

The MLA Advocacy and Legislative Committee, led by Jessica Keyser, director at the Grosse Pointe Public Library; and our lobbyist at GCSI, Bob DeVries; have put an extraordinary amount of thoughtful time and energy into the development of this legislation with Representative Damoose.

There is a political reality to the passage of this legislation, however. It should be noted that there have been a number of proposed revisions introduced to the Open Meetings Act (OMA) during the past year. None have moved past the introduction since mid-2021 with the political divisions we now see. (Some of these bills are documented in the [MLA Bill Tracker](#) on the MLA website.)

With that said, we also note that the most recent update to this particular section of the OMA allowed those in an agricultural commodity group to meet through electronic means. MLA hopes to emulate their success by giving libraries the option of meeting remotely as well.

We are very grateful to Rep. Damoose for recognizing the challenges faced by our libraries when it comes to meeting in person, and to Val Meyerson, Director of the Petoskey District Library for continuing to bring this item to his attention – it is all about relationships.

MLA's communication plan to support this legislation will be thoughtful and intentional. It is important to note that we are at step 1 of the legislative process, which as you know, takes an extreme amount of time and energy to get through. Now that it has been introduced, we will work behind the scenes with the leadership of the Local Government and Municipal Finance Committee to have it added to the committee agenda to be heard. Please make note though, that the aforementioned OMA bills have all languished at this stage and it is important to manage expectations – we know there are political reasons it may never move past this stage.

A key decision made by the Advocacy and Legislative Committee was to add our voices to the discourse that creates a global solution for all entities who must adhere to the OMA to meet remotely. But also, their recognition of the importance to all libraries throughout Michigan that have documented:

1. Remarkable increases in engagement/attendance/accessibility of the public at library

meetings that are held remotely.

2. Acknowledgment of the excessive and undue time commitments and extreme geographic distances traveled by many volunteer board members to participate at in-person library meetings.

3. Recognition that meeting in person is a barrier for recruiting new leaders within communities throughout Michigan to serve on library boards.

MLA will begin reaching out today to a small group of library leadership that can help us take our next steps in the process. We will keep you updated through Primary Source and postings on Michlib-I as this rolls out.