

**Western Massachusetts Library Advocates (WMLA)  
 March 14, 2022 via Zoom  
 Meeting Minutes**

**Welcome:** Lisa calls the meeting to order at 2:03pm.

**Roll Call:** Lisa Downing, Wendy Pearson, Lynn Blair, Natane Halasz, Mike Moran, Sharon Sharry, Jan Resnick, Rebecca Schmidt, and Misha Storm.

**Treasurer’s Report as submitted by Wendy:**

**WMLA February 2022 Treasurer’s Report**

Florence Bank Balance on 3/14/2022 - \$6,923.96  
 03/08/2022 Withdrawal - \$25.00 for legislative breakfast gift card  
 03/14/2022 Deposit - \$125.00 memberships

**Last Statement date - 2/28/2022**

Beginning balance: \$6,790.58  
 Deposits: \$33.38(via Square)  
 Withdrawals: \$0  
 Ending balance: \$6,823.96

**Membership Report as submitted by Natane:**

|                           |   |                 |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------|
| <b>Renewals Feb. 2022</b> | (Champion):<br>(Business/Institution): 1 x institution<br>(Friends/Library Group):<br>(Family/household):<br>(Individual):<br>(student/retiree): 1 x retiree<br>(open): | Total: \$110.00 |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------|

No new memberships in February.

**Board Member Updates:** Lisa announces MLA is having an in person conference in May and they are looking for raffle basket contributions. Jan adds that we have done it in the past. Is anyone attending that can deliver the basket? No one on the Board is attending. Lisa will follow up with an email about anyone dropping things off. The conference is May 23 & 24, we will need to get it together by then.

**MLA Legislative Committee:** Mike states Jo Comerford and Todd Smola have agreed to co-chair our session of the Library Legislative Day in April. Mike sent out the registration link to everyone. Mike thinks it would be appropriate now that the MBLC has had their budget hearing for us to be

lobbying our legislators. Reminding legislators from a local perspective how vital the state funding is for libraries is important. Lisa asks if the invite is ready to go live on social media, Mike will double check. Lisa asks about how much we want to advertise to get the Western contingent involved. Mike says it is a good idea to let everyone know, emphasizing the difference between the WMLA legislative breakfast to legislative day- local vs. more state-wide. Lisa asks if Mike will share his sample invitation. Jan suggests it is a good time to contact Friends and Trustees groups to get involved. Lisa adds it would be a good email to send out in Mailchimp. Jan adds that the deadline for reporting Rep. Balser's ebook legislation out of committee was extended until June 1.

**MBLC:** Lisa thanks Jan for her service over the years. As of today, Jan is no longer a Commissioner. A new Commissioner was appointed Friday. **Report as submitted by Jan:** At the March 3, 2022 meeting, Commissioners approved the extension of the moratorium to the State Aid to Public Libraries Hours Open Requirement through the end of the fiscal year. Commissioner Cluggish and James Lonergan testified virtually regarding the FY2023 Legislative Agenda in front of the Joint Ways and Means Committee on Tuesday, March 1 as part of their Economic Development/Housing/Labor hearing. They were not asked any questions but heard supportive comments about the MBLC's work and the work of the Commonwealth's libraries from legislators. Maria McCauley, the Cambridge Public Library director (and a member of the ALA Executive Board and incoming PLA President) and James met with staff from Sen. Markey and Reps. McGovern and Clark's offices on March 1 and 2 as part of targeted outreach with members of Congress organized by ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy office. ALA's asks included funding LSTA at \$232 million (it was funded at \$197 million for FY2021 and hasn't yet been funded yet for FY2022) and funding the Innovative Approaches to Literacy program at \$50 million (funded at \$28 million for FY2021). We also requested support for the Build America's Libraries Act. The Communications Team, Celeste Bruno and Matt Perry, updated the website for congressional meetings last year that details how the MBLC has been using IMLS & ARPA funds in Massachusetts: (<https://mblclsta.com/2022/>). There is no word the Executive Office of Administration and Finance (A&F) as to whether they would be raising the annual cap for the MPLCP from \$20 to \$25 million for FY2023. The Board should hear from them in a few weeks. February was a busy month for the Database Procurement Team. The review committee wrapped up product demonstrations with 8 sessions from several vendors. Also in February, product trials for 50 products from 9 vendors were opened to the Massachusetts library community. Login and other access information to the available trials can be found at the Databases Procurement LibGuide: <https://guides.mblc.state.ma.us/databasesFY23>. Product ratings from the open trial will be reviewed by the MLS/MBLC Database Procurement Team and the Database Advisory Committee. Planning continues for the ARPA-funded Perkins Access library accessibility training. In February Lyndsay Forbes, Shelley Quezada and Rob Favini participated in regular meetings with consultants from Perkins Access to plan a series of workshops tentatively scheduled to run from April through May 2022. Shelley Quezada and Rob Favini have begun planning for training sessions to help librarians learn about accessibility for the deaf and hearing impaired. They have been working with Jonathan O'Dell from the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to create training sessions that will be launched this spring. Spring Friends Coffee Hours began with a

session on March 1. The first coffee hour was attended by 21 people. Future Friends Coffee Hours are listed along with the registration link:

