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

**Date** : Thursday, August 3, 2023

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

**Place** : Perkins School for the Blind

Watertown, MA

**Board**

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

**Board**

**Present** : Jessica Vilas Novas

**Absent** : George Comeau, Esq.; Stacy DeBole

**Staff Present:**

James Lonergan, Director; Tanesha Deane, Contract Specialist; Tracey Dimant, Head of Operations & Budget; Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development; Rachel Masse, Assistant to the Director; Shelley Quezada, Consultant to the Unserved; Mary Rose Quinn, Head of State Programs; June Thammasnong, Communications Specialist

**Staff Zoom:**

Andrea Bono-Bunker, Library Building Specialist; Celeste Bruno, Communication Specialist; Maura Deedy, Library Advisory Specialist; Jen Inglis, State Aid Specialist; Paul Kissman, Library Information Systems Specialist; Uechi Ng, Administrative Assistant; Lillian Sutton, Administrative Assistant

**Observers Present:**

Kim Charlson, Executive Director, Perkins Library; Patrice Devin, Executive Assistant, Perkins Library

**Observers Zoom:**

Courtney Andrea, Executive Director, Mass Center for the Book; Anna Fahey-Flynn, Central Library Manager, Boston Public Library; David Slater, Network Administrator, Old Colony Library Network (OCLN); Sarah Sogigian, Executive Director, Massachusetts Library System (MLS)

**Meeting called to order by Chair Conrad**

Chair Conrad called the meeting to order at 10:02 A.M.

**Roll Call of Commissioners**

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

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

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

Chair Conrad moved to adopt a consent agenda for agenda items #2-Approval of Minutes and #13 Adjournment.

Commissioner Cluggish seconded.

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

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

**The motion passed.**

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

**July 13, 2023**

Chair Conrad asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the July 13, 2023 Monthly Meeting.

Commissioner Abraham moved and Commissioner Cluggish seconded to approve the minutes from the July 13, 2023, Regular Monthly Meeting. Commissioner Linehan abstained since she wasn’t present for the July meeting.

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

**Chair’s Report**

Chair Conrad presented the following report:

It has only been a few weeks since our last meeting so I will be brief. On July 18 I attended a Mass Municipal webinar about Open Meeting and Public Record compliance requirements. I found this review particularly helpful because most of my career had been spent working in private nonprofits which do not have to comply with these laws. The attorneys conducting the overview reminded attendees not to use reply all in responding to email. Another recommendation for sending email is to use the bcc function which will prevent accidental reply all problems. If you are taking your own written notes during the meeting, do not share them with another attendee. If you do so, your notes can be considered part of the public record of the meeting. The safest thing is to keep your doodles to yourself!

On July 11 I had a Zoom conversation with our newest commissioner, Joyce Linehan. I hadn’t been able to attend her formal orientation, so I was pleased to be able to chat about the work the Commissioners do on behalf of Massachusetts libraries.

On July 25 I attended the Executive Committee meeting along with the new officers during which we had a discussion about proposals for the FY2025 legislative agenda.

On August 1 and August 2, I attended several programs in the United for Libraries 2023 Virtual Conference for Trustees, Friends, and Foundations. I was able to attend the conference at no cost thanks to the statewide membership in United for Libraries paid for by the MBLC. I look forward to viewing the recorded sessions that I was unable to attend.

I reviewed the Commissioner Committee and Liaison assignments for FY2024. Commissioner Traub is stepping down as liaison to the Massachusetts Library System and moving to the Center for the Book. I am going to serve as liaison to the Massachusetts Library System. All other assignments remain the same until later this fiscal year.

Mary Rose sent out the very good news about our FY2024 budget, although everyone would have liked to see the Center for the Book funded at the level requested in the Legislative Agenda. Later today we will have our preliminary discussion about identifying priorities for the FY2025 Legislative Agenda – as one year of advocacy ends another begins.

