

WMLA Annual Meeting DRAFT
October 18, 2024
Erving Public Library and hybrid on Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 9:13 a.m.

Director's report: Nicole welcomed everyone to Erving Public Library and thanked FirstLight for their sponsorship. TKTKTK from FirstLight spoke about their growing company and their grant opportunities. He noted that applications open in February and are due in April.

Nicole thanked Abby Baines for hosting us at the Erving Public Library. She also thanked Barbara TKTK from Mass Library Aid Association (MLAA) for helping make the new library possible. Barbara noted that MLAA also has small grant and scholarship opportunities that also support continuing education.

Nicole thanked WMLA board & liaisons, MBLC, MLS, and MLA. Noted legislative agenda this year focused on state aid, Ensuring Your Right to Read, Mass Center of the Book, and digital equity. WMLA sponsored four legislative breakfasts and 134 summer reading programs.

Approval of minutes from October 26, 2023: A motion to approve was made by Abby Baines. So moved.

Treasurer's report - Katya Shapiro is out of the country, a treasurer's report will be sent to members.

Membership report - Lisa Downing reported that we are at the cusp of a new membership year. 35 members have joined this year, slightly down from last year. A renewal reminder will go out soon. Organizational members are also welcomed. Nicole noted that Lisa will be stepping down from the WMLA board as she moves to join the MLA board.

Election of Officers - Misha Storm presents

- Abby Baines - president
- Vice president - open
- Deena Caswell - secretary
- Katya Shapiro - treasurer

Misha welcomed new members to the board

- Joe Rodio
- Jean Canosa Albano
- Nancy Siegel
- Student seat - Nebraska Chatham

MBLC:

Maureen Amyot - thanked board members in attendance - Karen Traub, Rob Favini. MBLC provides state funding for libraries across the commonwealth. Administer seven lines in state budget - when we ask for advocacy, this is what we are asking for. 1 - agency line, 2 - state aid to regional libraries (MLS, Library for the Commonwealth), 3 & 4 - Worcester and talking book libraries, 5 - state aid to public libraries, 6 - library tech and automated resource sharing, 7 - mass center for the book. MBLC working on legislative agenda - poster with QR code asking for library stories. Launching RFP for strategic planning consultant soon. Invite everyone to participate in the process in 2025. Maureen touring Western Mass libraries in November - shout out to Alex Reczkowski for his support and organization. Book recs - *Shark Heart: A Love Story* by Emily Habeck, and *The Familiar* by Leigh Bardugo.

MLS

Sarah Sogigian - Book recs - *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, et al. and *A Treachery of Spies* by Manda Scott. Sarah acknowledged board members present - Joe Rodio, Maureen Amyot, Rob Favini. MLS serves over 1600 member libraries across Commonwealth. Public library grant opportunity - MLS does not typically award grants, but thanks to generosity of legislature, MLS now administers a grant program to support conference attendance. Started with PLA annual conference in Columbus, Ohio. Acknowledged Jeanette Lundgren from CWMARS in helping libraries onboard, those new libraries saw a 300% increase in usage. One library reported a 700% increase. Several learning grant opportunities available. There is also HR support to member libraries. Live translator program (via phone) available to assist. Visit website for more details. MLS annual meeting a week from Monday - two Western Mass librarians are on the slate of board members (Lisa and Nicole).

CWMARS

Jeanette Lundgren - just did regional director meetings over the past few weeks. CWMARS largest automated network in MA - 108 members are small public libraries <10,000. Membership growing - 160 members, includes majority public but also school and special libraries. Added 18 new member libraries over past year. FY24 - almost at pre-pandemic number, 10mil checkouts of physical materials, 3mil digital. 5% increase in physical circ, 20% increase in digital circ. Still seeing growth and advocating for better pricing and lending models. March - new online catalog Aspen - to improve discoverability and ease of use. Better integrates digital materials. E-card - rolled out online renewal option in May. Also working on strategic plan. Seeking input from member libraries. Working on expanding partnerships with statewide organizations. Working on internal accessibility audit. Looking at new options for space when lease ends - looking to downsize or maybe move. Thanked attendees for participating and advocating, serving on boards, etc.

Mass Center of the Book

Courtney Andree - Book rec - *The House is On Fire* by Rachel Beanland. Just completed strategic planning process. Want to deliver turnkey toolkits, easily implemented programs. Launched statewide literary events calendar - please submit events, can cross promote. Mass

Book Awards - two new categories, taking submissions. Best graphic novel/memoir, and Massachusetts-based publisher. Piloting speakers bureau for recent Mass Book Award winners. Interested esp in small and rural libraries. Applications accepted on rolling basis. 2023 - reading challenge program. 275 MA cities and towns participating in challenge program. Held inaugural mass kids lit fest, tied to children's book week. Want to turn tide of reading proficiency decrease. Libraries school historical societies - great reads from great places. *Colonization and the Wampanoag Story* by Linda Coombs - youth title, gave away over 50 book boxes, discussion kits.

Nicole notes idea shares opening in spaces across the library.

(Meeting adjourned at 10:19 a.m.)