



TO: MCLS Board of Trustees
FROM: Patricia Uttaro, Director
DATE: May 18, 2020
SUBJECT: Monthly Report – May 2020

Action Items

Approval of Proposed 2021 MCLS Budget: Enclosed is the proposed 2021 MCLS Budget, which was distributed for review by the Finance Committee and MCLS Director's Council prior to the Board meeting. Below is a summary of expense changes:

1. We have requested a 1.5% increase in RPL Central public operations support from Monroe County (increase of \$103,000 for total of \$6,975,000), and no use of the MCLS fund balance for Central Library operations.
2. Computer maintenance decreases (-\$32,395) are due to shifting cost from operating to cash capital for IT equipment licensing and maintenance.
3. Computer maintenance decreases (-\$29,860) reflect multi-year purchase of hardware and software in the 2019 budget.
4. Professional Services decreases (-\$35,170) are due to the discontinuation of the E-rate facility wireless contract, replaced with expansion of bandwidth under the new digital transmission services contract with Crown Castle.
5. Membership increase (\$9,080) reflects a multi-year movie license payment occurring in 2021, offset by minor savings.
6. Contract Services decreases (-\$117,934) reflect the removal of a planned Library Automation position and a larger vacancy rate based on current furlough and hiring freezes in RPL, which will be realized during 2021 system services billing.
7. We are recommending deferring new leases for our shipping fleet for one year, which allows savings (-\$39,133) as lease-to-own payments concluded in February.
8. Note that capital finance expenses (Bonds) are maintained by the County. The 2021 debt service is estimated as revised from 2020, with principal and interest based on County guidance in fall 2020. This amount will continue to decrease each year as County now funds the MCLS capital expenses with cash, as apposed to debt issuance.
9. We also rely on County input for Vehicle Maintenance/Service estimates and for the single remaining retiree medical payment annually.

On the revenue side, we are projecting a state aid decrease of 3% for 2021 based on the decrease of 2.6% in aid received this year. Use of library fund balance for MCLS expense support given the projected state aid loss is proposed (\$90,000), with a current fund balance of over \$325,000. Grants and Payments have minor decreases due to anticipated receipts of E-rate funds, given lower E-rate expenses.

MCLS member cost shares include a 1.5% inflationary increase in 2021 (\$16,851), consistent with the 2020 increase, as member library directors have endorsed a one-year extension of the current MCLS Member Library Document of Understanding.

Board Action Requested: Approval of the Proposed 2021 MCLS Budget.

Board Action Requested: Approval to utilize \$90,000 of the MCLS fund balance to support the 2021 MCLS Budget.

Update to 2020-21 Central Library Budget: Since RPL Board approval of the Central Library budget in February, we have not received confirmation of the requested 1.5% increase in County operating support, with limited communication from the County on budget planning for their calendar year budget process beginning in June.

Since February, we did receive confirmation of NYS Library Aid decreases of 2.6% for the upcoming budget, which has minor impact on Central (lower amounts for materials budgets from CLDA and Outreach) but has impact on the current MCLS budget. As a result of current and future projections of lower NYS aid, we have recommended to eliminate the proposed new full-time position in Library Automation, which was 50% shared as a system service/MCLS expense. We are also deferring a new part-time to full-time position creation in public services and have identified several expenses that can be frozen in the event that County support is reduced.

As the City treats branch libraries and Central Library consistently from a property tax support standpoint, recent City measures to mitigate revenue losses in the current budget year and upcoming budget also impact Central. Management salaries are frozen and position upgrades proposed are deferred at this time. We have developed the revised budget independent of furloughs and job-sharing measures, as those are anticipated only through July 31 at this time. Savings here are limited and will be applied towards the anticipated reductions in fine/fee, room rental and concessions revenues until some phased operations are restored.

Net of changes in revenues and expenses, the Central budget is reduced by \$50,600 from February, for a total of \$10,856,400; we are distributing a revised expense and revenue summary, which reflects the changes described.

Board Action Requested: Approval of the amended 2020-21 Central Library Budget.

Central Library Development Aid FY21: Enclosed is the proposed budget application for the expenditure of state Central Library Development Aid for the 2020-21 fiscal year, a reduction of 2.6% from 2019-20. FY21 reflects the ongoing shift of Central collection development to support electronic materials, especially in light of COVID-19, with a decrease in print reference materials of \$6,500. A minor increase in Interlibrary Loan (ILL) software from the year prior reflects a new web-based subscription cost.

Board Action Requested: Approval of NYSED Central Library Development Aid for the 2020-21 budget cycle.

