



TO: Library Board of Directors

DATE: May 14, 2024

RE: **LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Tuesday, May 21, 2024
5:00pm – Green Room
Worcester Public Library
3 Salem Square
Worcester, MA 01608

cc: City Clerk's Office

AGENDA
WORCESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Library Board of Directors

Tuesday, May 24, 2024

5:00pm – Green Room

Worcester Public Library

3 Salem Square

Worcester, MA 01608

Mission Statement:

The Worcester Public Library serves as a gathering place that actively promotes the free exchange of ideas in our democratic society. The Library makes information and services available to all people while fostering intellectual freedom, protecting privacy, encouraging personal growth and enrichment, and celebrating our diverse community heritage.

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the April 2024 minutes
3. President's notes
4. Executive Director updates and report Q&A
 - Current report attached
5. Community Services Committee report
 - Minutes attached
6. Legislative Affairs Committee report
 - Minutes attached
7. Friends of the Library updates
8. Worcester Public Library Foundation updates
9. Adjournment

Call in: 1-646-931-3860

Meeting ID: 819 9576 8085

Passcode: 416420

**Worcester Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Meeting on Wednesday, April 24, 2024
5:00 PM**

**Worcester Public Library
3 Salem Square
Worcester, MA 01608**

In Person: Stephanie Pasha, Christina Andrianopoulos, Katherine Bagdis, Sen. Harriet Chandler, David Dominguez, Roseann Fitzgerald, Laura Nicole Miller, Matthew Noe, Gail Schuyler, Sheila Trapasso

Virtual Attendance: Jessica Walsh

Library Staff: Jason Homer, Sulma Rubert-Silva (Associate Director), Doug Lord (Director for Library Services), Jennifer Marien (Interim Deputy Director for Adult Services), Cara Stone (Executive Assistant to the Executive Director).

Excused Absence: Moses Laguerre

Guests: Jodie Chapdelaine, Worcester Community member

1. Call to order at 5:01
2. Approval of March 2024 Minutes

Stephanie Pasha asked for a motion to approve the March 2024 Minutes. Gail Schuyler requested an addition to the Minutes so that the Friends Report included Meow Madness T-Shirts, sweatshirts, and Tote Bags. David Dominguez requested a correction for the ticket price to \$50 for 5/3 Mini-Golf event.

With those amendments, Pasha requested a motion to accept the amended minutes. MOTION TO APPROVE by Christina Andrianopoulos. SECONDED by Sheila Trapasso. Approved unanimously with two amendments. No one opposed.

3. President's Notes

In honor of April Poetry Month, Stephanie Pasha read the poem by Nikki Giovanni:

My First Memory (of Librarians)

This is my first memory:

*A big room with heavy wooden tables that sat on a creaky
wood floor*

*A line of green shades—bankers' lights—down the center
Heavy oak chairs that were too low or maybe I was simply
too short*

*For me to sit in and read
So my first book was always big*

*In the foyer up four steps a semi-circle desk presided
To the left side the card catalogue
On the right newspapers draped over what looked like
a quilt rack
Magazines face out from the wall*

*The welcoming smile of my librarian
The anticipation in my heart
All those books—another world—just waiting
At my fingertips.*

David Dominguez told the board about his poetry contest which involved Clark University, Holy Cross, and the Worcester Public Schools. Today was the awards ceremony. The event happened with the support of the Frances Perkins Branch Library.

Pasha reminded the WPL Board about May 3 mini golf and May 4 family fun day and encouraged all to attend.

Save the Date for August 10, 2024 Library Block Party!

Note that May Board meeting has been moved to **Tuesday 5/21** instead of Wednesday because City Manager Eric Batista will present his State of the City Address on Wednesday, 5/22.

4. Executive Director Updates, Report and Q&A

1. Katelyn Duncan, New American Librarian is one of the recipients of the 2024 Thomas Green Public Service Awards on 5/30/2024. Thank you to all who wrote nominations including David Dominguez.
2. IMLS Medal Finalist Update. Thanks for interacting w/social media over the last few weeks. Keep up the good work. The focus of the IMLS Application was the Community resources department.
3. Jason attended the Public Library Association's (PLA) biennial national conference in Columbus, OH in April 3-5, 2024

4. Staff Development Day on 3/28/2024: Conference approach with peer-to-peer sharing and to demystify what other staff do for work. At the end of the day, ED announced to the staff that Katelyn Duncan was nominated for the Green Public Service Award. It was also announced the Myron Malaxi and Joel Keisling were nominated for the MLA Paralibrarian Award for 2024. Joe Petty gave keys to the City to all the librarians involved with March Meowness Campaign (see printed report for Photo).
5. Adult Services: Staff hard at work pulling oversized books and interfiling them instead of storing them in a separate section to create more study space in the Library.
6. Children's Services: ED explained the new Draw Alive Technology in the Children's Library. On 4/16, two pre-school groups from the YWCA came to use it. The Baby Chicks hatching is happening at all the branches.
7. Community Resources: Last week onboarded our second Security Compliance Officer Samantha.

