



TO: Library Board of Directors

DATE: March 22, 2024

RE: **LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Wednesday, March 27, 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
Wednesday, March 27, 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 January 2024 and February 2024 minutes
3. President's notes
4. Executive Director updates and report Q&A
 - Current report attached
5. Administration Committee report
 - Updated Library Card Policy
6. Friends of the Library updates
7. Worcester Public Library Foundation updates
8. Adjournment

Zoom Information:

1 646 931 3860

Meeting ID: 823 8348 5930

Passcode: 822474

**Worcester Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Meeting on Tuesday, January 23, 2024
5:00 PM**

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

In Person: Stephanie Pasha, Christina Andrianopoulos, Katherine Bagdis, Sen. Harriet Chandler, Dr. Edward Carr, David Dominguez, Roseann Fitzgerald, Moses Laguerre, Laura Nicole Miller, Matthew Noe, Gail Schuyler, Jessica Walsh

Library Staff: Jason Homer (Executive Director), Sulma Rubert-Silva (Assistant Director), Cara Stone (Executive Assistant), Angela Bennett (Deputy Director of Youth Services), Douglas Lord (Director of Library Services), Jennifer Marien (Interim Deputy Director for Adult Services), Garrett Morin (Interim Deputy Director of Borrow Services)

Virtual: Christine Murray (Director, Worcester Public Library Foundation)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by ED Jason Homer at 5:05 PM

2. Board Officer Elections

ED read the By-Laws of how WPL Board Officers are elected.

President: ED read the position description and responsibilities of the President of the Worcester Public Library from the By-Laws. At the last board meeting, Stephanie Pasha was nominated, and ED asked if there were other nominees. Since there were none, Stephanie Pasha was the sole candidate. The WPL board elected Pasha unanimously by a show of hands.

ED congratulated President Stephanie Pasha on her election and handed the remainder of the board elections over to her. Pasha thanked the WPL directors for their confidence and oversaw the voting process for the remaining Officer positions.

Vice President: Pasha read the description of the Vice President officer position from the WPL By-Laws. There was one nominee, Katie Bagdis. There was a call for a vote and Katie Bagdis was unanimously elected.

Secretary: Pasha read the description of the Secretary from the By-Laws. There was one nominee for the position, Roseann Fitzgerald. There were no other nominees and Fitzgerald was elected unanimously. Pasha thanked Roseann for her willingness to serve.

Treasurer: Pasha read the description of WPL Treasurer from By-Laws. The nominee for the Treasurer was Matthew Noe. The WPL board was asked to complete paper

ballots and submit them to the Recording Secretary Cara Stone. Matthew Noe was elected unanimously.

Finance Committee: The President noted that the two other members of the Finance Committee need to be chosen by paper ballot. The President nominated Moses Laguerre and Roseann Fitzgerald and asked the WPL board to complete the paper ballots for both committee positions. The Recording Secretary reported that both Laguerre and Fitzgerald were appointed to the Finance Committee. The President thanked them for agreeing to serve.

Recording Secretary: The President read the description from the By-Laws and President appointed Cara Stone in this role and asked if there were other nominees. The President asked the WPL board to indicate their vote by a voice vote. Cara Stone was elected unanimously.

3. President's Report (Pasha)

President Pasha asked the Worcester Public Library staff attending the meeting to introduce themselves to the WPL Board and share a fun fact about themselves:

Jennifer Marien, the interim deputy director for adult services. Been with the WPL since 2015 and began her new role at the end of October 2023. Fun fact: she loves to hike!

Angela Bennett, Deputy Director of Youth Services joined the WPL seven weeks ago. She loves parentheses!

Sulma Rubert-Silva, Director of Administration and Operations has worked with the City of Worcester for 18 years and with the WPL for close to 10 years. Fun fact is that she is a salsa dancer.

Douglas Lord, Director of Library Services. Thrilled to be with the WPL. Fun fact: He is a triathlete.

Garrett Morin, Interim Deputy Director of Borrower Services, has been with the WPL for 10 years and just began in this new role. Fun fact: He likes to meditate.

The WPL board welcomed the WPL staff with a round of applause.

Pasha then shared two quotations. The first in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and the second in honor of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27th.

“Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

— **Martin Luther King Jr.**

“Human greatness does not lie in wealth or power, but in character and goodness. People are just people, and all people have faults and shortcomings, but all of us are born with a basic goodness.”

