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

**Date** : Thursday, February 1, 2024

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

**Place** : Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Offices

Boston, MA

**Board**

**Present** : Debby Conrad, Chair; Karen Traub, Secretary; Kate Chang; Mary Ann Cluggish; Joyce Linehan

**Board** : Vicky Biancolo, Vice Chair; Barbara Barros; George Comeau, Esq.;

**Present** Jessica Vilas Novas

**Zoom**

**Staff Present:**

James Lonergan, Director; Heather Backman, Library Building Specialist; Celeste Bruno, Communications Director; Andrea Bono-Bunker, Library Building Specialist; Tracey Dimant, Head of Operations and Budget; Allyson Dowds, Consultant to Special Populations; Sue Faiella, Accountant; Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory & Development; Rachel Masse, Assistant to the Director; June Thammasnong, Communications Specialist

**Staff Zoom:**

Kate Butler, Library Information Systems Specialist; Jennifer Inglis, State Aid Specialist; Jaccavrie McNeely, Electronic Services Specialist; Cate Merlin, Head of State Programs; Uechi Ng, Administrative Assistant; Lillian Sutton, Administrative Assistant

**Observers Zoom:**

Courtney Andree, Executive Director, Massachusetts Center for the Book; Eileen Chandler, Network Administrator, Cape Libraries Automated Materials Sharing (CLAMS); Aida Gennis, Trustee Chair, Wayland Free Public Library; Al Hayden, Acting Director, Peabody Institute Library, Peabody; Jason Homer, Library Director, Worcester Public Library; Chris Lindquist, Director, Wayland Free Public Library; Kathy Lussier, Network Administrator, North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE); Alex Reczkowski, Library Director, Berkshire Athenaeum, Pittsfield; Fae Saulenas, Saugus Citizen; Brad Schmidt, Massachusetts Library System; Dave Slater, Network Administrator, Old Colony Library Network (OCLN); Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System; Angela Veizaga, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Library for the Commonwealth

**Meeting called to order by Chair Conrad**

Chair Conrad called the meeting to order at 10:01 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 Barros- Present Zoom | Commissioner Cluggish- Present | Commissioner Linehan- Present |
| Commissioner Biancolo- Present Zoom | Commissioner Comeau- Present Zoom | Commissioner Traub- Present |
| Commissioner Chang- Present | 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- January 4, 2024 Minutes; #8- Consideration of approval of municipalities requesting waivers for the FY2024 municipal appropriation requirement in the FY2024 State Aid to Public Libraries Program within the 5% threshold; #10- Consideration of approval of a Joining Network Grant; #11- Consideration of approval of the FY2025 Plan of Service and Program and Budget for the Massachusetts Center for the Book; #12- Consideration of approval of the FY2025 Plan of Service and Program and Budget for the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) and Monthly Report; and #16- Adjournment.

Commissioner Cluggish seconded.

A roll call vote will be taken for agenda #9- Consideration of approval of a petition for a waiver of the municipal appropriation requirement for the FY2024 State Aid to Public Libraries Program above the 5% threshold.

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

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| Commissioner Barros- Yes | Commissioner Comeau- Yes | Commissioner Linehan- Yes |
| Commissioner Biancolo- Yes | Commissioner Conrad- Yes | Commissioner Traub- Yes |
| Commissioner Cluggish- Yes | Commissioner DeBole- Yes | Commissioner Vilas Novas- Yes |

**The motion passed.**

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

**January 4, 2024**

Chair Conrad asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 4, 2024 Monthly Meeting as presented.

Commissioner Chang noted a correction on page 7 line 9.

Commissioner Linehan moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded to approve the minutes from the January 4, 2024, Regular Monthly Meeting with the corrections stated above.