In the Director’s monthly report James described the silver tsunami taking place among Board staff as a large number of senior staff members are retiring in FY2024. I know James is going to talk about this in much greater detail. Each of the retirees has contributed so much to the Massachusetts library community over the years. I know that there are talented people who will be stepping into their roles but those are some pretty big shoes to fill. Over the next few months, the Commissioners will be reviewing and discussing the process for the Director’s search. I have served on two search committees for this position, and I know it will take a lot of effort to find someone to replace James. The positive impact he has had cannot be overstated.

**Commissioner Activities**

**Commissioner Abraham**

* July 18- PR Committee Meeting

**Commissioner Biancolo**

* July 25: Attended meeting of Executive Board, virtual
* August 1: Attended day 1 of United for Libraries Virtual Conference
* August 2: Attended day 2 of United for Libraries Virtual Conference

**Commissioner Cluggish**

* July 18- PR Committee Meeting

**Commissioner Traub**

* 7/13/23 Greenfield Public Library ribbon cutting dedication
* 7/18/23  MBLC Pr Communications meeting
* 7/25/23  MBLC Executive Board Mtg
* 8/01/23  ALA United for Libraries Virtual
* 8/02/23  ALA United for Libraries Virtual

**Commissioner Vilas Novas**

* July 17- attended Digital Equity & Civil Legal Aid: Opportunities to Close the Digital Divide webinar
* July 25- attended ECCF Digital Equity Coalition Advisory meeting

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Lonergan presented the following report:

Meetings/activities highlights since the last monthly Board meeting:

* July 19—Broadband & Digital Equity Working Group meeting, Westborough
* July 24—Mass. Broadband Institute & MBLC Catch-Up meeting, virtual
* July 25—Executive Committee meeting, virtual
* July 26—MBLC Collection Development Policies & Book Challenges meeting with Commissioner Linehan and Maura Deedy, virtual
* July 27— Meeting with Lyrasis representative to discuss the Palace Project app for e-content, virtual
* August 1-3—United for Libraries Annual Conference, virtual

Mary Rose will share the mostly very good news about our **FY2024 operating budget**. The Conference Committee budget has been released and meets the requested funding levels in the MBLC FY2024 Legislative Agenda except for the Center for the Book. The Conference Committee funded the MCB at $420,000, not the $440,000 requested. In addition, Senator Oliveira’s $750,000 additional request for the State Aid Regional Libraries line made it through Conference and is now part of the FY 2024 budget voted on by the House and Senate on July 31st. The Governor has up to 10 days to decide to accept the budget as voted or to veto lines or sections.

**Intellectual Freedom Update:** Rob Favini attended the MLA Intellectual Freedom/Social Responsibility Committee meeting at the Morrill Library in Norwood on July 20th. The 12 attendees discussed topics including:

**Censorship and Proposed Legislation**  
The group discussed the major points of 4 bills that have recently been submitted ([HD.4399](https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/HD4399), [HD.4443](https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/HD4443), [SD.2679](https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/SD2679) , [SD.2673](https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/SD2673) ) Rob was able to give some context of the major differences between the bills and relay the MBLC’s involvement in providing information to Senator Cyr’s staff regarding SD.2673.

**MBLC/MLA/MSLA/MLS Joint Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Censorship**  
Andrea Fiorillo provided background on the joint statement and encouraged folks to sign on as individuals and to share the statement with their library boards and staff. The discussion included sharing the many resources that have been posted on the MLS and MBLC sites.

**Candidates for library boards, school boards, and other municipal boards**  
Andrea shared a statistic that between 500 and 600 Moms for Liberty-supported candidates have won local municipal elections across the U.S. This represents a 55% success rate in the elections where their candidates have run. The group discussed the impact of having a well-organized and funded national organization getting involved in local elections. Andrea encouraged all to spread the word that librarians must pay attention to local elections to be aware who is running for library trustees and school boards. Local groups active in supporting candidates who want to limit intellectual freedom include Mass Informed Parents and the Massachusetts Family Institute.