ED asked the WPL Board if there were any questions.

Pasha chimed in and said that she attended the Staff Development Day. She noted that the energy was palpable and praised all the staff who coordinated the day.

David Dominguez noted that the new furniture at Great Brook Valley (GBV) Branch has greatly improved the space. He recently met the branch librarian and let her know how the furniture has created a new welcoming energy at the branch library.

ED noted that pre-pandemic, there was a plan to open a new GBV branch library in 2023. ED is working with the Worcester Housing Authority to create a new WPL branch which will have housing and will break ground in 2025. ED explained that the modest amount invested in new furniture from One City One Library to improve GBV has increased the number of patron asks to 173%. More people are going to the branches and asking staff questions.

Matthew Noe asked about the WPL Inventory Project. ED said that the project was completed at the end of June 2023. Most of the branch collections are smaller so the librarians reviewed the collection so that it is a refreshed collection (Ben at Frances Perkins).

Adult Services is moving oversized books. He noted that Adult Services has exceptional amount of data on number of shelves per collection, etc. The goal is to right size the collection and make sure all the books are catalogued. WPL librarians are reviewing titles that are relevant to today's community. ED reminded the WPL board that the books that are withdrawn from the collection are given to the Friends, or if they are broken or damaged, they are recycled. Every book returns a value to the WPL.

David Dominguez asked about the Golden Ticket Campaign which is a campaign to increase usage of the WPL vending machines. ED explained that the ticket will be in the left inside jacket of the book. The usage statistics are not yet available.

ED announced that he is attending the celebration tomorrow for Fare Free Worcester.

Pasha asked if there were no further questions for Jason, for Matthew Noe to deliver the Finance Committee Report.

5. Finance Committee Report (Noe)

Noe reviewed the highlights of the Finance Committee report included in the April minutes.

The Finance Committee had their annual meeting with Bartholomew & Company which managed the WPL Trusts. Future conversations on investments might occur depending on the WPL's needs.

Trust Fund Requests: Requests included funding fees for WPL staff to attend the Mass Library Association meeting and membership fee for the WPL's Urban Libraries Council.

Total requests approved totaled \$21,84.

Noe advised the board to read the full report which was included in the April 2024 minutes and asked Cara Stone to attach the full funding report to the minutes with his notes. Cara Stone said she would do this .

Pasha asked if the WPL board had questions on the report.

Since there were none, Pasha asked for a motion to accept the Finance Committee Report as submitted MOTION TO ACCEPT: Christina Andrianopoulos and SECONDED by Sen. Harriett Chandler. The Report was unanimously approved.

6. Marketing Committee Report (Andrianopoulos)

Christina Andrianopoulos chairs the marketing committee.

Christina noted that at the first meeting, the committee reviewed the goals of the committee which are to provide guidance and assistance as needed to ED and WPL staff and to create a marketing outreach timeline for the website.

They reviewed the marketing strategies developed by Linnea Sheldon for the IMLS Medal Campaign. Linnea has drafted a press release for the WPL winning the IMLS Medal.

Communico website will go live in Summer 2024 in time for summer reading (Mid-June to mid-August)

Block Party is August 10th and the Committee suggested having a theme.

New Logo for WPL is being considered. The committee will review samples and plans to bring about five samples to the full board for approval.

Pasha asked if the WPL board had any questions on the report.

David Dominguez—is there city funding available for the block party? Cara Stone said that in 2023 the WPL received a one-time ARPA grant. Stone noted that no grant funding is

available this year but the 2024 Block Party will cost less because a performance will not be included.

Pasha asked if there was a motion to accept the Marketing Committee Report. MOTION to accept: Matthew Noe. SECONDED by Katie Bagdis. The report was accepted unanimously.

7. Friends of the Library Updates (Schuyler)

Friends Annual Meeting took place on Tuesday, 4/16 at 4 PM

There was an Election of Officers and overview of last year. \$37K on Programs and passes - \$9M more than last year. There are 22 active volunteers.

Constitution Revision approved and the meeting time will change from 4 PM to 5 PM effective in September 2024.

March total sales: \$2,273,65

Friends of the Library sponsored hole #1 for the 2024 Mini-Golf event.

8. WPL Foundation Update (Fitzgerald)

R. Fitzgerald reported that Christine Murray asked her to remind the WPL board about the Mini-Golf event and Murray expressed her gratitude to the WPL staff for helping set up the holes.

