

**Minutes: Libraries Board of  
Trustees Meeting  
In person at the Town Hall  
334 Main St., Great Barrington, MA 01230  
December 20, 2023**

**Edited: delete hybrid option/added agenda items in Bold**

**Call to Order: 5:00 PM**

**Roll Call:**

**Patrick Hollenbeck (Chair)**  
**Rob Shaeffer (Treasurer)**  
**Ruby Chang (Secretary)**  
**Carol McGlinchey**  
**Lauren Clark**  
**Sandra Pantorno (absent)**  
**Donna Brown (Interim Director)**  
**Ed Abrahams (Friends of the Library)**  
**Michelle Loubert (community member)**

Patrick requests Ruby to chair the meeting tonight.

**Approval of Minutes:**

November 1, 2023 minutes: motion by Lauren, second Carol. Unanimously approved, no discussion/corrections.

November 15, 2023 minutes: motion by Lauren, second Carol. Unanimously approved, no discussion/corrections.

**Friends Report by Ed:**

- The Mason Meeting Room is redesigned and furnished. Thanks to Bobby Houston and his cohorts at Scout House. Total cost is around \$10,000 for furniture and labor.
- Film showing: starting February 3rd, 2024, first Saturday of months of February, March and April. The first film is a documentary called "Hello, Bookstore" about Lenox Bookstore with Matt Tannenbaum.
- **Vote:** Liquor Licenses for the three movie dates backed by the Friends and Trustees, free beer and wine with tip certified bar tending by Ed and Holly. We have always done this. Dates are Feb 3rd, March 2nd and April 6th. This will authorize Pat to apply to the Select Board for all three nights. Carol asked whether anyone has been uncomfortable that liquor is being served. Ed answered, no one has. The town would cover for insurance. Motion made by Pat and second by Lauren. Unanimous vote yes.
- **Vote:** Party to thank Scout House, Bobby and staff. Saturday, Jan. 20th, from 5-7pm. Need Trustees to apply to Select Board as well. Welcome Party for new director: Friends had done it in the past and will be happy to do it again. Consideration from Carol to have it at the Ramsdell and have ribbon cutting at the same time to celebrate the new ramp. Motion made by Pat and second by Lauren. Unanimous vote yes.

**Director's Report (dated October but is actually for November):**

- Donna reviewed the reports (see attached). These include monthly data on usage of the library and financial updates. We have been approved for State Aid but have not received the funds yet. Christmas celebration with decorations and cookies and hot chocolate by staff include Sam, Christine and Marie. New display at Mason called Cozy Winter Corner in front of circulation desk is really popular. People are made more aware of Ramsdell's Library of Things and draws attention to everything we have to offer. Ramp is completed and people are really happy. Applause! No questions.
- MAPS is still ongoing; there is funding for the rest of the year. Another program in February and part of Master Gardeners, who will come in on Saturdays to spruce up both Mason and Ramsdell as well. This is volunteering their time.
- Amazon Account: came out of Ramsdell Donation fund for Ramsdell.

