Western Mass Library Advocates

September 17, 2015

Minutes

Members present: Deb Kern, Betty Johnson, Sue San Soucie, Joe Rodio, John Ramsay, Jan Resnick, Mary Anne Antonellis

Member absent: Eric Poulin, Eliza Langhans, Dan Paquette, Judy Clini and Mary Kronholm

Meeting called to order.

Meeting began with discussion about the sale of the MLS-West building and the search for new MLS West offices. Joe has been communicating with Greg Pronevitz, encouraging him to engage Western Mass library staff to solicit feedback about opinions about locations and needs. Greg has been resistant to engaging users.

MLS is looking between Greenfield and Springfield on the I-91 corridor.

WMLA discussed the positive attributes of the Ingleside area of Holyoke. MLS is looking at a facility near Ingleside and at a facility on Munson Street in Greenfield. The owners of the Greenfield building want tenants and are “courting” MLS.

The real issue is MLS is not considering the needs and opinions of Western Mass library staff in the selection process.

Betty, Margo Malakowski and Joe were not able to attend the site visits because they had work commitments. John said he is willing consider attending future site visits since he is now retired.

MLS is a member driven organization that does not seem to want to talk to their members about an important decision effecting members in Western, Massachusetts.

MLS is not booking the meeting room at the current location for any future dates.

Joe made a motion to appoint John and Jan as MLS point persons to help with the new office search. Sue seconded. The motion passed unanimously. We feel input from WMLA is important since we advocate for Western Mass libraries and we can help influence a positive transition to a new location.

On Monday, September 21st at 1 pm, there is a meeting of the WMRLS board to dissolve the corporation so the USDA can forgive a large portion of the loan. The USDA has expressed reluctance to forgive the loan if there is a corporation that might resurface and be financially solvent.

Betty will send an email to Greg asking related questions and sharing info about this discussion.

Minutes from July, 2015 meeting.

Betty made a motion to accept the minutes with one change. Jan seconded the motion which then passed unanimously.

Treasurer’s report.

$50 to South Hadley Road Race

$8906,85 is the current balance.

Advocacy updates: New Legislative Action email list – people who attended the statewide advocacy action meeting, MBLC, MLA, Networks, WMLA represented. Some good ideas discussed.

Joe suggested that we have less connected legislative efforts since the dissolution of the regions. We have lost the local connection.

The group did not seem think a regional approach would be effective. There were a lot of network administrators. They are mostly concerned with budget line 9506.

Matthew Perry, Celeste Bruno’s new assistant sent an email to the group asking how they are involved in advocacy efforts. Joe replied that WMLA is instrumental in organizing Western, MA legislative breakfasts.

MBLC staff cannot advocate for their own funding but the Commissioners can.

There will be a meeting of the library legislative Caucus on October 15th. We should encourage our legislators to attend and learn about library legislative efforts. MBLC and MLA will be able to talk. They will advocate for line 9506.

Some libraries received emails from Tim Spindler alerting them to an invoice for $300 that will be coming to cover the budget shortfall caused by the reduction in State funding in the SLIN grants. Four towns will be phased out of the program because they are over 10,000 people.

We need to be in touch with our legislators year round. Having the breakfasts is not enough.

Is anyone from WMLA able to serve on the MLA legislative committee? John has advocated that the committee meet in a Central Mass location some of the time. They did have a recent meeting in Bolton. John will ask Pat McLeod.

Jan thinks it is important that a delegation from WMLA meet with local legislators about state library support. Jan explained that each library budget line is like a piece of a stool holding libraries up. Cuts to one leg of the stool make services wobbly. We can send representatives to talk to the Representatives in their offices. We might get good feedback.

The Representatives are starting to draw up priorities this fall that they will take to legislative leadership at the beginning at the next budget cycle.

Questions to ask legislators: What went wrong with the FY 16 budget? Is there a possibility of a supplemental budget. We are hoping to glean info about what went wrong and what we could do better. Why did that particular line (9506) take such a hit?

Mary Anne made a motion that a small contingent of WMLA members and Library folks from his district attempt to visit Steve Kulik. John seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The goal of the effort is to help develop more effective arguments for line 9506 and see if they will sign on to an increase through a supplemental budget.

WMLA website – Dan Paquette is absent.

Jan emailed a link to info about the MBLC 125th anniversary celebration to be posted on the website.

Discussion about statewide databases and relevance (or lack of relevance) to small libraries.

Discussion about new ebook platform – which is very difficult to use. It is way too complicated.

Discussion about the Commonwealth Catalog – it might be coming to C/W MARS in November.

Post office box – currently used by MLS and WMLA. MLS will no longer pay for it. Mary Anne made a motion to pick up the post office box for WMLA. Betty seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Sue will talk to them about if forwarded mail is a problem.

Annual Meeting

October 15th

Agawam Library

University Press of New England, Umass Press, Workman and Timberwolf Press, Maybe – Adams Media

Candlewick will send promotional materials.

The goal is to introduce smaller, more specialized titles, front lists of upcoming titles.

Small press book buzz.

Deb will ask Kristie if we can announce the WMLA Annual Meeting at the Small Libraries Forum next week.

We need one person to fill an empty seat on the WMLA board.

Joe will ask Tamsen from Easthampton.

Bylaws – terms are calendar years. A term is three years.

John will send us his personal email address as he is retired and his work email will become inactive.

NEASC is no longer requiring any standards for Academic Libraries. Eric is concerned that there should be substantial requirements for academic libraries. Jan made a motion that we send a letter to NEASC advocating for support for standards for academic libraries. Betty seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

November meeting – November 19th, 9:30 am, Northfield Library.

Meeting adjourned at 12:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Anne Antonellis, Clerk