

WMRLS Executive Board Minutes
Thursday, March 15, 2007, 3:00 p.m.
WMRLS Headquarters, Whately

Present

Sue San Soucie, Montague
Betty Johnson, Colrain Public Library
Joan Powers, Undermountain Elem., Sheffield
Andrea Taupier, Babson Library, Springfield College
Judy Cline, Agawam Public
Martha Santoro, Franklin Law Library
Beth Wade, MBLC Liaison
Jan Resnick, WMRLS Asst Administrator
John Ramsay, WMRLS Regional Administrator
BWS Johnson, Hinsdale Public
Megan Lambert, The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art
Laurie Risler, Lay Rep., S. Hadley
Sharon Blanchard, Westfield Voc. Tech. H.S.

Absent

Catherine Doyle, Westfield State College

1. Call to order (Brooke Johnson). 3:10
Brook read the WMRLS Mission Statement to open the meeting.
2. Approval of February 15, 2007 minutes: Betty made a motion to approve; Joan seconded; passed unanimously.
3. President's Report (Brooke Johnson):

After the February 15 meeting, the Board had taken an e-mail vote to approve John's goals. Brooke asked if there were any comments, suggestions or additions. There were none. Joan moved to accept John's goals as written; Martha seconded. John asked if these goals should be for a calendar or a fiscal year. The board serves based on a calendar year, but most WMRLS activities and reporting is done on a fiscal year basis. Brooke suggested that this should be on the fiscal year, and Joan said this would be a friendly amendment to her motion. This would therefore apply through FY08. Passed unanimously.

Brooke reported that she went to a meeting last night of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Association. This organization will be funded in October at the rate of about \$1 million per year for the next 10 years through the federal government, after receiving official designation by Congress last fall. . At hat meeting, Brooke mentioned her association with WMRLS, and thought that this might benefit Berkshire County libraries, especially through the small library work.

Brooke also wanted to check in about how the Board feels meetings are going. Martha said that she appreciates how Brooke runs a tight ship. Andrea appreciated how Brooke reads the Mission Statement at the start of each meeting.

4. Regional Administrator's Report (John Ramsay):

John had emailed the following report to the Board:

Connectivity:

Some libraries are now connected through this initiative! The first was Leyden (north Franklin County). In the future, it may be possible to “beam” access to the Town Hall across the street for use by people when the library is not open. Tolland has also had satellite installed. The next satellite installations are Blandford and Plainfield. Chesterfield and Peru have had their DSL connections modified so they can be covered under this project.

We've sent back contracts with the MBLC so we can get Gates and LSTA money to cover the costs of installations. We're also using some of the administrative funds we're receiving for working on this project to add wireless capability for many of the libraries so people with Internet-capable devices can get access either inside or outside the library. It is tremendously exciting that WMRLS is able to get broadband access for libraries in communities that could not get it before.

Legislative Breakfasts: 5 sessions have been held thus far, despite some very nasty weather on March 2 that forced postponement of the Monson session and lower attendance than expected elsewhere. Despite weather, each event has drawn a good number of library supporters and legislators, with the average around 35 people. A huge attendance is expected for the remaining session on Friday, March 16, in Sunderland. Presenters have included MBLC, WMRLS, C/W MARS and the Friends of WMRLS. We have promoted the Friends of WMRLS Bus to Library Legislative Day (Thursday, April 5), with an extra discount available for people who are members of either the WMRLS or Central Region's Friends.

Jan interjected that the weather was poor for the Berkshire breakfast, and thanked Joan for reading Brooke's talk since Brooke could not make it due to car troubles.

Small Library LSTA Grant Proposals: WMRLS, with much-appreciated assistance from members of the Small Library Committee, was able to submit 2 proposals based on the recommendations from the Himmel & Wilson Study and input from people at the Small Library Roundtables:

- “Together We Thrive: Small Town Libraries Work as One” (proposed at \$237,550) is a 2 year project that will hire a coordinator to supply a large influx of helpers (Circuit Riders) who will travel to small libraries (under 2,500 population). There they will help accomplish important tasks that the libraries have not been able to complete due to staffing limitations. These include weeding, preparing collections for automation, enhancing public relations, optimizing space utilization, etc. It also sets up mechanisms to facilitate the sharing of staff, collections and programming among libraries. All this is with an eye toward creating a structure that will enable this kind of cooperation to continue beyond the grant period. This proposal is bolstered by a letter from the Simmons West Library School program that is very interested about having some of its interns serve as Circuit Riders.
- “Small Libraries: Out of the Cold and Into the Fold” (proposed at \$101,950) is also a 2 year project. This one studies the options for small libraries (44 of them under 5,000 that are not members of C/W MARS) to participate in automated circulation and resource sharing. It will look at C/W MARS, MassCat, and other alternatives, Open Source Systems that have emerged of late, and even the Metro Boston Library Network (a new option since the grant was written). An important feature of this project is that it is not just another study of automation, but the second year will also help libraries with implementation of automation.

