

WEST BRANCH DISTRICT LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT FY2023-2024

OVERVIEW:

This fiscal year we had some good financial news and good legal news. The Michigan court of appeals accepted our appeal and in December they found in our favor. It was a great Christmas gift. In February the lawyers worked out the financial settlement between West Branch Township and the Library. Our settlement was \$27,831.07

Toni Wiles left us in late November of 2023. Matthew Thompson from the City of West Branch was hired to replace her in December. Due to the holiday season he did not really get regular hours until after the first of the year. He left us in late June of 2024 because he got a much better paying job. His last day was June 21. By the end of the fiscal year his position had not been posted.

In January the Board decided to go for an additional .04 mill on the May election. Sadly, it millage did not pass during that election cycle. The Library immediately filed to try again in August of 2024 at the Primary Election.

TECHNOLOGY:

We had to replace some switches and a firewall in our Local Area Network (LAN) over the course of the year. With the Universal Service Fund grant we only had to pay 40% of the cost. Reviewing the computer needs of the library with Nick we decided that we do not need so many public workstations anymore. The computers are running Windows 10 and Microsoft will not support Windows 10 after 2025. According to our Technology Plan we were scheduled to replace the computers in 2025. It was also determined that we do not need 12 computers for public use

and we will reduce the number to 8 in fiscal year 2025-2026. We will eliminate the four terminals along the west wall of the library. We will also update the server of the library at that time.

In May we replaced our Square terminal for credit cards. The program we had loaded onto the tablet had a hard time processing purchases. When updates we made on the tablet it got harder to get the Square Program to upgrade with the tablet. The new terminal is much smaller and is able to recognize taps from credit cards. It works much better and it is able to print a receipt.

FINANCES:

This year we opened an account with Michigan Class in September. Our initial investment was \$70,000. At the end of June 2024 the interest that we realized was \$3,428.20. This is an average daily yield of 5.3%. After only a year we should realize a yield of about \$4,400.

Through the Court of Appeals, we won the lawsuit against the West Branch Township DDA. Our settlement amounted to 27,831.07. This enabled us to replace the recessed lighting around the circulation desk and the lounge area near the fireplace. The Friends of the Library picking up half the cost.

Our penal fines for 2024 came in at \$55,129. This was about \$14,000 less than anticipated and lower than the amount we got in 2023. The chances of ever recovering the penal fines to 2019 levels are extremely slim.

State Aid increased to \$.50 per capita, the highest rate by law.

In the May election a .04 millage request was rejected by the voters and a millage request was submitted for the same amount for the August primary ballot.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS:

The canister lighting in the Lounge area and around the Circulation Desk was replaced. We converted from neon bulbs to LED bulbs. The Friends of the Library provided half of the funding to this project.

The carpet was cleaned at the end of June. It was the first time since 2014 that this had been done. Besides the carpeting we had the cloth covered chairs cleaned and the tile floor in the vestibule and bathrooms on the main floor steamed cleaned. The cost was shared by the Friends.

PROGRAMS:

We enjoyed a good increase in our programs this past year most notably in our Story time. There were 38 programs between September and the first week of June. We had an attendance of 472 children and 331 parents or guardians. Every meeting has a story and a craft.

Among the regular programs we have our Books for Lunch the first Tuesday of the month with an average of 5 attendees. Let's Discuss is very popular and is on the second Thursday of the month. The variety of the books read can be mystery, fiction or non-fiction and averages about 8 attendees. Unfortunately, the True Crime Book Club did not succeed.

We had to adult level programs. The first was on April 17 for the Coffee Talk with Amanda Barrett. Amanda discussed the writing process with

the audience. She also talked about her newest book, The Warsaw Sisters. 50 adults came to the event.

On May 1, we were host to Mark Jager, author of the Mystic Michigan series. He screened a movie featuring the geological sites in Michigan. It was we received and we had 41 adults enjoy the film.

Summer Reading: This year we had the children read in 15 minute segments for their prizes. We had no major prize, instead we gave a free book to every student who read 30 minutes to get a prize and could read for a total of 5 hours. We had 54 students complete the course.

COLLECTION:

The data is from the VLC Sirsi/Dynix reports for our circulation and cataloging reports. The accounts are count of our holdings in each of the listed collection headings.

Adult Fiction	13,103
Adult Non-Fiction	6,150
Children's Books	4,048
Juvenile Fiction	2,498
Juvenile Non-Fiction	1,611
Magazines & Periodicals	47
Young Adult	1,134
DVD's	910
Total	29,501

Magazines continue go to electronic format only so the number of our newspapers and periodicals continue to decline even as our collection grows.

We do not have a private catalog for our e-books. When we purchase an e-book it goes into the general catalog. The book is restricted for use for purchasing library during the first three to six months, depending on the title.

INTER-LIBRARY LOAN: Inter-Library loans are generated by two means. One is done by staff for patrons on MELCAT. That is the Michigan Electronic Catalog. Staff will place the title of the book or the author's name into the catalog search and place a hold for the patron if a copy is listed in the catalog. This is a State wide system and gives us access to several million titles.

The other are holds place through the VLC Sirsi/Dynix system. The is a catalog that gives us access to all VLC member library catalogs. Our patrons are able to place a hold for a book from home or staff can place a request for a patron when they are here in the Library. While the catalog for the VLC member libraries we still have access to over a million titles and the books are shipped to us via our delivery system. MELCAT figures the audio and movie titles.

The total amount of MELCAT books:	Total Lent	Total Borrowed
	931	736
VLC Inter-loan Statistics	764	723

WEBSITE AND COMUTER USAGE STATS:

Computer Usage	WI-FI	Websites
2,385	2,181	13,742
Audiobook circulation:	1,415	
E-Book circulation	988	
Total audiobook circulation	2,403	
Total circulation in collection	31,904	

We have experienced an overall increase in circulation of 6,640 items. This was a very good year and the increase was due in part from our increased programming to bring people into the library and making people aware of what we offer at the library. The storytime was well attended this year and as children got old enough to read on their own they brought their parents to the library and we re-activated several cards. The cost of everything going up has helped the library as our patrons were looking for less expensive forms of entertainment. More movies were circulated this last year and circulation of all categories were up except for magazines. No dramatic increases but enough to make a difference overall.

BORROWER STATS BY PARTICIPATING TOWNSHIPS AND CITY

Every year our patron records of any account that has not been active within the last 5 years and have no blocks on their records. Blocks are fines, lost book unreturned books listed on their records.

CARD HOLDERS

PARTICIPATING TOWNSHIPS AND CITY	NUMBER OF PATRONS	PERCENTAGE
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City of West Branch	1020	25.8
Edwards Township	413	10.1
Foster Township	228	5.7
Horton Township	312	7.9
Ogemaw Township	383	9.7
West Branch Township	813	20.5
Other out of District	<u>820</u>	<u>20.3</u>
Total	3,947	100%

OVERVIEW:

This past year was a good year for us. We won our lawsuit against the West Branch Township DDA and they will not be able to capture any of our millage from here on. We are experiencing more foot traffic and our circulation numbers and the size of our collection reflect good growth. Our patron numbers are down but the census numbers for Ogemaw county are also lower. With the millage passing in August our funding will be secure starting December of 2025. We are experimenting with a story/craft time on one Saturday morning a month. It will be run by Arianna Franciosi. Starting in the spring we will be starting to replace computers and our server. We will eliminate 4 computers and install two study modules in the west side of the main floor. The beginning of the new fiscal year will be a time of assessing the needs of the library to serve out patron's future needs and making arrangements to implement some exciting changes in the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Prepared by John Sheridan, Director