

2020 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES THAYER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Mission Statement

The Thayer Memorial Library brings people, information, and ideas together to enrich lives and build community.

Our Core Values

Passion

We love the Library, we love Lancaster, and we love what we do.

Free and Open

We promote intellectual freedom and privacy for all.

Inspiration

We enhance learning, the free flow of ideas, and civic responsibility.

Respect

We respond to all with courtesy and compassion.

Integrity

We uphold a bond of trust between the Library and the community as stewards of our collections and our building.

Legacy

We treasure the history of Lancaster and its Library as we embrace the future.

Board of Library Trustees

Chair	Emily J. Rose
Vice-Chair	Frank T. MacGrory
Secretary	Frank S. Streeter
Member	David I. Spanagel
Member Kathryn Engelhardt	term ends in May
Member	Anne T. Ogilvie
Member Ann Frantz	term begins in May

Library Staff

Director	Joseph J. Mulé
Assistant Director /Adult Services Librarian	Karen Silverthorn
Youth Services Librarian	Maren Caulfield
Office Manager / Senior Technician	Janet Baylis
Special Collections Clerk	Marcia Jakubowicz
Technician	Jo Agnes Santangelo
Page	Dot McCandless, RESG
Page	Lisa D'Ambrosio
Page	Gail Prewandowski
Page	Rachel Carter
Page	Melanie Turpin
Page	Meredith Brummer
Buildings' Supervisor	Rick Krafve transfer
Buildings' Supervisor	Scott Muth

Hours of Service¹

Monday	1 – 8
Tuesday	12 – 8
Wednesday	1 – 8
Thursday	1 – 8
Friday	1 – 5
Saturday	1 – 2

¹ The times listed were the conventional hours of service until the Library closed in late March under the Governor's order in response to the COVID-19 epidemic. Although the Library supplied the public with library services throughout 2020, its scheduled hours varied.

Our 158th Year of Public Library Service

In 2020, Thayer Memorial Library [Library] fulfilled its mission operating from its historic structure on the Town Green. However, 2020 was like no other year in the Library's history except during 1918-1919, when Massachusetts residents encountered the H1N1 Influenza, commonly known as the Spanish Flu.

Circumstances the Library and staff encountered in 2020 managing the conditions caused by the outbreak of Coronavirus disease 2019 [COVID-19] were abrupt, troublesome, and disruptive.

The COVID-1 pandemic in Massachusetts was part of a continuing epidemic in the U. S. The first verified case was reported in early February, making Massachusetts the fifth state to report an infected person. The second reported case in Massachusetts occurred in early March. Governor Charlie Baker declared a state of emergency on March 10.

The Library responded swiftly and employed a curbside pickup service to prevent staff and the public from directly encountering one another. However, by March 23, all Town buildings closed, and the staff ordered not to turn up to work. Many staff tackled their work duties from home. With the building otherwise unoccupied, the Director reported to the Library.

In early April, an email distribution list including more than 2,700 Thayer Memorial Library patrons living in Lancaster was generated. Several times a month, the Director dispatched emails to the public and offered well-timed information from government and public health agencies on COVID-19 related events and notifications. These emails also apprised Library members of the hundreds of thousands of eBooks, audiobooks, eVideos, and eMagazines that continued to be available.

In mid-April, the Library commenced mailing books to residents. Underwritten by the Friends of Thayer Memorial Library, patrons could request media titles on the Library shelves, often delivered to homes by the United States Postal Service within 48 hours. While working from home, the Youth Services Librarian began developing a host of innovative virtual programs, including story hours posted on YouTube.

By May, and after meeting health and safety provisions declared by the Commonwealth and Lancaster's Board of Health, staff with lower health risks returned to work. Much of their time was devoted to meeting the growing demand for books by mail, developing virtual services, and preparing procedures, policies, and protocols to eventually welcome the public back into the building.

In the middle of June, The Library commissioned a Re-Entry Taskforce lead by Board Chair Emily Rose. The group, which included Trustees and a local business owner, several members with higher academic credentials, the Library Director, and staff produced the document *Welcome Back To The Thayer Memorial Library*.

The plan required everyone entering the Library to wear a mask covering the nose and mouth, substantiate no COVID-1 symptoms such as a fever, maintain social distancing of at least six feet and practice hand cleanliness. Upon entering the Library, visitors employed a hands-free temperature station to verify healthy temperatures. To encourage compliance, furniture was

removed from public spaces, media stacks reorientated, and signage displayed to promote social distancing.

A feature of the plan was for the public to arrive at the Library's front entrance, check out their materials in the Nathaniel T Dexter Meeting Room on the ground floor, and leave through the rear exit. Occupancy was limited to no more than 25 inhabitants, which included staff. Visitors were scheduled at the top of the hour and permitted to stay for up to 45 minutes. Staff used the remaining time to prepare the building for the subsequent round of reservations, starting at the top of the next hour.

