

Date: June 12th, 2024 Library Board Meeting
To: David & Joyce Milne Public Library Board of Trustees
Prepared by: Angela Zimmermann, Library Director



Administrative and Staff Reports for June 12th Board Meeting

Library Director, Angela Zimmermann

While you'll see that the figures for the month of May show a slight decrease in various areas as compared to the previous month (which is likely influenced by the arrival of better weather, end-of-school events, graduations, and such), it's very evident from this entire report the diligent efforts of the library staff as they address new initiatives and projects, thoroughly prepare for the Summer Reading Program, and engage in various outreach activities within the community.

Outside of regular meetings, this last month I continued to meet with as many folks and organizations within the community as my schedule allowed for: continued discussions with Remedy Hall to create a satellite location within the library, the director of the Solomon Wright Public Library in Pownal, Council on Aging, Williamstown Youth Center (also attended SpringFest here with Children's Librarian Debbie), the career counselors at Mount Greylock School to discuss possible future youth apprenticeship opportunities at the library for high school students, the library director and staff at The Clark, the MakerSpace program managers at Williams, the '68 Center for Career Exploration at Williams, and I attended my first Town Meeting (which was fascinating).

We had quite a few scheduling changes in May/beginning of June. Part-time circulation clerk Chelsea Zhang who was with us for a little over two years graduated from Williams this year and moved back to New York. Rosemary Mangun officially retired from her substitute position at the Milne (she was hired as a part-time circulation clerk in 2009 and retired in 2014 to a substitute position). Both Chelsea and Rose's dedication, kindness, and time at the library have made a lasting impact. We are immensely grateful for their service.

Additionally, Denny Meneghelli moved from a part-time circulation clerk position down to a substitute due to her availability this summer. We're thrilled that she's open to occasionally filling in as a substitute.

We're also excited to welcome back for the summer months, part-time circulation clerk Katie Gentry. Katie primarily supports the Children's Department and brings a delightful and warm presence to the workplace.

With all of the changes and the summer upon us, we have hired Oliver Bingemann as a part-time circulation clerk. Oliver, a soon-to-be senior at Mt. Greylock did very well in his interview, displaying immense enthusiasm for the library. He'll be lending a hand at both the children's section and the front desk.

Beginning in the middle of June, we will also be welcoming our two interns for the summer. Emery Amico, our intern from Bennington College, will be aiding in the children's section, helping assist with the flow of patrons, coordinating various programs and crafts, and

contributing to other projects. Douglas Pineda Gutierrez, our intern from Williams College, will be working as our first Technology & Digital Literacy Intern. He'll be assisting with a wide variety of projects from working with myself to create a Technology Cycle Plan for the library to implementing technology-related programs for all ages (1:1 tech assistance, coding, etc.).

A look ahead at upcoming staff meetings:

June: We'll be welcoming Andi Bryant from Remedy Hall to talk to the staff about Remedy Hall's mission of supplying essential support to individuals and families facing hardship.

July: Narcan Training through Berkshire Harm Reduction. I did tell the speaker that there would be around 25 in attendance, in case anyone from the Trustees (or everyone) would want to attend.

August: In preparation for possible extended hours beginning in September and some schedule changes, we'll spend time going over opening/closure procedures as review and guidance for everyone.