— **Anne Frank**

Pasha welcomed new board member Laura Miller and announced that Dr. Edward Carr will complete his service on the Worcester Public Library board in February 2024. He has taken a new position as the U.S. Director of the Stockholm Environment Institute in March 2024. He noted that this is an exciting opportunity to step outside of academia.

Pasha noted that she looks forward to tomorrow evening’s retreat. Bring an open mind and energy for constructive discussion!

Pasha reminded the WPL Board about the Legislative Breakfast on Friday, February 2nd at 7:30 AM. Please attend if you are able. Mingle with our delegation members and express thanks for support for library funding! Sen. Chandler asked if the WPL board be informed of the exact FY2025 funding needs. ED said that the Mass Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) Agenda and talking points would be distributed before the Breakfast.

SAVE the DATE: Mark your calendars for **May 3-4, 2024** which are the Spring fundraisers for the Worcester Public Library Foundation, featuring the mini golf event for adults on Friday evening and a family fun day on Saturday. Great opportunity to introduce new people to the library!

Lastly, please be active on social media. Follow, like, and reshare posts on the various channels! It makes a difference!

4. Approval of the December 20, 2023 Minutes.

Pasha noted that David Dominguez has already let Fitzgerald know of some typos in the 12/20/2023 minutes. Pasha asked the WPL if there were other comments on the minutes and asked for a motion to approve the minutes. **MOTION TO APPROVE** by Christina Andrianopoulos and **SECONDED** by Katie Bagdis. The minutes were approved unanimously.

5. Executive Director Report (J. Homer)

Jason Homer shared a few highlights from the Executive Director Report:

Hosting Legislative Breakfast on 2/2/2024 with confirmations from Congressman Jim McGovern and others. He reminded the WPL board that Rep. James Mahoney worked to

get \$60,000 for the WPL. Rep. Mary Keefe worked to secure \$150,000 (cut to \$50,000) for the Library In Every Classroom project. ED will provide talking points next week for the FY2025 Legislative agenda.

ED is the Central MA Library Advocate and he spoke at Hopedale, MA breakfast because in 2023 it was threatened with closure unless there was an override. ED is hoping to influence funding for libraries in Central MA.

Central MA libraries continue to grow. In 2023, funding increased for the Worcester Talking Book by 30% and the goal is to continue to improve access to the community. The lineup includes MBLC Chair Vicki Biancolo who is the Librarian at Worcester Academy

The 2024 Board Retreat is at 110 Grill: The Agenda will be the WPL Community Survey. ED noted that 20% of library staff have received a promotion and Jason is very excited about his new leadership team and unpack the feedback from the survey.

Jason told the story about a WPL patron who was homeless who Cara Stone helped secure housing/employment. This patron now works at 110 Grill and the business actively supports members of the community who are looking for a second chance.

- **WPL Staff Updates:** Three WPL staff completed their MLS degrees in December 2023 including Alicia Rogers (OCOL), Jennifer March (Collections) and Missy Cutler (Branch Manager, Great Brook Valley). Others are interested in pursuing this degree and three are interested in Library Science and ED may be approaching the Finance Committee for some support.

Retirements: Local History Librarian Joy Henning retired on 1/19/2024 with 20 years of service to the WPL. Many think of Joy when they think of Worcester History. Sad to see her go but excited that she is starting her next chapter.

Website Update: ED had the first meeting with Communico which is a product designed to integrate events and book queues into one platform. Plan to engage with local graphic designer Travis Duda to develop a new brand for the WPL. Travis has worked with Jessica Walsh at Worcester Wares. The goal is to sunset the current logo, keep the current colors but refresh the design. Goal is to complete the first iteration of the website redesign by National Library Week in April 2024.

ED mentioned that C/W Mars is launching a new catalog which allows you to reserve books even if you spell the title wrong. This will be integrated into the website.

WPL in the Press: More stories have been published about the WPL staff and their work at the WPL. Angela had a story in *The Guardian* and Jen had a story in the *Telegram & Gazette*. ED is excited about seeing the WPL staff discuss their work at the Library and their work in the community.

ED noted that there have been stories in the local papers about homelessness and the WPL. Jason noted that he hopes that the WPL board saw his response in the story "[City Councilor Requests Answers About the Impact of Homeless Population in Worcester Libraries](#)" (*Telegram & Gazette*, 1/10/2024). ED noted the WPL is in the center of

Worcester, and it is important to navigate the challenges of this problem. He noted that the WPL Social Worker Asia just joined the WPL's Community Services Department as a social services specialist.