**August 5th Call to Hold Prayerful Story Times**  
A national movement led by former teen actor Kirk Cameron and Christian conservative publisher BRAVE Books is encouraging parents to reserve library meeting rooms on August 5th to pray, sing, and read BRAVE books. The Mass Family Institute has promoted the [event](https://www.mafamily.org/2023/07/11/see-you-at-the-library-august-5th-2023/). Local and national organizers are being encouraged to report any obstructions by libraries in booking rooms, which will be met with legal challenges.

**Banned Book Week Read-Ins Planned**  
The MLA and MBLC will be rolling out  promotion and guidelines to Massachusetts libraries to hold Read-In [events](https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/05/us/idaho-bonners-ferry-library-books/index.html) to highlight that the library is for everyone. Read in will provide a space for people to read what they want under the tag line “Free people read freely.” Event details will be coming out soon.

**Digital Equity Update**: Members of the MBLC staff continue to work collaboratively with the

[**Mass Broadband Institute**](https://broadband.masstech.org/) **(**MBI) as they create a plan to address the digital divide statewide. The MBI will be hosting a statewide listening tour made up of a series of regional meetings and focus groups that will inform the development of federal funding plans that will help Massachusetts access broadband and digital equity funding from the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The MBLC will be helping to set up and facilitate satellite locations at public libraries in support of the listening tour. The meetings will run through September and October.

**MBLC E-rate Outreach:** Aleck Johnson, MBLC’s E-rate consultant, facilitated a meeting with the Network Administrators to outline current E-rate programs and procedures and gather feedback on how/if they have been using E-rate funds for Network operations or in support of individual member libraries. Aleck also outlined the scope of his engagement with the MBLC highlighting services that he can provide to the Networks.

**Statewide Digital Equity Working Group**: Members of the MBLC staff attended the third meeting of the statewide Digital Equity Working Group. I represent the MBLC on the working group and attended in person, while Paul, Rob, and Kate attended remotely. The meeting included updates of programs and activities happening across the state and a visioning exercise defining what digital equity might look like in Massachusetts.

**Worcester Public Library’s Book Vending Ribbon Cutting:** Rob Favini attended the ribbon cutting for Worcester Public Library’s book vending machine program. The ribbon cutting took place at Worcester’s Union Station where one of three book lending machines are located. The library also has machines at the YMCA on Main Street and at the Worcester Senior Center. Each vending machine holds about 300 books that include best sellers, fiction, and nonfiction titles. The vending machines were made possible through America Rescue Plan Act funds as administered by the Institute for Museum and Library Services. The MBLC granted the funds to Worcester as part of the Communities Hard Hit by Covid (CHHBC) grant program.

**2023 United for Libraries Virtual: Trustees, Friends, and Foundations,** Tuesday, August 1 to Thursday, August 3, 2023.The MBLC has purchased statewide registration to this interactive three-day virtual event that will feature expert speakers on current topics facing library Trustees, Friends, Foundations, and staff who work with them. Programming runs from 11AM (EST) to approximately 4PM (EST) daily with scheduled breaks. Registrants may participate in some or all program sessions live, and/or watch recordings on-demand.  Registration is funded in part with funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. For more information on the program and speakers visit the conference web page: [https://www.ala.org/united/events\_conferences/virtual](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.ala.org/united/events_conferences/virtual__;!!CUhgQOZqV7M!gdhL6NE2zLtCTANYQSdPb_AEPA_3XuD4p9CZFantZaro_2Tb_kGY7ZgYBv_xjIEVvigKBpqJW3KlXxg9rw8Zuo6AabI9gQcHObUI$).

Maura Deedy will be speaking on a panel on Monday, August 7 at the Academy of Management conference in Boston in a session titled: “Navigating Censorship: Workers on the Front Line.”

During July, the **Communications Team** held events with Bruins mascot Blades at Ashland Public Library and Haverhill Public Library. Both events were well attended. Commissioner Cluggish joined the fun in Ashland and, with the help of Blades and a local hockey coach, ran the trivia round. Commissioner Vilas Novas attended in Haverhill where she ran trivia with Blades and talked with families and kids as they participated in the crafts, photo booth, and games. The Team also awarded Bruins prizes to 35 libraries (listed below). The libraries were selected through a random drawing of all those participating in the statewide summer library program. Bruins prizes including at-game experiences, team signed jerseys, and Brad Marchand signed photos and pucks.

