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

**Date** : Thursday, July 13, 2023

**Time** : 1:00 P.M.

**Place** : Remote Meeting

**Board**

**Present** : Debby Conrad, Chair; Deb Abraham, Vice Chair; Stacy DeBole, Secretary; Vicky Biancolo; Mary Ann Cluggish; George Comeau, Esq.; Joyce Linehan; Karen Traub; Jessica Vilas Novas

**Staff Present Zoom:**

James Lonergan, Director; Andrea Bono-Bunker, Library Building Specialist; Kate Butler, Electronic Services Specialist; Maura Deedy, Library Advisory Specialist; Tracey Dimant, Head of Operations & Budget; Lyndsay Forbes, Project Manager & Grant Specialist; Jen Inglis, State Aid Specialist; Paul Kissman, Library Information Systems Specialist; Rachel Masse, Assistant to the Director; Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs; Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist; Lilli Sutton, Administrative Assistant; June Thammasnong, Communications Specialist

**Observers Present Zoom:**

Courtney Andree, Executive Director, Mass Center for the Book; Russell Boekenkroeger, Trustee and Building Committee Chair, Lynnfield Library;Michael Colford, Director of Library Services, Boston Public Library; Pat Kelly, Head of Reference, Lynnfield Public Library; Marita Klements, Assistant Director and Head of Adult Services; Laurie Lessner, Assistant Director, SAILS Library Network; Kathy Lussier, Executive Director, NOBLE Library Network; Mary Kronholm, Former Commissioner and Trustee of the Porter Library, Blandford; Abby Porter, Director, Lynnfield Public Library; Jaclyn Powers, Assistant Director, Beebe Memorial Library, Wakefield; David Slater, Executive Director, OCLN Library Network; Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS)

**Meeting called to order by Chair Conrad**

Chair Conrad called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.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 Zoom | Commissioner Comeau- Present Zoom | Commissioner Linehan- Present Zoom |
| Commissioner Biancolo- Present Zoom | Commissioner Conrad- Present Zoom | Commissioner Traub- Present Zoom |
| Commissioner Cluggish- Present Zoom | Commissioner DeBole- Present Zoom | 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 #7- Consideration of approval of a Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP) Partial Provisional Grant Award; #8- Consideration of approval of the FY2024 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant Awards 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- Yes | Commissioner Conrad- Yes | Commissioner Vilas Novas- Yes |

**The motion passed.**

**Chair’s Report**

Chair Conrad presented the following report:

The week of July 2 I was in Chicago attending several large family gatherings. It was generally known I am a retired librarian and that I am currently serving on the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. A number of people approached me during the week to express great concern and opposition to the efforts to ban books. I answered a lot of questions about the number of book challenges libraries are seeing and the immense pressure that library staff members are facing. My relatives who still live in Illinois were proud of the steps that state has taken to combat censorship attempts. Here in Massachusetts State Representative Jim Hawkins from Attleboro and Senator Julian Cyr from the Cape and Islands have filed bills to prevent the banning of books in libraries in Massachusetts. The bill filed by Senator Cyr was developed in close cooperation with Board staff. I know James and Mary Rose will discuss this further.

I attended two excellent Zoom webinars sponsored by the Massachusetts Municipal Association on June 5 and June 12. These webinars were developed for municipal and public officials to help them develop policies about public meetings that comply with the 2023 State Supreme Judicial Court’s ruling that public officials could request but not mandate polite discourse at public meetings. The webinars focused on how to conduct public comment agenda items and what is legal in terms of protecting first amendment rights while ensuring that public meetings do not turn into chaos. Over the past few months, when we reach the Public Comment agenda item, I have stated how the Commissioners will receive public comment – limiting comments to 2 minutes and no more than 10 minutes total for public comment. This does not preclude the Chair opening up specific agenda items for testimony or questions by Commissioners as appropriate. Public comment is just that – not a question/answer time nor time for debate between the Board and the person making the comments. We have not yet had any member of the public participate in the Public Comment time, but Commissioners are reminded not to engage with the person making the comment. Board staff will be monitoring remote participants to ensure that the 2-minute time limit is adhered to. The Board Chair will be responsible for ensuring in person public comment is restricted to our time limits. As always, written testimony can be submitted to us as well.

Maura Deedy sent out an email with information about a webinar being held on July 18 about Open Meeting and Public Records requirements. I am registered for that and encourage Commissioners to attend as time permits. Of particular interest to me is how Open Meeting rules apply to email communications.

On June 13 I attended virtually the quarterly meeting of the Massachusetts Center for the Books, the first attended by Courtney Andree, their newly appointed Director.

On June 15 I sat in on the organizing meeting for the Board Nominating Committee, chaired by Commissioner DeBole as secretary. Commissioner Biancolo and Commissioner Traub also served on the committee. Commissioner DeBole will be presenting the Nominating Committee slate later in the meeting. The term for new officers begins at the August meeting.

On June 16 I attended the virtual meeting of the Massachusetts Library Association’s Legislative Committee. This was the wrap-up meeting for FY2023 events and an opportunity to potential new members to attend. Deborah Froggat, representative from the Massachusetts School Library Association, presented a draft MSLA “Right to Read” statement. Debbie is going to be working with other collaborators to finalize the language and I expect she will be attending a future meeting of the Board to explain the statement and seek our support.

On June 27 I attended the Virtual Executive Committee meeting.

And finally, welcome to our newest Commissioner, Joyce Linehan. I was able to virtually participate in her Commissioner orientation on July 11. Joyce was a Trustee at the Boston Public Library and served as Chief of Policy and Planning for the City of Boston. Joyce, would you tell us a little more about yourself?

Thank you. We look forward to working with you, particularly when the Board begins developing its next strategic plan.

Chair Conrad introduced newly appointed Commissioner Joyce Linehan and asked her to say a few words about herself. Ms. Linehan said she was a native and resident of Dorchester, Massachusetts. She currently is the Specialist Assistant to the President at the Massachusetts College of Art & Design which is the only publicly funded independent art & design college in the United States.

