

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

**Date** : Thursday, June 5, 2025

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

**Place** : Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Offices- Hybrid Meeting

 Boston, MA

**Board**

**Present** : Vicky Biancolo, Chair; Timothy Cherubini, Vice-Chair; Kate Chang;

 Debby Conrad; Joyce Linehan; Jessica Vilas Novas

**Absent :**  Karen Traub, Secretary; George Comeau, Esq.

**Staff Present:**

Maureen Amyot, Director; Heather Backman, Library Building Specialist; Andrea Bono-Bunker, Library Building Consultant; Kate Butler, Library Information Systems Specialist; Celeste Bruno, Communications Director; Terry D'Angelo, Administrative Assistant / Business Office; Tanesha Deane, Contract Specialist; Tracey Dimant, Head of Operations & Budget / Business Office; Allyson Dowds, Consultant to Special Populations; Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development; Al Hayden, Library Advisory Specialist; Rachel Masse, Assistant to the Director; Jaccavrie McNeely, Electronic Services Specialist; Cate Merlin, Head of State Programs; June Thammasnong, Communications Specialist

**Observers Present:**

Courtney Andree, Massachusetts Center for the Book; Eileen Chandler, CLAMS Library Network; Lee Anne Hooley, Worcester Talking Book Library; Sarah Jackson, Boston Public Library/LFC; Chris Lindquist, Wayland Free Public Library; Betsy Meaden, Massachusetts Library System; Annalisa Moretti, Tewksbury Public Library

**Meeting called to order by Chair Biancolo**

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

**Roll Call of Commissioners**

Commissioner Traub 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 Cherubini- Present  | Commissioner Linehan- Present  |
| Commissioner Biancolo - Present | Commissioner Comeau- Absent | Commissioner Traub- Absent |
| Commissioner Chang - Present  | Commissioner Conrad- Present  | Commissioner Vilas Novas- Present  |

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

**May 1, 2025**

Chair Biancolo asked if there were any corrections to the May 1, 2025 as presented.

There were no corrections.

Minutes were approved as presented.

**Chair Report**

Chair Biancolo provided the following report.

On May 23, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled decisively en banc that public library collections are “government speech,” writing in the majority opinion that "Libraries curate their collections for expressive purposes. Their collection decisions are, therefore, government speech." The lengthy dissenting opinion stated that “The Supreme Court in prior rulings affirmed the right to receive information and the right to be ‘free from officially prescribed orthodoxy ... Public libraries have long kept the people well informed by giving them access to works expressing a broad range of information and ideas, but this case concerns the politically motivated removal of books from the Llano County Public Library system by government officials in order to deny public access to disfavored ideas … Because I would not have our court join the book burners, I dissent."

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has jurisdiction over Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, but other courts may very well refer to this opinion. I hope this decision is appealed to the Supreme Court, and that our conservative court takes it up and upholds our First Amendment rights.

Before I get to my activities I want to let everyone know we will have a new commissioner! Kemarah Sika has been appointed, and once she is sworn in, she will join us on the board. She is in business, and has an MLIS. Joyce has volunteered to serve as her commissioner mentor, thank you Joyce!

On May 6, I spoke with Commissioner Emerita Jan Resnick and Mary Kronholm. On their advice, I signed up for the newsletter from the Massachusetts Municipal Association, and I urge you to do so as well. I intend to attend some of their events this year, when possible, especially their legislative breakfasts.

On May 19-20 I attended the annual conference of the Massachusetts Library Association in Falmouth. Personally, I had a fun time taking a shift at the CMLA booth, where I spoke to many librarians. There were two particularly interesting speakers, Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell and Lisa Varga, ALA Associate Executive Director for Public Policy and Advocacy. Attorney General Campbell agreed that, in her words, “You cannot have a democratic society without free access to information.” She also reminded us that executive orders from the White House are not laws. All they do is advise the behavior of federal employees. If you are not a federal employee, you do not need to, nor should you comply.

Also at that meeting, Maureen Amyot delivered the annual state of the state address as part of the annual business meeting. I want to publicly commend Maureen for her thoughtful report to the library community. She delivered good news joyfully and the grim news in a way that was easy to understand – in context, with reasoning. The relationship building that Maureen has always done with librarians, and continues to do, paid off. Librarians in attendance accepted the news with what looked like grim determination rather than despair.

On May 19, I spoke at the ribbon cutting of the beautiful new Sharon Public Library, and had the opportunity to meet Representative Ted Philips. It was a lovely day, and a great turnout for such a small library.

On May 23 I attended the monthly meeting of the Massachusetts Library Association Legislative Committee.

On May 27 I attended the monthly meeting of the executive board.

Next month is our first meeting of the new fiscal year, so we will be electing the executive board. As secretary, Commissioner Traub is chairing the nominating subcommittee.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude on behalf of the board for our library community. It is a difficult time to be sure, but the intense, consistent advocacy by librarians, trustees, friends, and supporters has resulted in better than level funding in the state budget for libraries for next fiscal year. Friends, that is an enormous win. We have all come together and raised the profile of libraries, and educated multitudes on the importance of libraries and library services in the Commonwealth, and it paid off.

Furthermore, in April, Attorney General Campbell joined the multi-state lawsuit against the Trump Administration’s dismantling of the IMLS, and because of advocacy at the MLA conference, she is now interested in the consumer protections we are looking for with our eBook legislation. The MBLC and MLA Legislative Committee will send information to her office.

We are doing great work, and I think that when we are old and gray (or grayer), we will look back at this bittersweet time, where we were presented with an enormous challenge, but we didn’t shrink from it. We met it, and we fought. So please keep chins up. We are on the right side of history, and it matters.

