

**WESTERN MASS LIBRARY ADVOCATES
MINUTES OF JUNE 13, 2024 MEETING**

Present: Mary Biddle, Deena Caswell, Tim Cherubini, Nicole Daviau, Lisa Downing, Rob Favini, Mike Moran, Wendy Pearson, Misha Storm, Karen Traub, Barbara Wurtzel

Meeting called to order by Nicole at 3:01 p.m.

Agenda:

- Welcome and Roll Call
- Approval of May minutes
- Treasurer's Report
- Membership Report
- Board Member Updates
 - Misha Summer Reading prize update
 - Advisory Toolkit
 - Annual meeting planning
- MLA Legislative Committee Updates
- MBLC Updates
- Miscellaneous
 - Wheeler Memorial Library, Amherst update update
 - The Public Health Institute of Western MA would like our help spreading the word about equity work they are doing that involves libraires
- Adjournment

Approval of May minutes: Vote: Motion Misha, Second Mike

Treasurer's report: Moved to July meeting.

Membership Report: Lisa reported adding several new members this month - our percentage of active members is ticking up! We discussed sending an additional email blast with a reminder to renew. Misha mentioned that information on WMLA was included with the summer reading prize info.

Board Member Updates:

- Misha Summer Reading prize update - she has filled 75 summer reading prize requests, there are roughly 50 outstanding. Prizes are available to any library in the state who requests.
- Advisory Toolkit - thank you to Barbara for a great summer newsletter! Nicole has already received emails with interest and information for the toolkit.
- Annual meeting planning - A planning subcommittee will be formed. Misha, Lisa, and Wendy all indicated interest in participating. No date is set yet for the

meeting. Last year's meeting was virtual with a speaker, in-person meetings allow for food and better networking.

- Lisa shared that Senator Comerford secured a \$50k earmark in support of the Forbes Library stage project.
- Misha shared that Francesca, teen librarian in Greenfield, was looking for WMLA support for an annual teen/high school librarian professional development day.

MLA Updates: Mike followed up on the legislative update email he sent to the board on June 12. Six legislators have been named to the budget conference committee; only one is in any of our districts (Rep. Todd Smola). We are all encouraged to reach out to our legislators in support of our budget requests as well as the the ebook bill (H.3239), the Freedom to Read bills (H.4235 & H.4005 and S.2447 & S.2528), and Gov. Healey's "Mass Leads Act," bill H.4722. The legislative committee will next meet on June 21. Rob Favini noted that all budget acts should happen by the end of June, then the House and Senate will pass a unified bill to send to the governor. The process usually bleeds into May.

MBLC Updates: MBLC is fully staffed! James Lonergan's last day will be June 21. Karen thanked Nicole and Molly for their testimony to the state. Karen will be at the National Book Festival in D.C. in August. Karen, Tim, and Vicky are putting together a July Library Joy tour, visiting western Mass libraries. They'll be at Springfield and Ludlow on July 15, Sheffield on July 16, and Blandford and Westfield July 17. More libraries and dates may be added. Karen also noted that Colrain is dealing with an issue around the removal of several old busts - this will be an issue for their trustees.

Miscellaneous

- Amherst Jones Library update - The extension was granted. Sharon Sharry, library director, thanked WMLA for our letter of support.
- The Public Health Institute of Western MA would like our help spreading the word about equity work they are doing that involves libraries - the group discussed this request. PHI is focused on digital equity in particular and has resources available around both devices and training. Deena noted that the work seemed to be similar to that of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.
- Orange Public Library will remain open - however, Jason is now looking at additional budget cuts. WMLA will reach out to offer additional support.

Next meeting: July 17, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.

Adjourned at 4:15 p.m.