Ms. Linehan served under former Mayor Marty Walsh as the Chief of Policy & Planning. She also did a lot of close work with the Boston Public Library on a host of issues. She has also had a career in the music business and in Public Relations and a very happy library user and thrilled to be appointed to this Board.

**Commissioner Activities**

**Commissioner Abraham**

* June 8: Book Ban Conference
* June 27: Executive Board

**Commissioner Biancolo**

* June 15 & June 19: Meeting about nominating committee for Executive Board
* July 13: Attended the Ribbon Cutting Celebration at the Greenfield Public Library

**Commissioner Cluggish**

* June 16: MLA Legislative Committee Meeting
* July 11: Attended Ashland Public Library Summer Reading Event

**Commissioner Comeau**

* July 13: Spoke at the Ribbon Cutting Celebration for the Greenfield Public Library
* Elected to his local Library Board in Canton

**Commissioner DeBole**

* June 15 & June 19: Meeting about nominating committee for Executive Board
* June 27: Executive Board

**Commissioner Traub**

* June 17: Said goodbye to the Leverett House in Greenfield
* June 15 & June 19: Meeting about nominating committee for Executive Board
* July 13: Attended the Ribbon Cutting Celebration at the Greenfield Public Library

**Commissioner Vilas Novas**

* June 10: Attended the Lawrence 50th Anniversary at the Main Branch
* June 20: Attended an ARIS Training
* June 12: Attended Haverhill Summer Reading Event

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

Meetings/activities highlights since the last monthly Board meeting:

* June 8—Broadband & Digital Equity Working Group meeting, virtual
* June 8—Library 2.023 Banned Books and Censorship virtual mini-conference
* June 9—Mass. Library System (MLS) Executive Board meeting, Marlborough
* June 12— Mass. Library Association (MLA) Executive Board Meeting, virtual
* June 13—Mass. Broadband and Digital Equity Summit, Union Station, Worcester
* June 13—Mass. Center for the Book Board meeting, virtual
* June 14— Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast (COSLINE) meeting, virtual
* June 15—Provided welcoming remarks for Mass. Municipal Assoc. webinar: Book Challenges, Library Collection Policies, and Mass. State Law
* June 15—MLS/MSLA/MLA/MBLC Intellectual Freedom Working Group meeting, virtual
* June 15—Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) EDI Engagement Group meeting, virtual
* June 16—MLA Legislative Committee meeting, virtual
* June 20—CW/MARS Users Group meeting, virtual
* June 26—Phone call with Jon Torcia, Deputy Director, Office of Boards and Commissions
* June 26—Meeting with Alex Nally, Legislative Director for Sen. Julian Cyr
* July 5—MLS Sustainable Funding Taskforce meeting, virtual
* July 10—MLS Executive Board meeting, virtual
* July 11—New Commissioner Orientation meeting, MBLC Office
* July 12— Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast (COSLINE) meeting, virtual

Regarding our **FY2024 operating budget**, Massachusetts began the new fiscal year on July 1 with a $6.6 billion interim budget that is in place until the end of July. Three of our budget lines are being considered by the Conference Committee working on the FY2024 operating budget. State Aid to Regional Libraries (7000-9401), State Aid to Public Libraries (7000-9501), and the Center for the Book (7000-9508) are being discussed in Conference to determine which of the figures, House or Senate, will be reported out to the full House and Senate for final votes. The House figures are higher for the Center for the Book ($420,000 vs. $400,000) and the Senate numbers are higher for State Aid to Regional Libraries (and above the Legislative Agenda request: $16,717,600 vs. $15,967,600) and for State Aid to Public Libraries ($17,600,000 vs. $16,825,000).

On the capital side, our annual cap for the MPLCP is now $25 million for FY2024. Regarding our request for a **new bond authorization**, the Healey/Driscoll administration plans to file new bond bills this summer and will include the MBLC’s $150 million request in the mix.

**Connectivity and Digital Equity Update:** On June 13th Paul Kissman, Kate Butler, Rob Favini, and I attended the Internet for All: MA Broadband Institute & Digital Equity Summit, at Union Station in Worcester. The event was co-hosted by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI). This day-long workshop brought together critical stakeholders in Massachusetts from the federal, state, tribal, and local governments, industry, and other key collaborators to discuss coordination on broadband and digital equity efforts as the Commonwealth prepares to receive significant broadband funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. A summary of the event can be found on the MBI website: <https://broadband.masstech.org/Massachusetts-Broadband-Digital-Equity-Summit>

**Intellectual Freedom and Library Materials Challenges:** TheMBLC has been in contact with state legislators regarding anti-book banning bills. Representative Hawkins of Attleboro filed [HD 4399](https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/HD4399), a bill modeled after the recently passed Illinois law that bans the banning of library materials. The MBLC was also contacted by Senator Julian Cyr’s legislative director Alex Nally to discuss ways to strengthen Massachusetts laws supporting librarians and libraries around library collection policies and materials challenges. Mary Rose Quinn, Rob Favini, and I met with Alex on 6/27 to provide background and perspective relating to the topic and submitted suggested amendments to M.G.L. Chapter 78, Sections 19B and 33 for consideration. Senator Cyr filed SD.2673 on June 30: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/SD2673>

On June 15 Maura Deedy hosted a webinar called [Book Challenges, Library Collection Policies, and Massachusetts Law](https://guides.mblc.state.ma.us/ld.php?content_id=72247930) that was advertised on the Massachusetts Municipal Association website and in their monthly newsletter. This session featured Canton Town Manager Charlie Doody and Canton Public Library Director Andrea Capone. The goal of the webinar was to educate elected and appointed municipal officials on intellectual freedom and to provide an overview of library operations, procedures, and statutory requirements.

