

J. V. FLETCHER LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

Ellen Rainville, Library
Director

Town Votes to Approve the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Project Grant:

Since 2011, Library staff, the Library Facility Needs Committee, and the Library Trustees Board have worked to poise the municipality for a Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) *Massachusetts Public Library Construction Project Grant* application which was submitted in 2017. The Town of Westford was waitlisted in FY22 in line for \$7,851,944 million in grant funds. In May 2022, the Town learned that the Division of Administration and Finance had appropriated additional funds for the Library Construction Program and that Westford's provisional grant award notification would be made one year early — in July 2022. Accordingly, on July 7 the Town received provisional grant notification from the MBLC of its \$7,851,994 grant requiring town approval and acceptance, which followed:



- 2022 October 17 – Library Project approved at Special Town Meeting [2/3rds vote ensured passage]
- 2022 November 8 – Library Project approved at the local ballot [majority support ensured passage]
- 2023 January 9 – Deadline to accept MBLC grant – Grant formally accepted
- 2023 May – Notice of potential supplemental grant from the MBLC in the amount of \$829,263
- 2023 May - Designer Selection Committee appointed by Town Manager

By December, library staff began the process of inventorying, shifting, culling, relocating and organizing collections and holdings in preparation for a move to off-site operations in FY25 for the duration of construction. Those plans will be shared with the public as soon as known. We thank here the Permanent Town Building Committee, Finance Committee, Capital Committee, Select Board, Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee, Library Friends, Board of Library Trustees, Fall Town Meeting attendees and voters who have shown such confidence in this exciting future. We look forward to serving our library patrons through the duration of the project and celebrating together a new, wonderful building, and the many new services it will afford.

*"You people of Fletcher are
The Best. Thank you, B."
Library Patron*

Return to Pre-Pandemic Levels of Service:

FY 2023 represented a full return to "normal" service with circulation reaching FY 2019 levels and usage and former services returning. Curbside pickup remained an option, and Homebound services as well.

New FY 23 services included:

- *Friends Book Sale Bag Day*
- *New York Times Database*
- *New York Times Cooking Database*
- *O'Reilly Database*
- *Circulating Hotspots (WiFi)*
- *Hybrid programs with the OWL – thanks to the Board of Health*
- *Outdoor staging purchased with ARPA funds — thanks to the Select Board*



Youth Programs: Exciting new Youth Services programming in FY 2023 included:

- *Return to Snap Circuits and LEGO Club*
- *Middle School Book Clubs*

- *Weekly Mother Goose*
- *Diwali Family Program*
- *Animanga*
- *Alpaca Therapy*
- *Tiny Art Show*
- *Middle Grade Math Club with Student Volunteer*
- *Return of two EXAM WEEKS with extended open hours*
- *Re-starting the Young Adult Advisory Board*

"Enjoy your library. Staff is great and always friendly and willing to help." Library Patron

Adult programming continued its monthly Book Groups and Clubs in an all-virtual format, with the *Library Book Discussion Group*, the *Monday Mystery Book Club*, and the *Non-fiction Book Club*. Twenty-nine neighborhood and library and library/school Book Groups were supported by the Inter-Library Loan department. Westford Library is now collaborating with other Merrimack Valley libraries in offering bi-weekly 50+ *Job Seekers Programs* into the future. Adult programs — primarily virtual throughout FY 2023 — included:

- 📖 *Discover India Series*
- 📖 *Quabbin Reservoir*
- 📖 *Travel Bhutan*
- 📖 *Travel Scotland and Ireland*
- 📖 *Civil War Women*
- 📖 *Uptown Girls to Downton Abbey*
- 📖 *Program collaboration with Westford Climate Action, and with*
- 📖 *Haystack Observatory*

"Staff is extremely helpful. Did not even have to ask for help, looked lost & was approached by librarian. Very proactive staff." Library Patron



The three Summer Reading Programs (Child, Tween and Adult) netted 1,708 registrants from June 2022 through August 2022 for the state-wide reading theme of: *Into the Woods*. This summer read-fest — funded by the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library, Inc. and the Massachusetts Library System — marked the return of an energetic, romping, largely outdoor Summer Reading Program.