**Commissioner Activities**

**Commissioner Chang**

* May 20- Attended the Mass Center for the Book letters about literature awards ceremony at the state house
* May 23- Advocacy work for MBLC funding

**Commissioner Cherubini**

* May 8- Attended the Mass Library System-sponsored open house at the Optima sort facility in Worcester
* May 10- Attended two Mass Center for the Book Kids Lit Festival events – an author hosted story time in Williamstown and a lecture by illustrator Barbara McClintock at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art.
* May 12- Attended Mass Library System monthly board meeting
* May 14- Attended virtual briefing for Commissioners on FY26 budget planning
* May 15-Visited the South Hadley Public Library where I toured two branches and heard from Director Joe Rodio about the library, the community, the past, present and future
* May 19- In Greenfield, viewed screening of the library documentary “Free for All” and participated as panelist on post-viewing discussion.
* May 20- Attended Mass Library Association Annual Meeting
* May 23- Attended (virtually) Mass Library Association Legislative Committee monthly meeting
* May 27- Attended (virtually) MBLC Executive Committee meeting
* May 27- Participated in the Western Massachusetts Library Advocates coffee hour in Blandford.

**Commissioner Conrad**

* May 13 – B & T Connect Training (virtual)
* May 15 – Retirement Reception for Jean Gallant, director of the Holmes Public Library in Halifax
* May 19 – 20 – Massachusetts Library Association Annual Conference
* May 28 – Massachusetts Library Association Fall Conference Programming Committee (virtual)

**Commissioner Linehan**

* Advocating people to reach out to their legislators about federal funding

**Commissioner Traub**

* May 7- “So you Want to be a Trustee” MBLC webinar
* May 8- Western Mass Library Advocates
* May 12- MBLC online Advisory Office Hour
* May 14- Commissioner Briefing
* May 19 and 20- MLA annual conference
* May 27- WMLA Advocates coffee hour Blandford Porter Memorial Library
* May 27- Mass Library Trustee Association monthly meeting virtual
* May 27- MBLC Executive Board

**Commissioner Vilas Novas**

* May 6- Participated in the SACL review committee meetings
* May 20- Attended the Mass Center for the Book letters about literature awards ceremony at the state house
* May 21- Attended the MA digital equity coalition
* May 21- Tuned into Net Inclusion conference livestream hosted by National Digital Inclusion Alliance- session
* June 3- Led the Essex County Community Foundation digital equity coalition
* June 4- Participated in Senator Markey's listening session, digital equity act

**Director’s Report**

Director Amyot provided the following report:

**Business Office**

The Business Office team has been working on the fiscal year end close, as well as in-depth planning for FY2026, anticipating ways to manage the budget with the likelihood of a continued lack of ability to spend federal funds.

Tanesha Deane, our Contracts Specialist, has spent the last few months working closely with the state’s Operational Services Division, the vendors, and MBLC staff to help navigate the changes in our database contracts.

We are also working closely with the Comptroller’s Office on the BEST (Business Enterprise System Transformation Project), which is the Commonwealth’s multi-year initiative to implement a modernization of the state finance and Human Resources operations and systems. The first phase of this project involves replacing the state finance system – this is currently called MMARS, and the new system is called MOSAIC. The go-live for this change is January 2026 (this was shifted back from July 2025, much to our relief). This will certainly result in some challenges as the new system is rolled out. The Business Office team is working to ensure that the impact on our operations is as minimal as possible. Two of our team members, Terry D’Angelo and Susan Faiella, have volunteered to serve as User Acceptance Testers for the new system, starting this summer. This will be a substantial amount of work and time but will serve to give us a “sneak peek” into the new system and set us up for greater success in FY2026.

**Communications**

The Communications Team has been busy getting ready for summer. The [consumer portal](https://libraries.state.ma.us/) has been updated with information for parents and caregivers that highlights the importance of reading over the summer. The team worked with the Boston Bruins to create a new [Bruins Favorite Reads](https://mblc-newsroom-static.s3.amazonaws.com/collateral/programs/summer-reading/1410dede_2025-bruins-reading-list_download.pdf) with reading recommendations from new players Elias Lindholm and Pavel Zacha and favorites Charlie McAvoy and David Pastrnak. Libraries say that it’s hard to keep the player recommended books on the shelves. The drawing was held to select libraries that receive Bruins prizes. Some libraries use the prize as a raffle while others award it to an outstanding summer participant. [Full list of prize winners](https://mblc.state.ma.us/news/news-releases/2025/nr250529.php) is on the agency website. Grand prize winners are:

* *High Five game experience:* Falmouth Public Library
* *High-five game experience:* Pollard Memorial Library, Lowell
* *Bench Assistant game experience:* Wilmington Memorial Library

The Communications Team has met with all libraries receiving a Bruins visit and each library has received a promo kit that includes promotional posters, a template press release, and social media graphics. The 12 libraries that will receive a Blades visit are: Attleboro Public Library, Sturgis Library in Barnstable, Wareham Free Library, Nevins Library in Methuen, Russell Public Library, Hadley Public Library, Sherborn Library, Thayer Memorial Library in Lancaster, Lunenberg Public Library, Charlton Public Library, New Bedford Free Public Library and Fall River Public Library.

**The Governor and Lt. Governor have been invited** to the Bruins summer kickoff which will be held at Woburn Public Library. The team is also in the process of inviting legislators to the Bruins library visits that will be held at libraries across the state.

The team continues to update both the [consumer website](https://libraries.state.ma.us/federal-funding-at-risk) and the agency website with the latest information on the federal impact of executive order 14238 that calls for elimination of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). For the agency site, the team worked with Kate and Jaccavrie to create a [new dashboard](https://mblc.state.ma.us/federal-funding/index.php) with the latest news, program status, MBLC news releases, Director updates, and more. The team is also keeping the Governor’s office informed of impacts.

At the Massachusetts Library Association conference, the team coordinated the MBLC’s participation in the vendor hall. The booth was busy throughout the conference. Over 250 people put their names in for the drawing of the team-signed Bruins jersey. Luke Kirkland, Library Director in Ayer, won the jersey for his library. Andrea Bono Bunker staffed the booth and talked with many people about library construction. People also had questions about state aid, federal funding, and the potential for more cuts.

