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Description automatically generated with medium confidence**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS monthly regular meeting**

**Date** : Thursday, September 1, 2022

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

**Place** : Worcester Public Library

Worcester, MA

**Present** : Debby Conrad, Chair; Deb Abraham, Vice Chair; Stacy DeBole, Secretary; Les Ball; Mary Ann Cluggish; George Comeau, Esq.; Karen Traub

**Zoom** : Jessica Vilas Novas

**Absent** : Vicky Biancolo

**Staff Present:**

James Lonergan, Director; Celeste Bruno, Communications Director; Tracey Dimant, Head of Operations & Budget; Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development; Jen Inglis, State Aid Specialist; Rachel Masse, Assistant to the Director; Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs / Government Liaison

**Staff Zoom:**

Andrea Bono-Bunker, Library Building Specialist; Kate Butler, Electronic Services Specialist; Maura Deedy, Library Advisory Specialist; Evan Knight, Preservation Specialist; Matthew Perry, Communications Specialist; Aparna Ramachandran, Data Analyst/IT Support Specialist; Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist; Lillian Sutton, Administrative Assistant

**Observers Present:**

Lisa Cheever, Library Director, Blackstone Public Library; Eileen Dyer, Library Director, Swansea Free Public Library; Debbie Froggatt, Director of Library Services, Boston Public Schools; Kim Hewitt, Library Director, Needham Free Public Library; Jason Homer, Library Director, Worcester Public Library; Michael Howard, Librarian, Worcester Talking Book Library; Paula Korstvedt, Community Service Coordinator, Worcester Public Library; Jeanette Lundgren, Network Administrator, CW MARS, Inc.; Kathy Lussier, Executive Director, SAILS, Inc.; Kathryn Pontes, Outreach Assistant, Worcester Talking Book Library; Sulma Rubert-Silva, Associate Director, Worcester Public Library; Sharon Shaloo, Executive Director, Massachusetts Center for the Book; Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS)

**Observers Zoom:**

William Adamczyk, Committee Co-Chair, MLA Legislative and Director of the Milton Public Library; Eileen Chandler, Administrator, Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing Network (CLAMS); Kim Charlson, Executive Director, Perkins School Library; Lisa Downing, Library Director, Forbes Library, Northampton; David Leonard, President, Boston Public Library; Philip McNulty, Network Administrator, Minuteman Library Network (MLN); Joe Rodio, Library Director, South Hadley Public Library; David Slater, Network Administrator, Old Colony Library Network (OCLN); Jennifer Varney, Librarian, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School, Library & Technology Center

**Meeting called to order by Chair Conrad**

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

**Roll Call of Commissioners**

Chair Conrad stated that she is required to take a roll call of Commissioners to comply with the Open Meeting Law for hybrid meetings.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Abraham- Present | Commissioner Cluggish- Present | Commissioner DeBole- Present |
| Commissioner Ball- Present | Commissioner Comeau- Present- | Commissioner Traub- Present |
| Commissioner Biancolo- Absent | Commissioner Conrad- Present | Commissioner Vilas Novas- Present Zoom |

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

Chair Conrad moved to adopt a consent agenda for agenda items #2, Approval of minutes and #15 adjournment. Commissioner Cluggish seconded.

Chair Conrad asked for a roll call vote of the Commissioners for this motion.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Abraham- Yes | Commissioner Cluggish- Yes | Commissioner DeBole- Yes |
| Commissioner Ball- Yes | Commissioner Comeau- Yes | Commissioner Traub- Yes |
| Commissioner Biancolo- Absent | Commissioner Conrad- Yes | Commissioner Vilas Novas- Yes |

**The motion passed.**

**Approval of Minutes from the regular monthly meeting:**

**August 4, 2022**

Chair Conrad asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 4, 2022 Monthly Meeting.

Commissioner Comeau moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded to approve the minutes from the August 4, 2022, Regular Monthly Meeting with minor edits.

**Hearing no objection, Chair Conrad declared the motion passed under the consent agenda.**

**Chair’s Report**

Chair Conrad presented the following report:

September 1 Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

Chair Report

Summer has ended and many schools in the Commonwealth have resumed classes or will do so next week. This means that the MBLC and its partners the Boston Bruins and Boston Pride have completed another very successful summer reading program. The importance of supporting statewide summer reading programs cannot be overstated: participation can prevent the summer slide, parents and children are introduced to the library, and everyone including reluctant readers can have fun. This summer, the program was in full swing without the interruptions of Covid and several of the Commissioners were able to attend at least one event. As always it was terrific that the Governor’s wife, Mrs. Lauren Baker was able to attend some of the events as did Oliver the therapy dog. I don’t need to even talk about how exciting it is when Blades the Bruins mascot arrives – I attended the event at the Wareham Public Library and Blades was a big hit as was the DJ. I am just sorry I didn’t have a chance to see the Isobel Cup won by the Boston Pride. I also attended an author/illustrator program being held at the New Bedford Free Public Library which was sponsored by the Massachusetts Center for the Book. It was truly rewarding to see the children in attendance interact with the author and illustrator.

I mention all of this because last month I had a conversation with someone who asked, “are libraries even being used these days?” I pointed out to how much his grandson enjoyed summer reading events at our local library and that I knew his grandson used the library all year long as I had seen him there with his mother. I told him that in my visits to public libraries across the state I always saw high school and college aged people using the library’s computers or quiet study space. I offered to take him to our local library to see the dedicated teen space and makerspace. I could have gone on from there, but I had hit on a topic in which this man was very interested (being a doting grandfather) so we just focused on how libraries play a critical role in education, and he was convinced that libraries were important and in fact being used.

