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

**Date** : Thursday, October 5, 2023

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

**Place** : Eastham Public Library

 Eastham, MA

**Board**

**Present** : Debby Conrad, Chair; Vicky Biancolo, Vice Chair; Karen Traub, Secretary; Mary Ann Cluggish; Joyce Linehan

**Board**

**Present** : Barbara Barros; George Comeau, Esq.; Stacy DeBole; Jessica Vilas Novas

**Zoom**

**Staff Present:**

James Lonergan, Director; Andrea Bono-Bunker, Library Building Specialist; Maura Deedy, Library Advisory Specialist; Tracey Dimant, Head of Operations & Budget; Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory & Development; Paul Kissman, Library Information Systems Specialist; Rachel Masse, Assistant to the Director; Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs; Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist; Shelley Quezada, Consultant to the Underserved; June Thammasnong, Communications Specialist

**Staff Zoom:**

Kate Butler, Library Information Systems Specialist; Celeste Bruno, Communications Director; Jennifer Inglis, State Aid Specialist; Uechi Ng, Administrative Assistant; Lauren Stara, Library Building Specialist; Lillian Sutton, Administrative Assistant

**Observers Present:**

Debbie Abbott, Friends of the Eastham Public Library; Al Alfano, Eastham Library Trustee; Melanie McKenzie, Eastham Public Library Director; Annisha Romney, Eastham Public Library Staff; Mary Shaw, Eastham Public Library Trustee; William Shire, Eastham Public Library Trustee; Joanna Stevens, Eastham Public Library Trustee

**Observers Zoom:**

Courtney Andree, Executive Director, Mass Center for the Book; Ellen Anselone, Finegold Alexander Architects; Todd Ashford, Colliers Project Leaders; Paul Bockelman, Town Manager of Amherst; Eileen Chandler, Network Administrator, CLAMS; Maty Cropley, Teen Services Librarian, Boston Public Library; Ginny Hamilton, Friends of the Jones Library, Amherst; Sarah Hertel-Fernandez, Library Director, Belding Memorial Library, Ashfield; Chelsea Jordan-Makely, Library Director, Griswold Memorial Library, Colrain; Kathy Lussier, Network Administrator, NOBLE; Cate Merlin, Library Director, Peabody Institute Library, Danvers; Josephine Penta, Finegold Alexander Architects; David Slater, Network Administrator, OCLN; Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS)

**Meeting called to order by Chair Conrad**

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

**Roll Call of Commissioners**

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Barros- Present Zoom | Commissioner Comeau- Wasn’t present at time of roll call | Commissioner Linehan- Present  |
| Commissioner Biancolo- Present | Commissioner Conrad- Present  | Commissioner Traub- Present  |
| Commissioner Cluggish- Present  | 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 #2 Approval of Minutes- September 7, 2023 Minutes, #7 Consideration of approval of policies for the FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries Program, #8 Consideration of approval of Board Policy on Budget Revisions for Budget Line-Item Programs, #9 Consideration of Network Grant Awards under account 7000-9506, #10 Consideration of approval for the Library eBooks and Audiobooks (LEA) Content Grants, #11 Consideration of approval of extension request for construction documents for Amherst, and #18 Adjournment.

Commissioner Cluggish seconded.

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Commissioner Barros- Yes | Commissioner Comeau- Wasn’t at meeting yet | 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:**

**September 7, 2023**

Chair Conrad asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 7, 2023 Monthly Meeting.

Commissioner Biancolo moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded to approve the minutes from the September 7, 2023, Regular Monthly Meeting.

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

**Chair’s Report**

Chair Conrad presented the following report:

I am going to keep my report brief today as we have a full agenda and need to adjourn well before 1 p.m. because there is a Library Trustees workshop scheduled to begin in this space at 1:30. This year I am the Board liaison to the Massachusetts Library System, and I attended the MLS Executive Board meeting on September 11. On September 13 I attended the MLS webinar about the Browse, Borrow, and Board program that was begun at the Boston Public Library and is now being expanded statewide as a pilot program combining the efforts of Boston Public Library as Library for the Commonwealth, the Massachusetts Library System, and the Department of Transportation. It was an interesting program, and I am hoping that we can arrange for an overview of how it works at a future Commissioners meeting. In the meantime, there is a recording of the presentation on the MLS website and a link can be sent to you. On September 14 Commissioner Cluggish, Commissioner Biancolo and I attended the annual Worcester Public Library Foundation meeting. The keynote was Senator Julian Cyr speaking about the legislation he has filed to protect public and school libraries from attempts to ban books. On September 15 I attended the organizational meeting of the FY2024 Massachusetts Library Association Legislative Committee. Commissioner Biancolo, Commissioner Cluggish, and I are all members of that committee which will be planning various events to advocate for the FY2025 Legislative Agenda. The Committee is also responsible for advocating for legislation that benefits libraries which will include ongoing work on the Ebook legislation filed by Representative Ruth Balser as well as legislation to protect libraries from attempts to ban books. On September 20, I attended the virtual orientation for Commissioner Barbara Barros. On September 22 I joined the past and current network administrators at a luncheon honoring Paul Kissman upon his upcoming retirement. And on September 26 I attended the monthly MBLC Executive Committee meeting.

It is very fitting that our meeting is scheduled during Banned Book Week as there are a number of activities taking place across Massachusetts to publicize and oppose book bans. At least 70 libraries across the Commonwealth are participating in the statewide read in of banned books as part of the Let Freedom Read theme. The local news channel had a very effective segment about events in Norwood and Amesbury. I have set a personal goal this upcoming year to work my way through the PEN 100 most challenged titles that I have not yet read – I have read most of the classics, but I need to catch up on contemporary titles. For today I am also wearing my banned book socks which were given to me as a retirement gift five years ago. There has been much discussion about various bills that have been filed in the Massachusetts legislature that oppose book bans. The bill filed by Senator Cyr is the one that was developed in consultation with the MBLC. I believe Mary Rose will be discussing this later this morning. I am confident that when such a measure is passed by the Massachusetts Legislature it will reflect the special circumstances of library legislation and regulation in this state. I also hope that Commissioner Cluggish will tell us a bit about her presentation at the Wellesley Free Library for the League of Women Voters about protecting the right to read.