Evan Knight is serving on the Advisory Board of a current IMLS-funded project with the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) and Lyrasis. CCAHA and Lyrasis have been gathering data and developing professional development resources to support **succession planning for collections stewardship** staff and volunteers. In support of these efforts Evan helped to plan and promote a listening session to learn about the nuances of succession planning strategies that have—and have not—achieved positive results. The project will culminate with educational programs presenting “best practice” strategies to prepare for staffing and volunteer transitions in the area of collections care, with a special focus on training which can help to position existing staff or volunteers for promotion from within. More information about the project can be found on CCAHA’s website: <https://ccaha.org/succession>

Evan played a key role in organizing and promoting an **emergency response training** program that will take place in September 2023. The training is designed for a wide set of stakeholders who are responsible for cultural institutions and collections in the face of emergencies. The training will be available online and as a two-day workshop at the JFK Library. The training is sponsored by the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC), funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Multiple COSTEP MA partners have helped plan, led by the Massachusetts Archives, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, Boston Office of Emergency Management, Federal Emergency Management Agency (Heritage Emergency National Task Force), Northeast Document Conservation Center,

Paul Kissman attended the ALA Annual Conference for the last time as E Rate Taskforce Chair. At ALA he met with FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel to discuss E-rate Improvements for Tribal and Small Libraries,  increased eligibility for advanced firewalls/cybersecurity tools in E-rate, and her new proposal “[Learn Without Limits](https://www.ala.org/news/ALA-welcomes-Learn-Without-Limits)” for E-rate discounts on internet connectivity on school buses and hotspot lending to patrons from libraries.  This would be the first time that E-rate extended beyond school or library property. In addition, he moderated a conference session titled “News You Can Use, E-rate Innovations: Fostering Access to Underserved Communities.”

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# The Communications Team worked with Buyer to complete the new “You belong here”: <https://youtu.be/kr_dgduhVXw>. Developed with the statewide Public Relations Committee, the goal of the video is twofold: it will be used to promote the newly designed portal and it will be used to communicate that everyone is welcome in libraries. It features actual footage from libraries across the commonwealth. Once the redesign of the consumer portal is complete, the Communications Team will use social media to release the video. It will be the first of several micro-campaigns aimed at driving new users to the consumer portal and to libraries both online and in person.

# Summer reading is off to a good start. Summer library visits with Bruins Mascot Blades will be as follows:

# 7/11 Ashland at 2:00pm 7/12 Haverhill at 11:00am 8/2 Hudson at 2:00pm 8/9 Sandwich at 11:00am 8/22 Scituate at 11am

# This summer’s [Bruins prizes](https://mblc-newsroom-static.s3.amazonaws.com/collateral/programs/summer-reading/8d8e52cf_2023-bruins-prize-flyer_download.pdf) include at-game experiences like high-fiving players. These were discontinued during the pandemic. In mid-July, the MBLC will coordinate with MLS to conduct a random drawing of libraries participating in the summer library program. The Communications Team also conducted a presentation for libraries with upcoming construction projects. The informal session on June 14 called “Building Support for Your Construction Project”, gave attendees the opportunity to discuss their library project goals, learn how to identify and gather community support, and brainstorm core messaging to advocate for their construction projects. About 30 people attended.

# The National Book Festival is coming up and the Communications Team is coordinating with the Massachusetts Center for the Book (MCB) for the Massachusetts booth at the Pavilion of the States, which is a way for each state to highlight literary and literacy efforts. June Thammasnong will represent the MBLC at this event held in Washington D.C. on August 12. Bruins READ items will be at the booth along with Massachusetts coloring books and other items from the MCB.

**Legislative Report**

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

Senator Julian Cyr (Cape and Islands) filed legislation at the end of last month to protect library collections in both public and school libraries and the library staff who develop those collections. The bill also addresses the patrons’ and students’ *right to read* the titles housed in those collections. The bill, SD.2673, An Act Regarding Free Expression is available on the MALegislature.gov site at <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/SD2673>. Director Lonergan, Rob Favini, and Mary Rose Quinn and MSLA representatives worked with the Senator’s Legislative Director and Deputy General Counsel, Alexander Nally, to draft language in the bill that would be specific to Massachusetts libraries. For public libraries, the new bill expands the collection development statutory language in Chapter 78, Section 33 and links the requirements in that section to Chapter 78, Section 19B of the State Aid to Public Libraries Program Minimum Standards. The protections for school library collections, personnel and readers are addressed in the language added in Chapter 71. It was a pleasure working with Alex Nally, who is a strong supporter of libraries. He promises to keep the MBLC informed as to the bill’s progress going forward. The news release from the Senator’s office is included below.   
  
*On June 30th, the last day of Pride Month, state Senator Julian Cyr (D- Truro) filed SD. 2673, An Act regarding free expression. The bill ensures that public and school libraries can offer diverse and inclusive books, media, and materials without political interference.*

*“Massachusetts is home to the nation’s first public library and first public school because we have long appreciated that unabridged access to knowledge is key to opportunity and fulfillment,” said* ***Cyr****. “At this sad moment when hate and fear are driving too many cruel policies across the nation, and yes closer to home, Massachusetts must continue to champion values of equity and belonging. Indeed, books are among our most compelling windows into the myriad of human experiences and capture the breadth of knowledge. We cannot allow small-minded bans or politically opportunist censorship interfere with the right to read.”*

*When signed into law, An Act regarding free expression would prevent book removal due to personal or political views in public and school libraries. Further, it would empower school librarians and teachers to determine access to age-appropriate materials in school libraries. Public libraries would be required to adopt the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights. The legislation would also protect librarians from retaliation. Cyr’s bill was crafted in consultation with ACLU Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, the Massachusetts School Library Association, and MassEquality.*

*“Across the country, there is a coordinated attack on students’ right to learn,” said* ***Carol Rose, Executive Director of the ACLU of Massachusetts****. “Book bans in school and public libraries—places that are central to our abilities to explore ideas, encounter new perspectives, and learn to think for ourselves—are misguided attempts to try to suppress that right. We applaud the communities that have resisted such attempts in Massachusetts and thank Senator Cyr for his efforts to protect all children’s access to an equal and safe education in the Commonwealth.”*