The project calls for 10 pilot libraries to have their collections ready and having the libraries actually circulating and sharing resources on the system by the end of the second year.

Letters of Support from WMRLS: WMRLS has pledged support and assistance for:

- “Massachusetts Reads,” an LSTA proposal from the Regions and MA Center for the Book. This will extend access to the MA Book Awards authors and books through a series of events held throughout the 6 Regions’ service areas.
- Jones Library’s proposal to the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts that will set up resources and training to enable librarians throughout the Region to provide services to people from other countries who hope to become US citizens.

Summer Reading Support – When it Rains, It Pours!: Massachusetts now has several supporters of its statewide summer reading program, “Catch the Beat for Your Library”:

- The Mass. Library Assoc. and Mass. School Library Association are now partners with the 6 Regions.
- Barnes & Noble, as reported earlier, will honor vouchers presented at time of purchase on April 20 & 21, 2007, with 15% of the sale price contributed to the 6 Regions (for summer reading) and the other 2 library organizations.
- Waste Management will contribute \$40,000 toward summer reading.
- And, as a last-minute further pledge of support, the MBLC is planning to cover with LSTA funds the 3 year contract with E*Vanced Solutions (software to enable summer reading programs participants to register and submit record of their readings online.
- WMRLS is fiscal agent and contract signer for these projects.

During the meeting John noted that Waste Management had been offered three different levels of support for the statewide summer reading program. They attached certain requirements to the gift, which present some complications. For example, they requested that all materials be printed on recycled paper, which needs to be checked against orders already placed. They also requested that the logo for Waste Management be included on materials. This gets complicated because the MBLC as a State entity should not have their logo on the same line with a commercial venture. Furthermore, the Governor usually signs the certificates, but his signature should not be on a document with a corporate logo either. Perhaps he will be photographed for an “ALA Reads” poster, which could then be distributed to participants. Waste Management will cover printing and recycled materials costs.

Statewide Databases, FY08 and Beyond: The MBLC is still awaiting approval and processing by the State of its new contract for online products. The outcome of the State and Federal budgets will play a large role in determining which products can actually be offered.

Rural Library Sustainability Workshops:

Registrations for these Gates Foundation-sponsored all-day sessions are strong in the West. The April 25 session at the Eastover Resort and Conference Center (Lenox) has 22 people thus far; the April 26 event at the Willitts-Hallowell Center at Mt. Holyoke College (S. Hadley) has 34 registered to date. We are also receiving requests for stipends of up to \$100 to cover staffing so people from smaller public libraries can attend; and applications for people to be able to have their costs covered for the ALA Annual Conference this summer in Washington, DC.

John added in the meeting that he heard back from the Berkshire Bank Foundation. John had written a letter to request permission to submit a proposal, and recently heard that they decided not to take a proposal. When John receives the official letter noting this he will contact them to see

again if there is anything that can be done to adjust it for support.

Bids were opened yesterday for the new statewide purchasing cooperative. The preliminary report is that the discount doesn't seem to be going down.

Update on the reimbursement for the purchase of online newspapers: \$33,333 per Region will be forthcoming from the MBLC to cover the FY07 costs for the NewsBank contract. After paying Springfield for its contribution, about \$14k will be left. Part of that amount will go toward the statewide delivery study, which will look at both the routes and the sorting processes. An objective process to assess this is needed. Mary King said that the drivers feel that with the additional libraries from the Berkshires coming on, additional deliveries will be needed, including the addition of a part-time driver.

5. MBLC Liaison Report (Beth Wade):

The Market St. Research report confirmed assumptions, and there were no real surprises in the study. The number of patrons who regarded readers advisory services as a primary responsibility of library was quite high. The full report will be available on the MBLC website.