**Commissioner Activities**

**Commissioner Barros**

* Wednesday, September 20, 2023 I attended the orientation for new Commissioners and gathered pertinent information regarding my role as Commissioner. In attendance were several MCLB staff including James Lonergan and Deborah Conrad. Much of what was discussed included the number of public libraries in the Commonwealth, State aid programs, the Mass Library System, grant opportunities, the 5 year plan for the IMLS, public relations and committees that are available for me to join.
* In addition, I worked along with Celeste Bruno and June Thammasnong to create a press release through social media regarding my appointment to the MBLC. Thank you June and Celeste, great job!

**Commissioner Biancolo**

* September 14- Worcester Public Library Foundation Annual Meeting
* September 15- MLA Legislative Committee
* September 26- Executive Committee

**Commissioner Cluggish**

* September 27- Gave a presentation at the Wellesley Free Library entitled "Who is Protecting Your Right to Read?". The local LWV asked me to explain Sen Cyr's legislation SD2673 for their Fall Kickoff event.
* September 29- Spoke at the Gloucester Sawyer Library groundbreaking.

**Commissioner DeBole**

* Saturday September 30- Right to Read, Read a Thon in Blackstone

**Commissioner Linehan**

* September 30- meeting I will have attended the Let Freedom Read: Statewide Read-In to Fight Censorship event at the Boston Public Library in Copley Square

**Commissioner Traub**

* September 20- Western Mass Library Advocates meeting virtual
* September 21- Mass Center for the Book office warming reception
* September 26- MBLC Executive Board meeting
* October 3- Mass. Center for the Book Executive Board meeting Worcester

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

Meetings/activities highlights since the last monthly Board meeting:

* September 11—Mass. Library System (MLS) Executive Board meeting, virtual
* September 12—Check-in Zoom call with David Leonard, Boston Public Library (BPL) President and Sarah Sogigian, MLS Director
* September 13—Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast (COLSINE) meeting, virtual
* September 13—Mass. Broadband Institute “Internet for All” Berkshires Listening Session, Pittsfield/virtual
* September 15—Mass. Library Association (MLA) Legislative Committee meeting, virtual
* September 19—Central and Western Mass. Automated Resource Sharing (CW MARS) Users Council meeting, virtual
* September 19—MBLC webinar “Introduction to E-rate”
* September 20—MBLC/MLS meeting with Gale staff for update on our statewide Gale e-resources, MLS Office, Marlborough
* September 20—Orientation for Commissioner Barros, virtual
* September 21— Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) update, virtual
* September 25—Meeting with new House Ways and Means Analyst Shannen Murphy, virtual
* September 26—MBLC Executive Committee meeting, virtual
* September 26—American Library Association (ALA) Webinar: “Protecting Civil Rights in Libraries: A Conversation with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights”
* October 3—Mass. Center for the Book Executive Board meeting, virtual

**Digital Equity Update:** On 9/19 the MBLC held the “Introduction to E-rate” webinar. The session was led by Aleck Johnson of EdTech Strategies, the agency’s E-rate consultant. 41 attendees learned the basics of the E-rate program and what types of services qualify for what types of funding. The webinar featured a panel of librarians: Anna Fahey-Flynn from the Boston Public Library, Karen Wall from the Charleton Public Library, and Amy Rhilinger and Carrie Sylvia from the Attleboro Public Library. The panel talked about the positive impact that E-rate funds have had on their libraries, how they worked with municipal IT departments, how they manage the application process, and filtering requirements. A recording of the session is available on MBLC’s E-rate training page: <https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/e-rate/trainings.php>

**Electronic Database Update:** On 9/20, Paul Kissman, Kate Butler, Rob Favini, and I and several members of the MLS staff attended a meeting with database vendor Gale at MLS. Representatives from Gale reported on their latest product enhancements and Massachusetts usage data. Gale also used the meeting to gather feedback on how products and services can be improved to meet the specific needs of the Massachusetts library community. Gale databases include some of the most popular that are available to library users of all types.

**COSLINE Annul Conference Report:** On September 27-29th Maura Deedy and Rob Favini attended the annual Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast (COSLINE) meeting in Philadelphia. This annual event brings together Library Development representatives from New England, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia. This year’s meeting included an update from each state and informative sessions on teleservices in libraries, working with mental health gatekeepers in the community, artificial intelligence, training community catalysts, and intellectual freedom/book challenges.

**MBLC Digitization Project:** On September 12 the BPL Digitization team visited the MBLC office. We are looking for possible MBLC materials to digitize that may be of value to the library community. One potential project is the digitization of items from the agency’s clipping file. These files include 1-2 page field reports written by MBLC staff dating back to the early 20th century.  This will be an ongoing project with updates to follow.

Evan Knightplayed a key role in organizing and promoting an **emergency response training program** that took place on September 25-26, 2023. The two-day workshop at the JFK Library was designed for a wide set of stakeholders who are responsible for cultural institutions and collections in the face of emergencies. The training was sponsored by the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC), funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. A reporter from NPR attended the event and will be having a report on the radio soon.

On September 18-19th Maura Deedy, Mary Rose Quinn, and MBLC Data Analyst Aparna Ramachandran attended MLS’s two-day **Research Institute for Public Libraries** (RIPL) workshop held in Devens. The workshop focused on the use of data in libraries and featured hands-on sessions covering:

* Designing outcome-based evaluation of programs and services
* Assessing the needs of your community
* Techniques for tracking public library data and using these data for planning, management, and demonstrating the library’s worth
* Using data and stories to document the impact of your library

On September 12th Rob Favini spoke at the North Central Massachusetts Community Foundation on the Digital Equity landscape in Massachusetts and how public libraries are responding. Attendees included representatives from area United Way organizations, municipal planning officials, and members of regional planning authorities.