The team is also working with Commissioner Linehan again this summer to bring MassArt at the Library to three communities. The program was piloted last summer to increase access to art education during the summer months. It places MassArt faculty and student ambassadors in public libraries so that children and teens can experience the benefits of art creation, learn about the creative process, connect with MassArt faculty and students, and explore art as a possible career path.

The results from last summer were impressive:
97% of participants said they learned something new
100% wanted to see more MassArt offerings at libraries
78% do not take art classes during the summer months (one person noted: unless it’s at the library)

Funding issues prevented the program from expanding this summer, but MassArt is able to offer workshops in three public libraries. The MBLC is in the process of coordinating the workshops which are as follows:

**MassArt Sustainable Fashion Workshop**
At this fun and interactive workshop participants learn about sustainable fashion and ways to get involved to be a voice for positive change. MassArt Fashion Design Chair and Professor Jennifer Varekamp will share some exciting sustainable fashion ideas and lead participants in an interactive and creative project where each participant can contribute their own creative ideas and learn how to make an impact toward a more sustainable future.

**MassArt Aluminum Pour**
Under the guidance of MassArt Fine Arts 3D faculty Marjee-Anne Levine and current MassArt students, participants carve their own design into a “scratch block” (a pre-formed mold made of resin-bonded sand) and watch as the design is cast in metal. Aluminum will be melted on site and poured into the scratch blocks created by each participant. Within minutes the metal will solidify and be cooled and finished by the MassArt team. Each participant will walk away with their own custom cast aluminum art.

**MassArt Comic Arts Workshop**
The workshop provides an opportunity to deconstruct the comic creation process in an engaging and accessible way that applies to a wide range of skill sets. It introduces the storytelling structure and starts with a simple activity where students sketch different shapes on their pages. MassArt Comic Arts instructor LJ Baptiste will demonstrate how these shapes can be fleshed out into full characters. Participants will learn techniques they can utilize to understand a character they're creating and develop their own 4 panel comic strip featuring one of their original characters.

**Library Advisory and Development**

**LSTA Grant Update**The State Advisory Council on Libraries (SACL) met virtually on May 6 to review Impact and Inspire grant applications for the FY26 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant program. Even though the grant program has been suspended due to the dismantling of the IMLS office, the LSTA consulting team and SACL members strongly believed that it was important to continue the review process.

Following the established review process is important for two reasons. First, to keep the application process moving on the off chance that funding from the IMLS resumes. If access to funding resumes, the MBLC will be positioned to move forward and award the grants. Second, finishing the review process will result in applicants gaining feedback that will contribute to a solid grant application that can be used with other funders.

**Intro to BPL Statewide Digitization Program at the Gardner Museum**On May 2, Jess Colati and Rob Favini attended Boston Public Library’s Statewide Digitization Assistant & Project Archivist Joel DeMelo’s presentation explaining the ins and outs of the BPL’s Statewide Digitization Program. The session provided an overview of the digitization process for anyone involved in a cultural heritage institution, regardless of their experience with archives. Attendees gained an understanding of the steps necessary to get materials online with a sense for the importance of making materials widely available on DigitalCommonwealth.org and Archive.org.

**So You Want to be a Library Trustee?**On May 7, Al Hayden and Rob Favini hosted a program that was a basic primer for people who are considering becoming Library Trustees. The session provided information about what libraries do for communities, the role of Library Trustees, responsibilities of trustees, and the support and resources the MBLC offers to the library community and its advocates. The program proved to be popular with 72 registrations, and 36 attendees. A recording of the session will be available on the MBLC website and will be repeated in the fall.

**Get to Know Your Government: Massachusetts Office on Disability**On May 7, Ally Dowds continued her “Get to Know Your Government” series with a Q&A with the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD). Attendees learned about this state agency, the guidance and support it provides to disability-related civil rights and architectural access, and shared feedback on how MOD can better serve both library staff and patrons. MOD helps people understand their disability rights and obligations, how regulations apply to the specifics of their situations, and practical steps they can take to assert their rights and comply with the law. This presentation, a new outreach initiative from MOD to libraries, informed attendees how to navigate state government, have more effective interactions with the government, and learn more about MOD and how they can help libraries and their patrons.

**Census Data on a Deadline**On May 14, Al Hayden hosted Nicole Esburnett McKenzie from the US Census Department, who gave a live demonstration of data.census.gov to gain meaningful data and insights into library communities for use to inform advocacy, programming, services and more!

**Simmons University West Public Libraries Class**On May 31, Rob Favini visited Simmons University Professor Eric Poulin’s Public Libraries class to discuss library funding and the impact of the recent dismantling of the IMLS. The discussion covered the role of the MBLC, state aid certification, municipal finance, and the local impact of the loss of federal funds.

**Upcoming Programming**

**Library Trustee Orientations**This virtual 4-session course will take place on Wednesday nights in June and will focus on the roles and responsibilities of Library Trustees. There will be a new session each week covering board responsibilities, the library landscape, applicable laws, and trustees’ vital role in library policy and advocacy. Each session will have time for questions. While these sessions are designed for new trustees, all trustees and library directors are welcome to attend. More information and registration links can be found on the [MBLC calendar](https://mblc.libcal.com/event/14700271).

 **State Programs**

**Construction**

The month of May has been busy for Andrea Bono-Bunker and Heather Backman, with workshops for Owners Project Managers and architects who have been hired for Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP) projects and assisting library directors through the initial steps in this first phase of construction projects. The MLA conference was a great opportunity to connect with both the library stakeholders and professionals involved in our projects.

Andrea and Heather joined Commissioner Biancolo, MBLC Director Maureen Amyot, staff, trustees, patrons, and local & state officials to celebrate the opening of the Sharon Public Library on May 19. The new library is beautiful, and patrons were already getting comfortable – before the “official” opening the next day there were many happy people reading, exploring, and connecting. Children seemed to love the new Children’s Room as well.