### **Discussion : Board of Trustees member involvement going forward**

- Rob: With new director coming on board, we should move forward with include the director in conversation. Collaboration and transparency is important and vote as a group going forward. We can be better at this. It is a really incredible opportunity to have a new director.
  - Pat: The LSTA Grant letter of intent was filed on December 6th. This is a place holder for the actual application's first draft at end of February. In 12 years, the libraries have only applied for one of these grants. Now, it will be up to the new director to determine if this should move forward. The first step was to just get in line for the grant potential of up to \$50,000. That was all.
  - Pat: Page 25 of the Strategic Plan indicates the application of the LSTA grant from the federal government. The library leadership and trustees were consulted on this during the discussion of writing the Strategic Plan. We could not have any meetings till now for December and must obey the Open Meeting Laws.
  - Lauren: Technically, we meet once a month and not more than 3 of us could meet to discuss or in an email. So, it comes up during our meeting as an agenda so we could vote and go forward. This is time sensitive. I have been on the board a long time and there are always things that any of us had talked about beforehand. They come up and then we talk about it at the meeting. We have a discussion, then vote on it. We have also been known to not vote.
  - Lauren: What do we do to change that?
  - Pat: I am asking for specific examples.
  - Lauren: The recommendation for something like this would be ...Pat went ahead and got this letter of intent, because it was time sensitive. What he should have done was to reach out to you as the director and just let you know that I followed through with line #7 on our goals of the Strategic Plan. So that you would know when you come to the meeting. That is a simple thing.
  - Donna: It is not just a Letter of Intent but who is going to write the grant and follow through....
  - Michelle: Looking at past agenda, this was on the agenda, that we were to meet on December 12 but no meeting occurred. I have past experiences on the Finance Committee where I received material hours before the meeting and could not vote.
  - Michelle: I apologize but I am calling a Point of Order, caution that we are bringing up things that would be subject to public record release and just doing you a favor before it snowballed.
  - Carol: My understanding is the assistant director does the programming? So the position that is open right now for assistant director is for programming? (Donna noted: yes) We have no program director? That person could not be communicated with. So you would be the person we would need to communicate with.
  - Donna: The programming we are doing now is very, very minimal.
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- Ruby: Do we have proposals or guidelines as to how we would like communications to be? For example, we are moving forward with writing or discussing the LSTA grant. We need to have a rough draft of that by February, giving us one month to do that roughly. So, how would you like to handle that?
  - Donna: I had nothing to do with it. I would assume it is the new director that you would have to talk to. You all proposed it. I am not sure how it is going to get done.
  - Ruby: How would the board members like to get communication, should we have more board meetings? Ongoing GoogleDocs that can be passed around ...
  - Michelle: You can send information out for review before a public meeting on such and such date. You cannot go back and forth. No problem with pushing information out. For example, Berkshire Hills push information out and everything has to be discussed at a public meeting.
  - Carol: Thank you so much for bringing this up. I was out of the country when all this was going on with the Strategic Planning. So, I am trying to catch up for the month of September.
  - Ruby: Let us use LSTA grant for example, moving forward, we have to have this done by February. The new director is coming sometime in January. How would you like us to move forward with this? So it satisfies everyone's involvement and understanding? Asking all of you!
  - Rob: We would meet with the new director and get her input on it. With experience from writing the Strategic Plan, it would be good to get an outside grant writer that specializes in libraries. None of us is equipped for writing grants. ..had a lot of trauma doing the Strategic Plan. Given such a short time.
  - Ruby: Writing the Strategic Plan for other libraries cost around \$35,000 to \$65,000. That is pretty standard if we had to pay someone to do it. We did not have the funds to do that. We needed the SP out to get other funding. We have to keep that in consideration. It is nice to say we can hire other people to do it but the money has to come from somewhere.