From Beth's e-mailed report:

LSTA Update

In preparation for the MBLC's new Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Long Range Plan 2008-2012, the agency contracted with Market Street Research of Northampton to survey Massachusetts library users and non-users for input to the plan. Market Street Research conducted a web-based survey of 1,200 residents statewide in early January and survey results were reported in mid-February. Survey findings included the following highlights:

- Library users are highly satisfied with their primary library overall and with the helpfulness and friendliness of library staff
- The most desired changes for better meeting residents' needs and increasing library use are expanded days and hours of operation and expanded materials and services
- Most survey respondents are aware of Massachusetts libraries' online interlibrary loan service, and almost all are interested in this service
- The vast majority of survey respondents are interested in having online access to full-text articles
- Respondents are particularly interested in their libraries playing the role of an educational resource
- Respondents with children expressed high levels of interest in programs and services their libraries could provide for parents and children
- Almost all respondents want librarians to act as a resource for library patrons
- Most respondents support the use of public funds to keep residents informed about library resources.

FY2007 Public Libraries Fund

At their March 1st meeting, the Board of Library Commissioners approved the awards for the new Public Libraries Fund program. The purpose of this program is to provide a matching incentive for funds raised by local trustees and library foundations from non-municipal sources for the

enhancement of library services beyond those provided through municipal funds. The FY2007 budget language authorized the Board to distribute matching funds to public libraries and appropriated \$250,000 to the Board. A total of 189 public libraries applied for matching grants. Libraries reported a total of \$5,016,962.44 in eligible funds. This resulted in a \$.0498 match for each dollar reported.

Library construction projects were not included in the emergency funding announcement. This was a disappointment.

Lee had a question on the \$250k fy07 of public Libraries Fund: Does this apply to the full year? Beth responded, Yes, there are no additional funds.

6. Committee liaisons and Reports:

- Continuing Education (Brooke or Judy): The Committee has not met, but Janet Eckert has begun work on the continuing education survey. The Readers Advisory programs have been very popular. Brooke will be doing a program on ethics, which will include an online component.
- Finance (Sue): The committee plans to meet soon to discuss revisions to the FY 07 budget. Brooke suggested that the committee should discuss the Governor's budget. John commented that his budget was a mixed bag. Beth said that it was generally level funded. No additional funding for the Regions was included.
- Personnel (Joan):
Joan said that the committee met right before this meeting for 2 hours. The employee handbook was at the center of the meeting, including an examination of the lawyer's recommendation for some serious changes. The committee will meet again before the next meeting.

John said that a lot of this is with an eye toward future employees. The policies and benefits will stay in place for current employees.

Jan said that the Western Mass Employers Association had recommended that supervisors have a separate handbook from that of the employees. This would provide more background for supervisors and a clear and concise guide for employees.

Sue asked if new employees would have different benefits. John said that this would be under review until the Board makes a determination.

- Resource Sharing (Andrea and Judy): There will be meeting on April 25.
- Small Libraries (Betty): 2 LSTA grant proposals were submitted to the MBLC. John, Brooke and Lisa Wenner developed the funding proposals, with input from the committee.

John said that small libraries will be encouraged to donate funds toward the bookmobile collection, as well as determine how they might share collections. Roundtables will be scheduled around these topics. Laurie also mentioned how to share specialized collections, especially materials that might otherwise be culled, but also other resources.

- Reference (Cathy): No report.

- PR (Laurie): No report.
- Bylaws (Martha): Martha wondered if the employee handbook revisions would have any impact on the bylaws. This will be monitored as progress is made in this area.
- Nominating (Megan): No report

7. Unfinished Business: None.

8. New Business & Announcements:

Andrea asked if WMRLS is doing anything through MLA or PLA to talk about the Small Library Study. Nothing is in the works now.

Jan reported that she spent the last 2 days at the Equal Access training. Libraries that become Equal Access libraries will receive a \$5000 grant to use, and attend this institute. The focus is on developing librarians' programming skills, serving youth, health, lifelong programming, and using technology to expand and enhance library services.

Joan asked if this opportunity is open to all public libraries. Beth said it is, and the \$5k is from LSTA funds, but on a different cycle than the regular LSTA round. There is a different application process. Do a short application to get into the program and then work at the rest of the materials at the program. Had 15 libraries in the 1st year, 15 this year, and they expect to do 30 next year. This year Monson, Ware, Springfield and one other library from the West were included. The people who are training now will then spend the money in FY08.

Nora Blake from MassCat is working to have each Region contribute to a basket to be auctioned off for scholarships for the MLA Scholarship Fund. Gifts for the basket are needed by mid-April; Board members are asked to contact Jan about any contributions that will be forthcoming.

John mentioned that the Library Leadership forum is moving forward to work on the mentor component of this program. The Steering Committee is waiting to hear back from a few people; Emily Alling at UMASS will participate as a mentor.

Jan reported that the Spring ILL roundtable will be held at UMASS on May 15.

9. Adjournment & On to the Blue Heron! 4:08

Joan moved to adjourn

Minutes submitted by Megan Lambert