ED is very excited about the work of Community Resources including the ESOL Navigator which was funded by the MBLC. New Americans Librarian Katelyn Duncan logged 2,400 consultations for patrons seeking immigration support (240,000 hours). She also sponsors an immigration clinic with pro-bono attorneys for patrons who need support. The Community Resources department also oversees the Road to Care Plan which helps match patrons with healthcare services (including the YWCA).

At the core, WPL hopes to educate the whole person. ED noted that there was an international patron who relocated from Boston and sought asylum because he is a member of the LBBTQ+ community. The WPL helped him find housing in Worcester in less than a week. ED is proud to promote an organization that builds bridges and protects humans from atrocities.

The WPL does have rules and the WPL Board approved the new [Behavior Policy](#) which is in place. Sometimes patrons are asked to leave the WPL for one year, but these patrons are only .2% of total patrons. The WPL staff can handle this. ED thanked the WPL board for its support of the social worker and the funding for additional security support.

ED concluded his report and is happy to answer any questions.

Christina asked a question about the staff being spotlighted in the media? Does the ED supply talking points to help? ED replied that the WPL works with staff so that they feel comfortable in speaking with the media. He mentioned that Melody spoke about the Scrabble tournament and there is a plan to increase the number of training sessions. ED then explained that the WPL is providing training for social work interactions. Christina volunteered to provide a public relations tutorial for WPL staff and ED was delighted and will follow up.

Sen. Harriet Chandler said that she is receiving mail regarding the book bans in the country with requests for support. ED noted that Sen. Julian Cyr's bill had a hearing about Book bills happening in schools. MA had the 4th highest attempts on book bans in 2022 because the Commonwealth of MA reports everything. In The Boston Globe, a reporter submitted a Freedom of Request for every public library in the State. The upcoming Legislative Breakfast will cover Book Bans.

ED serves on the CMLA, MBLC PR Committee and serves on the Public Library Association Toolkit Committee which is working on a national response to the book bans. In March 2024, ED will represent MA at the American Library Association Fly-In in DC (one of 18 states).

Sen. Chandler asked if there are any issues with public libraries in MA regarding Book Bans? ED responded, "Yes." In Great Barrington, there was a police request to look for a book. In Worcester, the conversation centers around the OCLC branches. Parents want to control what the students read. ED noted that the WPL Board updates to the Collection Development Policy were important. You need to be a Worcester resident in

order to log a valid request. People can't hide. The Request for Reconsideration needs to include the reason why the patron does not want the book to be in the collection. ED fields many conversations from concerned patrons and he can usually defuse their objections. Since he began working at the WPL, ED noted that there has been no request for reconsideration forms received by the WPL.

Sen. Chandler asked if there is a cost to the book ban process? Sen. Chandler noted that it is important to measure the long term costs of responding to the book bans and this should be in the WPL budget. ED noted that there is a Level of State Certification from MBLC when communities reduce access to books. Sen. Olivera has proposed securing funds for this issue.

ED Carr noted that the Administration Committee will be part of the process should book bans happen at the WPL. The Committee plans to manage this adaptively.

Christinas asked if the FY2025 budget cuts will affect the WPL? ED says this will affect the WPL and the MBLC because it is about earmarks. ED is having conversations with the MBLC and the ED 's trip to Washington, DC will discuss the budget.

President Pasha thanked Jason Homer for his comprehensive report and requested a report from the Friends of the Worcester Public Library.

6. Friends Report (Schuyler)

Gail noted that the Friends cancelled their meeting because of weather conditions. However, the sale of books at the Frances Perkins Branch was successful. The Friends sold \$400 in books at the Branch.

7. Foundation Report (Bagdis)

The Foundation met last week.

The 2023 Celebration of Author raised net proceeds of \$48,000 after expenses.

Save the Date for Mini Golf on May 3/4, 2024. The Food Hub will provide food for Friday evening event; Saturday is family friendly. Everyone is encouraged to attend both events. \$16,000 was raised at Friday's event last year.

The Fall 2023 appeal raised \$32,000.

There was a \$50,000 gift from the Stoddard Charitable Trust for the endowed agency fund for sustainable response for capital items. Chrissy Murray added that the Foundation has already received \$25,000 from the Trust.

Pasha noted that Jason and Chrissy meet quarterly with the WPL Foundation board quarterly and have a close relationship.

Pasha said bravo to the WPL board for perfect attendance.

Cara Stone reported the details for the WPL board retreat at 110 Grill.

8. Adjournment

Pasha requested a motion to adjourn. MOTION TO ADJOURN by Moses Laguerre and SECONDED by Sen. Harriett Chandler.