The Board of Health endorsed the Library's plan by the end of September. At its October meeting, The Board of Trustees approved welcoming the public back into the building. The first patron came at 4 pm on October 15. The last patron to visit the Library was on November 19. Around this time, the COVID-19 infection rate in Lancaster, Massachusetts, and the rest of the country spiked, which led to the decision by the Town to shut down public buildings until further notice. Staff continued to report to work to support curbside pickup services and provide and develop various virtual programs.

The Library as Lifeline

The Library became an instrumental presence in the community as residents grappled with the burdens of remaining at home isolated from family, friends, classmates, colleagues, and neighbors. In the earliest days, emails sent to most households announcing the latest information provided optimism, fun, and humor using quirky anecdotes and the Director's musings.

The times were gloomy, and patrons missed visiting the Library for various reasons. Scores of titles were mailed to residents' homes. Eventually, the interlibrary loan service was restored, and media titles were available from many libraries in CW MARS. Although patrons couldn't enter the Library to pick up their requests, the staff established curbside pickup services enabling the public to pick up requested titles waiting for them outside the Library. However, with more significant investment in digital resources, whether eBook, audiobook, videos, or magazines patron use boomed. Growth in electronic media grew by nearly 30% since 2019. Even under threat, the Library was an excellent investment and provided Lancaster citizens with almost \$70 of services for every dollar appropriated by the Town.

Behind the Scenes

The Board of Trustees continued to meet monthly to evaluate the staff's well-being, the Library's response to the pandemic, and plan for a post-pandemic reaction. In addition, the Board continued its routine duties of preparing and advocating for the upcoming FY2022 budget negotiations with the Town, reviewing and writing policies in light of the conditions on the ground, and working to address various building structure concerns.

Even when working from home, staff found ways to start new projects, develop services that could be delivered over a networked community, and planned to reopen the building. The Assistant Director worked with the Special Collections Clerk to update the Library's disaster plan.

She also worked with a team to begin the arduous process of transcribing manuscripts in the Library's special collections.

Other groups formed and met online, including one to evaluate the Library's website and plan on a redesign. Staff regularly convened and collaborated over shared work duties. The Board and staff even started organizing around developing a new strategic plan.

The Youth Services Librarian was awarded an LSTA grant for subscriptions to Beanstack, an online application to customize community reading programs, enabling the Library to reach more residents at home. She also started a *Mind in the Making* grant application focusing on developing spaces in the Library for children to play. Studies show that play enables young children to develop essential social and literacy skills that lead to future success in school. The grant to the Rosemary Davis Memorial Fund at the Greater Worcester Community Foundation was awarded.

The Library and volunteer Bob Kadlec worked with the Commission on Disability to virtually display a Disability History Exhibit on the Library's website. The exhibit was developed by Alaska's Governors Council on Disabilities and Special Education and was on display for October.

Staff Changes

In 2020, a long-standing member of the staff retired. Dot McCandless left at the end of August after serving as Page for more than 12 years. The community cherished Ms. McCandless. Her duties included working on the frontline of service at the circulation desk. Anyone who visited during her work hours was warmly greeted with a smile and a cheerful hello. She was good for a laugh which usually resonated throughout the Library's rotunda and adjacent rooms. The staff sorely missed Dot and wished her all the best in whatever she pursues in the next stage of her life.

Media Collections

In 2020, the Library added 3,782 media titles to the general collection and many titles to its eMedia collections. It also added a new online video collection called Kanopy. Table 1 shows the Library retained more than 725,000 titles broken down by several media types. Electronic media comprised more than 93% of accessible titles yet contributed less than 25% of titles borrowed by the public. Table 2 illustrates the circulation by media type at the Library in 2020.

Table 1. Collection Breakdown by Media Type

Media Type	Total
Audiobooks and Music	7,718
Books	41,354
DVDs and Blurays	8,985
EAudiobooks	251,400
ebooks	247,701
eComics	20,906
eMagazines	198
eMusic	30,190
eTelevision	31,067
eVideos	83,493
Magazines	2,285
Microfilm	87
Miscellaneous [passes, art, kits, etc.]	969
Video Games	409
Total Titles	726,762

Table 2. Circulation Breakdown by Media Type

Media Type	Totals
Audiobooks and Music	2,038
Books	28,226
DVDs and Blurays	8,260
EAudiobooks	5,128
eBooks	6,216
eComics	157
eMagazines	94
eMusic	173
eTelevision	186
eVideos	606
Magazines	999
Miscellaneous [passes, art, kits, etc.]	282
Video Games	390
Total Circulation	52,755

Although many museums and attractions closed once the COVID-1 pandemic took hold, some opened with limited occupancy. Others that remained closed extended the Library's subscription.