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**State Aid**

Uechi Ng has been moderating meetings (Board meetings and zoom sessions about databases), assisting with Connect training, organizing Annual Report of Information Statistics (ARIS) workshops and announcing registrations, working on FY26 State Aid forms and items for the FY26 ARIS survey, completing new director paperwork and librarian certifications, and proofing items for PR/Celeste.

Aparna Ramachandran, our IT specialist, had an incredibly busy month. She completed setups on multiple new laptops and handed them over to staff. She performed Windows 11 upgrades for all 23 staff laptops plus the travel and boardroom laptops. She created and sent VPN software update instructions for all staff and is working with Custom Tech on Windows 11 post-upgrade fixes. Aparna, along with Cate and the Business Office staff, has been working on a new inventory management and ordering process for technology purchasing, which they all hope will be completed soon.

Jen Inglis is deep into FY26 ARIS preparations - training begins next week, and the survey itself will be open from July 1-August 15. Her preparations included scheduling trainings, updating documentation to reflect changes to the ARIS, revising fiscal year information on all documents, reviewing the survey to make sure that it's correct, notifying directors about trainings, and creating tools to assist with reporting.

Cate Merlin has continued to host bi-monthly State Aid Office Hours, connecting with library directors who have State Aid questions and concerns. She continues to work with libraries facing budget challenges. She led another Connect training course and is offering logins to network administrators and MBLC staff. She is revamping the upcoming Financial Report training courses and will continue to offer Connect training as needed.

Cate has also been working with the Perkins and Worcester Talking Book Libraries to finalize their new joint application for Talking Book services, and that should be active soon. Cate and Jen created a small unofficial survey asking about policies regarding residents of decertified libraries, and Cate send out the results last week- ½ of MA public libraries responded, and 90% of existing policies state that the library will NOT serve residents of decertified communities.

 **Director Activities**My main focus this month was working with the management team to make difficult but necessary decisions about the statewide databases, since we needed to notify vendors regarding renewal or cancellation. After a lot of discussion and working through many, many different scenarios – plus discussions with the vendors and close examination of usage statistics, we realized we could only retain a small group of databases. To be clear, due to the actions against the IMLS taken by the Trump administration, we cannot afford all of the databases we currently subscribe to. For FY2026, starting July 1, we will only be offering:

* Encyclopedia Britannica Library/School/Escolar
* Gale Academic OneFile + OneFile Collections
* Gale in Context: Opposing Viewpoints
* PebbleGo

We will have to discontinue the following databases:

* Boston Globe Article Archive
* Britannica Moderna
* Gale Academic OneFile Select
* Gale General OneFile
* Gale Health and Wellness
* Gale in Context: Biography, Elementary, Environmental Studies, Global Issues, Middle School, Science, US History, World History
* Gale Interactive Science
* Gale LegalForms
* Gale Literature Resource Center
* HeritageQuest Online
* Peterson's Career Prep & Peterson's Test Prep
* Science Database (ProQuest)
* Transparent Language Online

We were able to retail the small collection listed here using state funds from budget line 7000-9506. In that line, we are proposing to reduce grants to the networks for ebook content from this year’s $1 million to $500,000 and using the $500,000 toward databases. Our awesome partners at the Massachusetts Library System also support the databases and they are increasing their funding by about $19,000 to just over $670,000 to make this service possible. (In this current fiscal year, MBLC and MLS together spent $2.2 million on databases, for context.)

I announced the cuts at the MLA conference, and held three zoom sessions for the library community so they could ask questions or share concerns. We are in frequent conversation with the MLS staff and the Boston Public Library to plan for future offerings, keep information flowing, and see where we can support each other’s work. It was a lot of heavy messaging to deliver, and the library community, in general, understands why it’s happening. I think the weekly communications have helped librarians understand what could be coming and made it slightly less shocking when it happened.

All the news wasn’t bleak, however. I got to experience moments of “library joy” in between the difficult things. I attended the MLS Open House at the Optima sort facility in Worcester, and it was amazing to see the seamless way items get offloaded from the vans, sorted, stacked, re-loaded, and sent out to libraries. When they do sessions again in the fall or next spring, I highly encourage Commissioners to attend and see the “invisible” side of the delivery operation.

I was able to join Andrea, Heather, and Commissioner Biancolo at the Sharon Public Library ribbon cutting. There’s no happier occasion than a groundbreaking or a ribbon cutting, and I was delighted to be able to attend. The turnout was incredible for a Monday afternoon!

The ribbon cutting was during the MLA conference, and it was wonderful to connect (and reconnect) with library friends in person. I think the highlight for me was getting to meet and have a conversation with Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell. She gave a keynote on the second day, and I had a solid 10-15 minutes with her before she spoke. I was able to talk to her about our inability to spend federal funds and explain our reimbursement model. I also took a few moments to thank her for her staff’s work on the Rhode Island vs Trump lawsuit. She is a library supporter, and a library user, so she understands the impact on a personal level. Her office is committed to fighting for IMLS, and the library community is truly thankful for their work and support.

**Legislative Report**

Rob Favini provided following report:

**Budget Update**

The budget process is now in the hands of the House Senate Conference Committee to create a final compromise bill to send to the House and Senate for a final vote of acceptance in each branch. The following legislators are serving on this year's Conference Committee. House: Reps. Aaron Michlewitz, Ann-Margaret Ferrante and Todd Smola; Senate: Sens. Michael Rodrigues, Joanne Comerford and Patrick O'Connor.

Following the House and Senate vote the budget will be sent to Governor Healey for signing. All of this will hopefully warp up by the end of the fiscal year deadline, June 30th.