Adjourned at 6:14 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann Fitzgerald

**Worcester Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Meeting on Wednesday, February 28, 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, Moses Laguerre, Laura Nicole Miller, Matthew Noe, Gail Schuyler

Library Staff: Jason Homer (Executive Director), Sulma Rubert-Silva (Assistant Director), Cara Stone (Executive Assistant), Angela Bennett (Deputy Director of Youth Services), Douglas Lord (Director of Library Services), Jennifer Marien (Interim Deputy Director for Adult Services), Lee Anne Hooley (Head of Talking Book Library)

Virtual: Dr. Edward Carr, Linnea Sheldon (Communications and Marketing Manager)

Guests: Christine Murray (Executive Director, Worcester Public Library Foundation), Dory Rourke (Worcester Public Library Foundation), Jodie Chapdelaine (Worcester resident) and Sheila Trapasso (new Worcester Public Library Director)

Not Able to Attend: Jessica Walsh

1. Call to Order

President Pasha called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

2. Approval of the January 23, 2024 Minutes

The 1/23/2024 minutes were not distributed to the WPL Board in advance of the board meeting. The approval was tabled until the next WPL Board meeting on March 27, 2024.

3. President's Report

In honor of Women's History month, Stephanie Pasha recited the following quote:

If your actions create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, then, you are an excellent leader. Dolly Parton

Committee Assignments: Pasha distributed the committee assignments to the Board and asked the Board to let her know if there are any concerns or questions. She noted that some board members are now in leadership roles. She worked to align skill sets with the committee opportunities.

Jason's report this month was very inspiring. Please read the report again if possible.

Pasha noted that this meeting is Dr. Edward Carr's last meeting with the WPL Board. President Pasha welcomed incoming WPL Director Sheila Trapasso who begins her term on 3/1/2024 and will join us at the March 2024 Board meeting. Sheila is a longtime teacher in the Worcester Public Schools and has served on several community-based organizations.

NOTE: The date of the June 26, 2024 WPL Board meeting has been changed to Tuesday, June 25, 2024 because of a conflict with the American Library Association conference.

That concludes my report unless the WPL board has any questions. Since there were none, Stephanie yielded the floor to ED Jason Homer who shared his notes from a recent meeting with the School Committee and his Executive Director's Report.

4. Executive Director Report (J. Homer)

On Friday, 2/23/2024, the Worcester Schools reached out and asked Jason to attend the Teaching and Learning Subcommittee which oversees the Libraries in the Schools. In the last 3 ½ years, parents and advocates have contacted the ED to improve library services for Worcester school students. ED shared his notes from the School Committee meeting on 2/26/2024. ED summarized the WPL's services to elementary school students. In FY24, the WPL is working with the Schools on Summer Reading, planning to launch Sora, an Overdrive student reading app and joining the Worcester Regional Transit Authority's "Browse, Borrow, Board" program which allows transit riders to access digital content while waiting for a bus.

Matthew Noe asked a question about outreach to parents and ED said that this is planned but there are no actionable items to report yet.

David Dominguez asked how Browse, Borrow, Board works. ED explained that it works with a QR code that gives patrons a collection of eBooks and audiobooks and the rider does need a smart device. The funding of the initiative is through the MA State library system which includes \$200,000 in FY24. ED noted that the biggest success of the WPL's partnership with the Worcester schools has been parent advocacy for their children.

Highlights from the ED Report:

ED noted that the **March Meowness Library Card Fine Forgiveness program** is the single most press WPL has received. Linnea Sheldon and her team deserve credit which started from the New Users Taskforce. There are many photos of cats to display. Friends of the WPL have even received a donation in honor of March Meowness.

WPL Staff Updates: The Social Service Specialist began in 2/2024. Katelyn Duncan's Immigration Clinic is full, and she provides drop-in ESOL training three times a week. ED shared a story from Katelyn about a young man who came to the immigration clinic and was fearful that he would be returned to his home country.

ED reported that ED will speak to the Worcester City Council on the WPL and Homelessness on 3/1. He will speak to the Education Subcommittee of City Council on 3/18/2024.

ED asked the WPL board if there are any questions on his report?

Matthew Noe asked if the March Meowness was only for WPL lost items and ED confirmed it is only for WPL's lost items.

Sen. Harriett Chandler suggested bringing the WPL staff to visit the City Council. ED said he would consider this request but noted there is a capacity issue. Realistically, ED noted that the WPL needs to double the social work staff. Sen. Chandler asked the ED to reconsider and bring the social worker to just attend the City Council meeting.