**Mass. Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP) Update**:

On September 22, the **Sharon Public Library** celebrated the groundbreaking for its new library of over 25,000 sf located about a quarter mile from the current library. This project is aided by a $7,485,943 grant from the MBLC and will feature expanded patron, staff, and programming spaces, a teen room, a media lab, improved telecommunications and HVAC systems, improved security and building access with full ADA compliance, a larger community room, quiet study spaces, and sufficient onsite parking.

The **Sawyer Free Library** in Gloucester held its groundbreaking for its renovation/addition project on September 29. The project, supported with a $9,030,047 MPLCP grant award, will centralize all the library facilities by renovating the current 1913 and 1976 buildings and constructing a new addition. The new library will have dedicated space for children and teens and restrooms on every level. It will be fully accessible to all, support more efficient and environmentally friendly heating and cooling systems, and provide a variety of spaces for studying, meeting, learning, creating, and performing.

On October 2, the **Marlborough Public Library** celebrated its grand opening after two years of construction, which was funded in part by a $10,186,626 grant from the MBLC. The original Carnegie building from 1904 has been renovated to preserve its historic character. The 1969 addition has been replaced with a larger, new structure that allows for full accessibility, 21st -century technology and infrastructure, dedicated spaces for children and teens, quiet study rooms, meeting rooms, and expanded parking.

We have a new website showing the entire history of Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP), now live at <https://mblcconstructionprogram.org/>

The Communications Team worked with the construction consultants and Buyer Advertising to develop the new website <https://mblcconstructionprogram.org/> . Based on the popular map poster, the site gives a snapshot of the program’s history and where projects are currently underway. Users can also search by municipality to find details of a community’s project. Lauren Stara wrote a [blogpost](https://mblc.state.ma.us/mblc_blog/2023/09/19/mplcp-revealed/) highlighting the features.

The team is also working with Western Massachusetts Library Advocates on a road trip site that will launch mid-October. This is the third network/region that the team has partnered with and has the goal of highlighting resource sharing across the state. The [SAILS](https://malibraryroadtrip.com/) road trip happened during spring break 2023. [OCLN](https://malibraryroadtrip.com/ocln/) launched their successful library crawl in the summer and they’re putting together a program for the MLA Conference highlighting their site and working with the MBLC.

A [summer wrap up video](https://youtu.be/b-CTWtV_z-Y?feature=shared) that highlights the library visits with Blades is available. Thank you to Commissioners Cluggish, Comeau, Vilas Novas, and Chair Conrad for participating.

Libraries are currently able to order [bookmarks that highlight the statewide databases](https://awarehouse.mblc.state.ma.us/collateral/programs/databases/?format=1). The team worked with the statewide PR Committee and Tressa Santillo from the Massachusetts Library System to divide the databases by age so that anyone doing research could just scan the QR code and be taken to the most relevant resources for them.

The team is also working with Kate Butler and Paul Kissman to finish the consumer portal. The portal’s focus is to bring new users to libraries both online and in person. Based on a PR Committee survey of the users and non-users done in preparation for the portal redesign, the portal highlights the services that matter most to new and returning users including eBooks and internet access. New features also include a statewide Library of Things and a new statewide events calendar.

The Read-In to celebrate banned books week is still underway with 75 libraries registered. The communications team worked with members of the Joint Task Force for Intellectual Freedom to develop the program materials and feature the Read-In on the consumer portal. NBC Boston did a nice segment on the Read-Ins. [Have a look](https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/let-freedom-read-events-fight-censorship-by-promoting-banned-books/3150233/?fbclid=IwAR3pm3eLQJuzvUvnykSjTYS1DI4RtgxJRZGq1cKwrJf0SB0zlP8m6sbuVmI).

**Staff news**:

Evan Knight, our Preservation Specialist, has let us know that he will be leaving the MBLC on October 13 to return to graduate school.

In addition, two of our five veteran staff members who have announced their retirements will be leaving us in October. Paul Kissman and Lauren Stara’s last day with us will be Friday, October 27.

Please join me in thanking them all for their dedicated service to the MBLC and to the Commonwealth’s libraries and best wishes to Evan, Paul, and Lauren for the future!

**Legislative Report**

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

With the FY 2024 budget nearing completion as the legislature takes up overriding gubernatorial vetoes, the MBLC continues to move forward with the Legislative Agenda for FY 2025. In addition to the budget requests for the seven budget lines, the Agenda will continue to focus on, among other topics, two pieces of legislation of critical importance to all types of libraries: Book Challenges and eBook legislation. The narrative for the Agenda is currently being developed by Celeste Bruno and will be available at an upcoming meeting before the first of the year.

As a reminder, the four bills filed against book bans are:

* Senator Julian Cyr (<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/SD2673>)
* Senator Jacob Oliveira (<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/SD2679>)
* Representative James Hawkins (<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/H4005>)
* Representative Aaron Saunders (<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/HD4443>)

Senator Cyr’s bill was submitted to the Joint Committee on Education and the remaining three sit in and will be heard by the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts, and Cultural Development. While the bills differ in their approach and content, the substance of their arguments remains focused on protecting the right to read in Massachusetts. The goal of the legislation is to protect the collections in our libraries from partisan, ideological, doctrinal, or other agenda driven interference; to protect the right of every resident to read and access the books and other information that they need to live, learn, work, and thrive in this Commonwealth; to protect the library workers on the front lines from threats and intimidation to their person or position; and to protect the librarians who use their skills and expertise to build the collections in their libraries to meet the divers needs and points of view within their communities. The MLA Legislative and Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility Committees have been working on this issue for the last couple of years and will organize testimony on the bills when they are scheduled for hearings. As a reminder, last year’s legislative agenda focused on “The Right to Read” as its central theme.

and the eBook bill

* Representative Ruth Balser: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/H3239>

The Massachusetts Library Association Legislative Committee Co-Chaired this year by Will Adamczyk, Nora Blake, and Kathy Lussier continue to work closely with eBook stakeholders to prepare for a hearing on the bill before the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts, and Cultural Development which is expected in the near future. The new bill focuses on contract language and consumer protections and avoids the copyright language of the previous bill.

As this is my penultimate meeting before retirement, I wanted to remind Commissioners about the critical role they play and the responsibility they have to continue their advocacy with legislators, municipal officials, and the library community across the Commonwealth. Equally important is their advocacy work with their local state delegations both where they live and work.

