

Western Massachusetts Library Advocates

Meeting Minutes

January 23, 2020

Present

Nora Blake, Joe Rodio, Jan Resnick, Andrea Puglisi, Andrea Bernard, Lisa Downing, Lynn Coakley, Mike Moran

Call to Order by Nora Blake at 9:46

Meeting Minutes

Minutes from December 19, 2020 were reviewed. Joe Rodio moved to approve the minutes and Lisa Downing seconded the motion. The WMLA Board voted to approve the minutes.

Treasurer's Report

Joe Rodio presented the treasurer's report. A deposit has been made to the Bluebonnet Diner for the Idea Share Breakfast. A deposit has also been made for the bus for Library Legislative Day at the State House. A donation was also made to MLA to cover costs for the same event. A donation was also given for the Berkshire Library Legislative Breakfast.

Both Nora Blake and Joe Rodio have information about the WMLA Square account from Dan Pacquette. Joe Rodio reports that payments to WMLA on Square are visible as direct deposits on bank statements. He will check Square for online payments for the bus, membership, and other donations. Joe Rodio will also try to get a Square report that shows who made the payments.

Jan Resnick raised the budget discussion from the December 19 board meeting and the concern that WMLA is spending more than the organization is taking in. She suggested that we ask for donation to Idea Share Breakfast. Joe Rodio suggested developing and distributing an appeal letter in the spring, following the Library Legislative Breakfasts and the Idea Share Breakfast when we have had a lot of publicity and name recognition for these events. Nora Blake wants to have an appeal letter ready at the Idea Share breakfast and kick off a fundraising request at that time. She will write an appeal letter for the breakfast and it can be sent out to everyone after that as well.

Andrea Puglisi raised the issue of a WMLA Twitter account. Many librarians are using Twitter and WMLA could increase outreach and awareness. Nora Blake raised the issue of having new sub-committees including one for social media. She will send out an email about sub-committees. Currently, Nora Blake is managing the WMLA website, Joe Rodio is managing the WMLA Facebook page, and Wendy Pearson is responsible for the WMLA Mailchimp account.

Library Legislative Breakfasts

Joe Rodio reached out to Monson Public Library and was able to share their graphic for publicity or the breakfast to be held there. Joe has not heard back from Alex Re about Berkshire Breakfast. Alex Reczkowski responded to Nora Blake and reported that registration is closed for the Berkshire Library Legislative Breakfast so more publicity would not be helpful.

Wendy Pearson sent out email reminders to register for upcoming Library Legislative Breakfasts through Mailchimp and on the WMLA website and on the Facebook page. Joe Rodio also sent out a flyer through delivery to all of the libraries for upcoming breakfasts. Registration for the legislative breakfasts has been slow. Joe Rodio reminds people to please register. A Legislative Breakfast email blast will go out again.

Nora Blake suggested WMLA have new voices promote the organization and its advocacy work on behalf of libraries at the breakfasts. Nora Blake and Joe Rodio will provide an outline of talking points. Lisa Downing will speak at the breakfast in Leverett. Jan Resnick will be at all of the breakfasts representing MBLC. Lynn Coakley will speak at the Berkshire breakfast.

Getting the agenda from the breakfast hosts is helpful for making good speaking points. Nora Blake, Jan Resnick, and Joe Rodio will try to get agendas from the host sites. The library legislative breakfasts were difficult to organize this year. Nora Blake suggests that in the future WMLA organize the breakfasts for the host site, getting speakers and preparing agendas, etc. Additionally, there is a need to speak to host libraries about ensuring that all legislators have been invited to attend at least one breakfast, even if the breakfasts are outside of their district. Some representatives are holding listening tours and office hours in libraries which may be a reason that it was harder to organize this year. But, familiarity with a library facility and understanding the needs of libraries may be two different things.

MLA Legislative Committee Report and Library Legislative Day

Mike Moran provided the report from MLA Legislative Committee. The flyer announcing bus availability and registration is complete. Online registration is available through the on the WMLA website via Square.

MLA is opening registration on February 12, 2020 for Library Legislative Day at the State House. Joe Rodio will revise the WMLA flyer to reflect the need to register separately for both the bus and the event.

Mike Moran raised the question if including speakers from the MLA Committees, suggesting that MLA, MLS, MBLC, and WMLA should all have a role. Joe Rodio raises the point that the other groups depend on state funding and MLA does not. But, MLA could talk about its advocacy role. MBLC produces the legislative agenda and MLA ratifies the agenda so there is consensus. MLA does need to be seen as a major player in the process. It was suggested that the MLA find out if there are regions that do not have legislative breakfasts. MLA could play a role in getting that started in those areas which may be a way for MLA to have a greater role. The MLA is very appreciative of the WMLA contribution to the event.