- Lauren: The library director and staff under perfect circumstances would be doing the SP. But we were short staffed and couldn't do it. Donna has been the Interim Director and Assistant Director and programming director all this time and we could not put it on her. The Board agreed we really want to try to get this grant and the Board will do it. But the Board doesn't usually do this. So now, new director is coming on. We will have our first meeting with her and say this is what is going on. We are not just dropping it on your lap, but we are hoping on working on this together and hope you will be on board with it. We will have communication with you and do this together. Am I assuming this? I don't know if she knows what has been going on this last 7 months and she is going to have a lot on her plate. This again is a time sensitive thing. She will say this is great, keep doing this since I have so much on my plate or I am so happy you had set this in motion and lets work together. This would be a first piece of major communication. Hopefully, we will go from there and get along great. We cannot be having discussions, like Michelle says on email or get together as a group except at our meetings. A couple of us can get together and talk about stuff but that would be 2-3 people together then that needs to be shared. That is part of the communications among us. We share the information that way. It is part of Open Meeting Law. It is what it is. It has always been this way and nothing new. It does hinder things in some way but it is the way it works. Sometimes, you get the agenda 2 hours before a meeting and at the meeting we can talk about it and then you are either able to vote on it or not.
- Ruby: Summarize the limitations to comply with the OML for communication, cannot go back and forth and make comments. We will bring agenda forward for voting as we are doing today, have everyone look through it and vote yay or nay. At each meeting, we would like members to volunteer their time on projects and then report back at the next meeting. We do need volunteers to help with the fundraising that is coming up. We need support for public communication and pave the way for public engagement. These projects have to be negotiated with the new librarian and discuss and execute. I propose that we should meet with the librarian on a regular basis, weekly? Maybe meet 2 at a time and then give report to others.
- Michelle: Can push out information but cannot discuss. Board members can suggest agenda items. Meeting with the librarian, two at a time should be fine since it is not a quorum. You could do a Library Director Update report. Then, can have free range during a public meeting. If you put Discussion and Vote, you have to vote. Everything has to be in a public forum. You can make a motion to pass over an agenda item if you are not ready to vote. A chair cannot skip over an agenda item. If you are under pressure, you will need to look at the schedule for more meetings to meet deadline.
- Ruby: We have had more special meetings due to pressure and timelines. We were supposed to meet on 12/13 but CPA meeting was same time and date. The next available time was set for the following week but it did not get posted. That is why we are meeting on the third week of December which is today.
- Michelle: Do not discuss agenda items with one person and then that one person discuss with another member that is considered against the OML. Do not "reply all" to emails. If there is something to deliberate about, leave it to the public meeting.
- Carol: Clarify when we each speak with the director that we do not duplicate and take up her time. We need to be organized about that.
- Pat: I would like to share the advice I received from Roe-Jan Library's Chair. She meets with the director every week, even if it is just 10-20 min and no need for agenda. "As chair, you have to do that." We could start with that approach. You could see how problems will start if everyone is taking up her time. We need to start with the chair meeting every week. We had accomplished quite a bit this Fall and saved a lot of money. It can get exhausting. This all stops soon, and we enter another phase with having a "Building Committee". This will involve the new Library Director, two trustees and several professionals in the community.
- Lauren: I am not so sure about each of us going into see the Director with our own agenda/topics. I recommend each of us make an appointment and spend 10 minutes with her with no agenda or topic, just hi and we are glad you are here. Leave it up to her to determine how can we work together. As time went on, each of us would have things that is important to talk about to the director.
- Rob: I was understanding that we should not take up the director's time and duplicate our discussion.
- Carol: Gradually it would be more cohesive to come to our monthly meeting and feel like we have (individual) rapport with the director over time. I think this idea of communication is really important and has not been there.... great way to begin foster it.



- Ruby: Would we agree the chairman would meet with the director weekly and all of us will make separate time for “meet and greet” for about 10 min or so?
- Lauren: Depends on the Director, right now we can agree with that....
- Pat: Just for your information, MBLC has a section for new Directors and NY State has a great handbook too. Before we jump too far, we should find out what the professionals recommend since this happens all the time. See what they say about this and see what we are told by the experts.
- Donna: Right.
- Ruby: Are we satisfied with our discussion on communications for now?
- Lauren: I think so and we do not have to vote on anything right now.