Access Agreement, Monroe County: As part of the MCLS digital transmission service beginning July 1, service is to be delivered to co-located sites: the MCLS hub (115 South Avenue), the Monroe County hub at 400 Freight Building Road (County Airport campus), and from the co-located hubs to all member library locations. MCLS added this co-located hub with Monroe County to support our business continuity planning; in the event of a loss of service at the MCLS South Avenue hub (building or weather-related disaster), vendor Crown Castle will be able to continue service via the County hub. Monroe County enabling local legislation allows for municipal rental of rack space in the Freight Building Road data center for this purpose, at a rate of \$410 per month. The rental expense is not e-rate eligible but is incorporated in the MCLS 2021 budget. The agreement will extend for the duration of the current e-rate contract (through June 30, 2023).

Board Action Requested: Approval of a rental agreement with Monroe County for data center utilization as described.

Report Items

MCLS Director, Patricia Uttaro reporting

System Update - Virtual use of the system continues to be robust. Central Circulation Supervisor Chad Cunningham continues to answer questions sent to the Help with Your Library Account e-mail. There were 97 questions in April, with 61 patrons needing help updating their library cards. A patron e-mailed requesting her library card number as she is trapped in Hawaii and didn't bring her card with her and wants to borrow digital items. Patrons continue to be appreciative of the library's digital presence. They show interest in Overdrive and Hoopla and are very grateful that we can update their accounts and get them access to digital content.

System Administration and the MCLS Directors recommended extending due dates for all materials to June 29. We will reconsider this date as we get closer to re-opening. If necessary, the due date may be extended again.

Discussion among member library directors is on-going regarding re-opening plans. Curbside service is being considered by some libraries, and Central will open touchless curbside on May 18. Adam Traub convened a system re-opening team to develop a set of best practices for member libraries, and system administration is working on plans for re-starting some system services as the NYS on PAUSE order is relaxed.

Many Central staff, which includes staff providing system services, have been furloughed or had their hours reduced. Administration is working on an overall re-opening plan for RPL which includes system services operations. Staff will be recalled from furlough or have hours restored as we slowly begin to add services back.

Responding to and Recording the Pandemic – Christine Ridarsky has been working on a process to record and preserve experiences during the pandemic. She has participated in the development of several projects relating to this:

- A Google form that people can use to share their reaction to and experience with COVID-19. The project was developed in partnership with the Association of Public Historians of New York State (APHNYS), for which Ridarsky serves as president of the Board of Trustees. The form is available here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfkgVGmuuwKdnsiZJW9aYoTOOnPj7s2oKAVcJRmYKdITuSjyA/viewform?usp=sf_link
- Development of a image-based short-form oral history project using the PixStoriPlus web application (also done in partnership with APHNYS). To contribute, go to <https://www.pixstoriplus.com/invitation/y3j79ZFh2GagiEF4h>.
- Participation as a guest on an episode of the *New York Minute in History* podcast focused on *Documenting a Pandemic in Real Time* (produced by WAMC Northeast Public Radio and hosted by State Historian Devin Lander). Listen here: <https://wamcpodcasts.org/podcast/documenting-a-pandemic-in-real-time-a-new-york-minute-in-history/>.
- Ridarsky also assisted Nanci Nugent in the Art Division in developing a form and setting up a process to encourage local artists to submit COVID-19 inspired artwork. The form is available here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdX6ElGJmlZEazzjiC1cv1qKMHILsNpijHtdIxCUmRklvcng/viewform?usp=sf_link.

We invite board members to contribute to these documentation projects and to encourage friends, family, and colleagues to do so, as well.

Bi-Lingual Storytimes – Alla Levi and Lauren Seaver (Fairport) did a bilingual Russian/English storytime which was posted on Fairport's and Central Library's Facebook pages. This is part of Seaver's MCLS Bilingual Storytime Program sponsored by Fairport Library, Central Library, and the NYS Family Literacy Grant. Seaver has storytime in the following languages planned: Spanish, Lao, Croatian, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese,

MCLS Director's Report – May 2020 (Continued)

Slovenian, ASL with a Deaf storyteller, and Swedish. She is looking for someone to do sessions in Nepali and Arabic. The co-presenters are a mix of MCLS staff and community members.

MCLS Member Library Updates

Associate Director, Adam Traub reporting

Find Your Place at the Library - National Library Week occurs in April each year; this year, ALA had switched their messaging from “Find Your Place at the Library” to “Find the Library at Your Place” to help encourage people to stay home during the COVID-19 pandemic. In his role as District 25’s Key Congressional Contact, Traub reached out to Representative Joe Morelle’s team to arrange a Virtual Story Time; MCLS is grateful to Representative Morelle and his team for participating in National Library Week on Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/RepJoeMorelle/status/1253765066106773506?s=20> (You will need a Twitter account in order to view.)