For detailed current and historic budget information concerning the MBLC budget lines (individually and collectively), see the data available at Mass Budget and Policy Center. Former Commissioner, Carol Caro successfully advocated for libraries to be included in the Budget Browser during her tenure on the Board. The data includes figures each year that are actual and adjusted for inflation. The report helps libraries when they are developing their own talking points. <https://massbudget.org/budget-browser/subcategory/?id=Libraries>

**Consideration of approval of policies for the FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries Program**

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

**MINIMUM STANDARDS**

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

 a. be in compliance with or receive a waiver of the FY2026 Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MGL, c.78, s.19A).

 b. meet the other minimum library standards required for receipt of FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries (MGL, c.78, s.19B):

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

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

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

2) If a municipality is in a different population group according to the population estimates mandated by the General Court for use with the FY2026 State Aid program, it is eligible for a grace period of up to three years to meet the increased standard for hours open or materials expenditure. This grace period is for the FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries grant round. Compliance for State Aid to Public Libraries in the FY2026 grant round is measured by library performance in FY2025. To be eligible for this grace period the library must be meeting the prior lower standard.

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

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

**Policy wording updated: October 5, 2023**

**FY2026 Approval Date: October 5, 2023**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

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

Minimum Hours Open Per Week:

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

Compliance Period

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

Massachusetts Legal Holidays:

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

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

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

**FY2026 Approval Date: October 5, 2023**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

**MINIMUM MATERIALS EXPENDITURE STANDARD CALCULATION**

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

Operating expenditures include:

1. Personnel

 *Salaries only.*

2. Library Materials

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

 *In addition, up to 10% of the materials expenditure requirement may be used to purchase hardware in the library for direct patron use. This includes but is not limited to public computer desktops and laptops, peripherals (mouse, keyboard, etc.), adaptive technology, and scanners. Hotspot connection fees are also included.*

3. Other Operating Expenditures

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

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

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

**Revision of Policy: October 5, 2023**

**FY2026 Initial Approval Date: October 5, 2023**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

**MATERIALS EXPENDITURE AND HOURS OPEN ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

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

A municipality will receive certification for FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries if it:

meets the FY2026 Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR), or receives a waiver of the FY2026 MAR,

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

**NOTE: Prior to FY2020, accommodation of the Materials Expenditure or the Hours Open standards included a minimum level of compliance (80%). The 80% level for accommodation for materials is no longer in effect since all municipalities are currently at 90% or higher. 90% is now considered the minimum level.**

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

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

Awards for municipalities meeting adjusted standards will be reduced according to compliance with reduced standard, and will be no less than 75% of the full award for meeting the minimum (90%) of both standards. Each standard that is met at a lower level will result in a 12.5% reduction to the full award for each level of reduction. Awards may be made in amounts of: 100%, 87.5%, 75%. If funds remain at the end of the FY2025 grant round, no additional award of State Aid to Public Libraries will be made to a municipality using this policy of accommodation.

Example: Library A

Library A has a population of 17,000 and is meeting its MAR. It is required to be open 50 hours each week and expend15% of its municipal appropriation on materials. It was only open 46 hours and spent 14% on library materials, mid-level compliance for both standards. As a result, the FY2024 State Aid award will be reduced to 75% of the Cherry Sheet total.

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

**FY2026 Approval Date: October 5, 2023**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually**

**Adjusted Awards**

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

**Materials Expenditure Requirement**

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

**Hours Open Requirement**

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

**MUNICIPAL APPROPRIATION REQUIREMENT CALCULATION**

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

For the **FY2026** grant round:

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

The **FY2023** figure will be either the **FY2023 MAR** or the **FY2023 TAMI**, whichever is **higher**. If the municipality was not certified for State Aid to Public Libraries in FY2023, the actual final FY2023 TAMI will be used.

The **FY2024** figure will be either the **FY2024 MAR** or the **FY2024 TAMI**, whichever is **higher**. If the municipality was not certified for State Aid to Public Libraries in FY2024, the actual final FY2024 TAMI will be used.

**FY2026 Municipal Appropriation Requirement Calculation:**

(FY2023 + FY2024 + FY2025) / 3 = average of three years

average x 1.025 = FY2026 MAR (average of three years plus 2.5 %)

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

**FY2026 Approval Date: October 5, 2023**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

**DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR A WAIVER OF THE FY2026 MUNICIPAL APPROPRIATION REQUIREMENT (MAR)**

The Board of Library Commissioners will consider requests for waivers of the FY2026 Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) from municipalities that demonstrate fiscal hardship. Requests for waivers must include the following documentation and must be received by the MBLC State Aid and Data Coordination Unit **with a postmark no later than October 3, 2024:**

1. a signed *Petition for Waiver of the FY2026 Municipal Appropriation Requirement.*

**And…with a postmark no later than November 7, 2025:**

**For Municipalities applying for a waiver of the FY2026 MAR that met full requirements (no waiver) of the FY2025 MAR):**

2. a completed *FY2025/FY2026 Total Municipal Operating Budget Worksheet*, and

3. supporting municipal budget document(s) (such as copies of warrant articles or summary pages from the municipal budget), listing for FY2025 and FY2026 both the total operating and departmental budgets for the municipality,

4. a statement from a senior municipal official:

a. citing the fiscal hardship surrounding the municipality’s inability to meet the FY2026 MAR,

b. explaining the municipality's FY2026 budget process regarding the library,

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

5. a cover letter from the library director and trustee chair, with enclosures if appropriate, explaining the library's FY2026 budget process and reasons why the community did not comply with the FY2026 MAR. (Examples of enclosures include: narratives from municipal officials describing the fiscal situation, text of referenda.)

**For Municipalities that received a waiver of the FY2025 MAR, in addition to documents 2-5 as listed above:**

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

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

**The Waiver Review Process**

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

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

The number of waivers available for FY2026 will not be determined until the budget language is final for FY2026.