## Discussion and Vote

### Mason Library Movie Night-Temporary liquor license for Feb 3-voted already.

- Action Plan FY25 - Motion to approving this - Pat made the motion and Carol second, Carol: by 2029 we will have sustainable support without burden the taxpayers, I find that we will no longer be a town funded library and possibly be a separate entity and nonprofit and I was not here for all of this and do not understand and need clarification (page 2, Goal 1)Pat: That should be modified to say “additional” This will be discussed with the new director and make modifications. All the towns are doing this since the town cannot support all of the expenses for programming and technology. Libraries are depending on flow of money from the outside. Carol: Are we changing this model right now as a town-owned library paid by the taxpayers? Pat: We do not get state aid unless the town kicks in some money. Carol: Are we having fundraising from private donors? Pat: Yes. Carol: if we have something come up that was beyond the budget,( I was not here for all of these discussions) that is when the fundraising comes up? Pat: An example would be the town of Orleans which paid \$60,000 for the Strategic Plan, that was paid for by separate funds not town money. This Action Plan was voted for in October and at this point we cannot change anything, until we get the next version done. Ruby: This is taken verbatim from the Strategic Plan. Pat: We are going to correct some of the grammatical errors in the document. Rob: We have approved of this in the strategic plan and right now we are breaking down to just FY2025 and next year there will be another one for FY2026? Ruby: Right, this had to go out by December 1,2023 so we could not vote beforehand. I had sent copies of this to everyone before it was submitted for comments. **VOTE:** Aye unanimous.
- CPA Step 2 Application : Pat make a motion to pass? Ruby: This was sent to everyone before and presented on December 1st to CPA Committee who reviews it and then decides if it gets passed onto the town annual meeting to be voted upon. We did present last week and they want to continue tomorrow. They had additional questions which I had sent along another packet with answers this week. This included how many branch libraries in the State are funded and what the MBLC regulations. If we are able to get into the program, MBLC will give additional \$100,000 to complete the Design and Plan phase and then we can decide, do we want to go to the Construction Phase and they have to decide if they want to fund us. All we are asking the town is the \$150,000 for the funding of the Design and Plan phase. Lauren made a motion to approve the application for the CPA committee Step 2 Application tomorrow. Rob Second. **Vote:**All voted Aye, unanimously.
- LSTA Grant Letter of Intent: Ruby: This is a letter of intent so we could have a placeholder. We will wait for the new Director to determine what it will be used for. Carol: The project director was written as Pat the chair and not the director? Pat: I had sent everyone a letter from the MBLC describing the situation of not having a Director at this point. They know about it and is a placeholder. Rob: make a motion that we approve the placeholder for the LSTA grant, Ruby second. **Vote:** Aye, unanimously.
- Officer Term Limit: Ruby: This was brought up at our previous meeting, people would like to have term limits. Every year we have to vote for officers and next time would be in May, after the elections so is one year good enough for everyone. Lauren: You chose your new officers after each election year. Rob: I think for the health of the library board we should be rotating more. I am thinking everyone should have a chance to facilitate the chair and not just be Pat. I think it would be healthier and engaging for everyone to be an officer if that is what they want. I don’t think it should be the same people. Lauren: Right now we do not have term limits and someone nominates and we vote on it. As it turns out, people nominated and we voted for Pat several times...at least 3 years. Rob: If trustees are elected for 2-3 years they will have a chance to be elected an officer, and more engaging for everyone. I think one year is good. I was envisioning every 6 months and Maura said that it would be crazy. The idea is to get everyone engaged and participate as much as possible. She thought one year with second year as option, but that was the extent. Carol: Trustee Pocket Guide says that blueprint for board meeting to rotate leadership for a stronger board. Did you discuss that with her. Rob: We talked about it and my feeling was that it would be beneficial. Michelle: I have gone to meeting after meeting and not aware of any board that set term limits. There could be a motion to remove... lets say Rob ...and then reconvene and someone make a



motion to vote for Pat Hollenbeck lets say.... Steve Bannon has been chair for so many years. You don't want a huge turn over since, knowledge of OML, knowledge of ethics, a chair of experience ..Steve is one of the most experienced chairs around and you learn from chairing the meetings. I was vice chair of the Finance Committee and the Chair was excellent. If you don't like the chair just don't vote for that chair next year. Carol: Being new to the board there is a hesitancy. How are you going to get experience if there is an incumbency around that? Michelle: When I was on the Finance committee, number one I did not have enough experience, Carol, would you have enough knowledge of the OML? Carol: New people come in, people need to be oriented and trained. If the training and mentorship does not happen, people get discouraged. Ruby: it is one thing that we should train new people coming on the board but right now, we are discussing term limits. Lauren: I would like to talk about it some more and I am not ready to vote on this. My feeling is that it is not a bad idea. It takes at least one year to get up to speed. I would say no less than 2 years definitely and again, Michelle's point is you nominate someone, you don't have to vote for them. You can nominate someone else. But just giving them one year is not great. The other idea of sharing board responsibilities. Personally, I never want to be secretary or treasurer and I don't want to be chair. So that is three things right there that I don't want to get voted into which totally dysfunctions the whole idea. I have been on the board for almost 9 years. Carol: So, you want to be a member but take on any of the responsibilities. Carol: That is true. I work three jobs and just being honest. I would not want to step up to and feel I would not do it well enough. I do not have time to do all that is required of me. Better to say that that is not something I would do. Rob: If you want to participate at that level it would be a choice and not mandated. Carol: Pat, you said that you did a lot of soul searching after Samara's resignation, we are doing soul searching with the new director coming one, where can we create or shift change the narrative that we are a little dysfunctional and mixing up the officers, is that what your intent is? ...put out a different image or voice? Rob: Based on the past 7 months of my involvement timing with start of the new director, I worry that on our end, if it is the same old thing... we have made great headways about how we want to treat the new person and all positive steps. Ruby: Should we table this for now? We do know that we vote for the chair every spring and all the officers and we have limited number of positions that only certain people want to or can do such as treasurer and secretary. I am hoping someone would take over the secretary role but I do not see anyone that wants to do that. We already know the chair will be elected yearly, We can table the next two items until Sandy is here. Pat: I make a motion that Ruby be vice Chair. This is not a part time gig. We have been so busy with this, I have crossed the state three times on behalf of this, Orleans and Dedham and Shrewsbury. I have incredible amount of institutional knowledge in this State and with the people I am dealing with and you need both. We get more bang for our buck. We could say co-chair or vice chair. Carol: I think there are two separate things. I would like to make a motion to table the term limits discussion. Pat; second, We will TABLE the officer term limits. **Vote:** Aye, Unanimous. Lauren: it would be good if Sandy were here.