Gail asked if there was a deadline for signing up for the WPL mini-golf event? Jason Homer said that people can show up for the Friday or Saturday events.

Pasha thanked Fitzgerald for the report and asked if there were questions/comments.

Jason Homer noted that the Worcester public is very interested in School Libraries. On Tuesday, 4/30/2024 from 6:00 to 7:30 PM, ED Jason Homer is hosting a Town Hall for parents and how they can help support school libraries. E.G., access for the Worcester Public School students access to the SORA app.

Pasha asked if there were any other comments or questions and there were none.

9. Adjournment

There was no new business. A MOTION was requested to adjourn by Stephanie Pasha. MOTION TO ADJOURN by Katie Bagdis. SECONDED by Christina Andrianopoulos. Approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann Fitzgerald

To: WPL Board of Directors
From: Jason Homer, Executive Director
Date: 21 May 2024
Subject: Report of the Executive Director



HIGHLIGHTS

- **March Meowness Final Numbers:** Comparing February 2024 to March 2024
 - Visits went up 10.7%
 - Circ went up 9.2%
 - New library cards issued went up 10.2%
 - Staff cleared 930 accounts with CWMARS clearing 3,787 for a total of 4,717 accounts unblocked due to **March Meowness**
 - Visitors to the website increased by 46%
- **NNLM Grant:** The library received a small, \$2,000 grant from National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM) which has a regional office on the UMASS Chan campus for books and materials to help those whose primary language is not English to find resources in their own language. Funds enabled purchase of a variety of consumer health and wellness titles in print and electronic format in Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Croatian, and Simplified Chinese. They range from diabetes cookbooks to self-help and self-care books. While the bulk of the materials will live in the World Languages collections at the main library, all locations will receive a few books in addition to access to the e-resources through our Overdrive platform.
- **Additional Staff Celebration:** We are delighted to report that Bookmobile staff Myron Malixi, and Talking Book staff Joel Keisling were nominated for Paralibrarian of the Year at the Massachusetts Library Association Annual Conference. While the Paralibrarian of the Year went to our friends in Watertown, we are deeply proud that for the fourth time ever, the MLA Paralibrarian section awarded a special award for "Innovation and Creativity" to our own Joel Keisling.
- **Celebrate Summer Reading:** The Dogs Days of Summer are upon us with Summer Reading. *Celebrate Summer* kick off parties for Main will be June 15th, and ends with the block party on August 10th.

Schools Department Partnership

Executive Director Jason Homer presented some of the partnerships between the WPL and WPS on May 14th at City Council, responding to a request for a report from City Council. The information has previously been shared with the board. To share additional items of note, Director of Library Services, Doug Lord, and Deputy Director of Youth Services, Angela Bennett have shared the following updates for the good of the Board:

- **Sora:** The WPS IT department has completed adding the Sora app to the WPS Clever accounts of all students. This is a huge victory in access to our students.
- **WPS Summer Reading:** There are several components to the SORA project which all serve students K-12. The primary supporting aspect is to provide copies of four titles that the schools have chosen for summer reading for 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th graders (about 7,150 total students). The library has purchased physical copies for the collections at all locations, also giveaway copies, and many electronic copies. All available languages and large type were purchased. Physical books will hit the shelves at WPL's 9 locations within a few weeks. Electronic titles are available to students through WPL's Libby and, importantly, also through Sora. Part of OverDrive, Sora is a reading app for K-12 students with ease-of-use in mind. Sora is free for student use, both in and out of school.

Department Highlights:

Adult:

- The AARP Tax-Aide Volunteers filed 134 tax returns on behalf of our community members this year.
- **Great Librarianship Stories:** This month, WPL patrons shared many great examples of staff doing stellar work.
 - Amy fielded an email reference question where the patron was seeking a photograph of the diving horses from the White City Amusement Park circa early 1900s. While Amy didn't find any photos in the collections or within any of the books relating to White City, she did find a footnote citation relating to the diving horses in a book for an article in the Sunday Telegram. Retrieving the article from the microfilm led to success: an image of the diving horses at Lincoln Park! The patron later credited the library on a Worcester history Facebook group for finding the image.
 - An out of town patron had reached out to Alex before his vacation in April asking for religious, economic, and social lives of Jewish immigrants to Worcester in the early 20th century. Despite his impending departure, Alex curated a comprehensive stack of resources tailored to her needs, and prepared his Adult Services colleagues for her four day visit to Worcester. She was so impressed with the resources he prepared that upon his return, the patron expressed profound gratitude for the "spot on" selection, praising Alex's thoroughness and the depth of information provided.
 - Katherine received an email from a patron seeking yearbook pictures of her birth father and aunts. Katherine combed through Worcester's high school yearbooks, searching a range of years, since the initial year the

patron provided was inaccurate. Despite the pictures not being where expected, Katherine's relentless determination and empathy shone through. She persisted, spending extra time searching and even involved Alex in the hunt. Though disappointed, Katherine's commitment to aiding the patron remained unwavering.