Today we are going to be discussing the 2024 Legislative Agenda. When the Executive Committee met earlier in August, we reaffirmed the policy that the Legislative Agenda should focus on a few of our line items for larger funding requests. As we discuss the three-line items that will be a priority for the 2024 Legislative Agenda, we should consider how we can formulate our stories about the importance of the line items on which we are going to focus. I look forward to our discussions today and I know that once we have made our decision, the PR committee and Board staff will be able to craft eye catching and informative tools that will demonstrate how important library funding is to Massachusetts.

**Commissioner Activities**

**Commissioner Abraham**

* August 9-11- United for Libraries Webinar
* August 23- Participated in MBLC Executive Committee Meeting
* August 25- Attended Construction Team Meeting

**Commissioner Ball**

* August 25- Attended Construction Team Meeting

**Commissioner Cluggish**

* August 25- Attended Construction Team Meeting

**Commissioner Comeau**

* August 25- Attended Construction Team Meeting

**Commissioner DeBole**

* August 23- Participated in MBLC Executive Committee Meeting

**Commissioner Traub**

* August 8- MLS Executive Board virtual
* August 9- ALA United for Libraries Virtual Conference for Friends, Trustees and Foundations
* August 14- Erving Public Library Summer Reading Party

**Commissioner Vilas Novas**

* August 15- MLS Monthly Meeting

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

Meetings/activities highlights since the last monthly Board meeting:

* August 8—MLS Executive Board meeting, virtual
* August 9-11—United for Libraries Virtual: Trustees, Friends, and Foundations (multiple sessions)
* August 10—COSLINE meeting, virtual
* August 11—Meeting with Timur Yontar, Assistant Budget Director for Capital, Executive Office of Administration & Finance, virtual
* August 11 & 18— COSLA EDI Working Group meetings, virtual
* August 12—MLA Executive Board meeting, virtual
* August 12, 16, 19, 31—COSLINE Annual Meeting Planning Discussions, virtual
* August 16—MLS/MLA/MBLC Discussion on Book/Material Challenges
* August 17— “Commonwealth Conversation” Planning Discussions with MCB & MLS
* August 25—MPLCP Construction Team meeting, virtual
* August 25—COSLA Member Update

**New LSTA Five-Year Plan**: After some minor revisions, IMLS has “accepted” our new LSTA Five-Year Plan 2023-2027 and let us know we should receive an official notification letter within a few months. Once we receive the official notification, we will share the new plan with the Commissioners and post it on our website for sharing with the library community.

**Amplifund Milestone:** Lyndsay Forbes has been leading an internal team that includes Kate Butler, Andrea Bono-Bunker, and Lauren Stara that is implementing the agency’s Amplifund grant management system. The effort reached a milestone as the FY2023 LSTA Direct Grants approved in July are going to be disbursed and managed through the new system. Work has begun on creating application functionality for this fall’s upcoming FY2024 grant round. Andrea and Lauren have been making great progress in setting up the system to manage construction grants. Once implemented the system will consolidate documents, reports, financial information, and communication in one place.

**Intellectual Freedom Affiliate Leadership Discussion:** Sarah Sogigian coordinated the first of what will be a regularly scheduled meeting bringing together representatives from the MLA, MLS, and the MBLC (James, Celeste, Maura and Rob) to discuss, and plan a coordinated strategy, to help provide support for libraries facing challenges to library materials, displays or programs.

The kickoff discussion centered around highlighting the experiences that each organization has had responding to librarians asking for support to meet challenges. In addition to lending a very supportive ear, each organization is working collaboratively to improve frontline library staff response to challenges through training, to improve librarian and trustee awareness around crisis response, and to assist libraries to deploy effective strategies with traditional and social media. In addition to public libraries, it was agreed that further outreach on the topic of library challenges must include school libraries and municipal leaders.

**Annual COSLINE Workshop:** COSLINE (Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast) is a subset of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) organization and includes twelve state library agencies from New England to West Virginia. COSLINE holds an annual meeting to bring together agency library development directors and staff to report on state activities, attend workshops and network with peers. At the last minute, the MBLC took up the challenge planning this year’s October 12-14 meeting after another state had to back out.

James, Maura, Rob, Tracey, and Tanesha quickly mobilized to secure a location for the meeting at the Inn on Boltwood in Amherst. We are now working with a planning committee made up of agency staff from New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island to plan meeting content. The agenda is “under construction,” but we plan to focus on intellectual freedom/material challenges as well as equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts at our state library agencies.

Maura Deedy moderated a panel at the **United for Libraries Virtual Conference 2022** titled “Prepping for Material Challenges.” Overall, participation from Massachusetts for the entire virtual conference was strong, with 191 total registrants and 85 live attendees.

**SACL Bylaw Revision:** Lyndsay Forbes and Rob Favini met with SACL’s ad hoc bylaws committee (Esme Green and Tim Cherubini) to discuss updating SACL’s bylaws and guidelines. The bylaws were last revised in 1987 and the guidelines in 2011. Both documents need updating to reflect more current practices. A revised version of the documents will be presented at SACL’s October meeting. The final approved version will be presented to the Commissioners at the November meeting.