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| **MBLC FY 2026 Budget** |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **FY25 Budget** | **FY26 Legislative Agenda Ask** | **FY26 Governor's Budget** | **FY26 H.4001** | **Fy26** **S.2525** |
| **9101 - Board of Library Commissioners** | $2,074,268  | $2,489,122 | $2,074,268  | $2,073,664 | $2,074,268 |
| **9401 - Regional Libraries Local Aid** | $19,000,000 | $19,950,000 | $19,000,000 | $19,075,000 | $19,500,000 |
| **9402 - Talking Book Program Worcester** | $711,942  | $747,539 | $711,942  | $711,942 | $711,942 |
| **9406 - Talking Book Program Watertown** | $4,053,441  | $4,256,113 | $4,053,441  | $4,053,441 | $4,053,441 |
| **9501 - Public Libraries Local Aid** | $20,000,000 | $22,000,000 | $20,000,000 | $20,000,000 | $20,000,000 |
| **9506 - Technology & Resource Sharing** | $6,169,480  | $6,477,954 | $6,172,690  | $6,197,690 | $6,172,690 |
| **9508 - Center for the Book** | $420,000  | $550,000 | $420,000  | $420,000 | $420,000 |
| **Totals** | **$52,429,131** | **$56,470,728** | **$52,432,341** | **$52,531,737** | **$52,932,341** |

**Library Related Legislation and Court Cases**

The Massachusetts Legislature is deep into the budget so there hasn’t been any movement on the library-related [bills that were introduced](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11vRKVTdUdnHrNTHvKnsYXKzsbyzFrOC4LEJjNKheFiw/edit?gid=0#gid=0) at the start of the current legislative session. While we are waiting for local action, nationally several notable pieces of legislation and court rulings have made the headlines.

Texas – The Fifth Circuit deals a blow to freedom to read

<https://www.wordsandmoney.com/in-a-stunning-reversal-the-fifth-circuit-deals-a-massive-blow-to-the-freedom-to-read/>

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit tossed out a 30-year-old precedent and held that politicians can effectively remove books from public libraries at will. The Fifth Circuit agreed that library book decisions are “government speech” that is not protected under the First Amendment and therefore not subject to Free Speech challenges.

Connecticut – Library E Book legislation passes

<https://www.wordsandmoney.com/connecticut-legislature-passes-library-e-book-legislation/>

This law places the emphasis on allowing libraries to negotiate with publishers by barring Connecticut libraries from entering onto contracts with terms (unreasonably short lending periods or artificial caps on usage) that run counter to the library’s mission.

The bill also includes two clauses that govern its implementation. One makes the law’s various terms “severable,” meaning that if the bill is challenged in court, the court can strike down certain provisions without striking down the entire law. And the bill also includes a trigger clause for its effective date: the law would not take effect until one or more states with a combined population of at least seven million people also pass similar legislation.

Related, Kyle Courtney's sharp [take on the Fifth Circuit ruling via his Substack.](https://mostlylawful.substack.com/p/books-were-harmed-in-the-making-of?ref=wordsandmoney.com)

New Jersey – E Book legislation Introduced

<https://www.wordsandmoney.com/new-jersey-introduces-library-ebook-bill/>

[Bill S4520](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2024/S4520/bill-text?f=S5000&n=4520_I1&ref=wordsandmoney.com) was introduced by New Jersey Democrat Andrew Zwicker on May 29. The bill would prohibit public libraries from entering into licenses for “electronic literary materials” that include what the bill characterizes as overly restrictive provisions.

**IMLS Funding and Reauthorization**

Keeping up with the status of the IMLS has been challenging to say the least. To stay informed and up to date with this fluid situation the MBLC’s Communications team has set up latest news page: <https://libraries.state.ma.us/federal-funding-at-risk#latest-news>.

**Senator Markey’s Digital Equity Listening Session**

On June 4, 2025, Senator Ed Markey held a listening session to hear how the Trump Administration’s termination of the Digital Equity Act and Republican efforts to block E-Rate funding for Wi-Fi hotspots are impacting Massachusetts. This funding directly impacts libraries and their ability to connect their users with broadband connectivity, devises including Wi-Fi hotspots, and digital literacy training. Members of the MBLC staff and the greater library community attended with Commissioner Vilas Novas and Rob Favini making statements.

**May State Revenues**

The Department of Revenue releases their May 2025 state tax collection report. Revenue collections are up $2.8 billion for the fiscal year over last year at this time. However, a significant portion of the better-than-forecast tax collections came from the relatively new surtax on wealthy households and capital gains taxes, two streams that generally cannot be spent freely. Surtax dollars can only go toward education and transportation. Capital gains taxes are available for general spending, but state law requires collections above a certain threshold to be steered into reserves.

**Consideration of a FY2026 Grant Round for 7000-9506, Library Technology and Resource Sharing, including Telecommunications for Resource Sharing, Resource Sharing Program, Network Infrastructure, and Small Libraries in Networks**

Kate Butler, Library Information Systems Specialistpresented the following four grant-round fact sheets, to be funded out of account 7000-9506:

1. FY26 Telecommunications for Resource Sharing
2. FY26 Resource Sharing Program
3. FY26 Network Infrastructure
4. FY26 Small Libraries in Networks

The total amount of money available for these four grants will be determined at a later date, but will not exceed the amount granted in FY25.

**Telecommunications for Resource Sharing** provides offsets to the ongoing costs that networks bear for providing broadband connectivity, dedicated data lines and shared Internet service to their members. Telecommunications for Resource Sharing also provides ongoing support for the cost of Internet service for smaller libraries that are not part of a network.

The **Resource Sharing Program** grant recognizes that libraries in networks are contributing to the overall universe of materials available to all residents of Massachusetts by facilitating interlibrary lending using network technology. The grant also supports 75% of the ongoing costs for the eCard registration and renewal platform used by networks.

The **Network Infrastructure** grant provides funding to each network based on the network’s size in number of outlets. These funds allow the network to accomplish large equipment replacement projects, software-as-a-service costs (SAAS), and related system costs on its own timeline.

The **Small Libraries in Networks** (SLIN) grant allows networks to directly offset annual membership costs for public libraries in municipalities under 10,000 population. It also provides a one-time subsidy of on-boarding costs for libraries joining a network for the first time.

