

**LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND**  
**The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on**  
**April 20, 2020**  
**Online Via Zoom**

**Members Attending:** Heidi Blais, John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Annette Feldman, Kenneth Findlay, Rosita Hopper, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Doug Norris, Amanda Richman, Leslie Page, Robert Sloan

**Members Absent:** Cristina Amedeo, Louise Herrington, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Marcus Mitchell

**Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS):** Karen Andrews, Nicolette Baffoni, Karen Mellor

**Guests:** None

**Materials Distributed:** None

#### **I.WELCOME**

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 20-25 which allows public bodies to conduct public meetings online, providing all other requirements of the Open Meetings Act (RIGL §42-46-5(b)) are observed, including ensuring public access to the meeting of the public body. The meeting was posted, and access information was made available to the public.

Member attendance was affirmed with a verbal roll call.

#### **II.APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the February 24, 2020 meeting**

**Moved By:** Mr. Bucci

**Seconded By:** Mr. Coutu

The minutes were approved as presented.

#### **III.REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Ms. Drnach welcomed the Board and thanked them for their participation.

#### **IV.CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT**

A. Ongoing

i. Staffing, Donna DiMichele

After 20 years of state service, Library Program Manager Donna Michele retired on March 31. Due to the coronavirus situation, it was not possible to hold a public celebration of Ms. DiMichele's accomplishments but staff hosted a farewell event via Zoom that included guests from the Department of Administration (DOA), the Library

Board of RI (LBRI, past and present), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

Dr. Hopper recommended that Ms. DiMichele receive a letter of commendation from the LBRI; Ms. Drnach and Dr. Hopper will work together to draft a letter to Ms. DiMichele.

ii. State Hiring Freeze

Two vacant Library Program Manager positions that were in the process of being posted in February are on hold because of the state hiring freeze.

B. COVID-19

i. Library Guidance

In late February/early March, OLIS began fielding and responding to queries from libraries about COVID-19, specific to the handling of materials. Ms. Mellor provided information based on the common recommendations available at that time and guidance from the RI Department of Health (RIDOH).

ii. Suspension of Delivery / Closure of Libraries

The Governor declared a State of Emergency on March 9, followed by closing schools on March 13; libraries began announcing closures at that point. OLIS suspended delivery on March 14; following the recommendation of RIDOH, OLIS recommended the closure of public library buildings on March 15.

iii. OLIS Response

OLIS staff began transitioning to teleworking on March 16. By March 17, OLIS had developed and posted a robust guide of online resources for state employees and the public. Unique learning resources were drawn from AskRI and the web for placement in the Online Learning and Enrichment Resources, which was arranged for elementary, middle, and high school learners, adult learners, and families. The guide was promoted by OLIS, the State, and Ocean State Libraries (OSL). Ms. Baffoni, who led the effort, reported the guide has been visited 7,000 times in 5 weeks, with 400-500 weekly visits and a link click rate of 50+%.

iv. Online Meetings and Continuing Education

OLIS and Ocean State Libraries (OSL) began co-hosting weekly meetings on March 23 to provide updates and support to the library community during the crisis; the weekly meetings are attended by upward of 100 library staff and a few trustees.

OLIS' Continuous Education (CE) in-person programs were canceled, with some rescheduled as online presentations. OLIS added 5 weekly online programs including twice-weekly youth services chats, adult services chats, digital services chat in partnership with OSL, and a special topics session focusing on COVID-19 topics. More information about online programming is on the OLIS website. Online programming attendance is strong and continues to increase with over 200 weekly participants. The

sessions provide opportunities for library staff to connect while providing standard programming and crisis-specific guidance.

vi. Ocean State Libraries

OSL has extended material due dates and library card expirations until June 1, closed the online hold process while library buildings are closed, and developed an online application and renewal process to ensure all Rhode Islanders are able to obtain an active library card. Library cards are required to access Ezone (downloadable books and audiobooks) and some AskRI resources. Over the past month, Ezone use has steadily increased.

vii. AskRI

AskRI has added several new resources, including Tumblebooks and more EBSCO resources; these resources were provided at no charge by the vendor. OLIS also added Udemy, an online learning product provided by Gale Cengage, to provide access to professional and personal development courses. Beatrice Pulliam at Providence Public Library has worked tirelessly to add these new resources and troubleshoot access issues with AskRI resources.

viii. Library Support

OLIS continues to inform communities and support libraries by providing guidance on safe material handling and curbside delivery practices.

Libraries are closed to the public, but staff in some libraries continue to maintain and develop collections, perform standard internal processes, and provide virtual online programming. Libraries are submitting virtual program listings to OLIS for inclusion on a statewide library calendar and creating innovative ways to provide services and materials to the public.

C. Governor's April Reading Challenge

OLIS partnered with the RI Department of Education (RIDE) to support the Governor's April Reading Challenge. OLIS convened a meeting of public library directors to determine how to best support the initiative and provide materials for students K-12. Currently 15-16 libraries offer curbside pickup to Reading Challenge participants. In addition, packets of books are being delivered to meal sites by RI Center for the Book, Reach Out and Read, Books Are Wings, and the Children's Book Festival. OLIS provided 500 books from the Kids Reading Across RI (KRARI) program for the Reading Challenge for distribution at meal sites.

D. Online Resources: AskRI

i. AskRI

AskRI has added new resources to meet the needs of distance learners, with existing vendors EBSCO and WorldBook expanding their resources until June 30.

Tumblebooks, a resource for early learners and elementary students, was added and

is available until June 30. In addition, Flipster, digital magazines aggregated by EBSCO; was added to offer readers a wide range of periodicals.