David Dominguez asked a question about the Social Worker duties. ED said that she has open office hours, and she is creating partnerships with other organizations. Reports to Christina Connolly, Community Resources Manager.

ED noted that the new social worker is planning a staff development session at the end of March 2024 regarding different communication styles. ED-- staff development-- is planning a session.

Harlee asked if Asia could attend a future board meeting.

Moses Laguerre asked the ED about the immigration clinics and are more people coming for services. The ED responded that the WPL needs lawyers for immigration help. Katelyn Duncan goes to spaces where immigrants are in crisis (e.g., churches, hotel residences)

Sen. Harriet Chandler recommended that Katelyn connect with the Worcester Bar Association. ED noted that many of the conversations started with the Bar Association.

Board Mission Statements: ED then continued the WPL Board discussion of the updating the Mission Statement of the WPL

ED noted that the current mission statement is listing of core values. ED presented three example. After a rich discussion, the WPL Directors synthesized the statements into the following:

The purpose of the Worcester Public Library is “to inspire lifelong learning, cultivate knowledge and empower our diverse communities.”

Matthew Noe requested a copy of the word cloud. Sen. Harlee Chandler thinks that mission statement could be more eloquent. ED will send a copy of the Mission Statement and the Word cloud of words recommended by WPL Directors to the board for additional feedback.

5. Administration Committee Report (Carr)

Ed Carr said the Administration Committee reviewed and approved the WPL holiday schedule. He noted that the WPL will close at 2 PM on Christmas Eve 2024 in line with the City of Worcester's plan to close at 2 PM on Christmas Eve.

He wished the new members of the Administration Committee the best.

6. Finance Committee (Noe)

Matthew noted the Finance Committee met and approved the shifting of funding from the One City One Library to pay for the carpet/furniture at Great Brook Valley.

President Pasha asked the WPL Board if they would accept the Finance Committee Report. The WPL unanimously approved the Finance Committee Report.

7. Friends Report (Schuyler)

Gail reported that the Friends met on Tuesday at 4 PM.

\$10,249.19 was approved for programs by end of May 2024

Financial report: Broke even for the year.

The Friends voted on changing the Meeting Time to attract a more diverse group to the Friends. The Friends will now meet at 5:30 PM which takes effect after the annual meeting in April 2024. Prices for coffee and cookies have increased.

ED noted that April 16, 2024 is the annual meeting date per the By-Laws.

Christinas asked for an update on the WPL website and the app. ED noted that the WPL staff is working on next steps to continue building the new website.

8. Foundation Report (Murray)

No recent meeting of the WPL Foundation but Christine Murray provided an update.

The WPL Foundation is raising money for Summer Reading

The Mini-Golf Event is on 5/3 and 5/4 and all holes are sponsored.

Redemption Rock and Decanted have been engaged to serve drinks and the Worcester Food Hub will provide food. Please share with your contacts in social media.

The Celebration of Authors event will be either on 11/7 or 11/14.

9. Adjournment

Before adjournment, President Pasha acknowledged Worcester resident Jodie Chapdelaine and thanked her for attending the meeting and caring about her library.

Pasha requested a motion to adjourn. MOTION TO ADJOURN by Katie Bagdis and Christina Andrianopoulos and SECONDED by Sen. Harriett Chandler. The motion was unanimously approved.

Adjourned at 5:55 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann Fitzgerald

To: WPL Board of Directors
From: Jason Homer, Executive Director
Date: 27 March 2024
Subject: Report of the Executive Director



HIGHLIGHTS

- **Hold for general announcement to occur March 27th at 10am and will be discussed at the Board Meeting.**
- **March Meowness:** Communications Manager Linnea Shelton has ushered the WPL into the sphere of "viral sensation" along with the staff in the *New Users* task force. As of March 15th, there have been over 600 unblocked accounts and over 3,000 emails from library and cat lovers from all over the world. Executive Director Jason Homer has been on BBC News Live, CBC News in Canada, and will be on NBC Nightly News. There have been 100+ print articles about this initiative, and press buzz is still going strong. Dozens of libraries have reached out to the Executive Director about this program and we expect to see many public libraries around the country adopt similar models.
- **Summer Reading Shift:** Due to the success of March Meowness, the WPL Summer Reading Committee voted to change the theme from the prescribed one to our own "Dog Days of Summer." Staff are hard at work adding new programs and events to engage with our community.
- **Addressing the Needs of Vulnerable Populations:** As mentioned at the last Board Meeting, the Executive Director spoke at the City Council meeting on March 12th and again at the City Council Education Committee meeting on March 18th. Board President Stephanie Pasha and Director for Administration and Operations, Sulma Rubert-Silva joined Exec Director Jason at the City Council Meeting. Councilors continued to show support for the efforts of the library. The WPL has also been positively mentioned in numerous contexts regarding our work with those in crisis. The report has been filed with City Council and Exec Director Jason has done a few interviews with various newspapers to discuss the work being done.
- **Press Reader:** Thanks to the earmark secured by Rep John Mahoney, the WPL now subscribes to PressReader, which allows patrons to access over 7,000 newspapers in over 60 languages all over the world. There will be considerable push to promote that resource in the coming days. It can be viewed either from home or within the library on our database page, linked here:
<https://mywpl.org/?q=databases#P>
- **ALA Fly-In:** As previously announced, Exec Director Jason Homer attended the ALA Fly-in of Washington DC. Along with Maria McCauley, the Director of