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

**Chair’s Report**

Chair Conrad presented the following report:

Before I begin my January report, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the co-chairs of the Massachusetts Library Association Legislative Committee – Will Adamcyk, Nora Blake, and Kathy Lussier (in alphabetical order!). Their dedication and professionalism have resulted in high visibility State House hearings and briefings in support of legislation that will benefit all libraries in the Commonwealth. They are coordinating a record number of legislative advocacy events being held across the state. They are working closely with the Library Caucus in the Legislature as well as the MBLC, the MLA Intellectual Freedom/Social Responsibility Committee, and the Massachusetts School Library Association. I can only guess at the number of hours they are devoting to this work and they deserve our thanks.

This has been a busy month for me as well. On January 8 I attended the monthly meeting of the Massachusetts Library System. On January 10 I participated in a New Directors Virtual Training workshop sponsored by MLA and coordinated with Maura Deedy at the MBLC. My role was to encourage new directors to participate in advocacy events and communicate regularly with their legislators. I was unable to attend the hearing held by the Joint Committee on Education regarding Free Expression but I was able to view the recording at a later date. There was some powerful testimony submitted by the library community as well as third party supporters such as the ACLU. The recording can be accessed on the Legislative website and while I had to fast forward through some of the testimony concerning other legislation it was well worth my time. On January 20 I attended the Massachusetts Municipal Association annual convention at the MBLC Booth in the exhibit hall. On January 23 I attended the virtual meeting of the MBLC Executive Committee followed by the Legislative briefing about Representative Ruth Balser’s eBook bill H3239 An Act empowering library access to electronic books and digital audiobooks. On January 26 I attended the Cape and Islands Legislative Luncheon at the Centerville Public Library. And on January 31 I attended virtually the legislative briefing related to the intellectual freedom bills that have been filed. In my spare time I have been working with my local Friends of the Library group to hold an Open House for the library in early February. I am taking my own advice and advocating at the local level for municipal support.

**Commissioner Activities**

**Commissioner Biancolo**

* January 19- Attended meeting of MLA Legislative Committee, virtual
* January 20- Attended MMA Conference in Boston
* Launched the Director Search Committee with several communications with MBLC staff, chair of the board, and committee members
* January 22- Chaired the first meeting of the full Director Search Committee, virtual
* January 23- Attended meeting of Executive Board, virtual

**Commissioner Chang**

Commissioner Chang of Somerville is the Vice President of Community & Government Relations at Pine Street Inn in Boston. She also has extensive experience working on political campaigns and as an independent consultant advising on legislative and advocacy strategies.

Ms. Chang currently serves on the boards of Reproductive Equity Now (formerly NARAL ProChoice MA) and Grinnell Museum and is a Trustee at the Charles River Alliance of Boaters.

**Commissioner Cluggish**

* January 9- Took a 2.5 hour tour of the Cambridge Public Library with Commissioner Traub

**Commissioner Comeau**

* January 19- Spoke at Legislative Breakfast in Hopedale

**Commissioner Linehan**

* January 9- accompanied the Lt. Governor to a presentation by Ellen Clegg and Dan Kennedy for their new book
* January 10- Attended the State House hearing on Sen. Cyr’s bill
* January 19- Attended the MMA Convention at the Hynes
* January 24- Attended Mass Creative’s Creative Sector Advocacy Day at the State House.
* Also, I have agreed to be a judge for a youth art contest organized by the Friend of the West Roxbury Library.

**Commissioner Traub**

* January 10- Joint Committee on Education Hearing virtual
* January 16- Legislative Advocacy for New Directors webinar
* January 17- Greenfield Library Legislative Breakfast
* January 18- Mass Municipal Association Convention
* January 22- Director’s search committee meeting virtual
* January 23 -MBLC Executive Committee meeting virtual
* January 24- Submitted written testimony in support of H4235
* January 26- Williamstown Legislative Breakfast
* January 31- Legislative briefing on bills S2447/H4235 virtual

**Commissioner Vilas Novas**

* January 31- Attended anti-book ban
* Haverhill Public Library had a bad flood, work has been going on last couple of weeks

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

Meetings/activities highlights since the last monthly Board meeting:

* January 8—Mass. Library System (MLS) Executive Board meeting, virtual
* January 10—Mass. Library Association (MLA)/Mass. School Library Association (MSLA)/MBLC New Director Legislative Training Webinar
* January 10—Testified at Joint Committee on Education Hearing on S.2528 & H.4229, State House
* January 16—Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) “Voices for Libraries” 2024 FAQ Session
* January 17—American Library Association (ALA) Membership Meeting, virtual
* January 19—Bancroft Library Legislative Breakfast, Hopedale
* January 19—MLA Legislative Committee meeting, virtual
* January 19—Mass. Municipal Association (MMA) Annual Meeting, Boston
* January 22—Meeting with new House Ways & Means Analyst Sarah King, virtual
* January 23— MBLC Executive Committee meeting, virtual
* January 23—MLA E-book bill (H.3239) briefing, State House
* January 24—Quarterly check-in call with David Leonard, Boston Public Library President, and Sarah Sogigian, MLS Executive Director
* January 26—Centerville Public Library Legislative Lunch, Barnstable
* January 31—MLA Anti-book ban bills (S.2447/H.4235) briefing, State House

Please note: In addition to the above highlights, I’ve been contacted by and met informally, either in person or remotely, with five potential candidates for the MBLC director position.

**FY2025 Budget:** Governor Healey’s FY2025 budget proposal was released on January 24th. Except for a slight increase of $20,014 to our agency’s administration line (7000-9101), our budget lines are level-funded. Rob will provide more detail on the Governor’s budget proposal as well as next steps in the legislative process. We will be included in one of the eight upcoming budget hearings to be held across the Commonwealth by the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

This year ALA is again supporting advocates from key states/Congressional Districts to go to Washington, DC for a “Fly-in” event on March 6-7 to meet with members of their federal delegations. ALA contacted us looking for someone from the Worcester area and we recommended Jason Homer, the Worcester Public Library Director. Jason will be going to DC with Maria McCauley, the Cambridge Public Library Director (Maria and I participated in “virtual Fly-ins” during the early pandemic years). We will be updating our [website](https://mblclsta.com/) on how we use our Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds (both statewide and by Congressional district) from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for their use in conjunction with their meetings.

I testified at the **Joint Committee on Education** hearing on Wednesday, January 10th that included S.2528, An Act Regarding Free Expression, Senator Julian Cyr’s anti-book banning bill. We worked with Sen. Cyr’s staff on the language for the sections focused on Chapter 78. Rep John Moran’s similar bill, H.4229, was also included in the hearing that day. A recording of the hearing is available at: <https://malegislature.gov/Events/Hearings/Detail/4815> (please note: Sen. Cyr and Rep. Moran started speaking on their bills at around 8:20, then other bills were discussed until the in-person speakers for the two anti-book ban bills started around 2:47:19. Virtual testimony on the anti-book ban bills starts at  3:45:54.)

Governor Healey released an **Executive Order** titled [Instituting Skills-Based Hiring Practices](https://www.mass.gov/executive-orders/no-627-instituting-skills-based-hiring-practices) on January 25th. Executive department offices and agencies “are directed to utilize skills-based employment practices in their efforts to attract, recruit, hire, retain, and develop the careers of talented employees.” In addition, job classifications issued or updated after the date of this Executive Order “shall not specify a minimum level of education as an entrance requirement unless the Human Resources Division (HRD) determines that a particular level of education is necessary to perform the job after completing a job analysis.  Job postings issued or updated after the date of this Executive Order may include preferred education requirements in excess of minimum entrance requirements only with approval of the agency’s cabinet secretary and the Human Resources Division.”

We will be awaiting further guidance from HRD on skills-based hiring practices policy and training. While we are an independent agency, we generally follow Executive Orders when applicable. A further question will be how this new Order may impact the [Director Personnel Requirements](https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/regs-standards.php#standards) in our State Aid to Public Libraries program.