Circulation:

Circulation for April continued to rise after March's success, with a 9.8% increase in circulation of physical library materials in April, with Frances Perkin and Great Brook Valley branches seeing 44% and 78% increases respectively. Circulation also had a busy month of outreach and making connections.

- In conjunction with Adult Service and Youth Services, Myla Salmela, Hilary Raymond, and Susan Groccia assisted with the Solar Eclipse Event on the Commons on April 8th.
- Tracy Baizley and Bianca Rullo attended a Healthy Kids Day at the YMCA on April 20th. They assisted several patrons with library card registrations, general questions, and vending machine checkouts. The hope was to educate families about our vending machines and how they work. We plan to work with Adult Services and Youth Services to do more outreach at each vending machine location.
- Heidi Purdy, former Library Page, was promoted to our vacant part time L2 position. She started in November and has been a huge asset to Circulation and is eager to learn more. She is currently enrolled to get her MLS degree.

Children's Services:

- Children's room usage increased dramatically in March, and not only kept steady, but increased again in April with 5,593 visitors. Program highlights included Jellybean Catapults, Edible Mosaics, and Recycled Robots. We partnered with Talking Book Library for the first time ever, to offer a Terrarium workshop with Tower Hill and an Animal Adaptations workshop with the Ecotarium.
- April also saw 3,500 people attend our Eclipse event on the Commons. It was especially heart-warming to see the community gather to watch the celestial event together in the common, even sharing glasses with strangers once the supplies ran out.
- One City Libraries had great success with their Cooking with Litani series, brought to us by our partners in SNAP-Ed. Goddard has been especially successful at gathering the kids around the cooking supplies, making healthy Juices, stir-fries, and crapes!

- March was a huge month for outreach! YWCA Girls CHOICE Outreach got a tour from our new tween librarian, and Create 508 got a tour from one of our teen librarians. And, because of Read Across America, we visited Nelson Place School, Woodland Academy, Columbus Park School, and Vernon Hill School. We received more invitations than we knew what to do with!

Community Resources:

- The biggest news of the month is that our very own Katelyn Duncan, New Americans Librarian and extraordinary human being, won the Thomas S. Green Public Service award! We are so excited!
- And here's a glowing review about her and the Library from the Computer Systems Institute, for whom Katelyn provided a group tour for 25 new Americans: "Thank you so much for taking such good care of my students. They loved the tour and reported back that you were very sweet. Everyone was astounded by the children's section. They were excited about video game access. And they were amazed that a person could check out up to 50 books!"
- On April 4th, WPL's Librarian-in-Charge/Security team attended an informative presentation of the City's EMS system. Leadership from the City's Dispatch, WPD, WFD, and EMS systems provided an overview of how calls are prioritized and best practices for contacting safety personnel for library incidents. And, speaking of safety, our new full-time Security Compliance Officer Samantha Zaragoza-Gonzalez started on April 16! She has been training with Kaseem and getting to know patrons and staff.
- Now that spring has sprung, tabling sessions in our Main Lobby are in full swing. This month, we hosted staff from the COW's Department of Sustainability, Pleasant Street Neighborhood Network Center, Clemente Course for the Humanities, QCC, Mass Saves., and Better Life Partners for a total of 36 hours. SMOC and Sheriff's Office staff spent 17 hours in the Community Resources Offices providing outreach support to patrons on a drop-in basis.
- Spectrum's Everyday Miracles Peer Recovery began providing drop-in hours on April 3rd. They are a peer-run support group for individuals in recovery from substance abuse and they will be offering assistance to our patrons on a drop-in basis twice monthly.
- Combining Katelyn and Azajuah's office hours and impromptu 1-on-1's provided by all Community Resources staff shows that 42 patrons received focused, expert help, for average of 20 minutes each, on resources including immigration, citizenship, language translation and ESOL learning, writing and resume help, mentoring, and social services of all kinds.