1. Petitions for a waiver will be reviewed by the Board of Library Commissioners at their January 2026 meeting.

2. All petitioners for a waiver determined to have a disproportionate cut to their budget must present their petition in person at the January 2026 meeting.

3. All petitioners for a waiver who received a disproportionate cut in the prior fiscal year must present their petition in person at the January 2026 meeting.

4. The Board will review FY2026 MAR Waiver Petitions based on:

a. evidence of municipal fiscal hardship, and

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

5. The Board will vote on the petitions for waivers of the FY2026 MAR at their February 2025 meeting.

6. The Board will hear any appeals of the denial of an FY2026 MAR waiver at their March 2025 meeting.

7. The Board will act on any appeal at their April 2026 meeting.

8. The FY2026 State Aid to Public Library Program officially concludes at the conclusion of the April 2026 Board of Library Commissioners meeting.

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

**Revision of Policy: October 5, 2023**

**FY2025 Approval Date: October 5, 2023**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

**THE CLOSURE OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners considers any municipality that closes its main public library or ceases offering library service to the public for any reason other than the undertaking of a project to improve library services (such as construction, automation preparation or inventory) or the occurrence of a natural catastrophe (including a limited emergency closing due to illness, 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 of Library Commissioners.

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

**FY2026 Approval Date: October 5, 2023**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

**FIVE YEAR MAR WAIVER PLAN POLICY**

The Board of Library Commissioners recognizes that municipalities that demonstrate fiscal hardship may need to request a waiver of the FY2026 Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR). Requests for waivers must include documentation as outlined in the *DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR A WAIVER OF THE FY2026 MUNICIPAL APPROPRIATION REQUIREMENT (MAR)* policy.

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

For Municipalities that received a waiver of the FY2025 MAR (Year One), and are petitioning for a waiver of the FY2026 MAR (Year Two), a plan must be submitted, written by a senior municipal official in conjunction with the library’s director and trustees. This plan outlines the steps to be made in FY2026 (and for the next three fiscal years) which will bring the municipality’s library appropriation back to the required level of funding, the MAR.

For Municipalities that received a waiver of the FY2023 MAR (Year One), and FY2024 (Year Two) and are petitioning for a waiver of the FY2025 MAR (Year Three), an update to the plan created in Year Two must be submitted, written by a senior municipal official in conjunction with the library’s director and trustees. This update reviews the steps that were made in FY2024 (and outlines the steps to be made for the next two fiscal years which will bring the municipality’s library appropriation back to the required level of funding, the MAR.)

For Municipalities that received a waiver of the FY2025 MAR with reservation, i.e. the library’s budget was DISPROPORTIONATELY CUT in FY2025, and are petitioning for a waiver of the FY2025 MAR, a plan or update as described above must be submitted, written by a senior municipal official in conjunction with the library’s director and trustees, and IN ADDITION, they must present their petition in person at the Board of Library Commissioners meeting in January, 2025.

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

**FY2026 Approval Date: October 5, 2023**

**State Aid Policies are reviewed annually.**

Commissioner Comeau moved and Commissioner Traub seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioner adopt for the FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Extending a Grace Period for Increased Population-Based Minimum Standards.

Commissioner Biancolo moved and Commissioner Linehan seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Minimum Standards of Hours of Service for Public Libraries.

Commissioner Cluggish moved and Commissioner Biancolo seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Minimum Materials Expenditure Standard Calculation.

Commissioner Comeau moved and Commissioner Linehan seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Materials Expenditure and Hours Open Accommodation Policy.

Commissioner DeBole moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt tor the FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Municipal Appropriation Requirement Calculation.

Commissioner Linehan moved and Commissioner Traub seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Determining Eligibility for a Waiver of the FY2025 Municipal Appropriation Requirement.

Commissioner Traub moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: The Closure of a Public Library.

Commissioner Vilas Novas moved and Commissioner Linehan seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners adopt for the FY2026 State Aid to Public Libraries program the following proposed policy: Five Year Waiver Plan Policy.

**Consideration of Approval of Board policy on budget revisions for budget line-item programs**

James Lonergan, Director presented the Board Policy. The only change is the date has been updated.

**MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS**

**Policy on Budget Revisions for Budget Line Item Programs[[1]](#endnote-1)**

1.) A budget revision request must be filed with the Board of Library Commissioners when:

a.) the proposed budget revision results in re-allocation of 10% or $50,000, whichever is greater, of the funds for any individual major category in the program contractor’s most recently approved program budget (i.e. delivery, interlibrary loan, continuing education and training, advisory and technical assistance, supplemental services, administration).

b.) the proposed budget revision results in the addition or deletion of 1.0 FTE or more or $40,000 or more in the Personnel category of the line item budget.

c.) the proposed budget revision results in any change in a Cherry Sheet amount for a contracting entity or a change of greater than 10% to any other contract for service included in the Sub-Contractual Services category of a line item budget.

2.) The executive director or program administrator is responsible for officially notifying the Board of Library Commissioners of actions by their executive boards or other governing boards or committees with oversight responsibilities which necessitate approval by the Board of Library Commissioners. Such actions may relate to budget revisions or may include other programmatic changes that impact contractual obligations between the MBLC and the contracting entity.

3.) Requests for budget revisions must be submitted on the prescribed forms by the executive director or program administrator. Both program budget and line item budget forms are required for any revision.

4.) Expenditures based on proposed budget revisions shall not be incurred or obligated prior to receipt of the required approval for the revision.

* No reimbursement will be made for expenditures made prior to receiving the required approval of a budget revision.
* For program entities operating under forward funding, no advance payments will be made for any quarter if the requested amounts or reported expenditures are at variance with the current approved budget.

5.) Requests for budget revisions must be accompanied by the following information:

a.) a narrative summary of the proposed changes including an explanation and justification of the revisions, and

b.) a brief explanation of the effect of the proposed budget revision on the program entity’s plan of service, if any.

6.) A budget revision effecting major change in the program entity’s plan of service will require the recommendation of the program entity’s council of members/governing board at a meeting duly called for the purpose before it is submitted to the Board of Library Commissioners for action.