**Mass Humanities:** Evan Knight and Rob Favini met with Jen Atwood, Mass Humanities program manager, to discuss several Mass Humanities ARPA-funded initiatives. The MBLC is assisting Mass Humanities by providing background on all types of libraries in Massachusetts and how they may effectively participate in ARPA funded projects as well as future general collaborations. The connection with Mass Humanities is one of many that Evan has fostered with other organizations and serves to connect libraries with key with cultural institutions across the state.

**Rob and Sarah on the Road:** Rob and Sarah continued their road show with visits to the Berkshire Athenaeum on August 22 and the Chicopee Public Library on August 24. (Sarah gets extra credit for a visit to the Springfield Public Library on August 23.) The Berkshire Athenaeum meeting was designed as a town hall style meeting promoted to library directors across the region to attend. Directors from Pittsfield, Stockbridge, and Sheffield attended. Margot Malachowski, Education and Outreach Coordinator from the Network of the National Library of Medicine also joined us to share outreach efforts from her organization.

Topics were in many ways representative of feedback that they have been getting from across the state: outreach to newcomers in communities; Increased participation in summer programs (but not up to pre-COVID levels); the opioid crisis and library action; and intellectual freedom challenges. Some issues that are more pronounced in the region include broadband connectivity, growing library open staff positions, low library wages, and lack of housing.

The **Communications Team** wrapped up summer visits with a huge turnout at Wilmington that again included our new partners Pride, a summer dance party at Wareham that included Board Chair Debby Conrad and Blades, and Blades and Mrs. Baker rounding out the summer with a heartfelt visit to Hamilton Wenham. In all the team visited 13 libraries this summer. The team is in the process of selecting the winners for the summer challenge Bruins prizes.

New ComCat materials that were developed over the summer are now available for libraries to order. The team worked with the PR Committee and the patron focus group to come up with the updated designs.   
  
The team is also working again with partners the Office of Economic Empowerment OEE to provide *Baby Steps*, a workshop to help parents and caregivers save for college. The team is also working with OEE to develop a yearlong calendar of financial workshops and resources that support financial literacy.

Matt Perry will be representing the MBLC at the Massachusetts booth (with the MCB) at the **National Book Festival** in Washington, DC this weekend. For further information on the event, including a schedule with a selection of livestream presentations, see: <https://www.loc.gov/events/2022-national-book-festival>

**Deerfield ARPA letter**: The Deerfield Selectboard submitted letters to the Governor and to leadership in the House and Senate on behalf of Deerfield, Amherst, Gloucester, Grafton, Orange, Seekonk, Westborough, and Westford requesting state ARPA funding, in addition to their recently awarded provisional MPLCP grants, for their library building projects due to increased construction costs. We were not informed about these efforts in advance but were copied on the letters, which Mary Rose and I recently forwarded to the Commissioners.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

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

MBLC Budget Request DRAFT



MBLC budget lines in the last decade have increased 47.6%; State Aid in the last decade increased 84% (FY P2013-2023).

MBLC budget total of $40,883,002 is 0.0776% of the total state budget of $52.7 billion. The Agenda request for FY 2024 is a 9.03% increase or $3,691,291.

There is still no word on the status of the1986 Tax Relief Law and the Economic Development bill Chapter 62F, a law from 1986 that has not been triggered since 1987 but which could send $3 billion back to taxpayers. Both the House and Senate have paused the decision on the negotiated economic development bill as well. They will reevaluate their spending decisions in the $4 billion plus bill until after the Auditor determines if the Tax Relief Law is triggered. The Auditor may have the figures in September.

The Department of Revenue collected $2.367 billion during July - the first month of the new fiscal year - an increase of $101 million or 4.5 percent over last July. After adjusting for an elective pass-through entity excise that skews some comparisons, DOR said last month's collections were at least $92 million ahead of July 2021 receipts.

Revenue collections for FY2022 were $41.105 billion, which is $6.982 billion or 20.5% more than collections in FY2021, and $3.438 billion or 9.1% more than the benchmark. After adjusting for PTE excise, FY2022 collections are $4.932 billion or 14.5% more than collections in FY2021 and $2.668 billion or 7.3% more than benchmark.

The Pass-Through Entity (PTE) Tax allows an entity to pay a tax on behalf of their partners, members, or shareholders

Legislative Agenda Topics for FY 2024

* MBLC budget lines
  + Focus on Technology & Resource Sharing (7000-9506) and the two Talking Book lines at Perkins and Worcester
* Construction
  + New bond and cap with talking points and advocacy
* Library e-book bill
* Statewide initiatives (IDEA focus) Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access
* Commissioners agreed to consider a five percent funding increase for all MBLC budget lines for the FY 2024 Legislative Agenda and to support a larger increase for the two Talking Book lines and the Technology and Resource Sharing line. The proposed increase to each of the three focus lines is 25% over current spending.