**ERate update:** Our ongoing training webinar series continued on January 25, 2024, with the fourth installment in our E-rate Training series led by MBLC’s E-Rate consultant Aleck Johnson. Contracting and Applying for Funds covered bid evaluation, awarding of contracts, and filing the Form 471.  The session covered these topics in detail, using examples, and included a walkthrough of how a library would complete and file the E-rate Form 471. A recording of the session will be posted on the [MBLC’s E-rate trainings page](https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/e-rate/trainings.php).

**Digital Equity Update:** In January the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [announced](https://www.fcc.gov/fcc-taking-steps-wind-down-affordable-connectivity-program) that the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) will wind down by April of 2024 if Congress does not appropriate more funding. As part of the ACP over [364,304 households in Massachusetts](https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/) are enrolled receiving monthly benefits that significantly reduce the cost of high-speed internet connectivity.

On January 10, 2024 Rob Favini and Kate Butler met with Liv Homestead from the **Western Mass Digital Equity Library** **Network** to discuss how the network could reach out to more libraries to participate in their education and technology programs.

**Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) State Program Report (SPR):** In our annual SPR the MBLC reported on 35 projects documenting the spending of our Federal FY2022 IMLS funding. Reporting included projects from the MBLC Direct Grant program. Every year the MBLC can designate specific Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) projects as exemplary to highlight impactful and innovative programming. This year the following three projects were identified as exemplary:

**Ashfield and Colrain: Rural libraries, Rural jails: Outreach to Incarcerated Community:**  
Lending, reading, and discussing books is such a basic standard of service for libraries that its importance is often overshadowed by the latest trends. Yet this project demonstrated that those services remain deeply meaningful. The success of this project lies with the personal connections established and the supportive environment that was created around providing those basic services. The impact can ultimately be linked to the care taken by the project to put the community being served at the center of the work, adapting to their needs, and being a true resource to them – now and in the future. The project has established the foundation of a long-term relationship that can outlast individual commitments. It can serve as a model for public libraries on how to develop services for incarcerated individuals and incorporate a transitional library experience for them. This project also reinforced the critical need of policies and procedures designed with the community in mind, something every library should prioritize for those they serve.

**Go Local: Watertown Collective Memory Project:**This project consistently adapted its plans and approach to best suit the needs of the community. Multiple methods were used throughout to broaden the scope of who contributed and shared with the project. The project incorporated suggestions and the result was both a robust inclusive community collection as well as sustainable workflows the library can continue to use in future years.

**Sawyer Free Library’s Anytime STEM Learning:**Sawyer Free Library’s Young Gloucester Scientists Club demonstrated an effective model for meaningful out of school learning. This project emphasized an exploratory approach and encouraged youth to actively think like scientists by observing, questioning, and experimenting with the world around them. It introduced participants to Gloucester community members with careers across a variety of STEM fields, offering another level of depth to what STEM can look like as an adult. This project also provided an excellent example of connected learning.

**Ally Dowds** has had an immediate impact in her role as our new Consultant to Special Populations as she was interviewed by WBUR for a story on Cape Cod prisoners’ access to books in jail libraries. <https://www.wbur.org/news/2024/01/23/barnstable-county-jail-library-cape-cod-falmouth>

On January 17, 2024, Maura Deedy hosted her final **Friends Coffee Hour**. It was fitting that her last event held for the MBLC was with a group that she has supported and helped to create a strong community of library friends with her innovative coffee hours.   
  
The **Communications Team** developed the materials and webpage used for the Mass. Municipal Association annual meeting and trade show and set up the booth. A new “MBLC at a Glance” was created with brief program descriptions and staff contact information. Other print materials that were available included: the legislative agenda, the library ecosystem chart, and a new construction information sheet. A bookmark with a QR code that leads to a webpage on the agency site with more detailed program information was available for staff and commissioners to hand to visitors. Vistors to the booth were tracked and the team is asking for staff and commissioners to provide feedback on their experience in this quick survey: <https://forms.gle/DQtV2T5a71kkhkyc7>   
  
The new **State Aid to Public Libraries website** is live: <https://mblcstateaid.com/> The team worked with Uechi Ng and the State Programs unit to develop the new State Aid online brochure/microsite for municipal officials. The site explains the benefits of the State Aid to Public Libraries program, offers a search so municipal officials can see how much their community saved by being certified in the State Aid Program, and includes information on how much State Aid awards have increased for individual communities over the decade (for most it’s been a 50% increase or more).   
  