E-Content Use - Overdrive usage across the System was up 60% in April, compared to usage in April 2019. Twenty-two Overdrive titles were purchased based on Patron Requests, waiting lists for titles, and upcoming expiring titles in the System’s collection; 43 titles were added to Lucky Day collection based on waiting lists. Gunther also continued to researched titles that had recently been made available to libraries for free adding another 5 new titles to the collection. Gunther maintained 16 cost-per-circ titles for the collection and continued to cap the monthly spending on these titles for the system at \$400 per month for the month of April.

MCLS Office Updates

Associate Director, Adam Traub reporting

All member libraries are closed, with most offering online programming to their community through various channels. Some libraries are reporting staff furloughs and reductions.

Gunther and Traub continue to monitor, respond, or refer questions as appropriate.

Social Media

April 2020	RPL Twitter	MCLS Twitter	Facebook	Facebook Groups	Facebook Calendar	Instagram	YouTube
Profile/Page Visits	268	176	1497	-	257	164	-
New Followers/ Page Likes	16	17	82	268	-	25	15
Engagements	354	55	8624	1501	537	572	16
Check In/ Mentions	76	44	30	-	-	6	-
Post Reach	29900	12900	21047	-	8800	7556	-
Video/Story Views	-	-	1712	-	-	273	1295
Saves/ Actions on Page	-	-	17	-	-	25	26

Extension Outreach, Melanie Lewis reporting

Outreach focuses on Talking Book and Braille Library patrons, predicting there will be an increase in May, as most patrons are provided enough material for 8 weeks at a time and the last mailing occurred in March. Lewis began calling patrons, beginning this effort with those who live alone, as many Outreach patrons are homebound and now without visitors. Telephone assistance for Hoopla and Overdrive are offered to those with devices and internet, though most have declined for now.

Patron Profile – “Felice”

“Felice” is an older patron, a regular who uses the computers on the first floor of the BLB. Last year, she began asking the circulation staff to have access to Extension’s Large Print collection for a friend. When asked for her friend’s contact information, she refused. She said she would check out the books on her card, bring to her friend, and return the books.

“Felice” would then pop into the library, asking for things like “golden age of Hollywood bio’s” or “American History, no war.” Lewis would load up a cart from our collection, bring them out to her, and she would make her choices. Lewis supplied her business card several times, asked that Felice call prior to coming so things could be prepared. Felice would not comply: “I lost your number,” “It’s not that easy for me to call,” and “I don’t really have time for all of that” were common responses. She also would never tell me her name, even though it could easily be checked with the circulation staff. Throughout these encounters, we would occasionally “chit chat.” It became clear: she was reading these books, not her “friend.”

Since we’ve been closed, “Felice” has called 3 times, leaving messages on voicemail. When I received the first message, I was not sure who the message was from, not knowing her name. When I returned the call, the number was the reception desk at the House of Mercy. They paged “Felice;” she came to the desk. This has happened two more times since. She wants to know when the library will be opening again. “You know how many books my ‘friend’ was reading” she said, sounding close to tears.

During our last conversation, she said that she would be getting a Kindle for her “friend” from Lifespan soon. She sounded better. I will call soon to make sure she receives her Kindle, and to see if she needs any help with setting up the device.

Central Library Updates

Central Library public services remain closed, although a vibrant and busy schedule of virtual programs has been developed. This report will share highlights from selected departments rather than include a separate report for each.

Central Casting, a library podcast produced by Arts/Literature librarian Andy Coyle (<https://rundelania.com/central-casting-rpl/>) began on April 17, and had 310 views in 10 days. The site features nature recordings, recordings from local musicians and authors, poetry readings and audio essays from library patrons and the community at large. Issue 7 of *Rundelania*, the division’s digital literary journal, was published online May 1, and has submissions from over 20 library patrons and community members.

Librarian Melissa Manczuk of the Arts/Literature Division began creating a new series of craft videos for patrons to watch while in quarantine. She has focused on making videos of crafts that can be made with easily obtainable materials but still bring beautiful results. A new video is uploaded to the library’s YouTube channel weekly and so far, the reception has been very positive.

MCLS Director's Report – May 2020 (Continued)

Five Rochester Writes online classes were offered in April, and included *This Is Your Year to Write*, *Writing During COVID-19*, *Make Me Care: The First Pages of Your Story*, *Reflective Writing*, and *Writing As Resource: Inner Guidance Through Challenging Times*. The classes continue to be intimate and interactive, thanks to the Zoom platform, our enthusiastic students, and the skills of our fabulous writing instructors. Some students have enjoyed the online experience so much that they have expressed interest in our continuing to offer classes in this way after the library reopens.

The Business Insight Center provided extensive intellectual property support to RIT students at the Simone Center for Student Innovation & Entrepreneurship, resulting in this message from Jeff Arywitz, a coach for the RIT Venture Creations Incubator:

"Thank you for sharing data on your experience this past semester. I think you've clearly shown that not only is there an unmet need, but that this is the right way to address it. My gratitude to Kate and Jennifer for stellar support for our students."