**Initial Policy Approval Date: May 4, 2000**

**Policy Re-approval Date: July 14, 2016**

**Policy Expiration Date: July 14, 2026**

Commissioner Biancolo moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners extends the board policy on budget revisions for budget line items to July 9, 2026.

**Consideration of Network Grant Awards under account 7000-9506**

Paul Kissman, Library Information Systems Specialist presented the following grants.

**FY2024 Small Libraries in Networks**

**Program Abstract:** For FY2024, $385,678 from the Library Technology and Resource Sharing Account (7000-9506) will be used to support connectivity and network membership through the Small Library in Networks (SLIN) program for 160 libraries.

SLIN grants, though awarded to the network, directly offset the membership cost for eligible member libraries. Each library’s membership offset is calculated from a common base amount ($1,450), a municipal need factor using the library’s federal e-rate discount percentage (20% - 90%), and an additional award if the network membership exceeds 6% of the library’s Total Appropriated Municipal Income (TAMI).

MBLC staff provided each network with an initial list of eligible libraries and offset calculations, which were then confirmed by the networks.

CW MARS’ award consists of two components: $272,563 for 101 member libraries and $2,250 for managing the connectivity for 6 nonmember public libraries’ internet access.

# **Changes from FY23**

Three libraries that had joined CW Mars in FY23 under the Joining Networks grant have been added to the SLIN program for FY24: Hinsdale Public Library, Huntington Public Library, and Middlefield Public Library.

The municipal population for baseline program eligibility is checked every year against the latest Department of Revenue socioeconomic data figures (2021). No library’s participation in the program has been affected by a population shift this year.

The Small Libraries in Networks Review Committee Final Recommendations (9/25/2019) had frozen the remaining data inputs for network membership percentages and E-rate discount percentages for three years, FY20-FY22. A new snapshot of data was taken in FY23 -- network membership assessments were checked against the latest TAMI figures available (FY21). Awards for libraries that were no longer above the 6% threshold and for libraries that newly exceeded that threshold were adjusted accordingly. E-rate discount percentages did not change. These remained frozen for FY24.

The calculated SLIN award for five libraries, Egremont, Middlefield, Millville, Tolland, and Tyringham would have nearly fully funded, or even exceeded the library’s membership in CW MARS, thereby requiring no local contribution at all. CW MARS and MBLC have agreed to cap any library’s award at 85% of the actual membership cost, so that the library was responsible for at least 15% of their annual assessment.

Commissioner Biancolo moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded to approve the following Small Libraries in Network Grants totaling $385,678 for FY2024.

**Small Libraries in Networks Expansion**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Library** | **Municipality** | **Award** |
| CLAMS | Barnstable |  $30,665  |
| CW MARS | Worcester |  $274,813  |
| Minuteman Library Network | Natick |  $11,615  |
| MVLC | North Andover |  $40,220  |
| OCLN | Braintree |  $4,250  |
| SAILS | Lakeville |  $24,115  |
| **Total Recommended: $385,678** |

**FY2024 Telecommunications for Resource Sharing Recommendation**

**Program Abstract:** The Telecommunications for Resource Sharing program offsets the annual operating expense of library connections to the Internet and to the services provided by their automated library network, including core library business transactions, such as searching, circulation, cataloging, and patron registration. Automated resource sharing networks have received state-funded telecommunications support for 36 years (since 1987).

For FY2024, the Telecommunications for Resource Sharing program will offset approximately 82% of the total cost of network telecommunications after E-rate discounts have been factored in. Both central site connections and library “remote-to-host” connections are offset at up to 85%. The maximum amount allowed per outlet for FY24 remains at $1,750 /yr.

The program supports direct connections to 334 library outlets. Shared central site connections are now primarily for staff workstations, rather than for hosted library system services or a large, shared internet pipe. This is a change that has been ongoing for at least a decade as networks signed up for hosted, SaaS (Software as a Service), solutions from their system vendor, or more recently, have move their locally-hosted integrated libraries systems into the cloud – most recently, CLAMS, CW MARS, and NOBLE.

Telecommunications for Resource Sharing also provides the annual ongoing “internet only” connectivity funding for small public libraries that are not part of a network. CW MARS is responsible for managing broadband internet access and/or payments on behalf of 6 public libraries.

Proposals were reviewed by MBLC staff and preliminary calculations shared with the automated networks prior to the final recommendation. This is a formula-based grant program.

Commissioner Biancolo moved and Commissioner Traub seconded to approve the following Telecommunications for Resource Sharing Grants totaling $457,046.

**Telecommunications for Resource Sharing**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Network** | **Municipality** | **Award** |
| CLAMS | Barnstable | $30,270  |
| CW MARS | Worcester | $115,732  |
| FLO | Boston | $5,100  |
| MBLN | Boston | $36,057  |
| Minuteman Library Network | Natick | $67,639  |
| MVLC | North Andover | $41,373  |
| NOBLE | Danvers | $40,865  |
| OCLN | Braintree | $59,864  |
| SAILS | Lakeville | $60,146  |

**FY2024 Network Infrastructure Grants**

**Program Abstract:**

The Network Infrastructure program provides annual support for the capital and infrastructure costs of the nine automated resource sharing networks that form the foundation for essential library services throughout the Commonwealth.

Applications were reviewed by MBLC staff and outlet data verified prior to the final recommendation. This is a formula-based grant program that includes a common base amount for each network and a per-outlet amount based on the number of network member libraries, branches, bookmobiles, and connected offsite storage facilities. In FY24, the base amount is set at $10,000 (increased from $7,500) and the total grant amount at $400,000 (increased from $300,000). 545 total outlets were counted for a per outlet amount of $569. Also in FY24, cybersecurity costs were added as an eligible expense.

Commissioner Cluggish moved and Commissioner Biancolo seconded to approve the following Network Infrastructure Grants totaling $400,000.