September: TBD

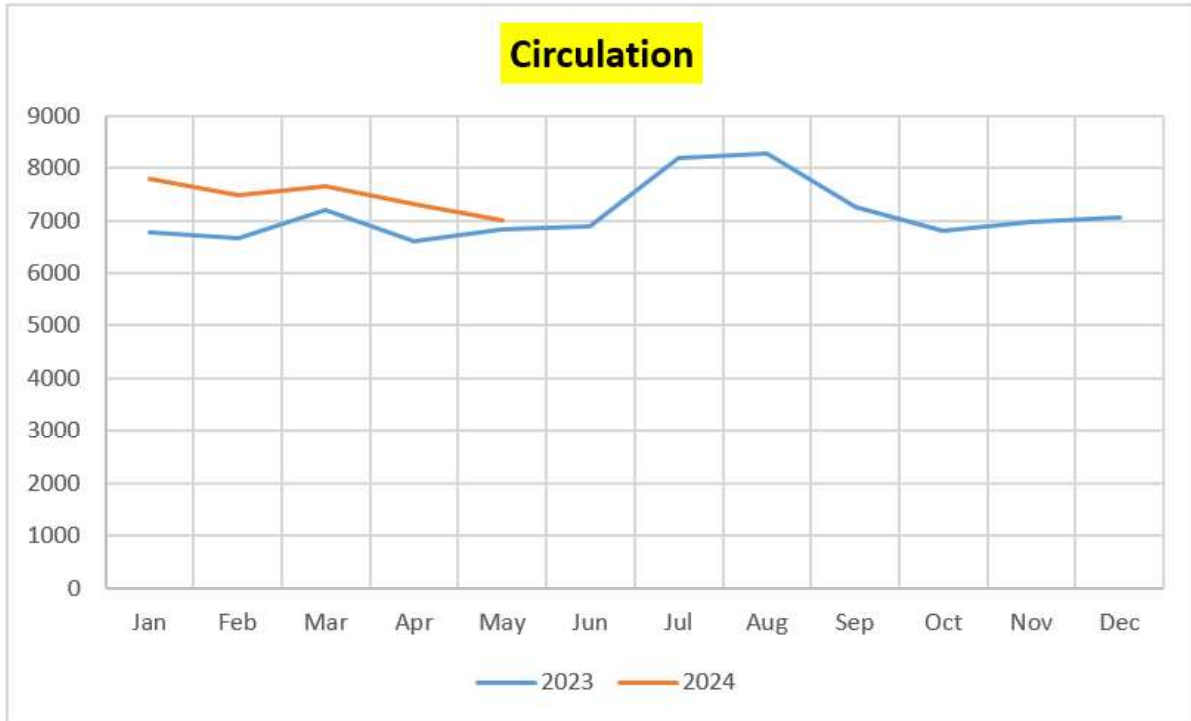
October: I'd like to close the library for a full in-service training day on October 4th. Details of the day are still being worked out.

The Library of Things committee (Debbie B., Jack, Jenna, Kira, myself) have been meeting on an almost weekly basis and we are nearly to the point where we are ready for this collection to officially get rolling. The Classics Room has been completely emptied out (with many thanks to go around: Alex, Ginny (Friends) Kira, Kirsten, Patt, Trevor (Friends). It was definitely not a small feat to clear out this room and it took a village, so thank you to everyone! This room now becomes the storage for the Library of Things (which, by the way, has a new name - **The Thingdom**). The committee has done an excellent job of discussing everything in relation to starting this collection, so we just need some funds now!

Which segues nicely into the fact that I did make the annual budget request to the Friends of the Library at their May meeting. This budget request did include the 'usual' yearly requests for programming, various technology, professional development, and digital resources (a couple of additions within this category). It also included funding for The Thingdom, miscellaneous items to consider covering (coffee in the Community Room, snacks in the Teen area, various storage/cabinetry), the consideration of a MakerSpace, etc. It included a trivial amount of funding needed to consider extending hours. I will attach this budget request separately for the trustees to see.

I met with Dave Fierro, the Town's new Finance Director to review our financials for the year, and it looks like we'll be ending up right where we anticipated, at about between \$20,000 and \$25,000 over for the year considering the changes which occurred with the budget due to the salary increases.

Milne By the Numbers in May



	April	May
New Library Card Registrations	33	18
Monthly Door Count	5,139	4,638
Creativebug (hours viewed)	6.94	1.05
Hoopla checkouts	150	140
Kanopy checkouts	202	159
Libby checkouts	1959	2026
Mango Language total sessions	44	26
Newsletter total subscribers	2629	2615
Newsletter unique opens	5402	4623
Website unique visitors	1746	1630
Website site sessions	3327	2937

Assistant Director, Kirsten Rose

I'm still working on cleaning up the catalog (correcting shelving locations, and other small overlooked details in old catalog records).

- Deleting old periodicals from the catalog that we no longer own.
- Deleting long lost items from many years ago (this is a recommendation from CW MARS, to do as regular clean-up).
- Finished weeding in MYSTERY section - contemplating some shifting so everything will fit better.
- Weeded old medical / health books, based on circ stats, but also looking at age and condition. Older books may contain outdated information.
- Still helping to move books from Fiction to Mystery (or vice versa!), or other similar decisions.

Weeding - running reports for staff, lots of discussions about what should or should not be deaccessioned.

Scheduling - planning for the summer vacations and absences, to ensure that we will have adequate coverage on the desks. This has been a large task recently.

Met with a representative from the New York Times to get information and pricing regarding digital access for our patrons.

Trainings:

Public Health webinar -

This program talked a lot about building partnerships in the community to increase cultural competence and better reach patrons with health issues. By 2040, 24% of the population will be over 65 years old, and this group sometimes has low health literacy levels (digital divide, mobility issues, visual, hearing or cognitive impairments).

Meals on Wheels and other similar orgs can be good partners to reach this population! In the end, I thought a lot about collection development in this area - I want to check what we have, and weed out older books (more likely to have misinformation) and bulk up our offerings about some of the major diseases/ailments that occur. I also think it might be worth it to reach out to the hospitals again (SVHC and BMC) about health-related programming. They did some programs for us pre-pandemic and they were hugely popular and very well-attended.