Libraries for the Cambridge Public Library, Jason visited Massachusetts Senators and Representatives to discuss the work of the WPL within the context of federal funds and LSTA grants. The WPL has a current LSTA grant as the ESOL Navigator, which has enabled staff to significantly grow the ability to connect with those seeking language learning or immigration assistance.

- **Staff Development Day:** The WPL will be closed on March 28th for Staff Development Day. This year will be a lightning-talk/conference style that focuses on demystifying roles throughout the library.

Department Highlights:

Adult:

- A parent spoke with Tara during the last De-stress with Dogs event in February. It was her first time at the program with her daughter, who has special needs. Although her daughter attends South High, which just introduced therapy dogs to their students, the parent was very pleased that her daughter could visit the library for De-stress. She wanted her daughter to be able to just hang out with the dogs outside of school, which she believed her daughter benefitted from. A long-time library user, the patron thanked Tara and WPL for the variety of programs that are offered and for giving her daughter a safe space to enjoy.
- The Adult Services and Circulation Departments coordinated with the Friends of the Worcester Public Library to create a book display of free books for Black History Month at the Worcester Senior Center. Senior Center attendees were welcome to take fiction and nonfiction books and audiobooks written by Black authors.
- WPL presented a new class on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, called Intro to Robotics to four patrons. Taught by Reference Librarian Melody Friedenthal, the class uses "Finch" robots from BirdBrain Technologies. These Finches can be controlled in several ways; our class uses the programming language Python and Bluetooth technology. This 1-hour class teaches patrons how to interact with the robots.
- They made the robots draw triangles and hexagons, run a maze, spell their names, tell us the temperature in the Computer Lab (71.3 F), and much more. Three out of the four patrons had previously taken our Intro to Coding: Python for Beginners class, so you can see we've created a natural sequence of technical classes for patrons to learn from – and which keep them coming back to WPL.

Circulation:

- Victoria Zayas and Sue Groccia attended ALA workshops on IDEAS (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Solutions) and Embracing a Public Service Mindset.
- Staff attended a training for the new catalog that was rolled out on March 4th - Aspen Discovery. Front line users are reporting that they like the platform and are waiting for some final bugs to be worked out before they fully report on it.
- Tracy Steele, a long-time staff member from 2009 got married and is now Tracy Baizley.
- Hilary Raymond and Mikayla LaLiberte both signed up to be on numerous summer reading committees and both have been actively working to plan summer events.

Children's Services:

- We had an extremely busy February vacation week, hosting African Folktales, winter rock painting, a comics illustrator, and Professor Bugman.
- The children's department added 3 new staff-members to their team in the past month! These three have brought a sense of excitement and a ton of ideas to the department; we are looking forward to seeing the increase in the quantity and variety of program offerings and to be able to head out into the community consistently and strategically!

Collections:

- The department continues to add many Library of Things (LOT) items to the catalog including a Karaoke machine, a metal detector, an OBD scanner, six different board games, a digital piano, a radon detector, and cornhole and kan jam lawn games. Many more Things are in process and also being purchased.
 - The Library of Things committee continues to discuss options to circulations policies for LOT items to ensure the safeguard purchases while not creating undue barriers to access for patrons.
- The department added and deployed more than 2,500 items to the catalog for patron use.
- A large-scale project on updating and recataloging books continues; these are Closed Stack materials on the lower level and the effort ensures findability for patrons.
- The department also began a routine to ensure that popular items awaiting cataloging will be consolidated and catalogued faster – a Monday morning huddle.

