



# Massachusetts Libraries

## BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

### Book Sale Questions:

1. How many book sales do you have per year?
2. Where does your Friends Group store the books in between book sales?
3. Who removes the books at the end of the sale? Do you use a specific company?
4. Do the Friends get paid for the extra books which are removed?
5. Are your book sales successful for the amount of work that is put into them?

#### Ashland

1. Usually 3 (we run them quarterly, but we skip one quarter).
2. We have a "Friends Storage Room" on the lower level of the library.
3. We use "More Than Words" They are great.
4. No we do not. One thing I'd like to mention is that we have partnered with a particular book seller (an individual who runs his own business). He comes to our book storage room about 4-6 times a year, and he looks through our inventory. Any books he feels he can sell for more than \$6.00, he takes with him and then he funnels the proceeds (minus his fee) back to us. We have made significant money by doing this. He always comes prior to our sales so that the high-value books are sold to him at a higher price than our \$1.00 price at the book sale.
5. Absolutely! We make significant money on our book sales.

#### Belmont

1. 1 big multi-day sale and 1 or 2 smaller one day sales. We also have an everyday sale area with money collected via an honor box.
2. We have a storage area in the library for sorting and shelving between sales
3. Currently using Discover Books
4. Not currently, historically we were paid but then the recycling market went down the tubes
5. Absolutely! It's a great community event and also raises a significant amount of \$\$.

#### community not mentioned

1. Two, spring and fall. This was a change made two years ago to have 2 shorter sales (2.5 days each); we used to only have 1 longer sale (10 days).
2. We have the use of two storerooms at the library, and we also have an ongoing book sale area.
3. We pack them up: some are kept for the next sale, and the majority are sent out to Better World Books.
4. Yes, Better World Books sells them and sends us a percentage.
5. Yes, we make about 30% of our budget from our twice a year weekend book sales (2.5 days each), a total of 30 hours. We used to make the same amount of money in about 110 hours when we had one longer sale (10 days), so this is much better for us staffing-wise.



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### Falmouth

1. 2 sales. July (big sale) and Nov (holiday)
2. Store in sorting room in library and then to rented storage paid for
3. First, take out valuable high dollar books, then non-profits can take, then put into dumpster at end of sale to go to Big Hearted Books
4. Yes price per pound
5. Yes especially summer sale. \$60,000. Over years, 45,000 on low side.

### Norfolk Public Library

1. One per year in the spring
2. We have a closet at the library and a drop off book shed in the DPW transfer station where books are collected. Donations accepted in the library. Volunteers bring the books from the DPW transfer shed to the library where we sort and box the books by adult and children's categories in a room setup for this purpose. After the books are boxed and labeled (very important to box all books in the same size boxes for stacking), the boxes are brought over by volunteers to a trailer which is owned by the Friends. We store close to 1,000 boxes each year there before sale.
3. We once used Big Hearted Books, but they are no longer in business. We now use Discover books.
4. Big Hearted Books did pay, but now we receive no payments.
5. Yes: Our sale brings in about \$18,000 which also included money from sponsors and memberships bought at the Friday Night Members-Only Presale.

### Hopkinton

1. we probably have between 10000 and 15000 books each year spread over 2 book sales. I've never counted but that's a guess based on the number of boxes we have packed.
2. We have a room for sorting but use a piece of the staff room for storing boxes where we can stack them out of the way. We spill out into a hall area that is not in the public and also store some in our sorting room by the time we're ready for the sales
3. We use More Than Words for remainder books. They charge \$25 for the pick up but are a non-profit that provides jobs for struggling youth. Good organization!
4. We are not paid for the remainder books -- they are donated on.
5. Good question about work v. payoff. It is about 2 hours work each week all year round for the boxing and sorting and we usually yield about \$2500 per book sale. Set-up is a half-day exercise with the help of High School volunteers to bring the boxes into the sale room with hand trucks. We have other fundraisers that are easier!

### Woburn

1. One



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2. We do not store books between sales
3. More Than Words
4. No
5. They do bring in an infusion of cash, but relative to the amount of work, they would probably not be considered "successful."