*This legislation is filed amid an alarming trend of elected officials across the United States seeking to censor books and materials in schools and libraries. The number of reported challenges to books* [*doubled*](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.npr.org/2023/04/24/1171570138/number-of-books-banned-or-challenged-up-in-2022-ala__;!!CPANwP4y!UUAozntTXsLwqQkmJfKE5Un9OyQR4obIL7SR65lDFVdiIIpy66jnMYnIS2rCdYNxdNzOLQrhD2eA9gar-H1bRhw2VISxVtSg$)*from 2021 to 2022. According to* [*PEN America*](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/pen.org/report/banned-usa-growing-movement-to-censor-books-in-schools/__;!!CPANwP4y!UUAozntTXsLwqQkmJfKE5Un9OyQR4obIL7SR65lDFVdiIIpy66jnMYnIS2rCdYNxdNzOLQrhD2eA9gar-H1bRhw2VAQOqtOv$)*, between July 2021 and June 2022, 41% of banned or challenged titles featured LGBTQ+ themes or characters, 41% included prominent characters of color, and 21% had content on issues of race or racism. Massachusetts is not immune. According to the* [*American Library Association*](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/by-the-numbers__;!!CPANwP4y!UUAozntTXsLwqQkmJfKE5Un9OyQR4obIL7SR65lDFVdiIIpy66jnMYnIS2rCdYNxdNzOLQrhD2eA9gar-H1bRhw2VE0ObpIN$)*, in 2022, there were 45 attempts to restrict access to books and 57 titles were challenged in those attempts in Massachusetts.*

*“The Free Expression legislation proposed by Senator Cyr benefits everyone in the Commonwealth,” said* ***Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs and Government Liaison for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners****. “By protecting library funding and library staff, it allows librarians to continue to develop collections that meet the diverse needs of the people they serve ensuring their right to read.”*

*To ensure access to materials in schools is managed responsibly, Cyr’s bill would require that school library materials are selected based on a school librarian’s professional training and not on political or personal views. To overturn a school librarian’s selection determination, the bill would require a review process by the school committee based on clear and convincing evidence that the material is devoid of educational, literary, artistic, or social value or is not age appropriate for any student in the school.*

*"The Massachusetts School Library Association applauds Senator Cyr's bill,” said* ***Barb Fecteau, President of the Massachusetts School Library Association****. “K-12 students have the right to read freely. Licensed school library teachers are trained to acquire materials that represent all of the students they serve. SD2673 will help licensed school library teachers fulfill their professional duties to the students of the Commonwealth."*

*To prevent the removal of materials based on personal or political beliefs in municipal libraries, the legislation would require libraries to incorporate the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights into their selection policies. Libraries would further be required to publicly post their updated selection policies. The bill would also protect municipal librarians from retaliation when selections are made in good faith and in accordance with the library’s selection policy.*

*The current movement to ban books with LGBTQ+ themes and characters of color in states across the country parallels a rise in* [*hate crimes*](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.wbur.org/news/2023/05/23/report-anti-semitism-lgbtq-white-supremacist-hate-crimes__;!!CPANwP4y!UUAozntTXsLwqQkmJfKE5Un9OyQR4obIL7SR65lDFVdiIIpy66jnMYnIS2rCdYNxdNzOLQrhD2eA9gar-H1bRhw2VJZH7kR-$)*and* [*anti-LGBTQ+*](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights?impact=__;!!CPANwP4y!UUAozntTXsLwqQkmJfKE5Un9OyQR4obIL7SR65lDFVdiIIpy66jnMYnIS2rCdYNxdNzOLQrhD2eA9gar-H1bRhw2VAqCZTxn$)*policies. Cyr’s legislation continues efforts on Beacon Hill to protect the rights and safety of the Commonwealth’s diverse residents. Cyr is one of ten openly LGBTQ+ state legislators currently serving in the Massachusetts Legislature.*

*“In the wake of the attempts across the Commonwealth to censor the reading materials in our school libraries, which were selected by trained professionals, MassEquality is delighted to support this bill and grateful for Senator Cyr’s efforts,” said* ***Tanya Neslusan, Executive Director of MassEquality****. “It is important that students have access to inclusive books and that professionals trained in the selection of these materials are the arbiters of the decisions about which books are appropriate to have available for our young people.”*

*Librarians and library advocates applauded the bill.*

*“This legislation could not come at a better time due to the recent scourge of book challenges and bans across the country,” said****Amy Raff, Director of the Provincetown Public Library****. “Libraries and librarians are committed to defending the freedom to read and to ensuring the free, direct access to information. We are devoted to supporting the curiosity and inquiry of readers. Reading is one the most important ways that we learn about ourselves and the world around us - it is the place where we see ourselves reflected in characters, where we learn about experiences other than our own - and to take that away is detrimental to a democratic society.”*

*“Public libraries play a crucial role in communities by fostering intellectual freedom and providing access to information and knowledge,” said* ***Kait Blehm, Chair of the Truro Library Board of Trustees****. “This bill is vital in the protections it provides for librarians who uphold these principles everyday in order to ensure that diverse perspectives can be explored without fear of censorship or retaliation.”*

*Several states have already taken action to ensure politics do not interfere with materials in libraries and schools. Illinois has signed legislation into law that prohibits book bans and similar legislation is being considered in New Jersey.*

*The legislation now awaits assignment to a committee. Similar legislation has been filed in Massachusetts by state Representative Jim Hawkins (D-Attleboro).*

Senator Jake Oliveira, who used his inaugural speech in the Senate to advocate for additional funding in the Regional line (7000-9401, has also filed a bill to protect libraries from book bans. Senator Oliveira’s bill SD.2679, An Act protecting against attempts to ban, remove, or restrict library access to materials includes expanded reference to the ALA Right to Read statements and also links the collection development section in statute to State Aid requirements for funding. <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/SD2679>  
[https://www.westernmassnews.com/2023/07/11/local-lawmaker-proposing-legislation-prevent-book-bans/](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.westernmassnews.com/2023/07/11/local-lawmaker-proposing-legislation-prevent-book-bans/__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!nPHPF715-LHaiHpWZRhfMRHVed3OxzJLPhLatTpLnIHj6I1yzCaGlw0TtDCRS0whFTnVRwS_PLgOfne39Q7_a6bQNm8$)

Representative James Hawkins’ *Freedom to Read* bill, HD.4399, closely mirrors the Illinois legislation which was recently signed into law. <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/HD4399>. There have been a number of news articles on the topic of book bans and the legislative efforts in Massachusetts to protect libraries from these challenges, including this from the Eagle Tribune <https://www.eagletribune.com/news/lawmakers-seek-to-curb-book-banning/article_c35a2e08-11d7-11ee-bc82-b7fc495f2f02.html>. The Library Legislative Caucus co-chairs are aware of the various efforts and will work to support the legislators who have filed the bills to try and consolidate the language into one as it makes its way through the legislative process.