**Network Infrastructure**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Network / MLS** | **Municipality** | **Award** |
| CLAMS | Barnstable |  $ 31,615  |
| CW MARS | Worcester |  $ 114,092  |
| FLO | Boston |  $ 29,339  |
| MBLN | Boston |  $ 37,871  |
| Minuteman Library Network | Natick |  $ 45,835  |
| MVLC | North Andover |  $ 32,752  |
| NOBLE | Danvers |  $ 28,771  |
| OCLN | Braintree |  $ 30,477  |
| SAILS | Lakeville |  $ 49,248  |
| **$400,000** |

**FY2024 Resource Sharing Program**

**Program Abstract:** The Resource Sharing program provides an incentive for libraries that are members of the nine automated resource sharing networks to list their titles and holdings in a publicly accessible database, and to lend materials to users of other libraries. Annual assessments that network member libraries pay are reduced with the help of these funds. Libraries, in turn, can show their funding authorities that there is a direct monetary benefit for their sharing materials, as well as the opportunity for their own users to have access to a much larger pool of resources.

FY2024 is the third year using a new resource sharing formula. Under the new formula awards are based on the size of the network’s operating budget and the number of members served, along with a smaller nod to the interlibrary loan activity each network undertakes each year. Each network’s resource sharing grant award correlates well with its size, complexity, and resource sharing activity. The formula freezes all the inputs for five years, except for yearly interlibrary lending. Thus, given a stable overall funding target, each network has a very good estimate of what its award will be through FY26. To buffer the larger changes that some networks will see, increases and decreases are capped at 3%, so no network will experience a major shift from one year to the next.

For FY24, however, MBLC received a substantial increase in account 7000-9506. Since the resource sharing program provides the most flexibility for automated networks, MBLC increased the grant amount from $1.6 million to $2 million. Proposed awards for this year, and for the remainder of the 5-year cycle have been recalculated using this new amount as a revised baseline.

Network data reporting was reviewed by MBLC staff, and final calculations shared with the nine automated resource sharing networks on September 22, 2023.

# **eCard Maintenance**

Beginning with the FY23 award, the resource sharing grants have included support for the cooperative network eCard program. Networks have begun to launch the new eCard registration and renewal platform. The platform allows for simplified and more reliable card registration and renewal processes across the Commonwealth. LSTA funding supported the initial implementation costs. MBLC will also offset 75% of the annual maintenance costs for the eight participating networks through the resource sharing program for an additional total of $74,071.

Commissioner Biancolo moved and Commissioner Linehan seconded to approve the following Resource Sharing Grants totaling $2,101,116.

**Resource Sharing Program**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Network** | **Municipality** | **Award** |
| CLAMS | Barnstable | $137,896  |
| CW MARS | Worcester | $417,005  |
| FLO | Boston | $98,466  |
| MBLN | Boston | $283,024  |
| Minuteman Library Network | Natick | $384,182  |
| MVLC | North Andover | $202,544  |
| NOBLE | Danvers | $221,826  |
| OCLN | Braintree | $165,116  |
| SAILS | Lakeville | $191,057  |
| **$2,101,116** |

**Consideration of approval for the library ebooks and audiobooks (LEA) Content Grants**

The **Library eBooks and Audiobooks (LEA) Content** grant provides networks participating in the LEA program with additional funds to purchase shareable eContent. These funds will directly support the continually growing demand for eBooks and Audiobooks across the Commonwealth.

**Program Abstract:**

The LEA program creates a statewide eContent system more closely approximating how books and other physical materials are shared. However, the current marketplace for digital books bears little resemblance to that for physical books and media. Prices and license periods for eContent are in constant flux, and often trend in ways harmful to library budgets. The LEA Content Grants funding, available for the first time in FY20, significantly supplements networks’ own collection development purchases, helps reduce hold queues and patron wait times, and increases the breadth of the collection.

For FY24, each network has provided MBLC with title and holdings counts of their shareable OverDrive collection, and both the network spending and individual library spending on shareable content for the previous three fiscal years. Items which are not shareable via LEA -- eMagazines, simultaneous use products, and OverDrive Advantage copies -- were not eligible for inclusion. Content awards were calculated with a common base amount of $10,000 for each network, with the remaining funds apportioned based on their provided data: 50% for total spending and 50% for holdings.

Commissioner Linehan moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners approves the following eight LEA Content Grants totaling $1,000,000 for FY2024, to be paid out of line item 7000-9506, and eight LEA Platform Grants totaling $94,000 for FY2024, to be paid out of LSTA funds.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Network | Municipality | Award (Content) | Award (Platform) |
| CLAMS | Barnstable | $67,154.33 | $12,000 |
| CW MARS | Worcester | $161,857.01 | $12,000 |
| MBLN | Boston | $230,988.70 | $10,000 |
| Minuteman Library Network | Natick | $210,914.37 | $12,000 |
| MVLC | North Andover | $66,583.85 | $12,000 |
| NOBLE | Danvers | $69,472.20 | $12,000 |
| OCLN | Braintree | $100,522.80 | $12,000 |
| SAILS | Lakeville | $92,506.75 | $12,000 |
| **$1,000,000** | **$94,000** |

**Consideration of approval of extension request for construction documents for amherst**

Andrea Bono-Bunker presented the following information about Amherst.

The Jones Library in Amherst has requested an extension of time to complete construction documents with updated energy stretch code mandates. In accordance with the 2015 Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program’s regulations, the deadline for this milestone is November 17, 2023. The Jones Library expects this milestone to be met within four weeks after the regulatory deadline, which is December 15, 2023. Their deadline to execute a contract with a general contractor and obtain a building permit remains June 30, 2024.

Commissioner Traub moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded that the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners grants an extension of time to complete construction documents to the Town of Amherst for its library construction project for the Jones Library to December 15, 2023.