Mike Moran anticipated supporting the legislative breakfast in Monson. Joe Rodio pointed out that Monson is getting reimbursed by CMLA and most of Senator Gobi's district is in Worcester County. WMLA sees the breakfast as part of CMLA budget and will not make a contribution this year.

Mary Rose Quinn, MBLC sent an email about the Governor's budget which included at least a 1% increase for all library lines. There is a 17% increase for administrative costs as MBLC must move and their rent will be higher. The group agreed that the increases provide a good start as a baseline.

The MLA registration form for Library Legislative Day will have a place for participants to indicate if they are in need of help to make appointments with legislators. Mike Moran

reminded the group that talking to aides is as good as talking to the legislators. WMLA will make its own appointments and will try to coordinate to set up appointments efficiently. Nora Blake will talk to Katherine Hand about how she set up appointments last year.

LOGO

Nora Blake has reached out to WMLA Board Members who are not present for their feedback.

Melissa LeFever spoke to Joe before she put her proposal together to get background information. She was able to use that information to understand WMLA's needs. The board members present discussed the draft logos. Nora Blake would like to get away from the state outline. She preferred the talk bubbles because they are simpler. Katherine Hand, Wendy Pearson, and Toni Golinski-Foisy also did not like the state outline. In addition, Katherine Hand and Toni Golinsky-Foisy wanted more modern colors. Joe Rodio pointed out that having a logo that can transition to grayscale is important.

Joe Rodio suggested an image for libraries and an image for advocacy could form a circle that could be used as a badge. The board agreed that the intersection of libraries and advocacy is important as is the idea of the badge.

Andrea Puglisi suggested using sans serif fonts to increase accessibility.

Lisa Downing was drawn to the map as stronger and bolder but felt that either image would put the WMLA in a better position. Mike Moran voiced that he did not have a strong preference for the images presented.

Lynn Coakley did not like the two conversation bubbles as they seemed to represent silence rather than advocacy. And, she thought that the state logo highlights WMLA's beginnings and maybe a time that has gone past.

Jan Resnick does feel that the WMLA location is tied to identity but she wants to change the way that the state logo shows everything pointing to the east.

Nora Blake will present feedback to Melissa Lefever and will ask for a new image emphasizing the idea of the badge, a sans-serif font, an image that can transition easily to grayscale, and an image connecting libraries and advocacy.

MBLC

New MBLC commissioners need to be appointed. Jan Resnick explained that candidates submit resumes to the Boards and Commissions Office at <<https://appointments.state.ma.us/>>. The applicant does not need organizational support but it helps. And the active support of a legislator is helpful too. Applicants also need to pass a background check. Anyone can apply and applications are always open. We need diverse candidates who know about Western Massachusetts libraries. It is helpful to submit a slate of at least five applicants and enlist support from legislators. Boards and Commissions make a selection and notify the selected person. The selection process can take several months to several years. MBLC can only contact Boards and Commissions to get updates on the process, not as an advocate for the applicants. may take anywhere from several months to years to get the appointment. Responsibilities for the position include attending monthly MBLC meetings. A travel reimbursement is available. Meetings take place across the state. The MBLC is an activist board that goes to library events throughout the state and members serve on various committees. Each member can decide how active to be. Commissioners also receive a large

information packet, sent out on the Monday prior to a Thursday meeting, to review in advance. Terms are for 5 years with a one time reappointment. Nora Blake will send an email to WMLA to urge us to start thinking about potential Commissioners.

National Library Legislative Day

Nora Blake has not heard from WMLA Board Members who would like to attend. She will send out an email to see if anyone wants to participate.

New Business

Library Giving Day, April 23, 2020, is an online fundraising event coordinated with the Seattle Public Library. Forbes, Sunderland, and Shutesbury participated last year. Forbes and Shutesbury raised funds successfully. The Forbes Library will try to raise \$8000.00 this year. Lisa Downing will write an email to help others know about the event and help libraries get involved. WMLA will make libraries aware of the opportunity but not provide support. It's possible that WMLA will be one of the participants, using it as a fundraising opportunity. Lisa Downing will help WMLA set up to participate. WMLA will need to promote its participation through social media. It's helpful to have quotes from people who are supportive of WMLA.

Nora Blake adjourned the meeting at 11:32 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Bernard, MSLIS
WMLA Clerk