The Team also coordinated with the Massachusetts Library Association to provide the data and design for the Freedom to Read briefing sheet. The following data was included and will be developed into a press release:

**The impact of attempts to restrict access in Massachusetts**   
According to the American Library Association (<https://public.flourish.studio/story/1882667/>), there were 45 book challenges in Massachusetts in 2022 affecting 57 titles. That’s more than the past 9 years (2013-2021) combined which totaled 38 challenges.

In \*2023, attempts to ban books in the Commonwealth continued with **more than 2,000 complaints and informal challenges and 135 formal challenges in public libraries.**  
Types of formal challenges:  
38 formal challenges to library materials  
64 formal challenges to library services like exhibits and displays  
33 formal challenges to library programs

\*\*Nearly 25% of school and public librarian respondents combined reported being harassed on social media; 22% reported being harassed via email; 18% report being harassed in person related to book challenges or program challenges.

\*Public libraries that reported a challenge in 2023:  
Agawam, Amherst, Ashfield, Athol, Belmont, Billerica, Boston, Bridgewater, Brookline, Canton, Chilmark, Clinton, Dedham, Dracut, Fitchburg, Foxborough, Hamilton – Wenham, Harwich Brooks Lancaster, Medford, Natick (Morse) Newton, Norfolk, Pembroke, Pepperell, Quincy, Reading, Rehoboth, Southborough, Southampton, Sturbridge, Sunderland, Swansea, Taunton, Watertown, Westborough, Wilbraham, Wilmington, Winchester

\*Data from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners State Aid ARIS report. A formal challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group using the library’s policy. An informal complaint is when a patron expresses concern about the appropriateness of a library program, service, or material. It does not trigger the reconsideration procedure. \*\* Data from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners informal survey of library directors who were asked to report on activity from June 30, 2022 to July 1, 2023

**Legislative Report**

Rob Favini, Government Liaison presented the following report:

**Legislative Breakfasts/Events**

The 2024 Legislative Breakfast season is in full swing. To date events have been held in Greenfield, Hopedale, Williamstown, and Barnstable (Centerville Library). These legislative events continue to be a great venue for library staff, users, and supporters to meet with legislators.

It is our goal to have a commissioner present at each event to say a few words on the importance of the areas of focus on this year’s legislative agenda. Currently we are looking for a commissioner to attend the February 23, 2024, Breakfast in Cambridge and the March 8, 2024, breakfast in Medway.

A complete list of event details can be found on the [MBLC 2023/24 Legislative Breakfast Calendar spreadsheet](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1oKNnRlQjduGEpt8CNLqJt_oM8kPLK_XthpU4PpeiiX8/edit?usp=sharing).

**Book Legislation Update**

Activity around the six book related bills was brisk in January dominated by the following hearings and briefings.

**S.2528/H.4229 An Act regarding free expression**On January 10, 2024, the Joint Committee on Education held a hearing on Senator Cyr and Representative Moran’s S.2528/H.4229 An Act regarding free expression. A recording of the hearing can be found here: <https://malegislature.gov/Events/Hearings/Detail/4815> The hearing included several other bills unrelated to libraries. Some helpful time stamps to help you navigate: Sen. Cyr and Rep. Moran speak on their bills at around 8:20, then speakers for the two anti-book ban bills start around 2:47:19.