Tuesday, April 12, 2022 from 6pm to 7 pm: <https://mbcl.libcal.com/event/8900570>

Thursday, May 12, 2022 from 2pm to 3pm: <https://mbcl.libcal.com/event/8900595>

Tuesday, June 7, 2022 from 10 am to 11 am: <https://mbcl.libcal.com/event/8900644>

The spring Trustee Deep Dive season will begin on Wednesday March 16 at 9:30 am with a special focus on library foundations and will feature Heather Calvin, Library Trustee at the Robbins Library (Arlington). Heather's presentation will draw on her experience in nonprofit leadership, knowledge of best practices, and findings from interviews with 12 library foundations and funds in Massachusetts to highlight common themes and areas of opportunity for libraries seeking to grow philanthropic support. There will be time for discussion afterwards. The Communications Team helped launch the 15th Annual Boston Bruins PJ Drive to benefit Cradles to Crayons and DCF/Wonderfund.

Communications Specialist Matt Perry did a special workshop for the Minuteman Library Network. The focus was how to maximize social media. During the month of February, the team also worked with Buyer to create the new federal funding website <https://mblclsta.com/2022/>. Director Lonergan used the site as part of the federal library legislative meetings. The site pulls all the federal funding, LSTA, ARPA and CARES Act into searches by district, municipality, or statewide programs and includes concise descriptions of how each community is using the funds. With all of the information together on the site, it's easy to share with legislators or anyone interested in how the MBLC is using federal funds. The Communications Team will update the site as funds are expended. The Department of Revenue reported Thursday that it took in \$1.8 billion in tax collections in February, a haul that surpassed expectations for that month by \$293 million but represents less than the state collected in February 2021...

Massachusetts paid out \$405 million in income tax cash refunds last month, \$188 million less than was projected, which Revenue Commissioner Geoffrey Snyder said was the "main contributor to the above benchmark performance for the month."

"However, this favorability may be temporary as refund activity will likely increase as the tax season progresses," he said.

With no estimated payments required from individual or business taxpayers, February is typically the state's smallest revenue month, accounting for less than 6 percent of the year's total.

Through February, fiscal 2022 tax collections have totaled about \$23.673 billion, more than \$4 billion above the same period in fiscal 2021 and more than \$1.7 billion above year-to-date benchmarks...

After adjusting for the pass-through payments, DOR said, February collections are \$291 million above projections -- and \$94 million below February 2021 -- and year-to-date collections are \$1.083 billion above benchmark. The department cautioned that its February figures "should not be used as predictors for the remainder of the fiscal year," in part because of the situation with the pass-through payments.

State budget-writers have already raised their revenue expectations for this year by \$1.5 billion, to \$35.9 billion. - Katie Lannan/SHNS | 3/3/22 5:14 PM.

The Kirstein Business Library & Innovation Center (KBLIC) has teamed up with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program to offer free tax preparation for all patrons. There are two options: a drop-off service on Wednesdays from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m. now through April 13. The second option is a Remote Assistance option where you do not need to visit any of the BPL locations. The LFC also reported on their distribution of Hot Spots which went to a wide variety of

organizations including shelters, farmers' markets, laundromats, and aid centers for immigrants and the elderly.

**MLS:** Lisa states the MLS has reached out to thank us for the breakfast. Lisa was invited to attend their board meeting in September to talk about current and potential partnerships between WMLA and MLS. Lisa has looked into the history: WMLA had reached out many years ago and Sarah attended a listening session with our concerns- main concern was MLS's impact in Western MA. There's been some listening back and forth, nothing concrete. Lisa suggests at next month's meeting we can brainstorm on ways we can collaborate and our requests.

**Sick Leave and Minimum Wage for Municipal Employees Update:** Lisa reached out to her legislators-the legislator thinks it will be an uphill battle to take on- individual communities approaching it themselves might be the best bet. WMLA can then support the communities. We could potentially get communities together to discuss this. Misha states that it will be helpful to give small towns that this mostly affects workarounds. Misha had success with asking for one individual- if we could spread around the knowledge, it would be helpful. Jan adds this would be helpful for our idea share breakfast. Mike thinks it might be good idea to anyone who has a connection at MMA to get involved so they can become more familiar with libraries and their needs. Lisa will follow up with Anna Lawrence, who originally brought the concern.

**New WMLA Logo:** Lisa will include the padlet as a follow up email for the Board to add thoughts. Lisa asks if anyone has the time to look into grant opportunities for a new logo- Natane will.

**Miscellaneous:** The meetings will now be held on Wednesdays at 3pm.

**Adjournment:** Lisa adjourns at 2:55pm.

Next Meeting Wednesday April 13 at 3pm