Signage and Wayfinding workshop -

There are a ton of resources located at: guides.masslibsystem.org/signs

Also located on that site - a facility walk-through guide for ADA issues.

We want to improve the intuitive navigable patron experience

The Transition Zone - the first 15-35 feet after you enter - is a decompression zone, it's where people decide what they are doing / where they are going - mentally switching gears as you enter

Continuity of Design - brand standards - common colors and fonts

Every sign should answer:

-who needs to know this?

-where are they physically located? (think about line of sight)

-what info is needed to make a decision

What info is important? What info is extra?

Going forward - I will be taking on more marketing of library events (mostly on the digital side) and some cataloging, to relieve pressure from the reference staff. I'm very excited about this!

*From the Circulation Department:
Circulation Manager, Jenna English*

- Attended the annual CW MARS circulation meeting. It was a roundtable discussion of various circulation-related topics, which included Aspen & Library of Things. Much of the discussion was about how different libraries did different things.
- Chelsea worked her last day in May. She left a very nice note for the staff. We will all miss her!
- Did a lot of work on the Thingdom: attended meetings, created lists of circulation policies & procedures, contributed to desirable items list
- Weeding: fiction is done, Debbie M is currently working on the 700s.
- Straightening: I straightened the history books, excluding the section I haven't weeded yet. I intend to work on this more when I get a chance.
- New Museum Passes: The Mount, Arrowhead, Berkshire Botanical Garden, Sand Springs (in process)
- Created a very basic template for museum passes

Circulation Staff, Debbie Monahan

Recently, I mentioned to Laura Dankner (former employee) that I have continued to purchase opera DVDs to supplement the wonderful collection she amassed while she was working at the Milne, and she suggested that I should attend the Spring Meeting of the New England Chapter of the Music Library Association (she is a former president of the national organization). I was able to join the New England Chapter as a paraprofessional for just \$12.00, and was given a grant for first-time attendees to cover my expenses. The meeting was at Smith College in Northampton on Friday, May 31st.

The keynote address was by Dr. Christopher White of UMass Amherst, on the difficulties of adapting artificial intelligence to the creation of new music from data sets. It turns out that both print and audio sources of music generate all kinds of errors that limit their usefulness.

A second presentation on the use of AI specifically in a library setting was offered by Elise Gowen, the librarian for STEM disciplines at Smith; rather than focusing on music specifically, she spoke of several useful tasks that AI can perform, such as looking for duplicate records in OCLC, but she also considered challenges such as the use of bad data and misinformation, the lack of transparency and accountability of AI-generated results, and ethical questions including privacy and environmental concerns.

The third morning presentation by Caleb Hall, from the Music Library at MIT, detailed currently available applications that amateurs and professional musicians can use to enhance their work.

In the afternoon, there was an interview with Steve Waksman of Smith, author of a book about live music performance in the United States, and a presentation (with audience participation) of shape-note singing by ethnomusicologist Tim Erikson.

I was really pleased to be able to attend this meeting, which would not have occurred to me without Laura's suggestion. Thank you to the Friends of the Library for any additional funds needed for this day.

*From the Adult Services Department:
Adult Services Librarian, Kira Williams*

In May, I spent a lot of time managing planned programs and also scheduling events for June.

We hosted quite a variety of events last month! May started with a fun workshop about aromatherapy, including three crafts that participants could make using various scented oils, with Kim Larkin of Klassic Kreations. Ken Kuttner also gave a presentation explaining the concept of Cottage Courts in advance of the Town Meeting. The Williamstown Garden Club and the library co-hosted a talk by an arborist, Ken Gooch, who spoke in detail about the best way to plant new shrubs and trees, and a representative from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts reviewed how to transition to Medicare by age 65. We also showed a film in honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, *Yellow Rose*.

Also, April and May marked the beginning of several new ongoing meetings - Board Game Meetups with Berkshire Gamers, and the Dementia Friendly Caregiver's Group with Corinne Case from the Council on Aging. Attendance keeps going up at each of these meetings! (We've also added all three of the book groups that are held here to our calendar in an effort to be more inclusive by attracting more participants to them). And Gentle Yoga with Mary Edgerton again took place on all but one Thursday in May.

Adult Program Attendance Numbers:

Program	# of attendees
Aromatherapy 101	12
Dementia Friendly Caregivers' Support Group	4
Cottage Courts	11
Right Plant, Right Place	42
Film: Yellow Rose	1
Planning for Medicare	7

Gentle Yoga	54
Board Game Meetup	4

Rocio and I attended the first Farmer's Market of the year on May 18th, which is a great venue for reaching people of all ages. Since it was the first one of the season, and we made use of our new prize wheel, we connected with nearly 200 people and distributed almost as many prizes.