There is still no FY 2024 budget news from the Ways and Means Conference Committee as to when they will have a proposal to present to the House and Senate for a vote. The Commonwealth is currently being funded month to month. Senator Rodrigues commented that the budget was “a work in progress”. The legislature has, however, voted on a supplemental budget for the current fiscal year of nearly $700 million.

We are at the last few steps of the budget cycle. As a reminder: the Conference Committee is made up of the Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Ranking Minority members of their respective Ways and Means Committees. They are Senators:  
[Michael J. Rodrigues](https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/MJR0), Chair, [Cindy F. Friedman](https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/CFF0), Vice Chair, and [Patrick M. O'Connor](https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/PMO) (Ranking Minority).  
Representatives:  
[Aaron Michlewitz](https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/AMM1), Chair, [Ann-Margaret Ferrante](https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/AMF1), Vice Chair, and [Todd M. Smola](https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/TMS2) (Ranking Minority).

1. [Conference Committee](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2024/ConferenceCommittee) The House and Senate appoint three members each to a "Conference Committee" to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate proposals. One member of the minority party must be appointed by each branch. The Conference Committee reports a final compromise bill to the House and Senate for a final vote of acceptance in each branch.
2. [Final Budget](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2024/FinalBudget) The Governor has 10 days to review the budget and take action to either approve or veto the budget. The Governor may approve or veto the entire budget, veto, or reduce specific line items, veto outside sections or submit changes as an amendment to the budget for further consideration by the Legislature. Following any legislative overrides to the Governor's actions, the budget is finalized and is commonly referred to as the "General Appropriations Act" (GAA) for the upcoming fiscal year. (FY 2024)   
   [**Acts (20xx)**](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021) **Chapter ## The General Appropriations Act (GAA)  
   An act making appropriations for the fiscal year 2024 for the maintenance of the departments, boards, commissions, institutions and certain activities of the commonwealth, for interest, sinking fund and serial bond requirements and for certain permanent improvements.** (e.g., from 2023 <https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2023/FinalBudget>)

Total Tax collections for the first eleven months of FY 2023 were below expectations. Plans are being discussed to use federal and other funding resources to make up the difference when the final budget numbers are announced. June figures and the final totals for the fiscal year are generally delayed into August.

**Consideration of approval of a Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP) Partial Provisional Grant Award**

Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist presented for Board approval provisional MPLCP grant awards to three municipalities Fitchburg, Lynnfield and Swansea totaling $27,519,585. A Construction Project may either be a project to construct a new facility, an addition/renovation to an existing building that may or may not add space, but does involve a significant reorganization of functional space, or a joint library project that will involve construction of a facility by two or more municipalities.

This award is subject to the completion and execution of a contract with the MBLC and the compliance of the library and community with all of the assurances as listed in the grant application and found in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations, 605 CMR 6.00 governing the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program. The date by which the municipality must accept their award is January 15, 2024.

2016-17 Construction Grant Round FY24 Provisional Grants

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| **Municipality** | **Library** | **Provisional Grant Award** |
| Fitchburg | Fitchburg Public Library | $12,449,949 |
| Lynnfield | Lynnfield Public Library | $8,193,792 |
| Swansea | Swansea Free Public Library | $6,875,844 |

Commissioner Cluggish moved and Commissioner Comeau seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves provisional grant awards totaling $27,519,585 to the following library construction projects in the amounts listed below. The date by which the municipalities must accept their award is January 15, 2024.

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

Ms. Stara also stated that these libraries are eligible to removed Green Library Incentive funding. An applicant may qualify for a MPLCP Green Library Incentive (GLI) in order to receive an additional 2% to 3.5% of its total construction grant award, depending on the level of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification that a project receives. When the project is complete, it must receive official LEED certification and must submit US Green Building Council documentation to the MBLC confirming receipt of certification.

2016-17 Construction Grant Round FY24 Green Library Incentives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Municipality** | **Library** | **Maximum Incentive Amounts** |
| Fitchburg | Fitchburg Public Library | $435,749 |
| Lynnfield | Lynnfield Public Library | $286,783 |
| Swansea | Swansea Free Public Library | $240,655 |

Commissioner Biancolo moved and Commissioner DeBole seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners authorizes Green Library Incentives totaling $963,187, the maximum allowed as per 605 CMR 6.00, to the following library projects in the amounts listed below, upon receipt of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.

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

**Consideration of approval of the FY2024 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant Awards**

Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development was pleased to present the recommendations of the State Advisory Council on Libraries for grants for twenty new projects under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) program for Fiscal Year 2024.

The recommendations are presented as a series of nine motions identified as items a-I in the accompanying documentation.

We extend the MBLC’s thanks to the members of the State Advisory Council on Libraries for all their hard work and dedication.

**Access for All**

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

Commissioner Abraham moved and Commissioner Comeau seconded to approve the following Access for All Grants totaling $78,465 to start no earlier than October 1, 2023.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Agency | Amount Recommended | FY24 | FY25 |
| Peabody Institute Library, Danvers | $10,000 | $4,420 | $5,580 |
| Framingham State University - Henry Whittemore Library | $11,452 | $11,452 | $0 |
| Hopkinton Public Library | $20,000 | $20,000 | $0 |
| Ventress Memorial Library, Marshfield | $17,013 | $17,013 | $0 |
| Newburyport Public Library | $20,000 | $20,000 | $0 |
| Total: | $78,465 | $72,885 | $5,580 |

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

**Archives Arrangement and Description**

Program Abstract: For archival collections that are demonstrably important to community memory and heritage, this grant supports their wider access and use through their proper arrangement and description to generally accepted national standards. Projects funds can be used for activities including but not limited to archival consultants, staff training, policy development, workflow planning, collection-level or object-level processing, rehousing supplies, and development of finding aids.

