

**Western Massachusetts Library Advocates (WMLA)
November 8, 2021 via Zoom
Meeting Minutes**

Welcome: Lisa called the meeting to order at 2:02pm. Lisa introduced Rebecca Schmidt (library science student). She is working PT at the Whately Public Library.

Roll call: Antonia Golinski-Foisy, Lisa Downing, Lynn Blair, Wendy Pearson, Adam Novitt, Natane Halasz, Bev Bullock, Michael Moran, Misha Storm, Anna Lawrence, Sharon Sharry, Rebecca Schmidt, Jan Resnick (arrived 2:30pm).

Approval of Minutes: September 13, 2021 meeting minutes are up for approval. Motion to approve by Wendy, seconded by Mike, approved.

Treasurer's Report (submitted by Wendy Pearson):

- Florence Bank Balance on November 8, 2021- - \$6,842.64
 - Withdrawal of \$188.00 on November 1, 2021 for PO Box Renewal
- Last Statement date - October 29, 2021
 - Beginning balance: \$6,741.67
 - Deposits: \$288.97
 - External Deposits via Square: \$23.97

Motion to accept made by Toni, Natane seconded, approved. Wendy read a card for the memorial donation.

Membership report (submitted by Natane):

- No new members
- Renewals: Friends/Library Group, 2, Family/Household, 1, Individual, 2, Student/Retirees,3 equaling \$210.00.
- One donation made of \$10.00.

A motion to approve made by Toni, seconded by Wendy, approved.

Board Members Update:

- Lisa states Rebecca Schmidt is observing today's meeting.
- Update from Natane- Natane is finishing up in Erving and moving to Hampshire College, but will remain on the board.

MLA Legislative Committee:

- Mike highlighted minutes from MLA's last meeting- MLA will meet again next Thursday November 18. One of the issues discussed was looking ahead to planning for legislative breakfasts over the coming months. The MLA committee is wondering about how to approach this year. There is a likelihood of not being able to do statewide library

legislative day in Boston. The state house is still closed to the public. Potentially planning to do a virtual legislative day again in the spring. Mike presents the question about whether WMLA wants to do anything in addition. Nothing was done in person last year. Now would be the time to begin making plans. There is one likely event in the CMLA area in Worcester. Breakfasts are usually held once the Governor releases the proposed budget in January- typically February and March.

- Wendy adds that the Berkshire Legislative breakfast talks have begun about having an in-person breakfast on January 28 (tentative date).
- Lisa states that last year's virtual event was very successful- there was much support from representatives and the virtual format made it convenient.
- Lynn states last year was successful and the virtual format could work again. Convenience was a key factor in the success.
- Toni agrees last year was successful- representatives forthcoming, the event flowed. Representatives did not have to fight for attention. Weather in February and March can be unpredictable. Toni states there were close to 100 participants. Representatives can talk without interruption.
- Lisa states she will add this to the December agenda to discuss.

MBLC: No report from the MBLC.

SLIS Student Seat:

- Lisa and Rebecca spoke about the length of the seat for a student. Lisa and Rebecca felt that three years was a very long time for a student- students aren't in school that long and it would give other students a chance. Toni suggests a trial period or introduction until the next annual meeting to edit the bylaws.

Membership Renewal Drive:

- Natane spoke about the renewal rate among current members- very low. We hadn't been asking for renewals during the pandemic. Lisa opens a discussion on a membership drive. Natane states that targeted marketing would be helpful or if there were potential events we could target with advertising. Natane asks questions regarding mailing for postage regarding envelopes and postage. Wendy says it will be covered by WMLA. Natane asks if someone submits a membership renewal and they state they're interested in helping out- where should she direct this query? Toni suggests sending a note to the respondent's email that if we do have an in-person program we can contact them.
- Natane contacts members as their membership comes due. The response rate is low- addresses and info have changed or they are no longer interested. Lisa suggests doing a more public membership drive. Natane suggests doing something with the new logo. Lisa suggests putting membership information on Facebook. Misha asks if we can clarify what's in it for members of WMLA. If someone were to ask what WMLA does- how would we answer? Toni states that WMLA had posted news happening in local libraries- an attempt to keep in touch- promoting libraries so that elected officials are aware of what libraries are doing. WMLA is an organization that supports one another, libraries of

all sizes, and how to keep your name out there with the elected officials. Jan adds that it's an advocacy arm for Western Mass libraries that gives Western Mass libraries a voice. Adam adds that he agrees with Misha in that WMLA's image has been a little unclear. In the past, there was the Western Mass Library Club that had mentorship opportunities and events that would allow for networking. Adam suggests clarifying our image and sending information through delivery (or something similar) to local libraries. Misha suggests a list of reasons as to what a member would get from being a member. Toni suggests bringing ideas to the next meeting. Sharon states if there was only one reason that WMLA exists is to get legislators involved to increase awareness for funding of libraries. It would be nice for WMLA to offer the networking, but our main goal is working with representatives/officials. Sharon states WMLA is essentially a political action committee. Jan says the dues give us flexibility to offer programs. Pre-pandemic, we'd offered up to four scholarships to MLA, funded the bus to Boston.

Lisa asks Jan is there's any MBLC updates to share. Jan says the MBLC has begun doing a board matrix- board members answer an online survey about their experiences and to get to know each other. The legislative agenda will be available shortly. New member Karen Traub is from Shutesbury. Jan's term ends in February. The board is looking for diversity. Voices from Western Mass have had an impact, other viewpoints would be equally valuable.

WMLA Logo:

- Lisa sent a document containing possible logos. Anna had begun working on the project. Toni states a brand and a logo are important. The simpler, the better, the font is important. Lisa asks if we're at the point where we should put a budget together to make this happen. Wendy adds that it seems like now is an ideal time to make the investment. The last time the board was discussing ideas, there were a few options but no one could agree and it was put aside. Jan states that no one was inspired by the past ideas.

Meeting Schedule:

- Lisa opens the discussion of a meeting schedule. We have been meeting on the second Monday at 2pm. Half of the board says the current time works great. Lisa will do a Doodle poll.

Summer Reading:

- Lisa would like to discuss summer reading. We will table the discussion until the next meeting. Jan says Misha and Lynn have been working on summer reading this past year, and it's time to get a transition going, Jan will no longer be assisting. Jan will get statistics so we can thank sponsors.

Lisa turns the discussion back to Rebecca. Rebecca does not have questions, but is excited to be able to bring the information back to Simmons students. Rebecca asks the board if they have any questions for her. Toni asks what area Rebecca is interested in working in. Rebecca states

academic libraries. She currently works in public libraries and enjoys it. Mike Moran commends Rebecca for her choice of career direction within the library field. Mike returns the discussion to the term for the library student. He suggests defining the term as being served by multiple people. Lisa thanks Rebecca for attending, Rebecca leaves the meeting.

Lisa puts forward Rebecca as a possibility to fill the student seat. Toni makes a motion. Mike seconds. Sharon would like to discuss before the vote. Sharon states that it would be beneficial to have the student be a person of color. Eric Poulin from Simmons put the word out for interested students. Toni and Eric had decided that Eric should vet the interested students. Sharon was hoping that the original idea of the internship program could be billed as an internship program for a student of color. Sharon would be interested in seeing if a conversation with Eric could morph it into something different. Rebecca is approved by the majority.

Next Meeting: December 13, 2pm will be the next meeting.

Adjournment: Lisa adjourned at 3:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Blair
Secretary