**Legislative Agenda discussion aids**

<https://massbudget.org/>

<https://massbudget.org/budget-browser/>

<https://massbudget.org/budget-browser/subcategory/?id=Libraries>

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| **Funding for Library Technology and Automated Resource - Sharing Networks** | | | | |
| 19.1% when adjusted for inflation (FY 2008-2022)   |  | | --- | | **BUT** | | 36.4% since 2001 when adjusted for inflation.   Actual budget in 2001=$4,420,235 | | | | | |
| **Adjusted for inflation (cpi)** | | **NOT adjusted** | | |
| FY23 GAA | | $4,744,293 | | $4,744,293 | | |
| FY22 | | $4,713,848 | | $4,518,373 | | |
| FY21 | | $4,897,285 | | $4,386,770 | | |
| FY20 | | $4,863,479 | | $4,259,000 | | |
| FY19 | | $3,266,414 | | $2,815,928 | | |
| FY18 | | $2,483,293 | | $2,097,330 | | |
| FY17 | | $2,513,822 | | $2,076,564 | | |
| FY16 | | $2,609,913 | | $2,116,564 | | |
| FY15 | | $3,322,372 | | $2,676,564 | | |
| FY14 | | $2,411,864 | | $1,929,238 | | |
| FY13 | | $2,449,391 | | $1,929,238 | | |
| FY12 | | $2,490,674 | | $1,929,238 | | |
| FY11 | | $2,563,821 | | $1,929,238 | | |
| FY10 | | $2,614,680 | | $1,929,238 | | |
| FY09 | | $3,830,941 | | $2,799,104 | | |
| FY08 | | $3,956,614 | | $2,851,000 | | |
| FY07 | | $4,077,487 | | $2,833,000 | | |
| FY06 | | $2,953,376 | | $2,000,000 | | |
| FY05 | | $830,310 | | $541,811 | | |
| FY04 | | $539,554 | | $341,811 | | |
| FY03 | | $551,455 | | $341,811 | | |
| FY02 | | $6,329,163 | | $3,838,471 | | |
| FY01 | | $7,417,479 | | $4,420,235 | | |

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| **Perkins Braille &Talking Book Library Funding** | | | |
| 3.5% when adjusted for inflation (FY 2008-2022) | | | |
| **Adjusted for inflation (cpi)** | | **NOT adjusted** | | |
| FY23 GAA | | $2,969,554 | | | $2,969,554 |
| FY22 | | $2,950,499 | | | $2,828,147 |
| FY21 | | $3,065,316 | | | $2,745,774 |
| FY20 | | $3,044,156 | | | $2,665,800 |
| FY19 | | $3,002,202 | | | $2,588,155 |
| FY18 | | $2,975,187 | | | $2,512,772 |
| FY17 | | $3,011,763 | | | $2,487,893 |
| FY16 | | $3,103,308 | | | $2,516,693 |
| FY15 | | $3,063,635 | | | $2,468,121 |
| FY14 | | $3,069,663 | | | $2,455,408 |
| FY13 | | $3,047,078 | | | $2,400,000 |
| FY12 | | $2,893,183 | | | $2,241,016 |
| FY11 | | $2,978,151 | | | $2,241,016 |
| FY10 | | $3,037,230 | | | $2,241,016 |
| FY09 | | $3,067,125 | | | $2,241,016 |
| FY08 | | $3,058,704 | | | $2,203,997 |
| FY07 | | $3,140,766 | | | $2,182,175 |
| FY06 | | $2,921,701 | | | $1,978,550 |
| FY05 | | $2,572,330 | | | $1,678,550 |
| FY04 | | $2,570,691 | | | $1,628,550 |
| FY03 | | $2,448,945 | | | $1,517,940 |
| FY02 | | $2,685,277 | | | $1,628,550 |
| FY01 | | $2,936,629 | | | $1,750,000 |

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| **Talking Book Program – Worcester Funding** |
| 10.0% when adjusted for inflation (FY 2008-2022) |

**Adjusted for inflation (cpi)** **NOT adjusted**

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| FY23 GAA | $521,569 | $521,569 |
| FY22 | $518,222 | $496,732 |
| FY21 | $538,388 | $482,264 |
| FY20 | $534,671 | $468,217 |
| FY19 | $527,750 | $454,966 |
| FY18 | $582,203 | $491,715 |
| FY17 | $534,726 | $441,715 |
| FY16 | $550,979 | $446,828 |
| FY15 | $543,936 | $438,205 |
| FY14 | $551,815 | $441,394 |
| FY13 | $546,732 | $430,628 |
| FY12 | $543,702 | $421,143 |
| FY11 | $559,669 | $421,143 |
| FY10 | $570,772 | $421,143 |
| FY09 | $576,390 | $421,143 |
| FY08 | $575,936 | $415,000 |
| FY07 | $561,320 | $390,000 |
| FY06 | $479,924 | $325,000 |
| FY05 | $488,517 | $318,777 |
| FY04 | $503,194 | $318,777 |
| FY03 | $479,364 | $297,126 |
| FY02 | $525,624 | $318,777 |
| FY01 | $574,824 | $342,550 |

**discussion of the FY2024 Legislative Agenda**

**Kim Charlson, Director- Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library started the discussion.**

Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library

FY24 Legislative Funding Increase Background Factsheet

Line Item 700-9406 (Watertown)

A targeted infusion of dedicated funding support for the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library (Line Item 7000-9406) will have a positive impact on thousands of Massachusetts residents who are unable to read regular print due to a severe visual, physical, or reading disability. This factsheet outlines the areas of need within the Perkins Library, the level of funding needed in each priority area to achieve compliance with the American Library Association Revised Standards and Guidelines of Service for the Library of Congress Network of Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, 2017, and the level of impact each investment will have on our patron population, both current and future borrowers.

The Massachusetts Talking Book Program (Watertown 7000-9406, and Worcester 7000-9402) are an identified priority area for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for needed transformational funding in FY24 to allow provision of quality, state-of-the-art library services for Commonwealth residents who are unable to read regular print due to their visual, physical or reading disabilities. The FY24 funding request represents a 25% increase in the Perkins line item of $742,388.00, and a total appropriation for line item 7000-9406 of $3,711,942.00. An investment in the Perkins Library in FY24 will bring Massachusetts and our library program into the nation’s lead as the preeminent braille and talking book library, delivering the highest quality and diversity of services to meet the vast range of accessible reading and information needs of borrowers.