Community Resources:

- Combining Katelyn and Azajuah's office hours and impromptu 1-on-1's provided by all Community Resources staff (including Kaseem) shows that 45 patrons received focused, expert help, for average of 20 minutes each, on resources ranging from immigration, citizenship and language translation to writing and resume help to social services of every kind.
- Word is spreading that WPL has a social services specialist, and Azajuah also continues to make inroads with our regular clientele. The City's Health and Human Services department is also referring people in need to her until they complete their own social worker hiring process. This month, Azajuah made referrals to YWCA's domestic violence program, Worcester Housing Authority, Central Mass Housing Alliance, Elder Services, RCAP Housing, Open Sky, and the Department of Transitional Assistance, among others.
- UMass Mobile Medical Clinic's Road to Care Van treated 39 patients at the WPL stop this month (they missed one Tuesday due to snow cancellation).
- Staff from partnering agencies, including New Start Brain Injury Community Center and Open Sky Community Services promoted their services in our Main Lobby for a total of 4 hours. SMOC, Sheriff's Office, and Dismas House staff spent 27 hours in the Community Resources Offices providing outreach support to patrons on a drop-in basis. We look forward to adding outreach staff from Spectrum's Everyday Miracles Peer Recovery Center.

Frances Perkins Branch:

- February was a great month for programming at Frances Perkins with an attendance of 263, a big increase from last February, which saw 145 attendees to programs. Rebecca reports that family story time attendance is growing, and the kids really enjoyed both the egg drop and winter paint night, as well as a visit with Princess Tianna (who also made an appearance at GBV). The Spanish book club drew a couple of new members and had a very lively discussion about Lady Masacre by Mario Mendoza as well as some discussion about favorite Spanish language literature podcasts.

Great Brook Valley:

- At the Great Brook Valley Branch Library we had a fantastic visit with Princess Tiana. This is the second time we have used this performer and once again she was incredible with our kids. She is so patient and kind when dealing with children of all ages and we can't recommend her enough! Rebecca found a true gem with this performer.

- The big news at GBV this month is all the new items!! Our kids are LOVING the new chairs we purchased to replace the bean bags that were torn. We also set up our new cubby bin that houses board & card games, puzzles, coloring materials and new pretend play toys. The new furniture is safer, sturdier, and large enough to neatly display everything in an organized manner that is easily accessible to all ages. The new toys are almost all Melissa & Doug brand and include a taco set, a pizza set, a sandwich making station, a cooktop, a cleaning set, a veterinarian/pet care set and a grocery shopping cart with veggies and fruits. From the moment we put them out they have been a HUGE hit! The highlight of the month was our visit from Doug. He graciously sat for a "check up" and "vaccine" for some of the kids playing vet.
- We have started to see some more new faces, partly due to the WHA offices moving in next door. We have seen an increase in faxing, as well as computer usage and printing due to residents being sent from their offices. We have a few new families who have started coming regularly and we have seen an increase in our adult reading check outs this month as well.

Human Resources:

- Peggy assisted the Department of Public Facilities in hiring 3 full time positions after the vacancies began to negatively impact library operations. Two of new custodians will start in February because of her willingness to assist. DPF Chief Julie Lynch expressed deep gratitude to the Library for assisting and the CM remarked the Library's willingness to help was proof of our strengthening partnerships.
- There were 10 open positions in January with 5 filled already and 5 position announcements closing in February.

Mobile Services:

- Libby secured a new stop at the Challenge and Reach Academy, which is an alternative school for 7th -10th with about 40 students.
- All of Bookmobile staff have assisted with Staff Development Day prep by doing some collection maintenance and cleaning of each bus.

One City, One Library:

- **Class Visits:** For the past few school years, concerns have arisen that students at Roosevelt are hesitant to read chapter books. Teachers have been encouraging their students to read longer fiction works and Branch Manager Mary, wanting the One City branch at Roosevelt to support them in that goal, brought *The Chapter Book Challenge* to life. In this completely voluntary contest,

3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th graders work together to see which grade can read the most chapter books between January and May of this year. Each grade has their own ice cream cone on the leaderboard and adds a scoop of ice cream to their cone for every 50 books finished. The leaderboard is updated at the end of each week so that students can see how well their grade is doing. The grade that wins will earn a party during their class visits in the last week of May.