Commissioner Conrad moved and Commissioner Linehan seconded to approve the FY2026 grant opportunity, funded out of account 7000-9506, as described in the fact sheets presented in agenda 8: Telecommunications for Resource Sharing, Resource Sharing, Network Infrastructure, and Small Libraries in Networks.

Chair Biancolo asked for a roll call vote.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Commissioner Cherubini- Yes | Commissioner Linehan- Yes |
| Commissioner Biancolo - Yes | Commissioner Comeau- Absent | Commissioner Traub- Absent |
| Commissioner Chang - Yes  | Commissioner Conrad- Yes | Commissioner Vilas Novas- Yes |

**The motion passed.**

**Consideration of a FY2026 Grant Round for 7000-9506, LEA eContent grants**

Jaccavrie McNeely, Electronic Services Specialist presented the FY26 Library eBooks and Audiobooks (LEA) Content Grant ($500,000) grant-round fact sheet, to be funded out of account 7000-9506.

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

Commissioner Conrad moved and Commissioner Chang seconded to approve the FY2026 grant opportunity, funded out of account 7000-9506, as described in the accompanying fact sheets: Library eBooks and Audiobooks (LEA) Content. The Board authorizes any additional FY2026 7000-9506 disbursements that may be possible toward the end of the grant cycle.

Chair Biancolo asked for a roll call vote.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Commissioner Cherubini- Yes | Commissioner Linehan- Yes |
| Commissioner Biancolo - Yes | Commissioner Comeau- Absent | Commissioner Traub- Absent |
| Commissioner Chang - Yes  | Commissioner Conrad- Yes | Commissioner Vilas Novas- Yes |

**The motion passed.**

**Report from Massachusetts Library System**

**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 the Library of the Commonwealth**

Sarah Jackson provided the following report:

**Digital Services Update:**

A reminder that anyone can sign up for the Statewide Digitization Newsletter, the Statewide Scanner with the following link: [https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/4qLumxw](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flp.constantcontactpages.com%2Fsl%2F4qLumxw&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7Cb4b4f48d8d1843b3fb1308dd9218506e%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638827355343928377%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=CJxjp1%2Fo%2BSsndwPFM5RQFB1a7fZSaIuA6w8tiAXwJbQ%3D&reserved=0)

**Community Learning Update:**

SkillMill – we have a total of 491 users across the state using the resource, with a total of 231 courses completed.

Excel Adult High School: We currently have 91 students actively enrolled in our scholarship program for the Excel Adult High School. 14 of those students have enrolled since the beginning of the 2025 calendar year, including 6 in the past 30 days. We have 65 total graduates - ​21 since the start of the 2025 calendar year, including 4 graduates in the past 30 days.

**Research Services, Collections & Special Collections Update:**

Special Collections and Public Service facilitated 5 open houses, 4 class visits, 3 fellowship selection processes and one public webinar.