This transformational initiative represents the following key service delivery programs: Inclusion & Engagement, Diversity, Education, and Accessible Services (IDEAS). Below are identified funding amounts in each of these areas, with a more detailed narrative following.

* Inclusion & Engagement: $165,000.00
* Diversity: $77,388.50
* Education: $250,000.00
* Accessible Services: $250,000.00
* Total: $742,388.50
* Full Appropriation Amount: $3,711,942.00.

Perkins Library Mission & Vision:

Mission:

The Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library provides accessible library services and resources that enable all people who are unable to read conventional print due to a disability to experience the joy of reading and lifelong learning

Vision:

By 2025, the Perkins Library will serve 30,000 individuals and institutions from all parts of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a 33% increase over our FY23 service levels. This expanded patron base will reflect the diversity of this community of people with disabilities in age, race, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, and disability type for the population eligible for accessible library services.

The Perkins Library has a long tradition of providing accessible library services beginning in 1837, making it one of the first library programs in the country to serve people with vision loss. Today, through our collaboration with the Library of Congress’ National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, we offer accessible services circulated by postage-free U.S. mail and online via the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service.

The ability to read a book, magazine, or newspaper is something most people take for

granted. But when vision loss or physical limitations make it impossible to read the printed word any longer, the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library is there – ready to restore the ability to read in a new way.

Any resident of Massachusetts who has a disability that prevents them from using regular printed materials is eligible for free accessible library services. With an extensive collection of more than 250,000 audio and braille books and magazines, Perkins is committed to meeting the needs of as many people as possible across the state, including thousands of potential patrons who aren’t yet aware of the Library’s services.

The Perkins Library continues to serve patrons by providing access to a full spectrum of services and materials in a wide range of accessible formats – audio, braille, large print, audio described DVDs, and electronic and downloadable audio and braille materials. There also needs to be increased emphasis on technology solutions to reduce or eliminate barriers to reading for people with disabilities, and to make these technological advances available to the target population.

Our expanded initiative for funding support is called IDEAS:

* Inclusion & Engagement
* Diversity
* Education
* Accessible Services

Inclusion & Engagement:

Goal: Identifying and eliminating barriers that keep people with disabilities from accessing and participating in accessible activities and using specialized reading materials provided in digital audio, braille, large print, audio described DVDs including books, magazines, newspapers, online electronic resources and other materials.

To allow people who are blind, have low vision, as well as people with physical and reading disabilities to participate in reading and accessing information, join book discussion groups, and other programs of interest, the infrastructure needs to be in place programmatically to support their specialized needs.

To connect with this community, the Perkins Library would expand its outreach activities to ensure that people with disabilities are aware of, and are able to, register and utilize accessible library services in the Commonwealth. People with disabilities continue to be marginalized from participation in all aspects of our culture and society due to barriers including transportation, geographic location, lack of accessible information about programs and services, and economic circumstances. Nearly 25% of the population has a disability of some type and experiences some degree of isolation or marginalization from mainstream programs and services.

Action: to address this situation of lack of knowledge of accessible library services, we would increase staffing for programs and outreach to include a Content and Program Outreach Librarian responsible for identifying and developing the Perkins Library’s programs, activities, and outreach strategies to increase opportunities for participation in informative events, activities, and meaningful engagement with others through Zoom-based activities and programs for borrowers that encourage engagement and inclusion.

Budget: $165,000 – including salary/benefits for one librarian position and program support.

Diversity:

Goal: Expand targeted outreach activities to include initiatives directed toward people with disabilities who are part of communities of color, urban or other isolated areas, and people who speak languages other than English. These efforts would be conducted in collaboration with existing community service agencies and organizations serving marginalized communities and people with disabilities.

Budget: $77,388.50 – to develop and distribute materials and resources for targeted mailings, media campaigns, and other efforts to get the word out to these hard-to-reach segments of the broader disability community. Presentations and informational visits would be provided to these key populations and service providers working with this population.

Education:

Goal: Increase services to public and private K-12 schools, community colleges, universities, and independent living and day programs, to initiate services and support for students in the educational system and adult learning. Support a family literacy program for parents, guardians, and caregivers to learn how to engage children with disabilities in learning and reading. Increase support to identify and locate accessible educational materials for students, work with school and media librarians, special education professionals, and other school personnel, to support the educational needs of students with a wide range of disabilities. Work with publishers to obtain accessible electronic book files to give broader access for students using assistive technology to read their books and other materials. Engage in promotion of, and research and development initiatives in utilizing assistive technology to grow and expand the availability of accessible electronic format materials with students with disabilities for learning and continuing education. Production of accessible braille and audio materials would take place through the Perkins Library recording studio and braille production services.

Budget: $250,000 -- Add one reader/librarian advisor position to support work with students, educators, parents, and publishers to obtain more accessible format educational materials.

Accessible Services:

Goal: Grow the Perkins Library’s capacity to deliver accessible audio and braille materials, services, training, and access initiatives. Staff will continue to work on, and develop the initiatives listed below:

* Continue innovation on the “next generation” talking book player
* Identify and grow opportunities for patrons to connect, learn, and engage as a community through Zoom technology to deliver a wide range of content and programming.
* Continue to focus on raising awareness among potential users of the Perkins Library’s existing physical, digital, braille and large print materials.
* Grow and continue access to same-day text-to-speech streamed audio of newspapers and magazines through our Newsline Program.
* Grow and sustain the selection of audio described DVD movies with audio description which makes video content accessible by including added narration of key visual elements.
* Provide long-term equipment loans of talking book machines and both handheld and desktop digital audio players and magnifying devices.
* Continue to sponsor in-person and virtual book clubs, museum passes, Bookshare services, Aira Access, speakers, program activities, art appreciation, crafts, and more.
* Continue provision of in-home and remote assistive technology training for borrowers.
* Conduct a needs assessment and engage in user research and testing to identify other needs of our 20,000-plus borrowers – determining how we can better serve them within our mission.