Frances Perkins Branch:

- **Circulations on the rise:** Frances Perkins saw a 10.5% increase in circulations in April when counted as the circulating library and 9.5% as the owning library. Even more impressive however is that this represents a 48% rise in circulations year over year (as OL), and the highest circulations for April in years.
- **Games and puzzles added to collection:** Recently several puzzles, games, and other LoT items were added to the collection at Frances Perkins. The collection is small and new, but most of the puzzles have been checked out and a couple games already have 6 circulations, which is good given the short time they have been on the shelf.
- **Chicks bring joy to FPBL:** Our chicks hatched the first week in April. Our young patrons were absolutely fascinated with our four chicks, Bookie, Alfredo, Wesley Snipes, and Izzi. Even our adult patrons stopped by to say hi. Culminating in a meet the chicken program where 28 people came and spent the entire hour visiting with the chicks. One little girl made two crafts, one for the chicks and one for herself to bring home. Her craft was displayed on the picture book shelves where the chicks could see it for the rest of their stay.
- **Patrons love their local branch:** In STEAM and Stories we had a patron return who had been absent for quite a while. She has broken her femur and been in a full body cast. She was so excited to be back at the library with her grandmother. She brought us a flowering branch from her garden to celebrate. She loves coming in and playing with her friends.

Great Brook Valley:

- **GBV drawing teens, begins reaching beyond the valley:** Susan has developed a following among teens and we have welcomed some teens from FPBL and Main at some of her programs here at GBV. She has been such an asset and having her weekly has allowed her to build a regular group of teens who look forward to her programs and even come in early to wait for her!
- **Chickens bring joy and spirit of partnership to GBV:** From Missy: "I cannot say enough good things about this program and we are excited to have been able to offer it for the first time at GBV. We received so much support from WHA and they promoted it on their social media to get the word out to as many residents as possible. Even the WHA staff got in on the excitement and we had a lot of participation in our naming contest. Residents of GBV are not allowed to have pets, so any opportunity we can introduce the kids to animals is pretty exciting, especially animals like chicks they have never experienced close up. This program drew in many new residents and we have seen an increase in circulations and visits because of it."

- **Facility Upgrades have created a friendlier environment:**
 - One of the residents who came in to see the chicks was a longtime resident who has not been into the library in many years. Missy had a nice conversation with her and she explained that she stopped coming in due to a pattern of difficult interactions with staff prior to 2019. She was AMAZED at how bright, clean and welcoming the library is now after all of the recent changes. She was complimentary of the new furniture and how much the vibe has changed at GBV. Her enthusiasm was so appreciated and I asked if she would be willing to write a little blurb for the WPL Impact/IMLS posts we did this month and she was thrilled to participate. It is so rewarding to hear such incredible feedback and know that we have been able to welcome her back as a patron.
 - In addition to this patron, we have received TONS of positive feedback from both kids and adults as well as WHA staff about all of the improvements and new furniture. The space feels bigger and brighter and we have so much more seating to allow different groups of kids to play games and toys as well as separate spaces for adults to work. The Light Zilla has been very popular as have our new Melissa & Doug pretend play toys. We have created an environment that fosters cooperative play and socialization in a safe and welcoming environment.
- **LoT checkouts on the rise:** Our newly added Hot Spot checkouts have been picking up and we hope to add more LOTs in the future. These have also brought in patrons from outside of the GBV community and even the city!
- **GBV gives back:** Our final craft of the month was an act of kindness from our kids to WARL. They made cat toys with donated materials and catnip for the kitties waiting to be adopted. We thought it would be a great way to have the kids contribute to the shelter as well as a lesson in philanthropy. Many of them don't have pets of their own so we enjoy exposing them to these experiences and lessons involving animals.

Mobile Services:

- Bookmobile had a busy month with outreach. On April 7th, Ange Aka, Susan Stepp, and Tracy Baizley attended the 2nd annual Autism Awareness Touch a Truck event in Shrewsbury. They assisted 878 patrons over the course of 4 hours.
- Marc Lindberg and Jason Wargo attended the WPL Solar Eclipse Event with Lilly on April 8th at the Common. Patrons were mostly interested in the eclipse of course, but the event overall was a huge success and all eclipse glasses were given out, a few patrons received library cards/checked out materials, and our new lawn games from our Library of Things were showcased.

- Myron Malixi attended a dedication for Dottie Doyle who passed away in January. Dottie's family and friends gathered while a memorial plaque was placed in Libby. Specific books were also purchased/donated in her memory and will be added to the Bookmobile collection.

