

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on
May 18, 2020
Online Via Zoom

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

Members Absent: Cristina Amedeo, Heidi Blais, Louise Herrington, 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 4:20 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 made available to the public.

II.APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the April 20, 2020 meeting

Moved By: Mr. Coutu

Seconded By: Mr. Norris

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. State Budget

The RI General Assembly Finance Committee began work last week on the FY21 State Budget; the state has an \$800M budget deficit. Ms. Mellor is monitoring the budget process for potential Grant-in-Aid (GIA) and OLIS impact.

ii. OLIS Telework

OLIS staff completed a second month of telework that will continue into the foreseeable future as RI moves into Phase I of 'Reopening Rhode Island'. Some staff go to the

Department of Administration building weekly to check mail and attend to various processes. OLIS staff have been working diligently, with very few absences.

B. Reopening Libraries

With assistance and input from libraries, Ocean State Libraries (OSL), the RI Library Association, and the Library Board of RI, OLIS staff developed a [comprehensive, phased plan](#) to reopen libraries. The plan was presented to libraries May 7 at an online meeting attended by 130 librarians and library staff, and updated May 11 and May 18 as new state guidance was published. OLIS received feedback from the Government Readiness group, which approved the plan on May 12 following review by the RI Department of Health (RIDOH). In her May 14 press conference, Governor Raimondo announced that libraries would begin offering limited services.

Ms. Mellor presented a thorough overview of the Library Reopening Plan, designed to align with the state's reopening plan. It includes information about developing individual reopening plans and details practices for managing key library processes while complying with state reopening regulations and best practices. Each public library has been assigned an OLIS staff member to assist them through the reopening process; OLIS will review library reopening plans upon request.

With one exception, all public libraries will begin offering curbside services in Phase 1 but are not open to the public. OLIS is maintaining a webpage for the status of public libraries services, and working closely with OSL to provide circulation guidance to libraries. Every Monday, OLIS and OSL host online update meetings with libraries to address questions and convey information; meetings average 100+ attendees.

Ms. Mellor extended her thanks to libraries and Board members for their input on the reopening plan, and to Ms. Baffoni for her work setting up the plan framework and website. The plan and related resources are available through the OLIS website.

C. Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Delivery

Interlibrary loan delivery resumes May 18 for public and academic libraries, with libraries receiving one delivery per week. Materials will be quarantined for a minimum of four days at the delivery vendor's warehouse; safety procedures have been communicated to libraries. OCLC is conducting a study to determine how long live virus can live on different library materials; the study will be available in late June/July.

D. Virtual Services Statistics

OLIS is hosting a calendar of virtual library programming. Libraries are conducting a tremendous amount of online programming, and eBook circulation and virtual library card applications have nearly doubled.

E. Continuing Education (CE) (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

Ms. Baffoni provided a statistical comparison between FY19 CE programs and virtual CE programs offered during the pandemic. In FY19, 679 people participated in 50 mostly in-

person programs, each session averaging 15 attendees. From April 20-May 15, 2020, 751 participants attended 21 virtual sessions, each averaging 68 attendees. Adding participants from the Monday update sessions, over 1,000 individuals have attended OLIS programs in the past two months. As librarians become more comfortable with participating in online programming, OLIS will incorporate more virtual programming into CE program schedules.

Upcoming summer programming will center on the theme, 'Civic Engagement in a Virtual Age'. Virtual chats will continue into June, with reopening sessions added to assist library staff. Technology and mental health workshops are also planned.

Other upcoming CE programs include a 3-part Diversity Audit series about auditing collections through a diversity lens, and Talking Books Library (TBL) will present 'Stepping Over Print Barriers', a workshop for helping patrons navigate libraries. More information about current and upcoming CE workshops is available on the OLIS website.

F. Summer Reading Program

Beanstack, a reading tracking application, has been purchased for libraries to track summer reading and other reading programs year-round. The application can be used on computers and mobile devices, supports reading challenges, and engages readers of all ages. Additionally, the application is customizable and will return a deeper view of statewide summer reading statistics than previously available. The purchase was made possible with COVID funds, and should be available by mid-June.

G. Business as Usual

i. Public Library Annual Survey

Staff is preparing the annual survey to be released mid-July. Data elements will be added to gauge what is happening at libraries during the health crisis.

ii. Library of RI (LORI) Certification

LORI certification will launch with the annual survey; certification allows libraries to participate in LORI delivery.

iii. Library Services Technology Act (LSTA) Coordinators Meeting

Ms. Baffoni and Mr. Ackermann attended the online annual LSTA Coordinators Meeting. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) administers LSTA funds; about half of OLIS' annual budget is funded through LSTA. Information from the meeting will be used to help complete the annual federal report.

iv. National and Regional Response to Coronavirus

Ms. Mellor has been attending online Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) meetings. State library agency chiefs are meeting monthly to share experiences and learn about other state's approaches to the crisis, reopening and other topics. In addition, the Council of State Libraries in the Northeast (COSLINE) has been meeting weekly; these meetings are helpful in learning what neighboring states are experiencing and how they are addressing issues in their states.

H. Upcoming

Delivery will resume slowly as holds lists are cleared and libraries begin to open. OLIS will be monitoring school libraries as the school year closes and schedules for September sessions are published.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

There is no reportable state legislative activity on libraries.

HR 6800, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act (HEROES Act) passed by the House of Representatives, contains \$1 trillion in funds for local response and recovery, which includes \$5 million for libraries. The Senate has not acted on a version of this bill yet.

VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

A. Ms. Richman

Hospital libraries are busy lending and fielding research requests; some libraries' staff is working remotely to assist patrons with resource acquisition.

B. Mr. Findlay

The Providence Community Library (PCL) donated 50-60 boxes of paperback books to the Department of Corrections. Mr. Findlay welcomes more donations and will provide donation contact information to the Board.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

OLIS will offer a round of mini-grants with approximately \$60,000 in CARES funds to help libraries offset costs associated with COVID-19 supplies. Rather than submitting proposals, libraries will apply for reimbursement of eligible expenditures online, with OLIS awarding funds following the submittal of proof of expenditure for supplies and services procured for response to and recovery from coronavirus.

B. Reopening Libraries

Ms. Mellor extended her gratitude to the Board for their contributions to the Reopening Plan and for serving on various committees developing the plan. Suggestions for revisions or updates are welcome.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Minimum Standards for RI Public Libraries under COVID-19

Because libraries cannot be open due to the health crisis, the minimum standard for library hours cannot be met. Ms. Mellor requested input from the board on how the standard can be adapted to provide equity within the library community to ensure all libraries are

providing services equally within their scope of ability. Ms. Drnach, Dr. Hopper, Ms. Page, and Mr. Coutu volunteered to assist in the review of the Minimum Standards.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

IX. FUTURE MEETINGS

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

X. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By: Dr. Hopper

Seconded By: Mr. Findlay

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.