- Add a Vice-Chair to Board : Pat makes a motion that we add a vice chair, Lauren: second. Discussion: Carol: Mark would like everything given at once (changes to the Charter) but can anyone be a vice chair before submitting the change. Pat: The last change was in 2010. We have precedence of this before. Pat: I make a motion that Ruby will be vice chair. Ruby you cannot vote on this. Carol/ Lauren (?) : second. No discussion. **Vote:** Aye, unanimous.
- Secretary Vacancy: Discussion about taking of minutes which had been extremely time consuming due to the amount of meeting time and additional renditions of each generated documents. Various options were discussed, including no options among the members present. Michelle suggested senior work-off type of compensation from the town. We will table this now and will revisit at the next meeting. Rob will approach Josh about senior work-off. Ruby noted it takes about 6 hours. Carol noted that you take notes more than others and go way over and above that. Your minutes were extensive.

### **New Business**

- Meetings with Select Board and CPC: We have received endorsement from the Select board for the Ramsdell Renovation and Improvement Project. The CPC Grant has met and still in discussion with more information that I have prepared to answer the questions they had which will continue tomorrow. The order of discussion is not known. The competition is fierce. Hope Kate will speak up again. Discussion concerning voting possibilities by the members were done.
- Town requirements for CPA funds: copy of the paperwork was not in the packet for this meeting ... will table that, Just a formality per Pat not a vote. Pat: we are going to get the \$50,000. We met with Rob Cullin and the town study of the building is not done yet. Joe may have a draft. We are stuck with this and plan to speak with an architect from Westborough and may not even need her services. This will be brought to the board when available. Carol: Joe was asked about feasibility of putting a handicap bathroom where the bathroom is now and he said "Yes," so we got 2 things

going on including the bathroom and elevator. Is it out of question of using the \$50,000 for the bathroom? Pat: That is not what we got the money for. It is for the studies. Joe says that the town does not approve the renovation addition and we can do this. Pat explained the state laws indicate if you spend more than 30% of the assessed value of the building, (Ramsdell is worth \$1.7M.) so if he spends over \$600,000 then the state say you have to fix everything up to code. We went through this before. We may have already triggered this law. The design was already \$600,000. Carol spoke with Joe and the railings would be another \$90,000...sounds like it is pending at this point.