**Recently Published BPL Blogs**

* [**Haitian Heritage Month: Haitian Manuscripts at BPL**](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F47h6dyvab.cc.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001uy1a2xJWh7eRafVMB_tVbzt73w7iMMIxM6FYKlTli7ImiTTI_B0jhocsxq77PgigVrAH6RrnKdXHuX0pFAA0D0E2dL06-k7KaUvG9Ok2ikkCDJJUgcEY7BmEmWBsc8st9arP0VOo-srM3-Xfx5VyJct0mRIVnn8dRN97YLNOY-3I3folhFj7L7lUXJMTkONdD9je46A_LguJKL5bh5cyYh06wxEcCszq82UTGEHS7wE%3D%26c%3D7_eL48BFNX0IiCcumhDxxg3h_y011ghAo6dvry9ezz2XWwX3Et4cow%3D%3D%26ch%3D_GnXXQ7t6UccWQzZ-U1hmnxtK_kUJn_yutdaObIJskNd-5MPtWajjw%3D%3D&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7C28ad8e9d3e8d4261c04a08dd8e42fae2%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638823140561186139%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=6LjNJiv%2F9kM2MEAJZZiaWvD9DXi6uvMdcO1ZZflQDU0%3D&reserved=0) — an introduction to the BPL's collection of Haitian manuscripts; written by Curator of Modern Books and Manuscripts Viv Williams.
* [**International Workers’ Day!**](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F47h6dyvab.cc.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001uy1a2xJWh7eRafVMB_tVbzt73w7iMMIxM6FYKlTli7ImiTTI_B0jhocsxq77PgigNcqZdjhQ2d_l6KxYWk1cq4nppPVpvyZo51Y8vdPoYlGjjb2AicIFwcH0SVl9e-YUdwBHTPi684-ET2GKT01ckPHFBzZCmoLU3Dkl52VvrBQWcV2y_5JRFAozJ1VZTFz6OUiBDp709qs%3D%26c%3D7_eL48BFNX0IiCcumhDxxg3h_y011ghAo6dvry9ezz2XWwX3Et4cow%3D%3D%26ch%3D_GnXXQ7t6UccWQzZ-U1hmnxtK_kUJn_yutdaObIJskNd-5MPtWajjw%3D%3D&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7C28ad8e9d3e8d4261c04a08dd8e42fae2%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638823140561212154%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=7D8SQ6TX%2FviMdb86yR8DqatfCtuNGheuRc2%2Bq3IqZwM%3D&reserved=0) — a brief history of International Workers’ Day with resources and reading suggestions; written by Reference Librarian II / Workforce Development Librarian Elizabeth Grab.
* [***Our Bodies, Ourselves***](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F47h6dyvab.cc.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001uy1a2xJWh7eRafVMB_tVbzt73w7iMMIxM6FYKlTli7ImiTTI_B0jhocsxq77PgigHN04-UPJ9-Nbbi7CJ_Cz06NpEk9ZeL81PLdLB_W7VnJAHmLH_W33zBJYc_AX6ZMUTxzRvJIy-Uans9EOeNW9qiyWXYzO9_F09sSi8XHuYFKHe1Oddb8bJOHw9tD6MejqUtrXgEa_2wy5fUaqh2wgYnU4KbAEryV-RVA24WDO6xc%3D%26c%3D7_eL48BFNX0IiCcumhDxxg3h_y011ghAo6dvry9ezz2XWwX3Et4cow%3D%3D%26ch%3D_GnXXQ7t6UccWQzZ-U1hmnxtK_kUJn_yutdaObIJskNd-5MPtWajjw%3D%3D&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7C28ad8e9d3e8d4261c04a08dd8e42fae2%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638823140561236352%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=7OIX%2BaxsdnaaC%2BQoAyq2Xh3%2BBKA4jGPL5SA7LoUrT20%3D&reserved=0)[**Now Available Online**](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F47h6dyvab.cc.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001uy1a2xJWh7eRafVMB_tVbzt73w7iMMIxM6FYKlTli7ImiTTI_B0jhocsxq77PgigHN04-UPJ9-Nbbi7CJ_Cz06NpEk9ZeL81PLdLB_W7VnJAHmLH_W33zBJYc_AX6ZMUTxzRvJIy-Uans9EOeNW9qiyWXYzO9_F09sSi8XHuYFKHe1Oddb8bJOHw9tD6MejqUtrXgEa_2wy5fUaqh2wgYrhsfbugKEIGMyFiIUjjTWs%3D%26c%3D7_eL48BFNX0IiCcumhDxxg3h_y011ghAo6dvry9ezz2XWwX3Et4cow%3D%3D%26ch%3D_GnXXQ7t6UccWQzZ-U1hmnxtK_kUJn_yutdaObIJskNd-5MPtWajjw%3D%3D&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7C28ad8e9d3e8d4261c04a08dd8e42fae2%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638823140561253290%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=MYbW%2B99F6%2BjKmubxgHchY%2FXffnRPwUwrMs9ZtuNF%2BqE%3D&reserved=0) — a spotlight on Special Collections Department's nine copies of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* now available digitally; written by Special Collections Public Services Supervisor Kathleen Monahan.
* [**Queer Lit Review: May 2025**](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F47h6dyvab.cc.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001uy1a2xJWh7eRafVMB_tVbzt73w7iMMIxM6FYKlTli7ImiTTI_B0jhocsxq77Pgiguil_J_NtqGIg2HZ2cDp8a_6T_kcOTPXEert-PTjsM13f42OA8L367rC_ghEBtIRRusXBwZ5VsGqGlpCqReonCj5hIfIIvmkrKqC4GswAcGruOklaqeHxvKKGndN_jXMgAooWMCAPpc0%3D%26c%3D7_eL48BFNX0IiCcumhDxxg3h_y011ghAo6dvry9ezz2XWwX3Et4cow%3D%3D%26ch%3D_GnXXQ7t6UccWQzZ-U1hmnxtK_kUJn_yutdaObIJskNd-5MPtWajjw%3D%3D&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7C28ad8e9d3e8d4261c04a08dd8e42fae2%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638823140561271479%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=kCd4mSoCrAp%2FFXm7i3BwxnGZ2HbU6QMYVpJ2HqRoCCg%3D&reserved=0) — the latest edition of the Queer Lit Review; compiled by Reader Services Specialist Jordan Draves and written by BPL staff.
* [**May is Mental Health Awareness Month!**](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F47h6dyvab.cc.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001uy1a2xJWh7eRafVMB_tVbzt73w7iMMIxM6FYKlTli7ImiTTI_B0jhocsxq77PgigMTspJNh3yA7tgRazwFvA4tSnyqjqfNfps0TTX1q-dzSMiZm2KeBgeCM-2o4c4QQW4rq_n5TkD9BC6Y9plrYMkGXuvdIjpGHoPX33HWsJ8M4tZ42LSrai3ov5AY-tYOZTkhSj_yVovkH1mh4sHLt4UId9uT9WUXA0%26c%3D7_eL48BFNX0IiCcumhDxxg3h_y011ghAo6dvry9ezz2XWwX3Et4cow%3D%3D%26ch%3D_GnXXQ7t6UccWQzZ-U1hmnxtK_kUJn_yutdaObIJskNd-5MPtWajjw%3D%3D&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7C28ad8e9d3e8d4261c04a08dd8e42fae2%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638823140561293335%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=M8IZtryjNz9kL6u7hmjUy3TAqePPLYQo7oyaYQjcQcA%3D&reserved=0) — an all-ages list of fiction and nonfiction titles focusing on mental health; written and compiled by Youth Services Librarian II Morgan Howard.
* [**Haitian Influence on Boston’s Workforce**](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F47h6dyvab.cc.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001uy1a2xJWh7eRafVMB_tVbzt73w7iMMIxM6FYKlTli7ImiTTI_B0jhocsxq77PgigsmVVtuHxi1SoACdiivJM_SGHGVk0fX6N-tgQj1QKh0CpvtGlJRYfEU3Ct5IvoHjPv3i_Wrxlugmm-U8vSjy9Sjr28Nc-OqX_BTMZSbMC7a0UgMQP1LcNh20XiFZDbkaBk3YJ8tCTXngVFjOOwQsgeM0El17NaN-a%26c%3D7_eL48BFNX0IiCcumhDxxg3h_y011ghAo6dvry9ezz2XWwX3Et4cow%3D%3D%26ch%3D_GnXXQ7t6UccWQzZ-U1hmnxtK_kUJn_yutdaObIJskNd-5MPtWajjw%3D%3D&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7C28ad8e9d3e8d4261c04a08dd8e42fae2%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638823140561311959%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Bk3MZIGQrTDwsM00h6E8VPgSxnc4sn7kx8hXdxzcR2A%3D&reserved=0) — books and resources for and about Haitian-Americans in the workforce; written and compiled by Reference Librarian II / Workforce Development Librarian Elizabeth Grab.
* [**An Interview with Dennis Lehane**](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F47h6dyvab.cc.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001uy1a2xJWh7eRafVMB_tVbzt73w7iMMIxM6FYKlTli7ImiTTI_B0jhocsxq77Pgiguq720mTCWeV0WPinAZQEdv-thlAHWCpU48FXvALZ6rztyKzxzeyV4T3bb0c2vOWm8x2rlyQ0VhnlFrfSiyieDSdY6b_Nh-QOR-ntR1BHSfQx5QyYxNyO1A7yLNv9WpmHgqqFwH0A1g_yRdsKtNtmjw%3D%3D%26c%3D7_eL48BFNX0IiCcumhDxxg3h_y011ghAo6dvry9ezz2XWwX3Et4cow%3D%3D%26ch%3D_GnXXQ7t6UccWQzZ-U1hmnxtK_kUJn_yutdaObIJskNd-5MPtWajjw%3D%3D&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7C28ad8e9d3e8d4261c04a08dd8e42fae2%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638823140561332068%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ttZPDvlGpchQmUYyXotZzKCo8hGgbJPMCU2G3VKMxMY%3D&reserved=0) — best-selling crime/mystery novelist Dennis Lehane shares insights on his BPL experiences and more; written by Public Relations Coordinator James Tran.
* [**Job Searching Over 50**](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F47h6dyvab.cc.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001ioWeEQekkQmD2kexf0aXCgJo2-fW7jnbjaKKLEKFgYOEUJPgp9WwlNr06FeT8cxEbRwygJ0iNfTVeo8XnLHMYljFMySKv8CO0IYNvW4AuRoUmjfKnSntJOB9XOhVnpsdpcbwpChAIe2t3fW_GCOI8KDGSvbGp6_afOE9zmv28rvTKSgizfbU5Z8stdoc_AjA3YWMOyvc3vw%3D%26c%3DZmyZveiyn5RpI1eE_P2JX7__7sjTue-fvifguvpsJQU88D7GhArpmw%3D%3D%26ch%3DznHE7AYxcwRBMC-srGJuu4MPIzdvkLCMVG4BEbbjGfScE08p0iIuHA%3D%3D&data=05%7C02%7Csjackson%40bpl.org%7C8127531fb5f645f6c30708dd93c9477d%7Cfa735c71d7954c01b0ae09fa7415b2b1%7C0%7C0%7C638829214949196416%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=MA3qTy8l8pKKigg26DVtrfPbcV95CN%2FZtIiYJQyf2lc%3D&reserved=0) — a list of resources and book titles for jobseekers over 50; written by Workforce Development Librarian Elizabeth Grab.