**H.3239 An Act empowering library access to electronic books and digital audiobooks**On January 23, 2024, The Library Legislative Caucus and the Massachusetts Library Association sponsored a legislative briefing on H.3239 An Act empowering library access to electronic books and digital audiobooks. After opening remarks by the Bill’s sponsor Representative Ruth Balser, MLA Legislative Committee Co-Chair Kathy Lussier presented and moderated a panel of speakers that included Boston Public Library President David Leonard, MCLA Associate Dean for Library Services Emily Alling, and Director of Copyright and Information Policy at Harvard University Kyle Courtney. A recording of the briefing can be found here: [Library Caucus Briefing - 1-23-24.mp4](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/malegislature-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/seamus_corbett_malegislature_gov/EU7Lb_oM62BDoTwcOY7g1YcBhrN4LRHpxWvwJhsJZ7dqWQ?nav=eyJyZWZlcnJhbEluZm8iOnsicmVmZXJyYWxBcHAiOiJPbmVEcml2ZUZvckJ1c2luZXNzIiwicmVmZXJyYWxBcHBQbGF0Zm9ybSI6IldlYiIsInJlZmVycmFsTW9kZSI6InZpZXciLCJyZWZlcnJhbFZpZXciOiJNeUZpbGVzTGlua0NvcHkifX0&e=nhjbon__;!!CPANwP4y!TORamyE30ptTwsP1eKGJWWRVfMStgMEV030iN3q6fJbg7LDUyfACCHAbieRt971SIO7X5NwQmfJKSPu0FQ3jNIFE$)

**S.2447/H.4235 An Act protecting against attempts to ban, remove, or restrict library access to materials**On January 31, 2024, the Library Legislative Caucus and the Massachusetts Library Association sponsored a legislative briefing on S.2447/H.4235 An Act protecting against attempts to ban, remove, or restrict library access to materialssponsored by Senator Oliveira and Representative Saunders.

**Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Recap**

More than 1,300 municipal officials and employees attended the 45th MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show on January 19th and 20th in Boston. The MBLC was one of 200 exhibitors who participated in the trade show at the Hynes Convention Center. The MBLC booth showcased the FY25 Legislative agenda, the MPL Construction Program, summer reading programs, and the work of our affiliates. The booth was visited by Mayors, Town managers, City Councilors, Select Board members, and library fans from across the commonwealth.

Many thanks go out to Rachel, Celeste, and June for preparing beautiful materials and setting up the booth (and tracking down our missing carpeting and padding!) and to MBLC staff (Andrea, Heather, Cate, James, June and Jen) for putting in time at the booth. In addition, a special thank you goes out to Commissioners Conrad, Linehan, and Biancolo for staffing the booth.

**Governor Healy’s Budget Recommendations**

As reported last week Governor Healy released her administration’s [FY2025 budget recommendation](https://budget.digital.mass.gov/govbudget/fy25/). The spreadsheet below breakdowns down the recommendations by our budget lines. The impact on the MBLC’s budget lines is basically a recommendation for level funding across the board.

Table

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There is a slight increase to our agency line to accommodate previously approved salary increases, but it is safe to say that the starting point this year falls below our [FY25 Legislative Agenda](https://www.mblclegislativeagenda.com/) ask. As you know, the Legislature will also have a role in setting the budget in the coming months. This makes the upcoming Legislative Breakfasts and related events even more important to get the message out regarding the increased importance of library funding.

More about the Governor’s Budget:

Detailed press release from the Healey/Driscoll Administration: <https://www.wamc.org/news/2024-01-25/berkshire-legislators-react-to-massachusetts-gov-healeys-budget-proposal>

WBUR’s breakdown of the budget: <https://www.wbur.org/news/2024/01/24/massachusetts-budget-proposal-maura-healey>

Berkshire legislators react to Gov. Healey’s Budget: <https://www.wamc.org/news/2024-01-25/berkshire-legislators-react-to-massachusetts-gov-healeys-budget-proposal>

Mass Municipal Association’s breakdown: <https://www.mma.org/gov-healey-files-fy2025-state-budget-proposal/>

MassBudget’s Look at the FY25 Governor’s Budget Proposal: <https://massbudget.org/2024/01/24/fy25-gov-budget-first-look/>

Track the FY25 budget process here: <https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2025/GovernorsBudget>

**Report from the Director’s Search Committee**

Commissioner Biancolo, Search Committee Chair presented the following update on the Director’s Search.