- **FY24 CPA Grant expenditures (vote) Tabled since we do not have results.**
- **Open meeting law required webinars this month —This was mandated webinar Training. Just a reminder. Has to be done up to 12/29/23.**
- **Fundraising Consultant start-up \$3000:** Pat: this is a fund raising discussion started back in September and October, Financial Development Agency from Amherst. They have raised \$100M dollars for libraries. He has a proposal for the Ramsdell Library. The amount of proposal is \$3000. Funds will be used for research of funding resources... set up systems, timelines, procedures and policies to establish a campaign feasibility leading to drive. We will be working with library leadership over a 6-9 months period. I checked with MBLC and it can be taken out of State Aid. He has done MBLC Grants in the past. We will need to sign for this. They have time to start this in January. We are lucky that they will fit us in. Ruby: The \$3000 is just to start but how are they getting paid? Pat: For Capital project there is a flat fee of \$30-35,000. And they would conduct 40-50 face to face interviews with philanthropy. They will provide interviewee list and study materials, support and tables etc. They will support capital campaign advice and services. Beyond that, there is additional flat fee or work hourly. FDA is wildly successful. Are there are additional questions about 501(c)3's development planning for Ramsdell Library. Motion by Pat. Second by Lauren. Discussions? Lauren: Had we gone to several entities and decided this was the best? Sandy had someone but did not. Rob had spoken with someone from Egremont who does this sort of thing and I think this is the best choice. She had done capital campaign for other libraries and she has nothing to gain. But, she is not looking for the job. Does it make sense just to have another person advise and clarify? Lauren: Is that something you suggest we do before we vote on it? Rob: It is a fair question. We should have a discussion and should get a knowledgeable second opinion. Pat: I had spoken with Liana Toscanini and she recommended these folks. They know where the money is. Lauren: I would certainly take Liana's recommendations **Vote:** all vote "Aye" with Rob abstaining. 4/5 still a quorum.
- **Budget FY25 Proposals /Fiscal 25 sponsorship:** Pat: People could send money to Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires and get tax write off. They will be responsible for regulatory filings. There is legal and accounting fee of 7%. It will be separate from the town. This will be a capital campaign just for Ramsdell. This is a baby step and may become eventually for both libraries as a foundation but not yet. Does not involve us to vote but is the next mechanism for people to donate. This can be up and running before year's end. We can also do this through Friends who has a 501(c)3, but they would have control. Michelle: Is that out of order? Pat: That is not great when we are scrounging around for money. Carol: A communication breakdown. Pat: They do a great job for what they do. I am telling you the mechanism and there will be a board. Ruby: Is there a separate board that handles this? Pat: Right now it is Liana's board. Lauren: So we, as a board do not have to vote on this? We are working with Liana for the Du Bois Project. The check goes to NPC and note says for the Du Bois Project. They actively fundraise as well. Pat: It has nothing to do with us and we do not have to oversee this. Rob: They would do the "end of year ask"? Pat: We have to put together a website. I went through this when we went through Musicians during Covid. It worked out great! Friends can help with raising money but we want it to flow to Nonprofit Center of Berkshires. Lauren: We should still be speaking up about it as a community public relations aspect. Pat: The library director will not have anything to do with it. She can be supportive as a private citizen but does not have any responsibility. Liana has "street cred" and she is the mechanism.
- **Wishlist for funding that goes to town budget:**
  - Website re-vamping**
  - Accessibility/translations app for website**
  - Technology (virtual reality)**
  - Ramsdell meeting equipment: owl, screen**
  - Ramsdell stacks replacement with mobile units (ADA accessible)**

Pat: These are all in the Strategic Plan and reviewed each item in more detail and need to present to the town. In the past we present this to the Town in December and then goes to Finance committee in Jan/Feb. We are a bit late and bringing to you now. Accessibility stacks cannot be denied. Monterey has everything on wheels. No word on budget meeting. Donna: I tried to get into the town but not



successful. Pat: We may need to have special meeting in January. We will have to vote on these issues then. Michelle: Maybe they are waiting for the new director. I will send them a note. Trustees have to be responsible for these. MLS has a list of vendors that the State has approved. 2 companies that does mobile shelving. It would be helpful to the Staff if we make calls on these things. We still do not have technology budget from the town for replacement of computers and need that to advocate for new equipment. This is just a beginning to work on. Nothing to vote on right now.

- **Ramsdell Celebration (January)**

Pat: We should celebrate the new opening of Ramsdell. Someone would be in charge of that and Sandy would be great with others helping. We will need to organize and market it. We should start having meetings at Ramsdell. Used to have joint meeting with Select Board. Eric suggested Housatonic Improvement Committee having meetings there as well. Eric has signed out the Owls and plug into computer at the Housy Dome. We could do hybrid there. More people see it. Carol: I posted the photos as personal account of the Ramsdell and two people had requested to make donations to Ramsdell. Steve Bannon recommend contacting Mark directly. I asked Rob as treasurer to facilitate that. Rob: If it does not need tax-deduction, can write to Town of GB with indication of going to Ramsdell. Pat: Liana has signed up to Fidelity and Schwab charitable accounts and year-end can get tax write-off. Carol: I field these request to Rob. I want vision of ribbon cutting with people come in with strollers and they do the ribbon cutting. It is for the young families.