**Report from the Griswold Memorial Library, Colrain and the Belding Memorial Library in Ashfield about their LSTA Grant**

Chelsea Jordan Makely, Library Director and Sarah Hertel-Fernandez, Library Director presented the following report to the Commissioners.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to share about the reasons behind our outreach pilot, and the impact it has had for FCSO! [Here is a link to our presentation](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/docs.google.com/presentation/d/1vEPsMKAHTN6YCRK1Dmv7wfCU-8Dh6c-G37VlZyhXPC4/edit?usp=sharing__;!!CPANwP4y!Tf6RV2-wAQEcLYAo650XJqUDrRgMld3pwkkPTPk9QS8W1qPt-De_goDCXqUMMcpI4zyJzgMEQrJi-vAkcMFVQm11zQ$), and a few more resources that relate:

* [A draft of the new Standards that were just approved](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/docs.google.com/document/d/1uSE_CWUdQRlxzNaXltwNmKazXgBoB1NZ/edit__;!!CPANwP4y!Tf6RV2-wAQEcLYAo650XJqUDrRgMld3pwkkPTPk9QS8W1qPt-De_goDCXqUMMcpI4zyJzgMEQrJi-vAkcMFuQltoWw$) by ALA Council, as well a page about the background and revisioning process itself [here.](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/alaeditions.org/standards/__;!!CPANwP4y!Tf6RV2-wAQEcLYAo650XJqUDrRgMld3pwkkPTPk9QS8W1qPt-De_goDCXqUMMcpI4zyJzgMEQrJi-vAkcMHSzzUsUw$)
* The [ALA press release about the Prison Libraries Act](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2023/04/ala-welcomes-prison-libraries-act-2023__;!!CPANwP4y!Tf6RV2-wAQEcLYAo650XJqUDrRgMld3pwkkPTPk9QS8W1qPt-De_goDCXqUMMcpI4zyJzgMEQrJi-vAkcMHq_kQB2g$)
* [New training resources and data map](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/sfpl.org/services/jail-and-reentry-services/expanding-information-access-incarcerated-people-initiative__;!!CPANwP4y!Tf6RV2-wAQEcLYAo650XJqUDrRgMld3pwkkPTPk9QS8W1qPt-De_goDCXqUMMcpI4zyJzgMEQrJi-vAkcMG8qQa1OQ$) that have come out of the Expanding Information Access to Incarcerated People grant from San Francisco Public Library and the Mellon Foundation.

I hope we can continue to connect about ways to advocate for the freedom to read for our patrons who are incarcerated!

**Report from Massachusetts Library System**

Sarah Sogigian presented the following report to the Board.

**Strategic Initiative 1**

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 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**

Jessica Chapel, Chief of Digital & Online Services gave the following report:

**Digital & Online Services**

Looking ahead – strategic planning is underway. BPL/DC/LFC is an example of a successful collaborative digital library program that’s expanded access to information, online resources, and cultural heritage to the public; for more than decade, DC has been a leader in defining what a digital library can be and making collections accessible. Our goal is to build on what's been achieved and to position the program to continue to lead in an increasingly digital future. Strategic planning is coalescing around three areas:

* Discovery and engagement
* Digitization services
* Digital preservation and repository services

*Hiring*

Interviews for the Statewide Digitization Assistant position are underway. From a pool of more than 70 applications, three candidates have reached the final round. The last interview with a candidate is scheduled for September 13. The hiring committee hopes to make an offer this month and have the selected candidate start by November. The person in this role will take the lead on outreach to repositories for Digital Commonwealth (we expect outreach and repository visits to pick up in 2024).

*MBLC Educational Fellowship*

Lara DeRose is continuing to meet with stakeholders and potential partners. Her interviews with museums and educational institutions, including DESE, literature reviews, discussions with educators have illuminated the scope of the challenges involved with outreach. Building connections with DESE could provide teachers with direct access to DC developed content and encourage use of the DC site. MA is currently developing a 3-7 Primary Source Curriculum, part of which is designed around local history units. It looks like there’s an opportunity to extend DC outreach and build new contacts.

*Newspaper Digitization*

We’re gearing up for the next round of newspaper digitization by preparing a multi-year RFP for vendors (three years with option to renew for two more years). The selection committee organized by Jake Sadow is reviewing titles for inclusion. More than 700,00 pages were digitized in FY23. We’re aiming for 1M pages in FY24 and the following years. Titles from the BPL’s microfilm collection, as well as those nominated/held by other libraries, will be included.

*Digital Commonwealth*

Nearing 500 applicants! As of last week, 493 applications have come from cultural heritage institutions across the state. We’re planning celebratory announcements via BPL and DC communication/social channels in honor of the 500th applicant.

**Collections**

*Browse, Borrow, Board*

Next week — Wednesday, September 13 — libraries are invited to attend a webinar with MLS/MassDot and BPL on the expansion of “Browse, Borrow, Board.”

**Expanding “Browse, Borrow, Board” across Massachusetts: Bringing multilingual digital library content to transit riders near you**

Join this one-hour session to learn about the “Browse, Borrow, Board” program, initially launched in Boston with the MBTA and the Boston Public Library, and now available to transit riders and library patrons statewide. The Massachusetts Library System is pleased to have joined the Boston Public library (in their role as Library for the Commonwealth) and MassDOT in expanding this program. We’ll discuss how the Browse, Borrow, Board program works, and how you can coordinate with your Regional Transit Authority to bring the service to your patrons.

**Presenters**:

* Melissa Andrews, Chief of Collection Management, Boston Public Library
* Kris Carter, Chief of Possibility, MassDOT
* Jaclyn Youngblood, Deputy Chief of Possibility, MassDOT

**Date**: September 13, 2023 (Wednesday)

**Time**: 10 – 11 am

**Location**: Zoom Webinar

**Register**: <https://calendar.masslibsystem.org/event/11217777>

This webinar will be recorded and made available on [the MLS Vimeo channel](https://vimeo.com/masslibsystem) after the event.

*Biblio+*

We have a new unlimited streaming resource, [Biblio+](https://biblioplus.com/landing), that is available statewide to all eCard holders (it is not LFC funded). Biblio+ went live on the BPL website on September 5. The service offers a curated selection of award-winning films, documentaries, and television shows for streaming.

**Library Services**

*Excel Online High School*

Now up to 11 graduates and 86 active enrollments. The program has recently added students from Framingham, Revere, and Shrewsbury. We are continuing to push the program out to libraries and community organizations across the state.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 1:06 P.M.



Karen Traub

Secretary

1. The line item program entities included in this policy are the Massachusetts Library System, the Library for the Commonwealth, Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library, the Worcester Talking Book Program, and the Massachusetts Center for the Book. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)