One City, One Library:

- In March, several of the OCOL branches partnered with WGBH in Boston to present read-a-longs that focused on computational thinking and to provide backpacks with expertly selected materials and manipulatives that enforce those computational thinking skills, appropriate for an early elementary audience. The backpack materials featured Work It Out Wombats!—a nationally syndicated, animated program on WGBH—featuring three wombat siblings who live with their grandmother in the Treeborhood, a treehouse apartment complex, who problem-solve through computational thinking. There is also a Work it Out Wombats! podcast for young listeners. The Tatnuck and Burncoat branches offered these focused read-a-longs with Pre-K, K, and 1st grade classes, as well as SAILS and STEPS classes. In all, over 200 students were able to benefit from these readalouds and the generous partnership support of WGBH.
- All four OCOL branches also hosted the eggs and eventual thriving chicks at the library. It was a huge element for generating excitement among all the classes who visit each branch daily, as they could track the progress of the chickens during each visit and engage in fun activities like voting on names for their chicks—Roosevelt even had a chick hatch right in the middle of a class visit!
- OCOL Staff also championed the March Meowness efforts by going with students public records to find lost items that could be forgiven with the program, and with photos and/or pictures of cats, or any other animal. The Tatnuck branch alone reported that they cleared approximately \$700 in fines during the month-long celebration.

Talking Book Library

- At the beginning of the month, Lee Anne met with Jenifer Daly of the MBLC and Karen Andersen Walsh of the WRTA to talk about bringing some low vision friendly events to the WPL in collaboration with the two organizations. Karen is a travel trainer for the WRTA and shows folks how to navigate the public transit system. We'd love to have her here quarterly to show our users how to use the bus, and are working things out with her
- TBL is working to restart the consumer advisory board. We had a strong one for several years that was dismantled during the pandemic. Thus far, we have several folks interested in returning to the board as well as some fantastic potential new recruits. With the help of the MBLC, we are hoping to restart the board in the summer or fall depending on schedules.

- Kate did some programming with the children's room to bring the Ecotarium to our young patrons. Attendees learned about turtles, and even got to meet one of the reptiles. It was well attended and we were thankful for the opportunity to collaborate with other departments.
- Finally, Lee Anne was interviewed by radio host Ken Meyer of Boston's 102.9. Ken, a beloved TBL patron and avid reader, and Lee Anne spent most of the time talking about books! It was a lot of fun and both Ken and Lee Anne have expanded their to read lists after the conversation

Teen Services:

- During March, we saw over a 50% increase in teen program attendance. April kept steady with that increase in teen attendance!
- Teen staff continue to work with external organizations that uplift marginalized teens. Teen librarian Erin has made a strong relationship with LGBTQIA2S+ teens and her work is being celebrated by parents. One parent in particular stopped the Executive Director at the mini-golf event to celebrate the work of Erin.

**Worcester Public Library
Community Services Committee
Meeting on Wednesday, May 8, 2024
5:00 PM**

**Worcester Public Library
3 Salem Square
Worcester, MA 01608**

Attendees: Sen. Harriet Chandler, David Dominguez, Roseann Fitzgerald, Sheila Trapasso, Stephanie Pasha

Library Staff: Doug Lord

Excused Absence: Gail Schuyler

Meeting began at 5:05 PM

1. Discussion to identify present and future community partners of the WPL.

Doug Lord had a PowerPoint which listed the current community partners of the WPL and there was a robust discussion about what communities the WPL has not yet reached.

There was also discussion about honoring various partners of the WPL which include a variety of constituencies, including WPL Foundation board members, parent groups, the Worcester Public Schools, academic partners, downtown neighbors including Arts Worcester, Hanover Theatre. The Worcester Red Sox, etc.

David Dominguez suggested having members of the community share their WPL story through a campaign called "Heroes of the WPL"

Doug Lord presented a packet of information to the committee which included:

Organizational Overview of WPL which includes a history of the WPL's service to the community. This includes the WPL's formation of the Community Resources Department established in April 2023 which is dedicated to groups of people "who have been traditionally underserved, and the need to build on the strength of staff connections with patrons and the community and the idea of equal access for all."

Impact Statement of the WPL's Community Resources Department: Summary of the range of various members of the Worcester community served by WPL's programs and resources. This includes statistics which states that in one year, the WPL had 1,300 social service referrals and a snapshot of the WPL communities that the Library serves:

8/2023 Letters of Support for WPL's Application for the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. This included letters from Dr. Mathilde Castiel, Commissioner of Health and Human Services for the City of Worcester, Sherin Saheera, Ph.D. UMASS Medical School and family (Nissam Abdul Majeed and son Sian Nissam), David Dominguez, Worcester Public Library Board of Directors.

By the Numbers

- 35% residents identify as non-white.
- 60,000 residents aged 5+ speak a language other than English at home.
- 30,000 self-identify as speaking English less than 'very well.'
- 16% speak Spanish at home.
- Over 6,000 residents speak various African languages.
- 1,000+ households speak Vietnamese.
- 80% increase in individuals living in shelters since 2023.
- 1,300 patrons served in one year.