- **Marketing documents such as pamphlets**

Donna: It is Fran's responsibility to do them. Ruby: Should we wait for the new director? Donna: If we request her to make a pamphlet for hours and other information. Lauren: We should wait till our new hours after the director arrives. Carol: We should wait till new director is in. Pat: We do need vision statement and mission statement on the website. Fran does the updates per Donna.

**Citizens Speak/Media Time —none**

**Board Speak—none**

**Next meeting date : 1/10/24, 2/14, 3/13, 4/10 ideally at Ramsdell**

**Adjournment at 7:38 pm**

Respectfully submitted (after additional editing by Pat Hollenbeck)

Ruby Chang





# Board Approves First Round of FY2024 State Aid Grants

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2023  
June Thammasnong  
Communications Specialist  
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At its November Board Meeting, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) approved 131 municipalities that met all requirements for certification in the FY2024 State Aid to Public Libraries Program. State Aid program grants for this initial round total \$2.8 million. Libraries use state aid funding to support local library services including purchasing computers, new furniture and assistive technology. Funding to support the State Aid to Libraries Program has increased 46% since 2021 and provided more than \$17.6 million for FY2024.

A second group of municipalities meeting all requirements will be presented to the Board for approval during the December 2023 board meeting. At the January 2024 meeting, Commissioners will review waivers for municipalities that do not meet the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR). The MAR is funding from the municipality allocated to support their library. Any library with a disproportionate cut to its budget will go before the Board during the January 2024 board meeting to present information on the budget cuts and how the library will be funded in the future.

Once approved for State Aid, certified libraries receive half of their grant awards following the Commonwealth's disbursement schedule, with the remaining amount released toward the end of the grant cycle in late spring.

Funding from the State Aid to Public Library Program directly supports public library services in towns and cities across the Commonwealth. The reciprocity that comes with library certification in the State Aid program is often what library visitors value most. It allows library patrons to use any State Aid certified library in the Commonwealth and gives them access to more than 59 million items available through the shared library system.

More information about the benefits of the State Aid to Public Libraries Program is available on the MBLC website.

## About MBLC

The Board of Library Commissioners ([mass.gov/mblc](http://mass.gov/mblc)) is the agency of state government with the statutory authority and responsibility to organize, develop, coordinate and improve library services throughout the Commonwealth. The Board advises municipalities and library trustees on the operation and maintenance of public libraries, including construction and renovation. It administers state and federal grant programs for libraries and promotes cooperation among all types of libraries through regional library systems and automated resource sharing. It also works to ensure that all residents of the Commonwealth, regardless of their geographic location, social or economic status, age, level of physical or intellectual ability or cultural background, have access to essential new electronic information technologies and significant electronic databases.



State Aid

4/13/23 Trustee Allocations

Vendor	Vendor #	PO #	PO \$	Date	Spent	PO Balance	State Aid Balance
MAPS							\$ 40,658.00
Earthwork Programs	13971	00240243-00	\$ 2,500.00			\$ 200.00	\$ 38,358.00
Maichack Arts	14055	00240406-00	\$ 150.00	8/1/2023	\$ 2,300.00	\$ -	\$ 38,208.00
Jerry Schneider	11331	00240402-00	\$ 412.00	8/1/2023	\$ 150.00	\$ -	\$ 37,796.00
Joseph Chernila	11235	00240477-00	\$ 280.00	8/15/2023	\$ 280.00	\$ -	\$ 37,516.00
Ellison Education Equ	10976	00240564-00	\$ 150.00	9/5/2023	\$ 150.00	\$ -	\$ 37,366.00
Marissa Fountain	14531	00240722-00	\$ 451.34	11/7/2023	\$ 451.34	\$ -	\$ 36,914.66
Hannah Van Sickle	14532	00240724-00	\$ 600.00	11/7/2023	\$ 600.00	\$ -	\$ 36,314.66
ReThinking Libraries	14533	00240723-00	\$ 2,250.00	11/7/2023	\$ 2,250.00	\$ -	\$ 34,064.66
	14544	00240774-00	\$ 375.00	11/21/2023	\$ 375.00	\$ -	\$ 33,689.66