Budget: $250,000:

Add one additional Shipping Specialist position to handle the mailing of accessible format materials to registered borrowers of the Perkins Library.

Add one braille production position specialist to produce and distribute braille materials needing to be transcribed into braille by the library.

Add one recording studio assistant position to produce and distribute digital audio materials needing to be produced by the library.

Total Initiative Budget Request:

* Inclusion & Engagement: $165,000
* Diversity: $77,388.50
* Education: $250,000.00
* Accessible Services: $250,000.00
* Total: $742,388.50
* Full Appropriation Amount: $3,711,942.00.

Uppermost with such a transformational request is our goal of ensuring the continuation of responsive and quality library services for borrowers with disabilities in Massachusetts. Through all of these initiatives, the Perkins Library will continue to lead the way in the development of new technologies, promising practices, programs, and reliable services to meet the accessible reading needs of our borrowers. every day the Perkins Library continues to be a champion of access and inclusion and represents an evolving 21st century library program.

**Kathy Lussier, Executive Director, SAILS regarding 7000-9506 in the MBLC Legislative Agenda**

James was correct when he spoke about how much technology has changed since 2001, but don’t forget that it’s just not all the nice new technology we are handling, but we are also dealing with greater threats to our technology infrastructure. With the ongoing outage from Baker & Taylor due to a cybersecurity incident, I’m sure my colleagues would agree that every time an incident like this occurs, we all lose sleep for countless nights because it could mean that our systems are inaccessible for a week or even longer. I am very appreciative of the support we received from the MBLC last year to help us address these potential threats so that we could bring in consultants to help us plan.

I am also very appreciative of the additional funding we’ve received to support electronic resources and our Overdrive collections. Even before the pandemic, it was hard to keep up with demand for this collection, and the demand has just grown during COVD. The pricing models for ebooks make it that much more difficult to keep up with these collections.

SAILS is currently in the process of developing its FY24 action plan. For next year, we have been talking about ways we can better support our libraries with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. We are just starting to talk about program ideas, but, so far, our planning and budget committee are in favor of every idea we’ve received. There is a need in this area. Some of the ideas we’ve discussed are supporting diversity audits for our libraries and adding additional languages for our patron notices. One topic we’ve been talking about for a couple of years now is inclusive cataloging. The records in our system need to use standards that have bias built into them, and we’re looking at ways to improve our records so that they are inclusive of all communities we serve. But this is a big project that takes staffing, and we, like many libraries, are already stretched with staffing, providing the most service that we can out of the limited staffing we have available. We are also looking at ways to make our Overdrive collections more accessible to underserved communities. Any additional funding would be very helpful in supporting these DEI efforts.

**Philip McNulty, Executive Director of the Minuteman Library Network**

Philip McNulty, Executive Director of the Minuteman Library Network, voiced appreciation for the attention to line 9506 represented in this legislative agenda. 9506 helps member libraries magnify their ability to get value from their network provided automation systems and electronic collections. Phil noted the invaluable help that MBLC is providing to a project to create more accessible and usable online card registration platforms across the state in a project that is just about to be launched through a special grant. Increases to the Resource Sharing segment of line 9506 will help the networks support the annual costs of this platform. Phil also noted that Minuteman has used 9506 money in the LEA grant to improve the diversity and inclusion of its electronic collections by having Overdrive do a DEI audit of Minuteman's existing electronic collections, which MLN's Digital Content Working Group then used to plan additional purchases of diverse and inclusive materials.

After Commissioner Comeau expressed an interest in knowing more about DEI efforts ongoing across the state, Mr. McNulty commented that Minuteman had created a DEI Interest Group that had just had its first meeting and was looking not only into how to assess collections and improve their diversity and inclusiveness, but would also look at issues of equity, diversity and inclusion in programming and hiring.

**Ron Gagnon, Executive Director, NOBLE**

I second what Kathy and Jeanette said so well, and we appreciate the funding and support provided by the MBLC.

**Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director- Massachusetts Library System**

MLS supports the FY24 Legislative Agenda. We acknowledge that the MBLC budget lines work together to provide services to the members across the commonwealth and that partner support is critical to all of our work.

With additional funds to line 7000-9401, the Massachusetts Library System will:

* Continue to provide Statewide Delivery, which cannot meet the critical needs of patrons without the work being done by the automated networks (automated networks are funded by line 7000-9506).
* Offer sustained support for MLS’ contributions to the Statewide Database suite.
* Grow our Commonwealth eBook Collection. As mentioned by our network colleagues, demand on these collections grows by the day and providing access to these resources is a priority.
* Create new opportunities for direct support to our members.
* Build capacity among our staff to provide more expertise and support to our 1500 member libraries.

**Joseph Rodio, Library Director- South Hadley Public Library**

I support refocusing the Legislative Agenda, plus we need to remember that 9501 and 9401 continue to resonate with legislators and our new communication efforts need to build upon what we've been saying. We need to be consistent with our FY24 messaging, given the strong budget support we've received the last few years and I have faith that Celeste and the MBLC team will do so.