The committee welcomed Ella Stocker as representative of the Massachusetts School Library Association to complete our mighty 13.

On January 22 we met over Zoom, where we got to know each other a bit, went over the charge and timeline, and discussed questions that arose.

Candidate materials look great, and more are coming in until February 9.

I have all confidence that this group will find a pool of terrific candidates for the board to consider.

**Consideration of approval of municipalities requesting waivers for the FY2024 municipal appropriation requirement in the FY2024 State Aid to Public Libraries Program within the 5% threshold**

Cate Merlin, Head of State Programs presented the 3 libraries that were petitioning the Board for a Waiver of the MAR that were below the five percent threshold set by the Board at the January Board Meeting for not being disproportionately cut in relationship to other departments within their municipality.

The 3 municipalities seeking a waiver are Clarksburg, Lawrence, and Stoughton.

Commissioner Linehan moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners grants a waiver of the FY2024 Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) and certifies that the communities on the attached list have met minimum standards of free public library service and awards each a FY2024 Library Incentive Grant (LIG), a FY2024 Municipal Equalization Grant (MEG)and a FY2024 Nonresident Circulation (NRC) offset in the indicated amounts, totaling $ 190,723.07, and authorizes any additional FY2024 State Aid to Public Libraries disbursements that may be possible toward the end of the grant cycle.

**Consideration of approval of a petition for a waiver of the municipal appropriation requirement for the FY2024 State Aid to Public Libraries Program above the 5% threshold.**

Director Lonergan spoke of the Wayland Free Public Library and how it was an error with the math from the previous director.

Commissioner Chang moved and Commissioner Linehan seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners grants a waiver “with reservation” of the FY2024 Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) and certifies that Wayland has met minimum standards of free public library service and awards it a FY2024 Library Incentive Grant (LIG), a FY2024 Municipal Equalization Grant (MEG), and a FY2024 Nonresident Circulation (NRC) offset in the indicated amounts, totaling $ 15,751.07, and authorizes any additional FY2024 State Aid to Public Libraries disbursements that may be possible toward the end of the grant cycle.

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| Commissioner Barros- Yes | Commissioner Comeau- Left Meeting | Commissioner Linehan- Yes |
| Commissioner Biancolo- Yes | Commissioner Conrad- Yes | Commissioner Traub- Yes |
| Commissioner Cluggish- Yes | Commissioner DeBole- Yes | Commissioner Vilas Novas- Yes |

**Consideration of approval of a Joining Network Grant**

Kate Butler, Library Information Systems Specialist presented the joining network grant.

The Joining Networks grant allows public libraries in municipalities with populations under 10,000 to join an automated resource sharing network for the first time. This grant works in tandem with the Small Libraries in Networks program, which offsets the annual network membership fees for small public libraries.

The C/W MARS network will add Becket Athenaeum (Becket and Washington), Hamilton Memorial Library (Chester), and Goshen Free Public Library (Goshen) as members in FY24. This grant provides for network on-boarding fees and offsets the first year’s annual membership assessment.

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| Network | Municipality | Award |
| CW MARS | Worcester | $10,094 |
| **$10,094** | | |

Commissioner Cluggish moved and Commissioner Traub seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the following Joining Networks grant totaling $10,094 for FY2024, to be paid out of line item 7000-9506.

**Consideration of approval of the FY2025 Plan of Service and Program and Budget for the Massachusetts Center for the Book**

Courtney Andree, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Center for the Book presented the FY2025 Plan of Service and Program and Budget at the January Meeting.

Commissioner Traub moved and Commissioner Linehan seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the FY2025 Plan of Service and Program and Budget filed on January 4, 2024 for the Massachusetts Center for the Book, with a bottom line of $420,000 as presented in agenda item 11.

**Consideration of approval of the FY2025 Plan of Service and Program and Budget for the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) and Monthly Report**

Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Library System presented the FY2025 Plan of Service and Program and Budget at the January Meeting.