### Berkshire Athenaeum

1. 3 - March, July and November
2. We leave some on the shelves, some on book racks, some in boxes in our Friends' room. When a book has been through 2 sales priced at least \$1 it then goes to the lobby sale for half price. After 2 months in the lobby, it goes to Goodwill for paper pulp or if not accepted by them, the dumpster. (Encyclopedia, dictionaries, etc)
3. The volunteers
4. See reply to question 2 YES –
5. We made over \$55,000 last year from the sales and over \$5000 in the lobby

### Greenfield

1. 6 sales/yr
2. We have a whole room full of stacks in the basement. We have around 6 volunteers who come in weekly on Thursday morning to sort and shelf donations. We use color-coded stickers so we know how long a book has been on the shelf.
3. After going through a few sales, old books are moved to the bargain area where you can fill a grocery for \$2. We have a scanner which we use on new donations. Any books that are worth selling on Amazon are set aside. We have 1 volunteer who handles the Amazon books.
4. We work with a local used book store (Roundabout Books) to process old books. They usually come in before a book sale and take away our oldest books along with worthless (moldy, smelly, brown, etc) books. The books are boxed up and set aside in one corner for pick up.
5. We generally make a minimum of \$1,000 per sale. Our last one was almost \$2,000. The sales are on Saturdays from 10 to 1:30.

### Jamaica Plain Branch Library

1. We have a 3 day annual booksale in May and a 1 day book sale in early December (2 per yr)
2. Storage rooms in our branch, right before a sale it's rather crowded!
3. More Than Words
4. No, we feel strongly people donated them to us and we want to pass them along to a non-profit where that intent is honored
5. Yes, we make about \$1K/day, and we are all volunteers who love the Library! The book sales also bring folks into the Branch who might not know much about it, so it's a good outreach opportunity along with the cash influx



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### BPL Roslindale Branch

1. We hold one large annual sale and also sell books at 4 farmers markets from June - September.
2. In the library store room
3. We donate leftover books to More Than Words
4. No we make a donation to MTW
5. Yes. We keep our prices low but get a lot of customers and move a lot of books at the annual sale. We recruit volunteers and do program promotion at the Farmers Market sales.

### Kingston

1. 1) We have 2 book sales, one on Mother's Day weekend that is a Book and Bake Sale and one in October.
2. 2) We are lucky that our library building has a big storage room out back and they have given us a portion of that room to keep all our books.
3. 3) After the sales, we move all the unsold books back into storage. Anything we feel might sell at the next 1-2 sales we save; anything else we donate to More Than Words.
4. 4) We do not get paid. However, we also don't pay to have them removed either.
5. 5) I think our sales are successful, yes. They might not be as successful as the sale carts we perpetually have near circulation, but they do bring in money for the library and I see that as a win. Especially because it's all volunteer work that goes into the sales; nearly all income brought in is profit.

### Wellfleet

1. We have two in Wellfleet, one in early July and one in early August. We also have one shelf of books for an ongoing sale in the library.
2. We have a small donation shed outside the library, and one at our Transfer Station where donors can drop books. We haul these into a large shed we built at the Transfer Station, where we meet weekly to sort and box up books for the summer sales. There is no lighting and no heat, so we sometimes cancel sorting a couple of times during the winter months.
3. More Than Words comes at the end of the August sales to take all remainders, for which we give a fairly significant donation, since we are a distance from Boston. Discover Books now comes during the year to haul away books we decide not to save for the sales.
4. No, although sometimes we let a Boston area book dealer look at the remainders before we get rid of them and pay us about half what we charge at the sales.
5. They're very successful. We make about \$20,000 in two mornings in summer, and \$4-5,000 from sales inside the library. We also think they're important for the recycling aspect, and as a service to the community. It's a huge amount of work, but our community includes many active young retirees (that is, under 80) who are eager to continue working, and the library is a beneficiary of that energy. We just wish we had more young folks to lug boxes when needed!



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### City-Wide Friends of the Boston Public Library

1. 6 or 7
2. We use a room in the library where we can leave the books on the shelves after a sale- and then we push the books on carts into a storage room the library allows us to use a part of.
3. Volunteers move the carts that we can't leave in the sale room. We find many people are excited to help with this, especially since the carts mean there isn't much lifting, just pushing!
4. We save those books and use them for the next sale- and then occasionally "weed" books that have been around for a long time. We then either donate these books (we have a great relationship with Suffolk County Jail, Literacy Movement 4 More, and a few other organizations) or put them with the books the library donates to Better World Books or Amazon. We don't get paid for these.
5. They are! We make between 3,000-5,000 in a one day sale- but we're also downtown in a city and get a lot of foot traffic, a lot of tourist traffic, and put a lot of work into marketing our sales. And with the amount of work spread amongst volunteer labor, it's totally worth it!

### Arlington

1. 1. 2 Book Sales per year (though we have an ongoing Sale open every day the library is)
2. 2. We don't store many from sale to sale but do have access to a closet in the library to store some items.
3. 3. More than Words from Waltham MA
4. 4. No we are not paid
5. 5. Yes! Require many hours but we enlist lots of volunteers and it is definitely worth the effort.