Commissioner Comeau moved and Commissioner Abraham seconded to approve the following Archives Arrangement and Description Grants totaling $28,500 to start no earlier than October 1, 2023.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Agency | Amount Recommended |
| Lucius Beebe Memorial Library, Wakefield | $8,500 |
| Westwood Public Library | $20,000 |
| Total: | $28,500 |

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

**At the Table**

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

Commissioner DeBole moved and Commissioner Abraham seconded to approve the following At the Table Grants totaling $60,000 to start no earlier than October 1, 2023. Commissioner Comeau abstained due to his library receiving an award.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Agency | Amount Recommended |
| Stevens Memorial Library, Ashburnham | $20,000 |
| Canton Public Library | $20,000 |
| Falmouth Public Library | $20,000 |
| Total: | $60,000 |

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

**Citizenship Corners and Expanded English Language Services for New Americans**

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

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

Commissioner Biancolo moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded to approve the following Citizenship Corners and Expanded English Language Services for New Americans Grant totaling $15,000 to start no earlier than October 1, 2023.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Agency | Amount Recommended | FY24 | FY25 |
| Franklin Public Library | $15,000 | $8,969 | $6,031 |
| Total: | $15,000 | $8,969 | $6,031 |

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

**Civic Hub**

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

Commissioner Vilas Novas moved and Commissioner Abraham seconded to approve the following Civic Hub Grant totaling $15,000 to start no earlier than October 1, 2023.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Agency | Amount Recommended |
| Abington Public Library | $15,000 |
| Total: | $15,000 |

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

**Creative Communities**

Program Abstract: This grant will support the development or expansion of artistic and creative learning opportunities in the community. Libraries should have a clear target audience and specific needs they are trying to address through this grant. Co-creating this project with the target audience starting at the proposal stage is highly recommended. Projects must include a strong programming component with an emphasis on hands-on learning activities. Funding may be used to develop or expand a makerspace. Libraries should have vested partnerships at the proposal stage. Potential partnerships could include local museums, cultural centers, and other relevant organizations.

Commissioner Comeau moved and Commissioner Abraham seconded to approve the following Creative Communities Grants totaling $90,000 to start no earlier than October 1, 2023.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Agency | Amount Recommended |
| Thomas Crane Public Library, Quincy | $30,000 |
| Shrewsbury Public Library | $30,000 |
| Swampscott Public Library | $30,000 |
| Total: | $90,000 |

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

**Go Local**

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

Commissioner Biancolo moved and Commissioner Comeau seconded to approve the following Go Local Grants totaling $32,000 to start no earlier than October 1, 2023.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Agency | Amount Recommended | FY24 | FY25 |
| Blackstone Public Library | $12,000 | $7,000 | $5,000 |
| Goodnow Library, Sudbury | $20,000 | $10,500 | $9,500 |
| Total: | $32,000 | $17,500 | $14,500 |

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

**Mind in the Making**

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

Commissioner Abraham moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded to approve the following Mind in the Making Grants totaling $30,000 to start no earlier than October 1, 2023.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Agency | Amount Recommended |
| Langley Adams Library, Groveland | $15,000 |
| Mashpee Public Library | $15,000 |
| Total: | $30,000 |

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

**Open for Business**

Program Abstract: In times of local economic recovery, libraries are well positioned to help support local entrepreneurs in their efforts to start or expand their respective small business enterprises. The Bellingham Public Library will develop a program that reaches out to both new and experienced entrepreneurs who may seek out resources at the library on topics such as business plan development, incorporation procedures, human resources management and similar issues.

Commissioner Vilas Novas moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded to approve the following Open for Business Grant totaling $11,984 to start no earlier than October 1, 2023.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Agency | Amount Recommended |
| Springfield City Library | $11,984 |
| Total: | $11, 984 |

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

**DISCUSSION ABOUT THE CLOSURE OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY POlicy**

On Tuesday, June 27, various members of the MBLC staff received word that the Pearle L. Crawford Library would be closing its doors permanently as of July 22 due to a town budget shortfall. The State Aid Unit staff later had conversations with the Director, confirming the information and timeline. We shared with Dudley Library staff, concerned residents, and the Town’s legal counsel what the closure would mean for certification and reciprocal borrowing privileges. The decision to close the library was made at a Select Board meeting on Monday, June 26. Prior to that meeting, the State Aid Unit had had various conversations with the Library Director who was anticipating a ten percent reduction to her budget. The closure of the library came as a surprise and a shock to the Director, the staff, and the community.

In our communications with Dudley Town Counsel in the days following the announcement, Jen Inglis and I expressed our concerns over closing the library and losing certification prior to a vote from the town residents on the budget or the override. Once the library closes and is decertified, it cannot be recertified until the town has met the minimum standards for a year. In the last few days, Dudley town officials have decided to keep the library open until the town residents and various town meetings can weigh in and override votes can be scheduled. The library will remain open on a reduced schedule, at least through a vote planned in mid-August. Chair Conrad has a communication from Dudley Town Officials with the details. In addition, CW-MARS has initiated a reversal of the steps already taken regarding the shut down process as it related to loan periods, holds, returns, pick up locations and the myriad of other tasks required to disconnect and now reconnect Dudley as a full resource sharing partner to the network.

Beyond the question of State Aid certification, the situation in Dudley is complicated further by the town’s past acceptance of a construction grant from the Public Library Construction Program with assurances in the contract that Dudley would remain open as a public library for a minimum of 20 years. The Commonwealth provides the construction funds and goes out to bond on those assurances and assumes the costs of all interest on those bonds. Dudley was awarded the grant in 2008 and dedicated the building in 2011. There will be time later in the fall to address the construction grant issue should the votes to keep the library funded fail and the town again decide to close the library.

The most immediate concern has been for the State Aid Program and the consequences to a town that closes a library and ceases offering services. The closure of a library results in immediate decertification. (see policy below) There is no waiver or appeal or delay until the next MBLC Board meeting. If Dudley decides to close the library in the upcoming weeks or months, the town will be immediately notified that it is no longer a participant in the State Aid Program and Commissioners will affirm or confirm the decertification at the next meeting of the Board.