I assisted Trevor Babb, a Friends volunteer, with withdrawing or re-cataloging several hundred books that were in the Classics section. (A huge thanks goes to Trevor for removing many items, and not just books, in what will soon be the Thingdom storage area).

I also attended a webinar, "Navigating Misinformation," hosted by the ALA, attended the Pioneer Valley Library Collaborative meeting about events for Climate Prep Week, and arranged demonstrations of library calendar software for the staff to consider. We should be ready soon to select one of these services.

Digital Resources Librarian, Jack Sarr

Website:

During May, our website saw a number of additions and changes, including:

- A Programming Proposal Form accessed under the "What's New?" tab, intended for individuals to propose programs they would like to present at the library.
- E-renewal for library cards. CW MARS have made it possible for individuals to renew their own library cards through the catalog. We now have a page on our website providing guidance.
- Re-organisation of our navigation bar in an attempt to make things easier to find. ("Events", for example, became "What's New?", allowing for more news & updates type information to be accessible there, rather than hidden beneath "About Us")
- An Exhibition Space page. Information about the exhibition space was previously mostly limited to the policy. This page provides insight into our procedures, and links to the policy and application form. There is also information about the current exhibition to this page, which will be updated monthly.
- The events page has also been converted to calendar view, instead of the old list view. Since we are now including many community events that take place at the library on our calendar, the list view has become very long to navigate. The calendar view makes our programming and events easier to navigate, and though it does have some shortcomings, we are hoping to build upon this idea by investing into some scheduling software that will integrate with the website. (This project is being lead by Kira)

Digital Resources:

We have received pricing information for digital access for both Wall Street Journal (\$900 annually) and New York Times (All Access: \$3,016 annually. News access: \$2080 annually) that we hope to add to the library.

Marketing

I have started research into obtaining a new logo for the library, spending time taking a look at the logos of every CW MARS library, as well as some from other consortiums. There are a *lot* of "open book" logos, which is useful to know if we want something that feels unique! I am currently researching graphic designers who work in styles that may be of interest to us, and in June I hope to narrow down the desired concept for the logo along with Angie and input from staff, allowing me to make contact with potential designers.

*From the Children's Department:
Children's Librarian, Debbie Baker*

May was busy! Although we had fewer storytimes, it was due to outreach visits at the elementary school where we talked to more than 400 kids over the course of three days. Summer Reading calendars were sent home for parents as a reminder of what's coming up.

We also participated in SpringFest at the Youth Center; although it was hard to compete with the bouncy house right outside the door and the air-brushed trucker hats across the hall, many kids (and a few adults) joined us in making laminated bookmarks with some of our enormous array of stickers and scrapbook paper strips. (This is a perennial favorite for all ages, we love our laminator.)

Additionally, I attended one webinar, called "Becoming Readers," which focused on early literacy and which was very helpful for both collection development and reader's advisory.

Teen Librarian, Rocio Carrera

Our WES visit was a wonderful opportunity for me to speak to our enthusiastic tween community. I was able to not only chat about the Summer Reading program but also talk about the Teen Room with the 5th and 6th graders and encourage them to come for a tour and see what is on offer in a space that is ostensibly their very own. I was happy to chat in Spanish with a new resident to our community, a young Ecuadorian girl who has been here two months. We chatted about the library, Summer Reading and about her new life here. Even better, a few days later, she visited the library with her mother and brother and I was able to sign her up for her own card (and give them our Spanish language flier!) and show her mother where our various Spanish language collections are as well as introduce her to Kira, who is also fluent in Spanish. Her brother was very excited to find Magic Tree House books in Spanish as he has been using their phone to translate the books he borrows from school.

I took on the task of weeding, shifting, cleaning and displaying the books in the Large Print area and my plan is to maintain it weekly, as it is so close to my teen room.

35 new items were added in our Teen Room collection for May.

Kira and I attended the first Williamstown Farmers Market of the season. We spoke with 197 individuals of all ages including seasoned library patrons, Williams College students and their parents, teens and children and summer residents.

We had 23 new additions to our 150th Favorite Book display bringing the total to 136! We are 14 book titles away from our goal of 150, perhaps the Board would like to stop by and add their favorite books!

Children and Teen Program Attendance Numbers:

Program	# of kids	# of teens	# of families
Storytimes	39		7
Outreach - Farmers' Market	50	50	97
Outreach - Springfest	120		
WES school visits	400+		