**Community History Updates:**

Submitted by Dory Klein, Community History Supervisor

**Program highlights:**

**Oral History Live: Trans Stories Panel with SpeakOUT:** In partnership with The History Project and SpeakOUT Boston, Community History facilitated this panel at the Connolly Branch; 27 people attended this moving program, and attendees were deeply engaged throughout. Survey feedback from patrons included, “People on the panel spoke from the heart and touched mine” and “Do more queer and trans programming!”

**History Slam! Community Activism in Boston:** Community History co-hosted BPL’s first History Slam with Community Learning. Four participants presented histories of community activism in Boston from pioneering 19th century cyclist Kittie Knox to the story of community gardener and advocate Elnora Thompson (who attended the event as an audience member with her family and community) to longtime school desegregation activist Lew Finfer talking about the local movement for housing justice via the Mass. Affordable Housing Alliance and the Community Investment Coalition. 31 patrons attended and shared overwhelmingly positive feedback: one attendee shared that they were inspired by Community History's programming and looked forward to learning more about our work; another shared that seeing others' presentations inspired them to want to do their own research; a library director based in Martha's Vineyard is inspired to develop a history slam at her library. There was an incredibly special moment during the audience Q&A in which Miss Elnora Thompson shared that Lew Finfer's work to establish an affordable mortgage program allowed her to buy a home; he responded that he has a plot in the Nightingale Community Garden, which she has helped steward and make possible.

**May program statistics: So far, Community History has run 5 programs/outreach events attended by 115 participants; by end of month, we will have run 8.**

**Quarterly Report from the Worcester Talking Book Library**

Lee Anne Hooley, Head of Talking Book Services, Worcester Talking Book Library presented the following report:

This was the Talking Book Library’s first month since August of 2024 being fully staffed! Even with some folks taking time off, it feels like a luxury to have all of the positions filled. It feels like we are making up for lost time and finally able to begin planning for projects and ideas. Karen and Joel were also trained on the Welcome Desk, a skill that will be great and help to increase their opportunities to serve the library community.

We are finishing up the end of the Fiscal Year 2025 with what seems to be a level funded budget as we head into FY2026. Due to the previous generous increased, we feel as if TBL is in a good place despite this. We are already planning for how to utilize the budget to best serve our patrons.

TBL had a busy month with a great deal of programming. We had two lectures that we co-sponsored with the Assumption group WiSE. We had a drum circle and some music and stories about Willie Nelson. We had a decent turnout for all of our events, and it has given us ideas on new programs and inspired Karen and Joel to create a survey asking what other kind of programming we can offer to the low vision community. The survey will be available online, in person at outreach events, and will be printed up in our June newsletter.

Harry Williams III, a well known retired librarian, radio personality, and audio book voice actor, came to meet with TBL staff and see our studio. He offered some great tips on recording, editing, and how to create an immersive audio book experience. Joel, Karen, and Lee Anne were happy to meet with him and left the experience with a lot of notes! Joel also trained Karen and Bianca on how to record in the studio, and will be teaching Bianca some editing, and possibly refreshing Cheryl on that skill as well.

In some sad news, our longtime volunteer Irene passed away this month. Cheryl and Lee Anne were able to attend her wake and let her family know how much she meant to us. Irene was also a member of the WPL friends and a lifelong Worcester resident and library user. We will miss her terribly.

**Unfinished Business and General Orders**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM



Karen Traub

Secretary