### Newton Free Library.

1. We have 3 book sales a year (running on a Saturday and Sunday for a total of about 9 hours each time). It is held in a former library building (which is now run by the local community). We receive, sort and store our books at the same site.
2. After each sale we determine which books to keep for the next sale and then send the rest either to the main library building for the ongoing sales or donate them to other non-profits.
3. We do not use any "company" to do this - we usually pay some "strong teenagers with cars" to help us.
4. (no response given)
5. In terms of the money we raise for all the work we do I think we are moderately successful - but in terms of the camaraderie of the workers and the pleasure our buyers seem to have in coming to the sales I feel we are very successful.

### Nevins Memorial Library, Methuen, MA

1. We have 2 book sales a year. One in the Fall September and one in early Spring in March



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2. We box and sort all year long. We store in a cloak room and towards the end, we use the back of our stage as it gets closer to time of the sale.
3. A big problem. The Vets used to take them but they went out of business. I am sorry but I cannot remember who we use and I found the company. Something like Words...
4. No
5. Putting the two book sales together we make around \$10,000. We really have a great group of Friends regulars that have the set up down to a science. We are well organized and have a large room for the sale. Fall makes more money than Spring.

### Woburn

1. One
2. We do not store books between sales
3. More Than Words
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### Morse Institute in Natick

1. The Friends of the Morse Institute in Natick have a total of 4 book sales each year; 3 selling all types of books and 1 selling only children's and tweens' books. The latter is 1 Sunday afternoon in December, the other 3 are 2 day sales (all day Saturday and Sunday afternoon) in January, May and September. We have only been doing the December sale for two years. The other sales have been held for over 25 years, although with changes to the months, etc.
2. The Friends have a room in the library that is dedicated to sorting and storing our books between sales. We have approximately 30 shelves in one part of the room, labeled with book categories (e.g., Mystery paperback author last name A-F, or Biography), and donated books are sorted onto these shelves. When a shelf is full, the books are packed tightly into a copy paper box and the full boxes are stacked in the other part of the same room. We only use copy paper boxes for size consistency so that the stacks of boxes are very stable even though we stack them very high.
3. When each sale ends, volunteers are directed to remove some categories of books for discards while other categories are repacked to save for the next sale. Some categories are culled so that some but not all are discarded.
4. We have a company that picks up our discards the following (Monday) morning. Our volunteers must move them out to the truck. We are not paid for the discards. I can't remember the name of the company but let me know if you want me to find out.
5. Yes, we think the money from our book sales is worth the effort. We typically make about \$8,000-\$9,000 during the 2-day sales and about \$700-\$800 from the December sale. Note that we have a bake sale with each of the 4 sales, and a music sale (LPs, CDs, etc.) with the 3 bigger





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sales. However, I have NOT included those proceeds in the numbers above. The numbers above are from sales of books only. I should also note that my category "sales of books" includes audio books, DVDs and VHS tapes, puzzles and games. These account for little of the numbers above, but I wanted to be clear. One last thing to put the money in perspective. We sell hard covers for \$1 and paperbacks for \$0.50. All children's, tweens and young adult are \$0.50. We sell a few books at higher prices, those that based on Internet research are worth more.

### Maynard

1. three sales a year--large, medium and small. We also have an ongoing sale shelf that is very successful.
2. We have a large closet in the library for storage and we accept books all year.
3. More Than Words takes away the books, and we don't get paid for this.
4. (not answered)
5. We have three very dedicated volunteers who sort books all year, and a slew who show up for the sales. Our big sale brings in about half our income for the year. The medium sale is about \$1000 and the small one about \$200. It's at the local Farmers' Market, so we have to transport those books. It's not worth the work, but supports the Market and is part of our community involvement. Our ongoing book sale brings in about \$100-150 a month, so it is very worthwhile. We are beginning to think of our sales as a community book recycling service.

### Agawam Public Library

1. One book sale per year; 3 days (1st day - members only, 2nd day - \$3 admission fee, 3rd day - free admission); always the 3rd weekend in May.
2. We really lucked out. The library lets us store the books in a section of the library's basement.
3. We have a company in Agawam called The Bindery that picks up the books. They will either recycle the books or try to sell them online. As an aside, we developed a relationship with the local high school where, on the day before the book sale, the students move the books from the library's basement to the room upstairs where we hold the book sale.
4. The only monies we receive for the extra books are a percentage of any sales that The Bindery gets for selling the books online.
5. I'd say we are relatively successful for the effort. It is our second biggest money-maker, the first being our annual basket raffle.

*Responses collected via Friends discussion list in February 2019*