

Western Massachusetts Library Advocates (WMLA)
Meeting
December 4, 2020
Via Zoom
Minutes – Draft

1. Toni called the meeting to order at 3:04 PM
2. Roll call: Toni Golinski-Foisy, Lisa Downing, Natane Halasz, Katherine Umstot, Wendy Pearson, Mike Moran, Lynn Blair, Nora Blake, Jan Resnick, Sharon Sharry; Absent: Mary Kronholm, Amanda Merk
3. Annual meeting minutes from October 29, 2020 reviewed and will be presented for approval at next year's annual meeting
4. Treasurer's Report - Wendy has been trained by Joe Rodio and made official at Florence Savings Bank. Our total funds stand at \$6449.
5. Membership Report - 2 new memberships; Nora and Katherine will be meeting to go over procedures; looking for someone to take over while Katherine is out on leave and after she leaves the board next October. Katherine invited someone to step forward to take over this duty which is very manageable. In the meantime, Nora will assist Katherine.
6. Openings on Board - Vice-President and Assistant Treasurer positions are currently vacant. The Assistant Treasurer role serves as a training ground to become treasurer and is not needed yet as Wendy just gets oriented to her new role but we will at some point. The Vice-President serves as back up if the President isn't available to run a meeting or to speak publicly on behalf of WMLA as well as agrees to become President the next year. Katherine offered to help recruit for the vacant seats on the board.
7. MLA Legislative Committee - Mike shared good news about the FY21 state budget that appears to have just passed. Work on FY22 must begin very soon which could be an austerity budget. Mike will continue to share draft committee minutes as soon as he receives them. John Chrastka is the director of EveryLibrary which he describes as the only national PAC for libraries. Work is done pro bono with the only potential costs to partners being for materials produced. EveryLibrary works with state agencies and other library organizations to help them take their advocacy efforts forward. MLA is planning to form a partnership with them. Nora hopes that this partnership will strengthen MLA's advocacy. She is particularly excited about help with messaging.
8. Mike said that a virtual Library Legislative Day is being planned in late March or April as well as having a presence as the virtual MLA conference. There is no word yet about Library Breakfasts. Nora suggested that we may want to hold virtual meetings with the five new state reps and senators in our region and possibly the rest as well. Katherine volunteered to begin organizing these meetings and invite WMLA members.
9. James Lonergan, Director of the MBLC joined as a guest to share the positive FY21 budget news. We are in much better shape than some states because of the healthy rainy day funds, one time federal CARES fund, and better than expected revenue. All of the legislative requests were approved or exceeded including 3% for many lines and significant increases in state aid and the state aid to regional libraries lines . The request for FY22 is going to be 3% with a larger ask in the state aid and the Center for the Book lines . James is hopeful that the FY21 state

budget passes quickly and as is. This is a good time to thank our legislators. Jan commented that over 90% of state funds for libraries goes directly to libraries or library services which is a much higher percentage than many other state budget lines. Jan also reminded us that state aid is local aid and Mike said that this could be helpful for us to share with new legislators. James thanked WMLA for our part in the effective advocacy efforts that led to this great news. Jan commented that as good as this news is, we are about where we were for state aid back in FY2001.

10. Jan said that she needs to transition out of organizing summer reading prizes after this summer. She is hoping that she can work with someone this summer that could then take it over. Katherine hopes that WMLA continues to serve this role because it has statewide library benefit. It was suggested that we could bring on someone to work on this that wouldn't necessarily need to be a board member. This could also be a good role for former WMLA board members.

11. Next meeting - Katherine will work with Toni to establish a proposed regular schedule for meetings.

12. Lisa proposed a communication to WMLA members about the good budget news and that thanks members for their advocacy and includes a membership reminder. Lisa will work with Wendy to put a mailchimp together once the state budget is finalized. Jan suggested that we also share this to the WMRLS list.

12. Adjournment Toni adjourned us at 4 PM.