At the end of the Community Resources Committee meeting, next steps included creating a list of partnerships of WPL Board Directors, and Stephanie Pasha added, WPL Foundation Board members. Doug Lord would discuss with WPL staff the best way to gather and store this information so that the WPL can create a repository of these relationships to help the WPL continue to expand its reach into the Worcester community.

Roseann and the committee decided that the next meeting of the Community Resources Committee would be driven by the needs of Doug Lord and the Community Resources Department.

She reminded the committee that Katelyn Duncan, the New Americans Librarian would be one of the recipients of the 2024 Thomas A. Green Award on 5/30/2024 at Mechanics Hall and that the event is free and open to the public.

Roseann Fitzgerald asked if there were any more questions. Since there were none, she asked for a MOTION to ADJOURN. MOTION TO ADJOURN by Senator Harriett Chandler and SECONDED by Sheila Trapasso.

The meeting adjourned at 6:07 PM

Respectfully submitted by:

Roseann Fitzgerald

Institutional Statement | Nomination for IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service

Worcester Public Library

March, 2024

The Worcester Public Library is honored to be selected as a finalist for the National Medal for Museum and Library Service by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). This recognition holds profound significance for the Worcester Public Library and our entire community. The nomination from Congressman James P. McGovern is a true testament to the unwavering dedication and hard work of our entire staff, who are deeply committed to serving our diverse community in meaningful ways. This prestigious distinction reflects their long-lasting efforts and celebrates their many successes, both large and small.

This honor also acknowledges the transformative role the Worcester Public Library plays in promoting access to knowledge, cultural understanding, and lifelong learning for present and future generations. It recognizes that the Worcester Public Library is successfully providing stellar service to a diverse range of residents. Being selected as a finalist not only fills the Worcester Public Library with pride but also presents an opportunity for continued growth, innovation, and impact. It inspires us to continue to push boundaries and strive for excellence in all aspects of our work.

Moreover, this recognition underscores the unique role librarians play in society. Our staff's profound understanding of the community's needs and challenges, along with their unwavering empathy and boundless enthusiasm, allows them to provide vital services that our patrons cannot find anywhere else. In today's landscape, librarians are more essential than ever before, and we thank the IMLS for recognizing our hard work and dedication.

Institutional Statement | Nomination for IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service
Worcester Public Library

March, 2024

The Worcester Public Library is honored to be selected as a finalist for the National Medal for Museum and Library Service by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). This recognition holds profound significance for the Worcester Public Library and our entire community. The nomination from Congressman James P. McGovern is a true testament to the unwavering dedication and hard work of our entire staff, who are deeply committed to serving our diverse community in meaningful ways. This prestigious distinction reflects their long-lasting efforts and celebrates their many successes, both large and small.

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May 8, 2024

Organizational Overview (one page)

Domínguez Letter of Support (two pages)

Castiel Letter of Support (two pages)

Institutional Statement (one page)

Saheera Letter of Support (two pages)

Impact Statement (four pages)

Strengthening Communities through Compassion and Collaboration

The Impact of Worcester Public Library's Community Resources Department

Synopsis The IMLS medal nomination is in no small part a result of the work of the Community Resources Department and its several new positions. A testament to the power of engagement, compassion, and collaboration, this department has enabled the library to embark on a transformative, inclusive, and uplifting journey of addressing pressing community needs for underserved populations.

These include services to those experiencing homelessness, a community that has grown exponentially in recent years, as well as services to the large influx of migrants seeking tools for self-improvement.

A significant portion of residents, particularly immigrants and English learners, face language and socioeconomic barriers that limit access to vital services and family health. Along with a shortage of affordable housing, escalating homeless populations, issues related to mental health, and the consequences of substance misuse, combined to create an urgent call for targeted support.

The library made a conscious decision to transcend traditional librarian-patron interactions by creating the Community Resources Department. These dedicated professionals work with agencies around our community to connect those in need with services and resources and seek to empower residents.

The sheer number of participants served with programs, one-on-one's, resumes, tours, and social service referrals – 1,300 in a one-year timespan – demonstrates the library's ability to engage with and serve a significant portion of the community. Data and results collected from these programs guide the library's short- and long-term planning trajectory. The staggering demand for ESOL classes, for example, prompted an urgent call for expanded language-learning opportunities.

The library's impact is a harmonious blend of quantitative and qualitative transformation. By serving as a catalyst for positive change, economic growth, and improved health within the community, the library has cemented its position as a vital resource and contributor to Worcester's thriving ecosystem.