Below is the draft of a letter the State Aid Unit sends to residents who have questions about library use and reciprocal borrowing and the FY 2024 CLOSURE OF A LIBRARY Policy.

*Draft Letter:*

*Thank you for reaching out to us. I am truly sorry this is happening in your town.*

*Our system of resource sharing across Massachusetts is a wonderful service available to all residents who live in municipalities that participate in the State Aid to Public Libraries Program, which requires municipal funding support (Municipal Appropriation Requirement) to participate. The State Aid Program is a voluntary Program. Municipalities are not required to participate but then they are not eligible for State Aid to Public Libraries funds and are not guaranteed the additional reciprocal services participants receive. Currently, only four small municipalities in Western Massachusetts do not participate in the Program.* [*https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/noncertified-list.php*](https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/noncertified-list.php)*.*

*When a municipality is certified for State Aid, Commissioners are assuring other participants in the Program that the municipality is meeting the funding requirement and the Minimum Standards of Free Public Library Services; with their vote, all participating libraries in the Program are required to lend and provide all other library services offered to their local residents. Once a municipality loses certification, no such requirement or guarantee exists. It is up to the Trustees in the other towns and cities to decide whether to lend their local tax supported collections to residents of a community that is no longer certified because it no longer funds a local library. Resource sharing is successful because it relies on all participants to do their fair share.*

*Once the Pearle L. Crawford Library closes, and ceases offering any library services, it is no longer a certified participant in the State Aid Program. If Dudley becomes decertified, which will happen immediately when it closes the library, then other libraries in the network and across the Commonwealth are no longer required to lend to Dudley residents, and most, if not all, will discontinue lending. Reciprocal borrowing or resource sharing is the key incentive/benefit of participation/certification in the State Aid Program.*

*You will still be allowed to go into other libraries and use their books onsite, but they are not required to lend to you. You also continue to have access to the Boston Public Library as the Library for the Commonwealth and the statewide databases through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC), the Library for the Commonwealth (LFC), and the Massachusetts Library System (MLS).* [*https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/benefits-state-aid.php*](https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/benefits-state-aid.php)*.*

*The State Aid Program details can be found in Statute and Regulation. More information about the other minimum standards for public library service is available at:* [*https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/regs-standards.php*](https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/regs-standards.php)*.*

*A link to our current policies is here:* [*https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/policies.php*](https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/policies.php)

*And our FAQ page with information about what happens when a library is not certified:* [*https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/faqs.php*](https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/state-aid-and-aris/faqs.php)

*I encourage you to reach out to your town leaders about your concerns. I am including the* ***Closure of a Library*** *language below from the policies link above.*

*I’m sorry I don’t have different news for you.*

***Mary Rose Quinn***

***CLOSURE OF A LIBRARY POLICY***

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

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

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

***Initial Approval of Policy:*** *March 5, 1993****FY 2024 Approval Date:*** *October 7, 2021****State Aid policies are reviewed annually.***

**Report from Massachusetts Library System**

Sarah Sogigian presented the following report to the Board.

# MLS Update June 2023

**Strategic Initiative 1**

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 2023 Road Trip program in late Feb.  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.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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.* |  |

**Report from Library for the Commonwealth**

Michael Colford presented the following report to the Board.

Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

Library for the Commonwealth report – July 2023

**Digital and Online Services**

*MBLC Educational Fellowship*

Lara DeRose started on July 3 as the DC Education Fellow. Lara is developing a project plan for the year and has started doing research on other educational engagement programs in Massachusetts. She's reached out to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to discuss the new middle school history curriculum that they are developing. The position is a one-year appointment that is scheduled to end in June 2024.

*Newspaper Digitization*

We have completed our major newspaper digitization projects for FY23, which included digitization from BPL’s microfilm holdings as well as processing of files previously digitized by MyHeritage. The final count of digitized pages for these projects is 788,439; titles include Boston Chronicle, Boston Evening Transcript, Fenway News, Franklin Sentinel, Longmeadow News, Mashpee Enterprise, Mattapan Tribune, New Bedford Evening Standard, Salem Gazette, and many others.

We have continued ingesting digitized newspaper content produced as part of our Boston Neighborhood News project from FY22 into Digital Commonwealth, to this point 21,784 issues from the 1840s to the 1960s are available online. Recently added titles include:

* [East Boston Argus-Advocate](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3A2n49x579w&data=05%7C01%7Cmcolford%40bpl.org%7Cb10a8ceca6e941a00a1f08db8315f14e%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638247902484517897%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ltOMBCjlvIAIG7LyjRJgeO8to5vKgiMNqlf7NOU%2BaNc%3D&reserved=0) (1886-1941)
* [East Boston Free Press](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3Awd378x459&data=05%7C01%7Cmcolford%40bpl.org%7Cb10a8ceca6e941a00a1f08db8315f14e%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638247902484517897%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=sqtz0YILZJpJyAtQkBMmKRuqlc40w1qLsKkRa36vRms%3D&reserved=0) (1886-1945)
* [The East Boston Times](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3A5m60tv66f&data=05%7C01%7Cmcolford%40bpl.org%7Cb10a8ceca6e941a00a1f08db8315f14e%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638247902484517897%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=vVSK7nWt%2BrcxRi0k%2FYle1OdqXG%2FeshflEZatIdAYv5o%3D&reserved=0) (1939-1943)
* [The Hyde Park Gazette](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fiiif.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fiiif%2F2%2Fcommonwealth%3Asx61hq60s%2Fpct%3A4%2C3%2C90%2C67%2F300%2C300%2F0%2Fdefault.jpg&data=05%7C01%7Cmcolford%40bpl.org%7Cb10a8ceca6e941a00a1f08db8315f14e%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638247902484517897%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=bNexh1rgA%2Fb4w8JonDw8YcWkxqrthRJH%2F285LL1vK%2BE%3D&reserved=0) (1899-1912)
* [The Hyde Park Times](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3Avq282t37k&data=05%7C01%7Cmcolford%40bpl.org%7Cb10a8ceca6e941a00a1f08db8315f14e%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638247902484517897%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=2oQ%2FIomubiFxhdnfkWN0eeO5G4LvGN537Pje1bc5NTE%3D&reserved=0) (1886-1901)
* [The Roxbury Advocate](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3A8k71rn61r&data=05%7C01%7Cmcolford%40bpl.org%7Cb10a8ceca6e941a00a1f08db8315f14e%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638247902484517897%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=e0GMqYLzQZwBmwmPaiZSLltPa87U5Dk2dkoNiVqISOQ%3D&reserved=0) (1882-1886)
* [The Roxbury Citizen](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3Ab2776z574&data=05%7C01%7Cmcolford%40bpl.org%7Cb10a8ceca6e941a00a1f08db8315f14e%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638247902484517897%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=BVoMsjt0b9Gd53UBbk0uB1dLoNV3hLxXRzgCspwJEis%3D&reserved=0) (1939-1940)
* [The South Boston Bulletin](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3Ans067b612&data=05%7C01%7Cmcolford%40bpl.org%7Cb10a8ceca6e941a00a1f08db8315f14e%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638247902484517897%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=WQUh0p49%2Fu3ZnbP3U0liWieVb6mI76OlyoSmX%2FcFO4Y%3D&reserved=0) (1890-1899)
* [South Boston Inquirer](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3Aq237mw83c&data=05%7C01%7Cmcolford%40bpl.org%7Cb10a8ceca6e941a00a1f08db8315f14e%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638247902484674142%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=kBNxtK8e2iwMCBOKzYnjI2A5F0ivNRsVzNh5%2BvXOlF4%3D&reserved=0) (1871-1910)
* [The West End News](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.digitalcommonwealth.org%2Fcollections%2Fcommonwealth%3Acr56r585c&data=05%7C01%7Cmcolford%40bpl.org%7Cb10a8ceca6e941a00a1f08db8315f14e%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638247902484674142%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=AWm%2BWqUiQFny01CtQJu%2FQ%2BZBpSRDRUmoUy4dYhCWoTc%3D&reserved=0) (1926)

**Collections**

*Browse Borrow Board*

* Browse Borrow Board was expanded to 33 locations outside of Boston (on commuter rail and some ferry stations) due to the Sumner Tunnel closure
  + Boston
  + Lynn
  + Winthrop
  + Quincy
  + Revere
  + Rockport
  + Gloucester
  + Manchester-by-the-Sea
  + Beverly
  + Newburyport
  + Rowley
  + Ipswich
  + Wenham
  + Salem
  + Swampscott
  + Chelsea
  + Medford
  + Everett
* In the first week (approximately) we have seen an additional 175 new signups for the service since the expansion and 64 checkouts.
* Total BBB since May: 616 and 200 checkouts of eBooks and eAudio.
* Since launch of Browse Borrow Board in May 2023 – we have seen Press Reader grow by 30%. Press Reader content is integrated in the service and users can borrow unlimited magazines and newspapers through the platform.
* With end of fiscal year funds, we added 21,000 additional copies of eBooks and eAudio to Overdrive.
* Is there interest in expanding Browse Borrow Board as a statewide service?

*Online Boston Globe access*

* Boston Globe is up and available for BPL patrons (including ecard holders):
  + Resource Link: [https://ezproxy.bpl.org/login?url=https://manage.bostonglobe.com/cs/reg/bpl/profile.aspx](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Furldefense.com%2Fv3%2F__https%3A%2F%2Fezproxy.bpl.org%2Flogin%3Furl%3Dhttps%3A**Amanage.bostonglobe.com*cs*reg*bpl*profile.aspx__%3BLy8vLy8v!!BspMT6SJLSDJ!O3oPzcmC6_Rqh7qF3L02AIscykWgyM3nurQrYTxVyUDzN4yq7mhMSHAis-zzFj4Fo6gcBi879jhQSJj8%24&data=05%7C01%7Cmcolford%40bpl.org%7Cde7ae21546854e630ce408db82f1da6a%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638247747479772693%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Qg2ZM%2FNGveIOSNvW%2BHtZY2w8tGIfe1368ItnO%2BEmx3Y%3D&reserved=0)
  + Users can login to receive 72 hours access to the Boston Globe. We have 120 ‘tokens’ or ‘seats’.
  + We have seen such demand for NYT we are exploring adding seats to accommodate more users, passes are often full. We expect Boston globe will have similar demand, if not more.

*Online High School*

* We have 79 enrollments currently of students working towards their high school diploma, with still 1/3 who live outside of the City of Boston.
* 10 graduates from the program
  + One recent graduate as of last week from North Andover, MA.
* Originally a graduation ceremony had been tentatively planned for early August – but we would like to reach a total of 20 graduates to hold a ceremony – hoping to reach that goal this spring.

*Metro-Boston Library Network*

* Hired Sarah Jackson, former Director of the Chelsea Public Library as our new Network Administrator.

**Election of Officers**

Commissioner DeBole stated that she chaired the nominating committee that discussed the FY2024 Slate of Officers. Commissioner Biancolo and Commissioner Traub were on this committee as well.

“Therefore, I have the honor to present the following slate of officers for FY2024: Commissioner Conrad for the office of Chair, Commissioner Biancolo for the office of Vice Chair, and Commissioner Traub for the office of Secretary.”

Chair Conrad asked for any nominations from the floor.

Commissioner Comeau moved and Commissioner Vilas Novas seconded that the FY2024 Slate of Officers are Commissioner Conrad for the office of Chair, Commissioner Biancolo for the office of Vice Chair, and Commissioner Traub for the office of Secretary.

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

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

**The Motion passes.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**List of documents for the July 13, 2023, Regular Monthly Board Meeting:**

1. Agenda for the July 13, 2023, Regular Monthly Board Meeting
2. #7- Consideration of approval of a Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP) Partial Provisional Grant Award
3. #8- Consideration of approval of FY2024 LSTA Grants
4. #10- Report from Massachusetts Library System (MLS)
5. #11- Report from Library for the Commonwealth (LFC)
6. #12- Election of Officers

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:49 A.M.

Text, letter

Description automatically generated

Stacy DeBole

Secretary