

REPORT OF THE WELLESLEY FREE LIBRARY BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

The Wellesley Free Library's (WFL) relevance as Wellesley's community gathering place, cultural destination and gateway to ideas continues to grow as patrons visit the Library to check out materials, attend programs, and use the wide range of digital and printed resources. Circulation is growing at a moderate pace while use of the resources such as the Internet, databases, and reference services in both the Adult and Children's Department is rapidly expanding. Attendance at computer programs is high as patrons seek information to help them sort out the many ways that the information explosion and new technologies affect them on a daily basis, including leveraging information and services on the Internet, using downloadable audio books, as well as understanding and comparing ereaders. Although the budget remains tight, the WFL continues to be resourceful in the prudent use of funds available and implementation of efficiencies to provide the services that Wellesley residents have come to expect. The dedication of the library staff is an important factor in the realization of the Library's mission.

Budgeting

The weak economy provides unique challenges for the WFL. Library services become more important to people in challenging economic times when disposable income shrinks and jobs are lost. The Trustees of the WFL continue to focus on meeting the increased need and demand for library services within the Town's relatively flat budget guidelines. To ensure the most effective use of limited funds, the Trustees continue to follow the model established in FY 10 of zero based budgeting to allocate resources based on an analysis of past and emerging usage behavior. In FY 11, two senior positions at the Library became available due to retirements. This afforded the Trustees the opportunity to reallocate some resources to fill the needs identified in the five-year plan, especially in the Children's Department.

To provide a longer term planning tool, a five-year service plan has been developed to meet library service needs and a yearly comprehensive review of funding sources (town, private, and state) is conducted. It is clear to the Trustees and Administration that continued development of public-private partnerships and grants is required to provide the exceptional level of service expected by Wellesley residents.

Wellesley Free Library Foundation

The WFL Foundation is now in its second full year of operation as a supporting organization of the WFL. The Foundation is focused on raising private funds to leverage and stretch public dollars by providing the resources to supply value-added offerings that supplement the tax-funded core services. WFL Trustees have developed a five-year plan for initiatives to be funded by the Foundation.

RFID (Radio Frequency Identification System)

The Radio Frequency ID System (RFID) for circulation and inventory control became a reality in FY 11. RFID has allowed WFL staff to continue to serve the needs of patrons by offering self-check as an alternative to waiting in line for an operator assisted transaction. The launch of self-check enabled by RFID, has allowed the increased patron circulation needs to be met without the need to increase staff to keep up with the demand. This tremendous efficiency was made

possible through the generosity of the Building Fund, with money that was raised as part of the capital campaign for the new main library building. This gift closed out the Building Fund; Trustees are extremely grateful to the Building Fund and all its contributors for the amazing support they provided. The RFID project is a two-phase project with the circulation function fully operational in FY 11. Inventory control is a project that will be accomplished in FY 12. The numerous benefits from this system are faster checkout; fewer lost materials, reduction in staff repetitive motion injuries, and improved customer service.

Sources of Funding

In addition to the WFL Foundation and the final gift from the Building Fund, the WFL is fortunate to have two other long time sources of enhancement funds. The Friends of the Wellesley Free Library continue to generously fund the majority of programs/events offered at the Library; this funding is primarily based on the proceeds of the book sales. The Centennial Fund supports collection enhancement including expanding specialized areas, databases and the ability to try new and evolving formats.

In addition, the Trustees continue to actively seek other opportunities to enhance the services of the Library. In FY 11, the WFL applied for and received a two-year LSTA grant from the Mass Board of Library Commissioners to enhance the services provided to the Middle School/High School population. This grant focused on services to Middle School students through the creation of a "Tween Advisory Board" and improved programming and resources. The second year of the grant will focus on services for High School students.

The WFL was also awarded a grant from the Fund for Wellesley to launch formal English as a Second Language (ESL) program for the community. This grant allows us to establish ESL offerings as well as to train tutors/program leaders.

Facilities

Maintenance of the WFL buildings continues to be a priority of the Library Director and the WFL Trustees. The Library continues to work with the Town in the establishment of a unified and consolidated facilities department. A long term approach to address the capital needs of the branch library buildings remains under discussion. WFL Trustees were pleased that the long planned boiler project at the Hills Library will become a reality by the fall heating season in 2011. The cost of this project was covered through revenue received as lease payments for rental of branch space.

Library Usage in FY 11

Total circulation for FY11 was 672,094 items. This figure includes books, magazines, CDs, audio books, and DVDs. The circulation figure reported above captures one element of Library usage. Other important metrics of usage for FY11 include:

- 64,680 reference transactions;
- 12,184 children attending 422 programs for babies, pre-school and school-aged youth
- 5,952 people in attendance at 407 general interest programs;
- 503,503 visits to the library website www.wellesleyfreelibrary.org

- 22,668 connections to the wireless network;
- 17,929 Wellesley residents with library cards.

The Library's Collection

In FY11 total library holdings included:

- 235,453 books
- 18,545 audio cassettes and CDs
- 14,757 video cassettes and DVDs
- 3,640 ebooks
- 2,400 downloadable audio books.

Respectfully Submitted,
Beth Sullivan Woods
Board of Library Trustees