By the numbers

- 35% residents identify as non-white
- 60,000 residents aged 5+ speak a language other than English at home
- 30,000 self-identify as speaking English less than 'very well'
- 16% speaks Spanish at home
- Over 6,000 residents speak various African languages
- 1,000+ households speak Vietnamese
- 80% increase of individuals living in shelters since 2023
- 1,300 patrons served in one year

Organizational Overview | Worcester Public Library | March, 2024

The Worcester Public Library the second largest city in New England, and is known as the "Heart of the Commonwealth". The city has a long history, beginning with the first settlers of the area, members of the Nipmuc tribe. Worcester played an important role in historic events such as the American Revolutionary War, women's suffrage, and the Civil Rights movement. The city also housed locations of the Underground Railroad.

First established in 1859, WPL has been at the forefront of library services for many years. Under the leadership of Samuel Swett Green, who was internationally renowned for his contributions to public librarianship, WPL led the charge in encouraging cooperation between libraries and schools, developing collections for reference materials, adding books in languages other than English, and promoting Sunday hours.

WPL currently has seven locations, including the Main Library; the historic Frances Perkins Branch, which opened thanks to funds provided by Andrew Carnegie; the Great Brook Valley Branch, located in the Great Brook Valley housing development; and four branches housed in Worcester Public Elementary Schools, the Burncoat, Goddard, Roosevelt, and Tatnuck Magnet Branches. There are two wheelchair-accessible bookmobiles that meet the community where they are, visiting schools, apartment complexes, city parks, housing developments, and special events. The Worcester Talking Book Library is housed in the Main Library, and provides access to patrons who are unable to read traditional print material due to a visual or physical disability.

WPL is dedicated to our mission to serve as a gathering place that actively promotes the free exchange of ideas in our democratic society, making information and services available to all people while fostering intellectual freedom, protecting privacy, encouraging personal growth and enrichment, and celebrating our diverse community heritage. We are a very diverse city, and the Worcester Public Library provides programs and resources to our community members based on their needs.

Historically, the library has provided for these needs in our community, which have grown and changed over the years. A library as a community center and a place to connect people to vital resources has become the new normal in our city, and our team has risen to this challenge while continuing to provide traditional library services to our patrons.

As the times have changed it became apparent that changes to our organizational structure were also needed. In 2020, the Board of Directors decided that the leadership of the library needed to evolve from that of a librarian in name and function, to a director whose title and objectives encompass all that a public library has become and represents in our community. Our new Executive Director Jason Homer was hired to oversee all aspects of a library of our size, from traditional library services, to staffing, communications, programming, and community connections.

Under this new leadership, the library has increased services to underserved populations throughout our community. Staff have created new programs, and expanded on the services offered for unhoused individuals. They have built stronger connections in and around the city to provide better solutions for patrons who are looking for assistance, whether it be to find permanent housing, a place to shower or do laundry, a regular meal, or medical interventions. They have built a level of trust with these patrons, and an understanding that our staff are there to help connect them to the services they need, or just lend an ear when they need someone to listen. Staff also worked with our city officials and community organizations to serve new immigrants and limited English proficient individuals, as they navigate the challenges of coming to a new country and barriers of access due to language.

This opened the door to the creation of an entire department dedicated to groups of people who have been traditionally underserved, building on the strength of staff connections with our patrons and the community, and the idea of equal access for all. The Community Resources Department was officially established in April of 2023, after many years as an aside to regular library service. This dedicated team are now able to devote all of their time and resources to finding solutions to help these populations, and better serve the public in a place that is welcoming to people from all walks of life. While our staff have been doing this work for quite some time, this change will give our library an opportunity to make even more of an impact on the lives of our patrons, and create a positive change in our community for years to come.

Legislative Affairs Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 15, 2024
5:00pm

Present:

Stephanie Pasha
Harriette Chandler
Matthew Noe
Laura Nicole Miller
Sheila Trapasso
Christina Andrianopoulos
Jason Homer
Cara Stone

Call to order: 5:15pm

The Legislative Affairs committee met to discuss an idea presented by Executive Director, Jason Homer.

Mr. Homer would like for the library to step away from the traditional Legislative Breakfast regimen and branch out to a different concept. This concept would be a "Stand with Libraries" event and involve a collaboration between multiple libraries. We would invite a keynote speaker, all Mass legislators and Mass libraries. It would be centered around a specific topic/issue that Mass libraries are facing.

This event would take place in December to ensure that Mass legislators have enough time to understand the topic/issue at hand as they start the discuss the next fiscal year budget.

The Committee agreed that this would be a step in the right direction for Worcester Public Library.

The event will take place on Thursday, December 5 from 5:30pm to 8pm. The library will work with the Worcester Public Library Foundation and the Worcester Public Library Board Finance Committee to further discuss funding for the event. A save-the-date is in process and will be available soon.

After no further discussion Chandler asked for a motion to adjourn. Andrianopoulos motioned. The meeting adjourned at 6:15pm.