**Bruins Summer Library Prize Winners**

**Grand Prize**High Five game experience: Haverhill Public Library  
Bench Assistant game experience: Thayer Memorial Library, Lancaster  
High-five game experience: Middleborough Public Library

**Team-Signed Bruins Jerseys**  
Melrose Public Library  
Bushnell-Sage Public Library, Sheffield  
Walpole Public Library

**Brad Marchand Signed Bruins Puck**  
Athol Public Library  
Porter Memorial Library, Blandford  
Emily Williston Memorial Library, Easthampton  
Fitchburg Public Library  
Boyden Library, Foxborough  
Brooks Free Library, Harwich  
Lakeville Public Library  
Thomas Crane Public Library, Quincy  
Rockland Memorial Library  
Somerset Public Library  
Southborough Library  
Goodnow Library, Sudbury  
West Springfield Public Library  
Vineyard Haven Public Library, Tisbury  
  
**Brad Marchand Signed Photographs**  
Public Library of Brookline  
Paul Pratt Memorial Library, Cohasset  
Millicent Library, Fairhaven  
Georgetown Peabody Library  
Sawyer Free Library, Gloucester  
Norwell Public Library  
Orange Public Libraries  
Lawrence Library, Pepperell  
Shrewsbury Free Public Library  
Upton Town Library  
Lucius Beebe Public Library, Wakefield  
Beaman Memorial Public Library, West Boylston  
Weymouth Public Libraries  
Wilbraham Public Library  
Worcester Public Library

The team also concluded the **soft/quiet censorship survey** for directors of all types of libraries. The questions are different than those the team worked with State Aid staff to include in the Annual Report Information Survey (ARIS).

Questions on the soft censorship survey included:

* Have you withheld ordering a title that may be considered controversial due to negativity surrounding book challenges?
* Have you reconsidered displays and books or items featured due to negativity surrounding book challenges?
* Have you or your staff been targets of negative comments on social media or in traditional media?

The survey was done to get a better understanding of the full impact that the current climate is having on library staff and services. There were 237 total respondents: Public: 199, School: 35 Academic: 2 Special: 1

While we’re still compiling data and considering the best way to release it, there are several initial findings stand out: 25% of public library respondents report that library staff have been harassed; 11 libraries had formal challenges that they did not report. These 11 libraries experienced 59 challenges, with one library experiencing 32. In terms of funding, only one library, a public library, reported experiencing funding issues due to a formal challenge.

The survey was anonymous, but allowed for people to comment about their experiences and needs. The comments speak to how stressful the climate it. Many libraries have had informal challenges and incidents. Many say things like they’ve been “lucky so far but know it’s coming” Several share how afraid they feel and how stressful it is for staff.

**Staff News**: Five veteran MBLC staff members have informed that they plan to retire this fall:

* Shelley Quezada, our Consultant to Special Populations, came to the MBLC in 1984;
* Paul Kissman, our Library Information Systems Specialist, started in 1995;
* Susan Gibson, our Accountant, came on board in 2006;
* Lauren Stara, one of our Library Building Specialists, has been with the MBLC since 2013; and
* Mary Rose Quinn, our Head of State Programs/Government Liaison, joined us in 2014.

We will be celebrating all five staff closer to their retirement dates in October and November, but we wanted to thank them all for their dedicated service to the MBLC and to the Commonwealth’s libraries and wish them well on their upcoming retirements!

I’m happy to announce that Kate Butler will be moving into Paul’s position starting August 28. Kate’s experience and institutional knowledge in the unit makes her uniquely qualified to take over as the Agency’s Library Information Systems Specialist. Congratulations, Kate!

In addition, Andrea Bono-Bunker will be moving into Lauren’s position in late October. Andrea’s experience and institutional knowledge also make her uniquely qualified to serve as the Agency’s supervisory Library Building Consultant. Congratulations, Andrea!