- So far, the response from students (particularly 3rd and 4th grade), and school staff, has been overwhelmingly positive. As of the end of February, **538 chapter books** have been read by students participating in the challenge!
- **Public Hours Programming:** Another successful public programming month at all four One City, One Library branches- Black History Month was a huge focus for public programming, with all four branches offering multiple programs to allow patrons to create one part of a quilt featuring a famous or notable individual in Black history. Indeed, the OCOL programming librarian who masterminded the project, as well as the participating staff and patrons, were featured on Spectrum News in Worcester, MA, Orlando, FL, and Brooklyn, NY! The piece can be found on Spectrum News' website, posted on February 23, 2024. Classes at all four One City schools contributed hundreds of beautiful quilt pieces.
 - In addition, each branch had a Mardi Gras party to celebrate the season, with almost 100 total attendees, and the Goddard branch brought in over 30 participants to their Super Bowl celebration!

Talking Book Library

- TBL loves any opportunity to collaborate with other departments, so when Tara in reference asked us to put up some Dial A Story content celebrating Major Taylor, we were all in! Staff Melody, Alicia and Joel recorded poetry, children's work, and some vintage newspaper articles celebrating Major's cycling career as well as his connection to the city of Worcester.
- Kate hosted author Andrew Leland for a successful virtual author talk on his book, "In the Country of the Blind." We had participants register from all over the country. Kate's Q and A sessions with Andrew was informative and interesting. Safe to say TBL is really having a great time bringing programming to the print disabled community!
- Joel and Lee Anne have been having meetings with the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled working on certifying the recording studio. This will ensure that the materials that we do record can be available not just to our own patrons, but the entire visually impaired population of the world. In addition, we have Riley, our first outside volunteer reading in the studio, as well as some talented members of the WPL staff who have offered to help us record books. It's been a long process with a lot of steps, but we're really enjoying learning so much and cannot wait to bring our voices to the community.

Teen Services:

- Several families from the former library of the new Teen Librarian Susan's have made the trip to visit her and are so impressed with WPL Teen and Children's space, as well as all of our programs and services. They couldn't believe all the great things going on in Worcester, and we love making non-Worcester residents wish they had our library!
- Susan also had a mother share that her teen was dressed and ready to go at 8 am because she was so excited to get to the library for anime club (which doesn't start until 2 pm.)



Board Mission Statements:

Based on the feedback from the Board, the Executive Director has synthesized the suggestions into the following for the **WPL's updated Purpose Statement**. Board members will be asked for their thoughts on these and during the Board meeting, the Executive Director will ask for input.

... to inspire lifelong learning, cultivate knowledge, and empower our diverse communities.

... to provide free access that fosters learning, belonging, and enrichment.

... to enrich the lives of our community through access to knowledge, information, and diverse perspectives.



Library Card Policy

You may apply for a library card in person at any of the Worcester Public Library locations as well as the Mobile Libraries. You may also apply [online](#).

Worcester Public Library cards are free to Massachusetts residents and are valid for two years unless otherwise noted. Non-residents working in Worcester may obtain a library card free of charge with proof of employment in Worcester (letter from employer on letterhead; business card; pay stub).

All other out-of-state users are charged an annual fee of \$10.

Children 11 or under need a parent or guardian's approval.

Replacement cards are available free of charge.

In order to get a Worcester Public Library card, you need proof of current address. Acceptable Proof of Address includes but is not limited to:

- Valid Massachusetts Driver's License with current address
- Valid Massachusetts State Identification Card with current address
- An imprinted bank check or deposit slip
- Rent receipt (confirming 30-day occupancy)
- Utility bill dated within the last 30 days
- Letter verifying residency and mailing address dated within the last 30 days from a social service provider, temporary employer that provides housing, or a short-term residence.

In the case of children and teens under 18 years of age, proof of address of a parent or legal guardian is acceptable.

If any adult, teen or child is unable to provide the above means of identification and address verification, they will receive a card with limited access until they can complete the necessary forms. In the case of address verification, the Library will mail you a Good News post card. When you return the Good News post card to the Library, you may use it as proof of mailing address and obtain a full access library card.

A Post Office Box or business address is not acceptable as proof of residency but may be used as a mailing address.

Unique Applicants for Library Cards

Institutions may apply for a library card. A verification letter from the institution (on official letterhead) with an administrator's signature is required for the organization to receive a card. Institutional library cards are kept in the Worcester Public Library location where the institution is registered. The institution must provide a list of authorized users.

Student Cards are provided to students attending Worcester Public Schools. These cards are used for the lending of books only during school hours and are subject to other limitations. Please ask staff at your child's school for further information.

ARC (Academic and Research Collaborative) faculty, staff and students with a valid ARC card or a college ID may apply for a library card. The library card expiration date will correspond to the ARC card or college ID. Link to the list of ARC libraries <http://www.worcesterarc.org/which.html>

Updated: 03/28/2024