Commissioner Linehan moved and Commissioner Chang seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the FY2025 Plan of Service and Program and Budget filed on January 4, 2024 for the Massachusetts Library System, with a bottom line of $12,438,200 as presented in agenda item 12.

**Presentation and Dicussion of the FY2025 plan of service and program and budget for the library for the commonwealth**

Angela Veizaga, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Library for the Commonwealth presented the program and budget.

As the Library for the Commonwealth, the Boston Public Library (BPL) will continue to expand access to library services to residents across the Commonwealth. Our staff is committed to delivering excellent reference and research assistance, creating and supporting educational activities, facilitating pursuits of personal interest and growth, and enhancing the discovery of

our shared cultural heritage through the development and maintenance of unique print and

digital collections.

The BPL’s e-card program, now linked with the other Networks across the Commonwealth via

Quipiu, allows Massachusetts residents to remotely and instantly access a wealth of online resources, including e-books, audiobooks, music, television, movies, graphic novels, and

newspapers and magazines from around the world. Our extensive collection of subscription

databases and e-resources provides sound, authoritative information from trusted sources.

Through remote reference, the creation of research guides and online tutorials, our subject

specialists can assist patrons in the use of these tools from nearly anywhere and at any time.

BPL will continue to focus on digitization services, metadata consultations, and content hosting for libraries and cultural institutions across Massachusetts to protect, preserve, and disseminate their unique and valuable works. The addition of an online historic newspaper repository to integrate with collections hosted on DigitalCommonwealth.org remains a priority. We will

maintain key partnerships to strengthen this program and reach out to new organizations to

diversify the content represented in Digital Commonwealth. In addition, BPL will be reorganizing around a new priority of Digital Engagement, helping residents use the digitized collections that we have invested in. Through a combination of state, city, and private funding, we are in the process of expanding our work around Community History and Digitization with the goal to illuminate the histories of our communities that are often marginalized or overlooked. This new team will be continuing the work we have begun in our Boston neighborhoods, while also sharing tools and best practices with librarians across the State to help so that Digital Commonwealth can become rich with the stories of the underserved.

For FY25, the BPL will continue to focus its institutional priorities on finding ways to help Americans become more resilient and able to face the challenges of today, through programs,

resources, and services that promote youth engagement, economic recovery, workforce development, diversity, racial equity, and inclusion, and civic engagement & discourse. We are

excited to add another statewide resource called SkillMill from Interplay Learning which teaches trade skills using virtual reality and other online tools.

The board will vote on the LFC Program and Budget at the March 7, 2024 meeting.

**Report from Massachusetts Library System**

**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.* | Changes made by the new School Library Membership Policy are being implemented.  Sarah Sogigian and Rob Favini (MBLC) launched their 2024 Road Trip program  Two Masscat public library members (Huntington and Becket) have signed contracts to join C/WMARS, with support from MLS. |
| 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.* | We launched the five-part webinar series with ALA on intellectual freedom topics. Three webinars occurred in February with 176 participants at the live events and 94 views of the recordings. Two additional webinars will occur in March. Recordings of the webinars will be available for 18 months.  We continued working with MBLC and other organizations to host a webinar series on mental health supports and libraries. One webinar occurred in February and two will occur in March.  Staff from MLS, MBLC, public libraries, and other New England state libraries began the *Touchpoints for Libraries* train- the-trainer program to teach the Touchpoints program to Massachusetts library staff. The training will continue in March.  We continued working with other New England states on this year’s Summer Summit, to help libraries prepare for the youth and adult summer library program. The event is scheduled for March 31. |
| 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.* |  |

# **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.* | We scheduled a series of four workshops with the Employers Association of the NorthEast on HR topics relevant for libraries (employment Law, interviewing, performance management, and documentation skills). They will take place March through May.  We are working with EANE to schedule four community chats on HR related topics. |
| 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.* | We launched the Language Learning Grant program and approved 20 applications in February. |

# **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.* |  |
| 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.* |  |

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:04 P.M.



Karen Traub

Secretary