Finally, I recently informed Chair Conrad that I plan to retire at the end of June 2024. The staff and I will be happy to assist the Commissioners as appropriate throughout the director search process.

For the previous director search in 2017, a search committee was officially formed at the January 2017 monthly meeting and “charged with identifying and recommending candidates for the position of Director for consideration by the Board of Library Commissioners.” Initial work took place in late 2016 to review and revise the job description, to create a job posting, and to contact potential search committee candidates.

The search committee reviewed applications and conducted preliminary interviews, with the charge to forward up to five finalists to present to the Commissioners. The search committee’s work began in January 2017 and concluded in early April. The Commissioners interviewed the remaining finalist (me--there were two finalists, but one dropped out) in an open public meeting on April 21, 2017.

The 2017 Director Search Committee included representatives from the MBLC (the vice chair and secretary of the Board and one staff member); a network representative (Chair Conrad in her role as the executive director of the SAILS Network); the BPL president; the MLS executive director; an MLA representative; a Gateway City library director; and the chief of the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services. I believe previous director searches may have included a few additional representatives from MBLC affiliates and/or partners.

I will work with staff and Chair Conrad (and other interested Commissioners?) to create a draft director search process and timeline for consideration by the Commissioners at an upcoming monthly board meeting this fall.

**Legislative Report**

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

The House and Senate accepted the FY 2024 Ways and Means Conference Committee Report and, in separate votes, approved the FY 2024 budget. They have sent the budget to the Governor for her approval. Governor Healey has ten days to sign and accept the entire budget, veto sections, or veto individual lines. In the meantime, Massachusetts has in place an interim budget for the month of August.

We are at the last steps of the budget cycle. As a reminder: the Conference Committee was made up of the Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Ranking Minority members of their respective Ways and Means Committees. They are Senators:

[Michael J. Rodrigues](https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/MJR0), Chair, [Cindy F. Friedman](https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/CFF0), Vice Chair, and [Patrick M. O'Connor](https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/PMO) (Ranking Minority).  
Representatives:  
[Aaron Michlewitz](https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/AMM1), Chair, [Ann-Margaret Ferrante](https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/AMF1), Vice Chair, and [Todd M. Smola](https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/TMS2) (Ranking Minority).

1. [Final Budget](https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2024/FinalBudget) The Governor has 10 days to review the budget and take action to either approve or veto the budget. The Governor may approve or veto the entire budget, veto, or reduce specific line items, veto outside sections or submit changes as an amendment to the budget for further consideration by the Legislature. Following any legislative overrides to the Governor's actions, the budget is finalized and is commonly referred to as the "General Appropriations Act" (GAA) for the upcoming fiscal year. (FY 2024)   
   [**Acts (20xx)**](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021) **Chapter ## The General Appropriations Act (GAA)  
   An act making appropriations for the fiscal year 2024 for the maintenance of the departments, boards, commissions, institutions and certain activities of the commonwealth, for interest, sinking fund and serial bond requirements and for certain permanent improvements.** (e.g., from 2023 <https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2023/FinalBudget>)

The budget passed by the Legislature for the seven MBLC budget lines is $730,000 more than was requested in the FY 2024 Legislative Agenda. The budget for the Center for the Book was $20,000 less than the Agenda, unfortunately, however, thanks to Senator Oliveira, the Regional line received $750,000 more than requested. The chart included in this report provides both the prior year and now current year numbers and will be updated once the Governor makes veto decisions and the Legislature follows up on overrides.



**Update on Book Ban Banning Bills:**

The three bills filed separately by Senators Cyr and Oliveira and Representative Hawkins are headed to the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts, and Cultural Development chaired by Paul Mark in the Senate and Mindy Domb in the House. Former Commissioner Mary Kronholm has reached out to Senator Mark’s office to advocate for the bills and received this in response from the Senator: *“As a follow-up* [to a prior email on the topic], *in some good news, these bills appear to be heading to the Joint Committee on Tourism, Arts, and Cultural Development.  While I won't be able to co-sponsor them as Chair, I will do what I can to advance them out of committee.”*

Commissioners will be updated when a hearing on the bills is scheduled. The co-chairs of the Joint Committee are Senator Oliveira, a sponsor of one of the bills, and Representative Kushmerek from Fitchburg.