Funding provided by the Friends of Thayer Memorial Library and the Rosemary Davis Memorial Fund at the Greater Worcester Community Foundation underwrote all attraction pass acquisitions listed in table 3.

Table 3. Museum and Attraction Passes

Animal Adventures	Museum of Russian Icons
USS Constitution	Museum Butterfly Place
Trustees Go Pass	Worcester Art Museum
Davis Farmland Megamaze	

Programs and Events

The Library scheduled more than 24 programs which more than 3,050 citizens attended. Nearly half of the programs were conducted virtually. The Youth Services Librarian also started a YouTube channel and uploaded 21 videos which generated about 420 views. All of these programs were funded using grant funds and gifts donated to the Library. Many of the programs held in 2020 are listed in table 4.

Table 4. Programs and Events at the Library in 2020

In-Person

Weekly, Monthly, or Intermittent

Knitting Club [3]	Adult Book Discussion Group [5]	7 Bridge Writers' Collaborative Programs
Mama' boot Camo [10]	Board Game Mania [x1]	Bright Star Theatre African Folk Tales
Monday Movie Matinee [8]	Crafternoon [x2]	Dungeons Dragons tutorial
Scrabble Club [4]	Every Child Ready to Read [x1]	Frozen Party
Snuggles and Stories [x3]	Family Movie [x3]	Music Makers with Miss Katie
Storytime [x13]	LEGO Club [x3]	Pajama Storytime with the Nashoba Chieftains
Toastmasters [9]	Read to a Therapy Dog [x1]	Photography Workshop for Kids
Tween Book Club [x2]	Uno Tournament	

Virtual

Weekly, Monthly, or Intermittent

Mini Storytime and Craft [x10]	7 Bridge Writers' Collaborative Programs:	YouTube Storytime [x11]
Christmas Around the World	Zoom Storytime [x12]	Fairy Tale Puppet Theater Take and Make
Harry Potter Trivia Night	Monthly MRE Me Stay-at-Home Storytime [x4]	Adult Book Discussion Group [3]
Music Makers with Miss	LEGO Club (biweekly) [x13]	New Year's Eve Party

Katie [x2]		
Teen Advisory Group [x4]	Noon Year's Eve Party	Teen Movie Club [x2]
Storytime with Princess Anna	Tween Book Club [x7]	Storytime with Princess Belle
YA Book Group [x2]	Teddy Bear Picnic	Teen Game Night
The Climate Crisis and Its Solutions		

Building

From January through late March, the Library continued to make plans and progress towards meeting the goals and objectives outlined in its strategic plans. Through the capital budget process, pursuing grants, and fundraising, the Trustees, looked forward to addressing many capital concerns that plague the historic wing of the Library. By April 1, opportunities for the Library to raise capital funds by any means vanished. However, all was not lost. Capital funds approved in FY2010 were put to use in 2020 to install a state-of-the-art, energy-efficient HVAC unit for the Constance V. R. Dexter Special Collections Room. The Town raised an additional \$13,000 through the National Grids Green Communities program to complete this installation.

Funding Library Services

The calendar year 2020's operating budget comprised revenue collected in the latter half of 2019 [January-June] and the first six months of 2020 [July-December]. Service expenditures were paid using municipal funds, grants awarded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and non-profit agencies, trust fund income, and generous supporters' gifts. The Library expended more than \$362,870 on operations. 11% [\$40,000] of this sum was funded using non-municipal income.

Municipal Support

The Library's municipal appropriation funded operational expenses, including wages, the purchase of books, magazine subscriptions and other media, the CW MARS membership, office, and housekeeping supplies, and building maintenance services. Table 5 illustrates municipal appropriations to the Library in FY2010 and FY2020.

Table 5. Municipal Appropriations in FY2010 and FY2020

<i>FY2019</i>	<i>FY2020</i>
January – June	July–December
Appropriated Municipal Income 352,119	Appropriated Municipal Income 357,550
	Δ 1.54%

State Aid

A municipality and its library must be annually certified by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners [MBLC] as meeting statutory and regulatory requirements to receive State Aid to Public Libraries funding. Lancaster and the Thayer Memorial Library met all criteria to certify with the Commonwealth and received a State Aid award. Requirements for certification included:

- Being open to all residents of the Commonwealth,
- Being open for service 4 hours per week,
- Expending a reasonable portion of the library's total budget on library media,
- Reciprocally lending books to other libraries,
- Filing all necessary reports with the Commonwealth.

As a result of certifying with the Commonwealth, the Library received a State Aid award of \$14,500.

In-kind Donations

The Library accepted books, compact discs, DVDs, magazine subscriptions, and other public in-kind donations throughout the year. In 2020, 656 titles were added to the collection, with an estimated value of more than \$7,750.

Thayer Memorial Library thanks the citizens of Lancaster for their continued support!