Central staff worked to set up telephone reference, specifically in response to a need expressed on social media for people needing assistance navigating the IRS website with stimulus check questions. Cynthia Dana, Dennis Williams, and Martha Ruggeri created a process that provides email notification to staff when voicemail messages are left on specified phone lines, allowing reference staff to respond quickly. Adam Traub also launched an online chat reference service that has been very busy.

The Reynolds Media Center worked hard to get as many MiFi units in the hands of our patrons as possible before the library's doors closed in March. Here are two patrons talking about the difference these units have made in their lives.

"I am a regular library patron. I use the computer and WiFi for my phone there, because it's too expensive to get at home. I so appreciate getting this [device] from the library – since COVID-19 happened I have been in touch with my family and friends more than ever to let them know how much I love and care for them. Thank you from the bottom of my heart..." ~ J.Z.

"We used to have internet at home, but as the bill went up, our family could no longer afford it. We were using the internet at the Central and Irondequoit libraries before they had to close. I am homeschooling my two children, and we would be stuck without this mobile internet service – we would have zero access to resources. Now we can use Overdrive, my daughter can continue her art classes on Zoom, and both children can continue their schoolwork and entertainment." ~ Rachel

Darlene Richards coordinated virtual programs with Susan Shiroma from Candid on proposal writing and for the Grant Writers on Candid resources. Richards also held a virtual program on Introduction to Grants with Susan Shiroma. Her presentation included topics such as what funders really want to know about the organizations they are funding, and how to identify funders and make the first initial approach. Below is a comment from a patron registering for the next Proposal Writing Program:

"Thanks so much. I just signed up. I also wanted to say, that last week's webinar on finding grants was the best webinar I have attended since New York has been shut down. I really learned a lot from it. Can't wait until the library opens again so I can come down and visit the Grants Resource Center. Thank you for organizing both workshops."

Central staff has put together a handful of Facebook clubs to keep patrons engaged around various topics. These have proved to be very popular. They include clubs on cooking, gardening, a scavenger hunt, Lego challenge, and reading.

MCLS Director's Report – May 2020 (Continued)

The ever-popular Mourning in the Morning series, presented by the Local History Division in partnership with the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, proved especially popular as it moved to a virtual platform this month. Chris Grooms presented "Tales from the Crypts: The Mausoleums of Mount Hope Cemetery." This was the division's first time hosting a program on Zoom, and it attracted 244 registrants. Unfortunately, only 100 of these were able to participate, as that is the maximum number allowed through the library's Zoom account. A recording of the program received an additional 414 views through the library's YouTube account. The incorporation of sign-language interpreters helped make the program accessible. This worked well, and we plan to provide sign interpretation for our online lecture programs for as long as we continue to work in a virtual-only environment moving forward.

Local History's Daniel Cody's SUNY Brockport Master's thesis on the 1918 flu epidemic continues to attract widespread attention. It was accessed 344 times in April by people from all over the world, including the governments of the City of Rochester, the State of New York, and two downloads from the U.S. Department of Defense.

Selected Meetings & Outputs

MCLS Director, Patricia Uttaro reporting

April 18 – May 15

Standing Meetings

City Senior Management Team (weekly)

RPL-MCLS Management Team (weekly)

A. Traub, T. Reeves, B. Harrison, A. Suro, T. Burton, C. Ridarsky – one-on-one meetings (monthly)

FFRPL Executive Director Ned Davis (monthly)

MCLS System Services and Operations Committee (monthly)

New York State Library – Division of Library Development conference call (monthly)

Public Library System Directors' Organization (PULISDO) conference call (monthly)

Deputy Mayor James Smith (monthly)

County Chief of Staff Amy Grower (monthly)

Other Meetings

RPL Site Supervisors

Urban Libraries Council Directors

Lomax Campbell, City of Rochester

Roc the Future Convener's Meeting

City Budget Director – Budget Review

DRYS Commissioner Danielle Lyman-Torres and City Director of Special Projects Sandra Simon

RPL Assistant Director Reeves and RPL Board VP Donna Benjamin

City CIP Hearing

Seymour Library Director Michael Boedicker

Budget meeting with Mayor Warren

Central & Branch All-Staff Zoom Calls

NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council Executive Team

Roc the Future's Jackie Campbell & Stephanie Townsend

GRASA Program Locator meeting

Email Activity

April 2020

Name	Send Actions	Receive Actions	Read Actions
Uttaro, Patricia	1003	9872	8858
Traub, Adam	742	2787	2436
Reeves, Tolley	434	4330	1292
Harrison, Brie	431	4966	3929
Ana Suro	1101	5908	2778