**Update on school librarians and intellectual freedom issues:**

The Communications Team has been assisting the Massachusetts School Library Association with the development of talking points and other information for the Legislative Agenda Affiliates and Partners page. The Board will hear more from Debbie Froggett at the budget hearing at the September Board meeting about MSLA initiatives and the work they are doing with Every Library but I wanted to alert Commissioners about the most critical current issues facing school libraries and school librarians: the book banning and censorship threats in Massachusetts school libraries and the need for trained librarians in every school in the Commonwealth to build strong collections and to promote reading and research skills at every K-12 academic level. As a previous Legislative Agenda highlighted – ***You need to learn to read before you can read to learn.***

**Update on eBook bill:**

A meeting was held at the State House last week between Representative Ruth Balser, the sponsor of the bill, Representative Mindy Domb, the House Chair of Tourism, Arts, and Cultural Development, and a small sub-committee of library representatives organized by the MLA Legislative Committee. Kathy Lussier, the NOBLE Executive Director was recently added to the sub-committee and attended the meeting at the State House. She has offered to update Commissioners about the meeting at the end of this report. A hearing on the bill is expected some time in September or October.

**Report from Perkins Library**

Kim Charlson, Executive Director of the Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library shared information about programs and services ending FY23.

* Active registered patrons: 22,000
* Equipment loans: 2,550
* FY23 annual circulation: 560,000
* Active Newsline Subscribers: 4,100
* # Newsline calls: 100,000
* Newsline minutes used: 2,000,000; Hours: 33333
* Active BARD download patrons: 4,900
* BARD downloads: 160,000
* Annual incoming phone calls: 54,000
* Zoom Activities:

500 events

6,500 participants

Total Zoom minutes: 50,000, 833 hours

Children & Youth Services:

Very successful Summer Reading Program with 60 participants from all across Massachusetts. All activities included accessible activity guides that were sent out, and this year, we had scheduled accessible arts and craft days at Perkins with good engagement.

Kim Charlson spoke at Governor Maura Healey’s July 26th press conference announcing the creation of a Digital Accessibility and Equity Governance Board. It will highlight access and broadband availability, and application and platform accessibility for assistive technology.

**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.**

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| Goal | Actions | Measurement of Success | **Monthly work towards goal** |
| MLS ensures service value to all member types. | MLS will create new avenues for active member engagement, including task forces, class leaders, and project engagements. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the number of active member engagements.* | Changes made by the new School Library Membership Policy are being implemented.  Sarah Sogigian and Rob Favini (MBLC) launched their 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.**

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| Goal | Actions | Measurement of Success | **Monthly work towards goal** |
| MLS promotes excellence and continuity by providing professional development, conversation, and community around leadership. | Together with our partners, MLS will lead the planning of learning opportunities on leadership and management topics and ensure networking options in our engagements. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the leadership and management learning opportunities hosted and the reflection from participants.* | We scheduled a series of four workshops with the Employers Association of the NorthEast on HR topics relevant for libraries (employment Law, interviewing, performance management, and documentation skills). They will take place March through May.  We are working with EANE to schedule four community chats on HR related topics. |
| Leadership, professional development, and networking opportunities will have flexible offerings in order to include participants from various library types, library sizes, and resources. | MLS will explore the creation of grants and/or scholarship opportunities to support member library staff in their professional development work. | *MLS will report to member libraries on an annual basis the number of opportunities available, awarded, and the reflection from participants.* | We launched the Language Learning Grant program and approved 20 applications in February. |

# **Strategic Initiative 3**

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

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

Additional notes:

* MLS was a sponsor of the Digital Commonwealth Annual Meeting on April 11, 2023 (virtual). Scott Kehoe provided an MLS update.
* MLS hosted an exhibit booth at the MAHSLIN (MA Health Sciences Library Network) annual meeting (in person). Michelle Eberle attended to share MLS info with attendees.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:44 A.M.



Karen Traub

Secretary