



Westwood Public Library Update
Tricia Perry, Library Director
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WENTWORTH HALL UPDATE

The foundation work is complete, and the Town of Westwood is now moving forward with selection of a General Contractor. Bids have been received, and the scope of work includes the relocation (panelization) and renovation of Wentworth Hall. A contract is expected to be signed in the next few weeks, with construction beginning shortly thereafter. The project is projected to take approximately 9 months or so for completion. When complete, the new Wentworth Hall will include the offices of Youth and Family Services, the Islington Branch Library, and an expansive basement that will be available for use by municipal and community groups.

This project has proved a bit more complicated than originally anticipated, and I would like to acknowledge the remarkable efforts made by the Town Administrator, Chris Coleman, and Assistant Town Administrator Pam Dukeman, as well as members of the PBC, the Islington Task Force, and especially Nora Loughnane and Michelle Miller Peck who have been instrumental in moving this project forward.



Staffing

The Covid-19 environment has resulted in several changes in our staffing, including several retirements over the past several months, with Marie Lydon and Jean Todesca retiring this summer from their part-time positions as Reference Librarians to spend more time with family. We appreciate their years of service, and wish them the very best as they embark on a new chapter.

Felicia O'Keefe will be celebrating her one-year anniversary as the Teen Librarian at the Westwood Public Library. (She joined us in September 2019!).

Staff Development initiatives over the summer included a Mental Health and Wellness Webinar that was attended by full time and part-time staff. This was made available as part of a "mini grant" from the MBLC and was managed by Molly Riportella. As we continue to adjust to the "new normal" that the fall and winter will bring, senior staff will be looking at coordinating additional opportunities.

Library Assistants: As we move toward a phased re-opening plan, adjustments to our regular schedule have been made to better reflect actual hours worked. Working in tandem with our Town Administrator, Assistant Town Administrator and the Head of Human Resources, we were able to add additional hours to two of our

part-time benefit eligible positions that will allow these individuals to accrue vacation and sick leave at a level that is more consistent with the hours that they were regularly working.

I am anticipating that we may be making an announcement shortly regarding a proposed reorganization of our staffing model, which will allow for increased opportunities for staff development and upward mobility for senior staff. I hope to be able to share more specifics at our meeting; but do want to thank Chris Coleman (TA) and Joan Courtney Murray (HR) for their engagement and support of this initiative.

Summer Reading:

11,726 Books Read by 1114 Readers = 775,988 Minutes of Reading!

This year's Summer Reading Champion is the Martha Jones School.

The summer reading program this year also included a goal for Community Reading of 10,000 hours. This goal was reached fairly quickly; total hours for community reading in Westwood: 36,586 Hours!

There are so many individuals who contributed to the success of this year's Summer Reading Program, and planning for how best to create a new model began long before the summer months, when it became clear that our traditional "in person" weekly or daily updates and check-ins were going to be very different in a virtual world. In May, a "Beta Beanstack" was created and submitted for review. It is hard to imagine the amount of work that went into coordinating this platform; it was a complex and time-consuming effort, and involved long days and hours of Lizzy and Kristy and Felicia and Molly working in what was referred to as the "sandbox". Because of the quality of effort put into advance detail work and training of staff, this platform performed exceptionally well for the readers of Westwood.

Circulation:

On June 29th, we rolled out Curbside Holds for the Westwood Community (with an unofficial soft rollout a few days earlier as we tried to clear some of the items that had been on the hold shelf since March 12th!) In addition to fulfilling patron holds requests, Readers' Advisory Services were also created by the Children's, Teen and Adult Services staff. During July and August, our curbside delivery included 436 Kid and Teen "Book Bundles," individually curated by Children's and Teen Librarians; and an additional 72 "Click, Grab, and Go" bags curated by our Adult Services staff.

Since moving to Curbside Holds Pick-Ups, more than 3000 pickups have been accommodated, with many of the pick-up requests placed directly online by patrons. Cumulative circulation for the months of June, July and August totals over 20,000 (including remote renewals). Circulation staff have also coordinated the fulfillment of 55 Museum Pass Requests during the past month.

There are many moving parts to this piece of the puzzle; adjusting to new workflows, creating work-arounds that allow us to safely quarantine returned materials, and maintain the safety and security of staff and patrons, while also accommodating requests for pickups that respond to the needs of individual patrons. I think the Westwood Staff has done an exceptional job; and I am grateful to every staff member for their contributions to this effort!

Flexibility and team work have resulted in a very successful roll-out of a Holds Pickups. We began curbside knowing that our Westwood Holds Pickups were our first priority, and the entire library staff worked as a complete team to make this happen. We continue working towards getting back to our regular workflow of fulfilling requests throughout the library system by running a full "paging list" on a daily basis. When we began our Curbside Holds, this "paging list" numbered over 2500 items; with additional requests being added every day by patrons at Minuteman Libraries! "Chipping away" at that has taken many weeks – but we are now seeing the numbers start to reflect the gradual reopening of other library collections with expanded resource sharing.

Outreach Services:

Homebound Delivery (coordinated by Karen Gallagher) continues to be an important part of our community outreach. Claire Connors is also working with Lina Arena DeRosa (COA) to provide “Books and a Bite.” This new collaborative initiative offers seniors an opportunity to have a lunch delivered to their door with books and other library materials accompanying the delivery. Lina coordinates the lunches with Hessco Elder Services and COA van drivers delivery the lunches to the Library on Thursday. Claire, Karen and Caitlyn complete the circle, delivering books (or other library materials) with the “bites”.

Phased Re-Opening Plans:

We are now working on introducing our first phase in moving towards a gradual reopening of the Library and other Town departments and buildings. Beginning on Monday, October 5th, limited browsing will be available by appointment in the Community Room and Gallery Area. We will be creating a new Adult Browsing Collection which will be housed in the Community Room, and the Gallery will be dedicated to Children’s Collections. (Teen Collections will also be available, but we have not yet identified in which space!). We will be coordinating this effort with other town departments, and will be utilizing some of the “mobile shelving” that we repurposed for the Islington Branch “Pop-Up” as well as the existing mobile shelving in the Children’s Room.

Masks will be required, and staff will have the necessary PPE equipment and gear needed for a smooth and safe re-opening plan. We will be coordinating and communicating throughout this process with the schools and other municipal departments. If this first phase proves successful, we hope to be able to introduce additional services and resources as we move forward. Next week we will be working on creating the physical layout of the space and on securing the necessary equipment and supplies needed.

As we move towards the scheduling of browsing, we anticipate that browsing appointments will include special hours for seniors or others who may be immune compromised.

Preliminary schedule (which has not yet gone through a complete review)

- Monday and Wednesday:
 - Browsing Appointments: 10 am – 1 pm and 3 pm – 7 pm.
Closed 1 pm – 3 pm for Cleaning/Sanitization
- Tuesday and Thursday:
 - 9 am – 10 am: Browsing Hour (By Appointment) for Seniors and others who may be immune compromised
 - Browsing Appointments: 10 am – 1 pm and 3 pm – 7 pm.
Closed 1 pm – 3 pm for Cleaning/Sanitization
- Friday
 - Browsing Appointments: 10 am – 1 pm and 3 pm – 5 pm.
Closed 1 pm – 3 pm for Cleaning/Sanitization
- Saturday
 - Browsing Appointments: 10 am – 1 pm