**Sharon Shaloo, Executive Director, Mass Center for the Book**

Sharon Shaloo, Mass Center for the Book, made the point that in order to realize the potential of our funding increases, we must continue to advocate for a budget that does not fall behind inflation, at the very minimum.  To that end, she pointed out that a raise of only 5% in line items amounted to a budget cut when inflation is nearly double that amount. She further urged that we embrace the moment in a country that is mired in disinformation, working to expand the role of the library to be a community resource for trusted information, a public role that will need a greater public relations and communications role to place articles and opinion pieces in media throughout the commonwealth, among other things. She asked that all of us think boldly about the role of libraries in a time of rampant disinformation, and she suggested that each spring the administrators of the line-items under the library umbrella meet for a visioning and planning session so that we develop themes that can guide future budget requests.

**William L Adamczyk, Director- Milton Public Library**Speaking on behalf of MLA and the MLA Legislative Committee

* We committed to the focus of this year's MBLC Legislative Agenda
* We agree with Sarah Sogigian that it is integral that partner organizations support the agenda. We intend to do so and to work together.
* We agree with Joe Rodio that if we shift the message, it is important to hold on to some of the prior language and prior asks, even if they are not the focus. Keep a consistent message while introducing new areas of focus. We can get behind that.
* We agree with Deb Conrad that the focus is on the people. This is what the legislators want to hear and what they care about. This is what the MLA membership also cares most about.
* MLA is committed to supporting the agenda. However, our membership relies heavily on State Aid, so this will be a secondary part of our messaging with local legislators. It is our bread and butter.
* MLA Legislative Committee is also working with Rep. Balser to continue the fight for an eBook bill. We are working to reintroduce a better, stronger bill.
* MLA Legislative Committee is working to support other library related, or library adjacent legislation. This is a way to build new coalitions and support for libraries.
* MLA is committed to being proactive to defend libraries and librarians from the rising number of challenges being seen nationwide. This may come in the form of legislation, and we will work to make sure libraries have the proper protection.
* In conclusion, we are excited to support the MBLC Legislative Agenda. We can help champion the new areas of focus, while also reminding legislators of the important need for state aid, delivery and databases.  We also hope our partner organizations will support MLA as we move forward with different advocacy campaigns.

**Lisa Cheever, Library Director**- Blackstone Public Library

Thank you for inviting me to the meeting. As part of CMLA, when talking to other directors, they are having trouble staffing their libraries. There is a lot of turnovers when support staff can go to Dunkin and make more money per hour. Not all libraries are fortunate enough to be fully staffed. I know that a lot of the directors would like to focus on diversity and inclusion, but they are being pulled in too many directions trying to serve the patrons. I feel that staff training should be an important part of the resource sharing line. Just something to think about when planning the budget.

After hearing all the discussion from the affiliates, the Board decided that the 5% increase wouldn’t be enough so they proposed a base increase of 10%. There would also be an increase of 30% to the priority lines.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MBLC | Budget Lines | **MBLC Initial Draft figures Legislative Agenda FY 2024** | | | | |  |
|  |  | **FY22 GAA Budget** | **Final FY 2023 GAA Budget** |  | **2024 increase** |  | **\*Agenda Focus for 2024** |
| 7000-9101 | Board of Library Commissioners | $1,953,271 | $1,731,586 | 10% | $173,159 |  | $1,904,745 |
| 7000-9401 | Regional Libraries Local Aid | $14,100,731 | $14,516,000 | 10% | $1,451,600 |  | $15,967,600 |
| 7000-9402 | Talking Book Program Worcester | $518,222 | $521,569 | 30% | $156,471 |  | **$678,040** |
| 7000-9406 | Talking Book Program Watertown | $2,950,499 | $2,969,554 | 30% | $890,866 |  | **$3,860,420** |
| 7000-9501 | Public Libraries Local Aid | $13,562,408 | $16,000,000 | 10% | $1,600,000 |  | $17,600,000 |
| 7000-9506 | Technology & Automated Resource - Sharing | $4,713,848 | $4,744,293 | 30% | $1,423,288 |  | **$6,167,581** |
| 7000-9508 | Center for the Book | $312,979 | $400,000 | 10% | $40,000 |  | $440,000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | $40,883,002 |  | $5,735,383 |  | $46,618,385 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | \* Focus numbers (highlighted) represent 30% increase request | | | | | |

Commissioner Cluggish moved and Commissioner Comeau seconded to adopt the FY2024 Legislative Agenda with an increase of 10% to each line item and then 30% to the three priority line items for a total request of $46,618,385.

Chair Conrad asked for a roll call vote of the Commissioners for this motion.

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| Commissioner Abraham- Yes | Commissioner Cluggish- Yes | Commissioner DeBole- Yes |
| Commissioner Ball- Yes | Commissioner Comeau- Yes | Commissioner Traub- Yes |
| Commissioner Biancolo- Absent | Commissioner Conrad- Yes | Commissioner Vilas Novas- Yes |

**The motion passed.**

**Summary of the proposed changes to the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP) Regulations in preparation for the next grant round**

Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist and Andrea Bono-Bunker, Library Building Specialist presented the following summary to the Board.

**Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program**

**Summary of Regulatory Changes for 2023-2024 Grant Round**

*Issues to Solve*

* Long waitlist
* Unpredictable grant cycles
* Review focused more on design than need
* Capacity (financial and staffing) for small population (under 2,500) libraries

*Solutions*

* Single, competitive application process for both planning & design and construction
  + Short waiting list; not all applicants funded
  + less upfront expenditure before application – no design work prior to funding; building program, conditions assessment, if applicable, and application forms
  + even less upfront expenditure for concurrent small population grant round; application forms only
  + more municipal involvement earlier with local vote for approval to apply and appropriation of Planning and Design Phase (P&D) local funding due at application deadline
  + Independent review process heavily weighs need (facility, community, economic) and capacity (staffing, ongoing financial support, ability to operate new facility)
  + Applications reviewed by tier from either the size of building determined in the building program- Large Library (30,000+ sf), Medium Library (15,000-29,999 sf), Small Library (6,000-14,999 sf)- or qualification as a Small Population Library (under 2,500 municipal census population)
* Streamline program from application through construction
  + No second application means there is no gap between initial design work and later phases.
  + When invited in, both immediately funded and waitlisted libraries complete P&D simultaneously to MPLCP Level of Design; library building specialists review every iteration of design using evaluative criteria for upcoming independent design review
  + Independent review of design at end of P&D
    - If review is successful, grant awards are calculated from MPLCP Level of Design estimates, and immediately funded projects seek local funding approval to move into Construction Phase.
    - If unsuccessful, two months to correct design issues and come back for approval.
    - Waitlisted libraries can move forward without a provisional award or can wait until they are greenlighted to seek local funding and begin the Construction Phase.
* Hope for more predictable, regular grant cycles that dovetail with municipal and state capital planning efforts

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

Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director presented the following report to the Board.

**Strategic Initiative 1**  
MLS ensures its services are sustainable, prioritize member needs, and equitably serve all member types.

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| Goal | Actions | Measurement of Success | **Monthly work towards goal** |
| MLS ensures service value to all member types. | MLS will create new avenues for active member engagement, including task forces, class leaders, and project engagements. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the number of active member engagements.* | We will create a process to engage with member library staff on leading learning opportunities.  We collaborated with the Cushman Library and Winchester Public Library on blog posts about their website redesigns. |
| MLS will continue to strengthen its partnerships and collaborations to allow MLS to focus on what it does uniquely well. | Utilizing the newly created partnership policy and process, MLS will explore possible partnership work with the Library for the Commonwealth and other organizations. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the value of their partnerships.* | MLS collaborated with the Employers Association of the NorthEast to bring member benefits to MLS members (see next box for details) |
| New services will be designed to deliver the greatest statewide impact, able to expand and contract due to available funding and need. | MLS will evaluate current, new, and proposed services using a new internal service review process. | *MLS will ensure that services are able to expand and contract due to available funding, need, and capacity.* | We launched a collaboration with the Employers Association of the NorthEast (EANE), including an HR Hotline for public library members, discounts on EANE membership and services for all members, and HR-related learning opportunities. Join us for an informational webinar about these new services on September 15 at 10 am. |

**Strategic Initiative 2**

MLS empowers leaders to emerge at every level of library service, connecting staff throughout the stages of their careers.

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| Goal | Actions | Measurement of Success | **Monthly work towards goal** |
| MLS promotes excellence and continuity by providing professional development, conversation, and community around leadership. | Together with our partners, MLS will lead the planning of learning opportunities on leadership and management topics and ensure networking options in our engagements. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the leadership and management learning opportunities hosted and the reflection from participants.* | MLS will host our first in-person workshops since the beginning of the pandemic. On September 14 and 15 we are hosting “Sing Me a Story” with Emilia Dahlin in the Marlborough and Northampton MLS offices. We have had strong registrations with waitlists for these classes. |
| Leadership, professional development, and networking opportunities will have flexible offerings in order to include participants from various library types, library sizes, and resources. | MLS will explore the creation of grants and/or scholarship opportunities to support member library staff in their professional development work. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the number of opportunities available, awarded, and the reflection from participants.* |  |

**Strategic Initiative 3**

MLS will take the lead in facilitating important conversations, and support member-facing initiatives focused on DEI: diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and social justice.

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| Goal | Actions | Measurement of Success | **Monthly work towards goal** |
| MLS will integrate the core values of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and social justice into its policies, practices, procedures, and programs. | Utilizing learnings from our work last year, MLS will continue its review of documents, resources and practices to ensure they align with core values.  In partnership with trusted experts, MLS will begin an accessibility audit of MLS services. | *MLS will demonstrate both increased resource allocation as well as substantive, visible progress in representation throughout MLS services.* | We drafted an accessibility statement for events that we will begin using to inform members about the process for requesting an accommodation to attend an event. |
| Following the lead of trusted experts, MLS will build awareness in using the DEI tenets with member library staff to identify and eliminate barriers to inclusive library services. | Utilizing established services, MLS will showcase member libraries that are using the core values of DEI within their communities. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the DEI learning opportunities hosted and the reflection from participants.* |  |

**Save the date:** MLS Annual Meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 7, 2022 at Devens Common Center.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**List of documents for the September 1, 2022, Regular Monthly Board Meeting:**

1. Agenda for the September 1, 2022, Regular Monthly Board Meeting
2. Draft Minutes from the August 4, 2022 Regular Monthly Board Meeting
3. Agenda #7 Legislative Agenda Motion
4. Agenda #8- Summary of proposed changes to the Construction Program
5. Agenda #9- Discussion/ review of the FY2025 State Aid to Public Libraries Policies (Tabled until October 6, 2022 Meeting)

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 P.M.

Text, letter

Description automatically generated

Stacy DeBole

Secretary