

Western Massachusetts Library Advocates (WMLA)
Annual Meeting
Thursday, October 29, 2020, 10am
Via Zoom
Minutes

Board members present: Nora Blake, Lynn Coakley, Lisa Downing, Katherine Umstot, Jan Resnick, Mike Moran, Joe Rodio, Toni Golinski-Foisy, Wendy Pearson
Board members absent: Andrea Bernard

Honored Guests: Gia Varlotto aid to State Representative Angelo Puppolo; Pat Duffy aid to State Representative State Vega, James Lonergan, Director of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners; MayAnn Cluggish, Chair of the MBLC; Sarah Sogigian, Director of the Massachusetts Library System; Jan Resnick, Commissioner with the MBLC

Welcome - Nora introduced board members and thanked everyone for attending.

The minutes of the October 17, 2019 annual meeting were approved by Katherine and seconded by Wendy.

Treasurer's Report - Joe reported a light year of activity due to the pandemic.

Balance 10/1/2019 \$6,282.89

Deposits \$2,906.84

Payments -\$2,592.98

Balance 9/30/2020 \$6,596.75

The report was approved by Jan and seconded by Katherine.

Membership Report - Katherine reported that we have 37 active members so far in 2020, 5 of whom are brand new members. This is a dramatic decrease from 2019, when we had 71 active members. Additional work will be done in 2021 and for the remainder of 2020 to increase our membership and renewals. The membership coordinator took a break from membership renewal reminders March 2020 - October 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It did not feel wise to be asking for funds during a difficult time for so many. The majority of large events where WMLA and WMLA membership are publicized were also cancelled, including Massachusetts Library Legislative Day and our annual Idea Share Breakfast.

Election of New Officers -Katherine presented the following slate of officers:

Lisa Downing – Secretary

Toni Golinski-Foisy – President

Wendy Pearson – Treasurer

We still need a Vice-President

Nora approved the slate and Joe seconded the motion.

Nora welcomed the following new Board Members:

Lynn Blair, Southwick Public Library
Natane Halasz, Erving Public Library
Amanda Merk, Lee Library Association
Sharon Sharry, Jones Library, Amherst

Nora thanked the following departing Board members

Andrea Bernard
Lynn Coakley
Joe Rodio

James Lonergan, Director of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners presented an overview of the state budget which is still being finalized for FY2021. Lonergan is pleased that the Governor's budget level funded most lines except for Library Technology and Resource Sharing which was reduced and slight increases to state aid and the MBLC line to cover increased office costs. The reason the budget is so stable is because of utilization of the state's rainy day fund which may be offset by additional federal aid. James is hoping the budget will be finalized by December. FY2022 is very uncertain at this point and has the potential to be difficult. James encouraged WMLA membership to engage with the upcoming budget process. He thinks the focus will once again be on the state aid to local libraries line. The Governor signed a \$115 million bond for state construction which will help cover the waitlist libraries for the next several years. It is not quite as high as hoped and the annual cap was not increased. MBLC received \$622,000 in CARES act funding through IMLS which was used for virtual programming grants and another round is expected; also used for summer reading software. He thanked Sarah at MLS for compiling reopening resources for the library community. The MBLC's strategic plan should be done by the end of the year. James shared a new construction themed podcast to learn more about the history of the library construction program that also addresses ongoing building related issues including HVAC. MBLC moved to new headquarters near their old headquarters and email is the best way to reach them because staff mostly work remotely.

Questions/Discussion - Diane Tiago from the Friends of the East Longmeadow library shared that they developed a pandemic policy that has been submitted to the MLS lib guide.

Pat Duffy from Rep Vegas's office shared that libraries have been and continue to be a priority for them. The legislative portion of the budget process would like to see the FY2021 budget wrapped up by Thanksgiving.

Gia Varlotto from Rep Puppolo's office shared that he wished to be here today and sent his regards.

Katharine thanked James and all from the MBLC for their work on behalf of libraries during this difficult time .

Sarah Sogiggian welcomed everyone to attend their annual meeting coming up. Their strategic plan is complete and has been presented at the meeting. She thanked everyone for their work

on the local level to make their work possible and invited people to reach out to her if they'd like to check in about anything.

Becky Plimpton shared information about the upcoming Central Massachusetts Library Association program that will include a program about implicit bias called Unpacking Impact.

Nora adjourned the meeting at 10:34