversity Training

Commissioner Kronholm

* Working with the Library Director in Blandford on an Innovative “Out of the Box” Process that will be especially beneficial for the regional schools in area.

Commissioner Resnick

* South Hadley Public Library was used as primary voting site for primary election.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. Commissioner Cluggish stated on behalf of the Board deepest condolences of the passing of former Commissioner Carol Caro’s husband.
2. Commissioner Cluggish informed everyone that MLS will be having a webinar about Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines- Oh My!- Rachel will send out the link.

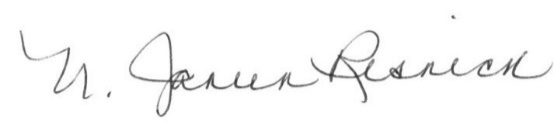
**List of documents for the October 8, 2020 Regular Monthly Board Meeting:**

1. Agenda for the October 8, 2020 Regular Monthly Board Meeting
2. Agenda Item 7, a-h- FY2023 State Aid to Public Library Policies
3. Agenda Item 8- Appointments to SACL
4. Report from Massachusetts Library System
5. Report from Library for the Commonwealth

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Perille moved and Commissioner DeBole seconded to adjourn the October 8, 2020 monthly business meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners at 1:10 PM.

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



N. Janeen Resnick

Secretary