A grant awarded to Providence Public Library was used to purchase Udemy, an online learning tool with 4,000+ classes. Patrons can take courses and work toward certifications in a variety of areas; personal development sessions are also available. Library cards are required to access Udemy courses.

Beatrice Pulliam, Director of Technology and Information Services at Providence Public Library and AskRI Coordinator, has worked tirelessly to add these new resources and troubleshoot access issues with some AskRI resources.

Ms. Blais noted that she speaks to individuals who are not aware of the many AskRI resources available and requested that more attention be given to promoting the resources. Ms. Mellor will investigate ways to further promote resources.

#### E. Grant-in-Aid (GIA) and Learning Grants

Grant-in-Aid fourth quarter payments will go out within the next few weeks. Summer and Connected Learning grants awarded earlier this year will move forward reframed to work in the current environment. OLIS will monitor state budget activities to determine if GIA will be impacted.

#### F. Business as Usual

##### i. Public Library Annual Survey

The annual Public Library Annual Survey will move forward as usual; OLIS is developing reporting guidance for libraries that will capture the different activities that libraries are engaged in due to the pandemic. Certain data collection elements will be significantly impacted by the current library closure and statistics in those categories will look very different this year. The survey will be released in July and collect data from FY2020.

##### ii. Library of RI Certification

The Library of RI (LORI) annual certification was moved this year to align with the Public Library Annual Survey and will be released with it. OLIS will pilot the LORI certification process with some libraries in May to refine and troubleshoot any issues.

##### iii. Summer Reading Program

OLIS will continue to provide Summer Reading Program material resources and is finalizing the purchase of a user-friendly online tracking tool for libraries that includes a mobile app. OLIS will partner with PPL to roll out this tool and will provide grants to libraries currently using other products.

#### G. Census

Ms. Baffoni reported that the Census is extended to mid-August and 47% of Rhode Islanders have completed it to date. Libraries continue to promote Census participation.

#### H. Talking Books Library

Ms. Mellor reported Talking Books Library (TBL) continued to ship materials to patrons until the week of March 23 when Massachusetts' Governor Baker ordered closure of all businesses; Perkins Library, which is contracted to ship audio books to RI Talking Books patrons, closed as a result. TBL staff have been ordering interlibrary loans from the Multi-State Center West, which is located at the Utah State Library, to meet patron's needs for books. TBL staff are also making wellness calls to check on patrons they have not heard from and ask if they need books.

#### I. Personal Protective Equipment manufacturing at libraries

Several libraries are using 3-D printers to print face masks and other PPE needed by first responders. Providence Community Library has moved all 3D printers to Rochambeau Library and have manufactured over 2,000 face masks. Several libraries manufacturing PPE are using 3-D printers purchased previously with OLIS LORI grants.

#### J. Providence Public Library Reopening

The reopening of the Providence Public Library (PPL), scheduled for March 30, has been postponed. PPL is hosting a virtual event on April 24 to celebrate the new library and provide a virtual tour; the grand reopening will be scheduled for a later date.

### V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### A. Federal & State Legislative Updates (Mr. Coutu reporting)

The RI Library Association (RILA) is composing a letter requesting that Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds be used to support libraries and watching for potential budget impact on GIA.

### VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

#### A. Ms. Feldman

Louttit Library has remained open with only two staff members in the building at a time. Louttit joined other small libraries in creating lists of vulnerable and at-risk patrons and staff is making wellness calls to them. Louttit's Circulation Head has made over 80 face masks, supplying the West Greenwich Police Department, cleaning service staff, and patrons upon request. Louttit is providing printing services, external Wi-Fi, and curbside delivery with social distancing measures in place.

#### B. Mr. Norris

For beginning adult English as a Second Language (ESL) learners the most effective learning method has been sending educational materials by mail and following up via phone. Intermediate and advanced learners are using resources such as newsela.com and conducting group email classes.

C. Mr. Sloan

Mr. Sloan inquired if any libraries have used the Small Business Administration (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to retain staff. Ms. Mellor is unaware of any libraries currently using PPP funds and will make libraries aware of the funding source.

D. Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo

Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo asked if homeless individuals housed in hotels during the pandemic will be counted in the Census. Ms. Baffoni reported the 2020 Census Group Quarters Enumeration process includes visits to shelters and point-in-time single night large scale efforts to count homeless people. If groups of people are staying in a hotel, it is conceivable that those individuals will be counted in that environment by Census workers.

## **VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. Public Library Trustees Manual

This item remains on the agenda and will move forward as the crisis abates. When possible, Ms. Mellor will submit a PL Trustees Manual to members for review.

B. Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Resource Sharing

This item remains on the agenda and will move forward as the crisis abates. In person meetings important to this process will be scheduled when possible.

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Funding

The first federal COVID-19 relief package included \$50,000,000 for the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS) of which \$30,000,000 is allotted to the Grants to States program. OLIS will receive approximately \$96,000 in CARES funds based on a population formula and welcomes recommendations for how the funds can be dispersed to support libraries. \$14,000,000 of the CARES Act IMLS funds will be made available through a discretionary grant program to be announced.

B. Reopening Libraries

Ms. Mellor requested LBRI member input on the development of a phased plan to resume in person services at libraries.

Ms. Drnach recommended working with libraries to determine how various types of libraries should reopen. Board members should contact Ms. Mellor or Ms. Baffoni with suggestions and recommendations, and if they would like to volunteer to help this effort.

## **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

## **X. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2020, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., online via Zoom.

## **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved By:** Dr. Hopper

**Seconded By:** Mr. Coutu

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.