

Minutes from the Inaugural Meeting of the Friends of the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System

November 7, 2003
Westfield Athenaeum

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m. by WMRLS President Connie Clancy.

Attending:

Alberta Booth, Pelham (trustee)	Sally Caldwell, S. Egremont Library Director
Dottie Carmody, Belchertown	Eileen Chapman, West Springfield
Connie Clancy, S. Hadley	Mark Contois, Palmer
Lisa Downing, S. Hadley	Rebecca Frank, Pelham
Rep. Donald Humason, Westfield	Mary King, WMRLS
Judy Kelly, Ludlow	Christopher Lindquist, Westfield
Bill Massidda, Wilbraham	Anne Murray, Southwick
John Ramsay, WMRLS	Jan Resnick, WMRLS
Linda Reynold, Blandford	Maggie Spiegel, N. Amherst
Lisa Wenner, Williamsburg	Sara Woodbury, Southampton
Bobbin Young, Williamsburg	

Welcome: Christopher Lindquist, Director of the Westfield Athenaeum, welcomed the group to his library for this historic meeting.

The Value of WMRLS: Mark Contois expressed his appreciation to WMRLS for the services it provides and for its continued efforts despite recent budget difficulties. He talked about the value of WMRLS for all member libraries and all communities of W. Massachusetts.

WMRLS Update: Regional Administrator John Ramsay, was pleased by the turnout of people interested in helping WMRLS. He gave an overview of Regional services, including workshops, consulting, bookmobile, databases and reference assistance, huge increases in delivery of materials between libraries, and other information. Residents and libraries receive over \$12 million in services from WMRLS every year, a return of \$7 for every State tax dollar spent on WMRLS. He recapped the dire fiscal situation that resulted in a loss of \$430,000 (24%) from the WMRLS budget for FY03. There is now no funding for bookmobile or Interlibrary Loan materials; 5 staff vacancies have not been filled; and WMRLS was closed every Friday, with staff unpaid for that day. He hopes that, in addition to fundraising, the Friends can undertake public relations and advocacy efforts to make the public and funding authorities more aware of the vital role WMRLS plays throughout the four western counties.

WMRLS Friends Overview: Next, Rebecca Frank explained the need to conduct fundraising to help provide new library materials despite the budget cuts. She discussed the many months of planning for the inaugural meeting and thanked all of the members of the "pre-Friends" group. Everyone contributed wonderful ideas to get this project off the ground.

Organizational Business: WMRLS President Connie Clancy began by talking through the Bylaws of the new organization. All those in attendance approved the Bylaws as written. Connie then read a nominating slate for election of officers. A number of open positions were filled from members of the audience who wished to be involved in the new Friends group. All those in attendance approved the Election of Officers as follows:

- President ~ Rebecca Frank, Director, Pelham Public Library
- Vice President ~ Sally Caldwell, Director, Egremont Free Library
- Treasurer ~ Mark Contois, Director, Palmer Public Library
- Assistant Treasurer ~ Lisa Downing, Reference Librarian, South Hadley Public Library
- Director (3 year term) ~ Sara Woodbury, Director, Edwards Public Library, Southampton
- Director (2 year term) ~ Maggie Spiegel, Director, North Amherst Branch Library
- Director (1 year term) ~ Christopher Lindquist, Director, Westfield Athenaeum

The position of Clerk was not filled at this time.

Other Organizational Business: Beginning the process of applying for 501c3 status was discussed. Several members of the group discussed their experiences with this process and urged the Friends group to begin as soon as possible.

Membership Drive: The group brainstormed ideas for a membership drive. A few of these ideas included:

- Making a large graphic of the bookmobile to color in as funds are raised
- Targeting groups that are affiliated with WMRLS: van repair shop, local businesses, book and supply vendors, etc.
- “Buy an item for the Bookmobile” \$25.00 / Book, etc.
- Distributing bookmarks with regional services
- Door stickers for libraries indicating WMRLS membership

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m. The newly elected Board members met to discuss a future meeting date.

Respectfully submitted,

John Ramsey, Regional Administrator, WMRLS
Rebecca Frank, Director, Pelham Library