Western Massachusetts Library Advocates

Thursday, November 20th

9:30 am

MLS Whatley

Present: Eric Poulin, Dan Paquette, July Clini, Deb Kern, John Ramsay, Sue San Soucie, Betty Johnson, Jan Resnick

Absent: Eliza Langhans, Mary Kronholm

Dan moved to accept the minutes from the September 11, 2014 meeting. Sue seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously.

Introductions were made and new member, Deb Kern was welcomed to the board.

Officers list provided by John Ramsay was reviewed. (See attached)

Betty made a motion to appoint Mary Anne as Clerk.

Jan seconded the motion. The appointment passed unanimously. Mary Anne accepted the position.

Jan is a WMLA board member.

Mary Kronholm is the MBLC liason to WMLA.

The position of Vice President-President Elect is currently vacant.

Eric and Deb are coordinating the legislative breakfasts.

John gave a brief overview of the origin of WMLA, discussed the boards accomplishments, and raised discussion of future role of WMLA.

Origin: Two organizations merged to become WMLA. The Western Mass Library Club was formed in 1988. It became a social organization for librarians and met once a year. It had custody of the Humphry fund. John Humphry was the director of the Forbes Library and a member of the WMLC. The second organization was Friends of WMRLS, which was formed to support WMRLS. When WMRLS was defunded the WMLC and Friends of WMRLS merged to create a library advocacy group for libraries in Western Mass and statewide. Accomplishments include successful legislative breakfasts, sending a bus of library advocates to library legislative day, scholarships to MLA, a Library Advocacy presentation at MLA by Eric and John, and ongoing library advocacy work statewide.

WMLA members discussed ways to reach out to and engage librarians in Western Mass. Discussion about how we can work to improve communication and collegiality among librarians and libraries across the state.

One suggestion was a WMLA meet and greet, January 22th, in Easthampton.

A suggestion was made to add a link to the website, blog and Facebook page to the sign up link for the WMRLS email listserve.

The locations for the legislative breakfasts are Westfield State – Humason, South Hadley – Stan Rosenberg, Springfield – Lesser and Welch, Munson - Senator Brewer’s successor, Hancock Shaker Village – Downing (Berkshires, not organized by WMLA). Eric and Deb will communicate with hosts to determine dates.

Eric and Deb will draft a letter describing legislative breakfasts and send it out to Western Mass libraries.

Library Legislative Day is April 1, 2015

John attended the Western Mass Legislative Summit at the JFK Middle School in Florence, organized by Hampshire Council of Governments. Senator Rosenberg, Representatives Ellen Story, John Scibak, Peter Kocot and Paul Mark were in attendance. The legislators and attendees participated in break-out sessions. Early childhood education was a main topic discussed. One goal of the Summit was to help develop ideas for Bills that might be filed this coming year.

Mary Rose Quinn of the MBLC attended and distributed the Legislative Agenda and a document showing the impact of State funding on libraries in Western Mass.

John is working on developing an advocacy training program. He asked for suggestions of people who might be good speakers about what advocacy approaches are effective.

Treasurer Report: Sue reported that WMLA has received $2,740 in memberships, with generous contributions from  Jay Schaeffer – UMass, CLGS, and Dan Paquette. $80.51 was expended for supplies for the October meeting. The current balance is $9,834.73.

Dan has created a new website using Wordpress. Members should email Dan with ideas and submissions for the website. A link to the WMRLS listserve, minutes, and upcoming events are items that should be added to the website.

Upcoming meeting dates:

Thursday, December 18th

Tuesday, January 13th – after MLS member forum at South Hadley Library

February 19th

March 19th

April 16th – Spring Meeting - tentative date

May 21st

June 18th

July 23rd

September 17th

October 15th – Annual Meeting

Topics suggested for Spring Meeting – Collaboration among libraries, including how larger libraries can support smaller neighboring libraries.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Anne Antonellis