Vendor	Date	Spent	Department	Amount	Spent	Balance
MAPS	7/24/2023	\$ 150.00	Mason Children's	\$ 5,200.00	\$ 1,292.00	\$ 3,908.00
MAPS	8/8/2023	\$ 150.00	Mason Adult	\$ 1,000.00		
MAPS	8/8/2023	\$ 2,000.00	Ramsdell	\$ 2,000.00		
			MAPS	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00

Mason Donations

Date	Vendor	Vendor #	PO #	PO \$	Spent	PO Balance	Added	Mason Donations Balance	Note
7/1/2023								\$ 23,718.57	
7/28/2023	Donations						\$ 116.25	\$ 23,834.82	
7/24/2023	Ingram Library Services	90032	00240313-00	\$ 14.80	\$ 14.80	\$ -		\$ 23,820.02	FY23 invoice
9/5/2023	Ingram Library Services	90032	00240313-00	\$ 421.83	\$ 421.83	\$ -		\$ 23,398.19	FY23 invoice
9/5/2023	OverDrive Inc.	12926	00240522-00	\$ 939.69	\$ 939.69	\$ -		\$ 22,458.50	FY23 invoices
10/5/2023	Donations						\$ 270.81	\$ 22,729.31	
12/11/2023	Kanopy Inc.	13801	00240762-00	\$ 152.00	\$ 152.00	\$ -		\$ 22,577.31	FY23 invoice

Ramsdell Donations

Date	Vendor	Vendor #	PO #	PO \$	Spent	PO Balance	Added	Donations Balance
7/1/2023								\$ 13,093.18
8/1/2023	Amazon Capital Services, Inc.	13595	00240317-00	\$ 26.53	\$ 26.53	\$ -		\$ 13,066.65
8/8/2023	Patrick Hollenbeck	11742	00240466-00	\$ 294.30	\$ 294.30	\$ -		\$ 12,772.35
8/8/2023	Donations						\$ 100.00	\$ 12,872.35

December 7, 2023





October 2023 Director's Report  
Great Barrington Library Board of Trustees  
December 13, 2023

**November 2023 Statistics**

In-Person Visitors	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23
Mason	6,737	6,977	5,375	5,407	4,115
Ramsdell	352	92	56	39	74
Circulation	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23
Mason	7,788	9,128	7,047	7,379	6,968
Ramsdell	1,020	483	124	280	381
Libby/Overdrive	1,923	1,998	1,950	1,939	2,055

**Funding Requests:**

- There are no current funding requests

**Financial Information:**

- Current balances of State Aid, Mason Donation, Ramsdell Donations (attached).

**Updates:**

- MBLC Board Approves First Round of FY2024 State Aid Grants. Great Barrington Libraries is not on the First Round. However, a second group of municipalities meeting all requirements will be presented to the MBLC Board for approval during the December 2023 board meeting. <https://mblc.state.ma.us/news/news-releases/2023/nr231121.php>  
Copy of Announcement is attached.
- Holiday decorations have been going up at Mason and Ramsdell Libraries, thanks to Jane Barnard and the Friends of the Great Barrington Libraries.
- New display at Mason is titled "Cozy Winter Corner". This display, which is front and center near the circulation desk, covers cozy things to do such as baking, knitting, bird watching & cozy mysteries. It also highlights the ***Library of Things at Ramsdell***, letting patrons know about the availability of various kits that can be taken out, such as leather working, paper making, crochet and cake decorating are all available to check out at Ramsdell Library.
- Mason Library will be participating in the Great Barrington Holiday Stroll. Sam Rossmeissl will be reading books in the children's garden, The Mitten by Jan Brett and Over the River & Through the Wood by Linda Ashman. There will be a craft, hot chocolate and cookies!

**Operations:**

- Ramsdell Ramp has been completed and the doors are handicap accessible as well.

