



## **Westwood Public Library Update**

### **Charlotte Canelli, Interim Library Director**

### **September 2022**

I've enjoyed every moment of my first six weeks here in Westwood, including the challenges such as the paving project scheduling changes, etc. The staff both in the library and in other town department have been so welcoming, helpful, and easy to work with.

I've worked closely with Danielle Sutton, Youth and Family Services Director, and Molly Kean, Assistant Town Manager and HR Director for the past six weeks. I attended Town Department Head meetings on September 14 and October 12.

I attended the Wentworth Hall Dedication the last week of September, the Minuteman Library Network Membership meeting on September 21, and facilitated the Westwood Poet Laureate meeting on October 1. I will attend the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fund remote meeting on October 27. Several library managers and I will attend the Massachusetts Library System annual meeting on November 7.

My contract as Interim Library Director ends on November 30, but I will be happy to facilitate or attend any of the December meetings during which Lizzy might still be on leave.

## **Library Services and Programs**

### **Adult Services**

Programming, whether continued throughout the summer or beginning again in the fall, continues to be popular. Open Mah Jongg changed to Wednesdays at 7pm, with Beginners on Tuesdays at 10:30 am. The Westwood Poets Writing Club facilitated by Lynne Viti meets biweekly on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm (but will be at the Branch on October 11.) Other one-night programs, The Present and Future of Olive Oil; Great Decisions: Drug Policy; High School Academics and College Admissions; and An Evening with SpeakOUT Boston were held on September 8, September 14 and September 15, respectively.

Adult Services' Living Library receives lots of compliments and is a wonderfully creative project, full of seeds, live plants and books. Adult Services also offered a handmade greeting card program and there is a *Dear Reader* table in adult services where patrons are invited to send a snail mail greeting card complete with postage stamps.

Banned Books displays, in the lobby and in the Children's Room, received compliments as well. While many other libraries in the Minuteman Library Network were dealing with some negative

criticism, it is wonderful to know that Westwood's library patrons appreciate our efforts. (All staff are aware of the Request for Reconsideration, including the Freedom to Read and the ALA Bill of Rights.)

Book groups continue at the library and I am thrilled to know the library knows how popular they are for adult readers.

The art display in the Gallery is a beautiful collection of wall quilts created by the Bobbin Chasers, a group of quilters led by Victoria Pariyar. Tricia Perry's quilt, one of the ten, is lovely. A brochure explains the process.

### **Youth Services**

The youth services staff has pivoted to school-year programming with many offerings. The programs are very popular and well-attended. They are busy with story times, book groups and events.

16 participants attended Imagarena for kids in grades 2-5 on Friday, September 23. We hope to bring the presenters back another time this year. All of the programs are listed in the Youth Services Newsletter, including Read to a Dog, Lego Builders, One Up Games, Fri-Yay! And Creative Kids. The Youth Advisory Board is scheduled each month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday beginning in October.

Many middle-school age children (25-50) are coming to the library after school. The staff has been monitoring them closely and there have been a few challenging days. The Collaboration of Youth and Family Services High School Mentors have now been trained and will be starting at the library on October 14.

### **Islington Branch**

The Branch has introduced a True Crime Book Club that meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month. One of my favorite books, *The Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson, is the October book. Along with Sit N Knit and the Technology Help, the Branch remains a popular place. Unfortunately, the construction of the community and meeting rooms caused some of the September events to be cancelled, but the wait was worth it with great spaces now available. Tricia Perry presented a lovely quilt and it is proudly installed at a wall at the Branch.

### **Poet Laureate**

Maria Ryan will report on the committee at the board meeting. The committee's meeting is October 11. A second Poet Laureate meeting is scheduled for December 13.

### **Facilities**

The temporary chiller was removed from the back parking lot on September 16. On Tuesday of the next week, a crane was put in place for removal of the old chiller (behind the fence) and placement of the new. AC has been shut off for the year, and heating will take over.

We had leaks from rain AND AC condensation in September. Staff and facilities have both worked hard to monitor, repair and avoid water damage to the books.

After some fits and starts (beginning in August) the paving project begins October 11. The project necessitated the closure of the library and quick action by the library staff to get the word out. Library staff will work their regular hours 8-4 or 9-5 October 11, 12 and 17 and will weed the collection, move books, and catch up after a busy summer. Karen Gallagher coordinated with the Massachusetts Library System and Optima delivery and the library custodians to bring book bins (holds and returns) to the Branch and back to the library each day. The Branch will be open to the public and designated as the place to return books during the main library's closure.

### **Staffing**

Four new Adult Services/Reference substitutes were hired and trained in September. They will work mainly on the weekends or at night. Several may be available to sub in Children's, as well. They are all professional librarians. In addition, Abby Walsh and I interviewed a two candidates for the part-time archival project which begins October 17. We await final documentation and instructions from HR and Procurement.

### **Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners State Aid Application 2022**

I successfully submitted the State Aid Application on October 4, ahead of the October 7 deadline. Terry Duane was helped me so willingly and never complained about printing another account report to help me navigate the FY22 budget. I received confirmation from the MBLC that the application was received. I expect the Westwood State Aid grant award notification in November or December.

### **Minuteman Library Network**

At the September Membership meeting, directors received the first assessment (budget) for FY24. The OverDrive assessment for combined libraries is proposed to increase from 900,000 to 1,200,000 due to the demand in digital materials. I will include this increase in the FY24 budget request to the Town.

For this meeting, Phil McNulty and the MLN Board asked the Massachusetts Library System (MLS, the State agency for libraries), the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, and the Massachusetts Library Association to present at the meeting and share resources for Intellectual Freedom: <https://guides.masslibsystem.org/intellectualfreedom>

### **Budget FY24**

All documents for the FY24 budget request are due on November 18. They are included in the trustee documents for the October board meeting.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Fund**

A meeting is scheduled for October 27.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

*Charlotte Conelli*

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