Gift- and Grant-Funded Initiatives and Awards:

In FY 2023, the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library Inc. provided over \$25,000 in book and new format funds, and one-half of the Library's MVLC annual network membership was paid from the State Aid to Public Libraries account. The library thanks those gracious donors who gave to the Friends' 2022 Fall Appeal campaign to fundraise and to supplement Town funds for new media, downloadable collections, and technology purchases, which provided critical remote access to titles — a growing trend. The Friends are also thanked for three highly successful Book Sales this past year, for funding multiple museum passes, all library programming, the annual Wishlist and for ALL the ways their support expands and enhances daily Library service and has now launched the new Foundation.

We thank the Westford Garden Club for underwriting the gift of passes to the *Tower Hill Botanic Garden* facility in Boylston and for adorning the Library's Main Street entrance all year round with such luxurious plantings! The library and families of Westford thank the KDK Foundation (Kurt Kelly Hockey Memorial Fund) for funding the fun-filled

summer DJ and Yo-Yo programs, and December's Mini-Golf Tournament! As well, we thank the many donors to the J. V. Fletcher Library Library Memorial Book and Gift Account. Finally, we thank *Link to Literacy* volunteers headed by Elizabeth Elliott, for continuing to provide this critical tutorial work. Nancy Boutet, Head of Youth Services and the Youth Services Division AGAIN won the *Coveted Roudenbowl* for the "*Be a Readosaurus!*" Apple Blossom parade entry May of 2023.

Facility Maintenance and IT Support, FY 2023:

The following library maintenance issues were addressed:

- Air Chiller Tower Repairs
- Boiler Expansion Tank Leak
- Facilities Department provided plumbing assistance from School personnel
- Safety and security procedures and initiatives were introduced per the *Town School Safety Task Force*, and *Stop the Bleed* training

We thank here the *Facilities, Highway, IT and Parks and Grounds Departments* for their support and assistance throughout the year, with all types of temperamental weather and technology!



Administration, Professional Development and Town Civic Activity:

Library staff continued to be professionally active, albeit Director Ellen Rainville stepped down from serving as MVLC Treasurer and as MLA Executive Board Bylaws Chair to focus on the future building project. We celebrate here those library staff pursuing their Library Science degrees, and active in the following!

- ALA (American Library Association)
- MLA (Massachusetts Library Association)
- MSLA (Massachusetts School Library Association)
- MVLC (Merrimack Valley Library Consortium)
- NELA (New England Library Association)
- PLA (Public Library Association)
- YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association)
- Virtual School Library Journal Day of Dialog
- Virtual Library Journal Day of Dialog
- Virtual School Library Journal Middle Grade Magic

Library Staffing FY 2023:

Director — Ellen D. Rainville

Asst. Director — Kristina Leedberg

Senior Librarians:

Head of Youth Services — Nancy Boutet
Systems/Head of Technical Services — Dina Kanabar

Head of Reference & Information Services — Justin Liberti

Head of Circulation —Holly Sheridan-Pritchard



Staff Librarians:

ILL/Serials Librarian — Charles Schweppe
Young Adult Specialist — Jess Dymont
Local History/Genealogist — Virginia Moore
Head Cataloger — Alla Brovina
Substitute — Sandy Kelly

Library Associates:

Cataloger/Data Entry — Lauren Evans
Fine Arts Librarian/Acquisitions — Carol McCahon
Juvenile Reference/Program Assistants — Ellen Apicco; Alexis Chrobak; Jacki Dibble (*retired 4/14/23*); William Overstreet
Circulation and Reader's Advisory — Mayleen Kelley; Judy Madsen; Heather Marquez; Jeanne Millet; Lisa Navarro; Heather Nevits; Chantale Shepard
Substitute — Lawrence Bentley; Jacki Dibble; Quinn Dolan; Jeff Henry; Jen Petro-Roy; Erin Trainor

Library Technicians:

Order and Acquisition Receiving — Susan Blanchette
Inter-Library Loan Support — Sara Morton (*resigned 8/15/22*); Diana Daniels; Bari Pender

Maintenance Worker I and II — Robert Otto; Joseph Burke

Office Manager — Amy Spadano

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Capstone Volunteer: None

Volunteers, In-Library and Friends *giving over 3,900 hours*



"We feel very fortunate to have a library like the Fletcher which provides so much enrichment and education to the community. Thank you so much!" **Library Patron**