

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on

February 08, 2021

Online Via Zoom

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

Members Absent: Cristina Amedeo, Heidi Blais, Louise Herrington, Rosita Hopper, Marcus Mitchell

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

Guest: Stephen Spohn, Executive Director, Ocean States Libraries

Materials Distributed:

- Ocean State Libraries eZone Sustainability Report, February 8, 2021

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 public access information made available. Members are requested to identify themselves when making a motion.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the January 11, 2021 meeting

Moved By: Mr. Norris

Seconded By: Mr. Bucci

The minutes were approved as presented.

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach commended [Overdue: The Value of School Librarians](#), the advocacy documentary produced by the School Librarians of Rhode Island (SLRI), a section of the RI Library Association (RILA); its viewing and distribution is recommended. Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress, was interviewed by Robin Givhan of the [Washington Post](#) on February 5 for Black History Month.

IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

Ms. Mellor recommended the January 25 *Providence Journal Bulletin* [article](#) about RI library adaptation efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic. Directors from Charlestown's Cross' Mills Public Library, Tiverton Public Library, and Burrillville's Jesse M. Smith Memorial Library were interviewed.

A. OLIS Updates

- i. OLIS Annual Award Notification

OLIS received \$35,000 additional Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the Institute of Library and Information Services (IMLS) for federal FY21, and \$112,000 more funds in FY20. The increases bring OLIS' annual LSTA funding to just over \$1.2 million, slightly less than 50% of OLIS' annual budget. Ms. Mellor has been working with Senator Jack Reed's office, other state library officers, and the American Library Association (ALA) on legislation to increase LSTA funding to states, particularly for states with small populations.

ii. Library Program Manager Positions

OLIS was approved to post both vacant Library Program Manager (LPM) positions. Responsibilities for both positions were redefined to ensure the most efficient and effective agency management structure in alignment with the current strategic direction of the agency.

The Library Development LPM position was posted last week and is anticipated to be filled by the end of February. The position supports library development activities including Youth, Adult and Learning services, and manages federal funds and grant programs.

The Library Services LPM will manage resource-sharing services including delivery and AskRI statewide databases hosted at Providence Public Library (PPL), the Talking Books Library (TBL), and digitization services, including development of Rhode Island's [Digital Public Library of America](#) (DPLA) hub. The position is expected to be posted this month. RI is one of four states that do not have a local DPLA hub. The Digital Public Library of America is a national gateway to library collections, especially those of historic and culture significance.

iii. Public Library Annual Survey

OLIS will release salary data gathered through the annual public library survey by the end of the week; the comparative analysis informs libraries about current salaries and is useful for hiring and library budget development purposes. Kelly Metzger, State Data Coordinator, is convening a committee of librarians to review job categories used in the annual survey. The categories are currently not granular enough in certain areas and do not adequately capture current job responsibilities. Results of the project will be incorporated into the FY2021 public library annual survey.

iv. Continuing Education (CE) Programming, Spring 2021 (Ms. Baffoni Reporting)

Danielle Margarida, Youth Services Coordinator, began phase 2 of Project READY: Reimagining Equity & Access for Diverse Youth, an ongoing series of trainings for cohorts of school and youth service librarians. The five-week 'Be the Connection: Libraries, Teens, and Connected Learning', that focuses on programs that connect teens to real-world opportunities, meets February 2 – March 2. The virtual Tri-State Summer Summit for youth service librarians, hosted by the Connecticut State Library, the Massachusetts Library System, and OLIS, is February 10-11. 'New Ideas for Virtual Library Programs for Young Children' is scheduled for February 26.

The Adult Services Roundtable will discuss 'Accessibility for Virtual Programs' on March 17. Ms. Baffoni is working with the Thriving Libraries organization to craft a program for new library directors titled 'Engaged Leadership'; more program information will be forthcoming.

All CE programs are posted on the OLIS website.

B. Projects and Grant Programs (Ms. Mellor & Ms. Baffoni reporting)

i. Summer Reading Program (SRP) Mini-Grants

In 2020, OLIS repurposed funding for summer reading presenters to a competitive round of SRP Learning Grants. This year OLIS will offer a non-competitive grant program to support summer reading activities at all public libraries across the state; the program is modeled after the successful 2020 CARES Act grant program that provided reimbursement for eligible expenditures. The Summer Reading Mini-Grant Program will support summer reading program activities for children, teens and adults. Libraries may apply for up to \$500 for youth services programs and an additional \$250 for each library branch; libraries may also apply for \$250 for adult programming for their system. An instructional webinar for applicants is scheduled for March 8. The application and award process will be entirely digital.

OLIS will again offer the Beanstack Reading Tracker software to libraries to support summer reading activities; libraries not participating in the Beanstack program will be reimbursed for their reading tracker expenditures.

ii. Other Grants

OLIS is reviewing other needs for project funding for statewide library initiatives; an additional grant program to support projects relating to access to library materials, digitization, and other identified needs is in development.

C. Reopening Libraries: Updates

i. Coronavirus Updates

RI coronavirus cases are trending down, with 450 average cases per day and hospitalization stays decreasing; 8.2% of Rhode Islanders have received at least 1 dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. Vaccinations are being administered based on age, not occupation, except for health care providers and first responders. Library workers had been seeking to be vaccinated earlier due to their substantial interaction with the public; Ms. Mellor had requested this accommodation for library workers when the State was seeking input on its vaccination plan. Library workers will be vaccinated in accordance with the age-based or underlying health conditions schedule.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

i. Rhode Island legislation

- a. H 5148. The RI Broadband Development Program bill establishes an 11-member council, including a representative from Ocean State Libraries (OSL), to establish a plan for creating a statewide fiber optic network in all RI communities. Mr. Ed Garcia, RILA Legislative Action chair, will investigate the addition of OLIS as a council member.
- b. H 5054. The Community Antenna Television Systems and Internet Service Providers bill would require internet service providers to follow internet service neutrality requirements.
- c. S 2592. The bill's passage would amend Section 11-47-60 of the General Laws in Chapter 11-47 entitled "Weapons" to reflect that 'No person shall have in his or her possession any firearm or other weapons on school grounds' except for law enforcement officials or security personnel. RILA is seeking perspective from the School Librarians of RI.
- d. H 5700. To protect student privacy, the bill for Student Privacy on School-owned Technology provides that no educational institution without an opt-in shall compel students to participate in a take-home technology program.

ii. Federal Legislation

a. Build America's Libraries Act

Senator Jack Reed introduced the Build America's Libraries Act to provide funds for library construction or renovation; the federal government has not provided library construction funds in over two decades. The \$5 billion bill will provide \$10 million to each state and additional funds based on population. In addition to construction and renovation, funds will support creation of external spaces, HVAC system upgrades, advanced technology purchases - including Wi-Fi for rural locations, and address hazard remediation and disaster preparedness.

b. Coronavirus Relief

Senator Reed introduced a bill to increase IMLS LSTA funding by \$200M. The temporary funding will increase each state's base grant by \$2M for response and recovery to Coronavirus.

VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

No board member reports.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Trustee Resources and Support Committee

The committee has been unable to meet because of time constraints. Trustee information from other states has been investigated and will be available when the committee convenes next month. Ms. Drnach, Mr. Coutu, and Mr. Findlay will serve on the committee.

B. Resource Sharing: Delivery Service and eBooks (Ms. Mellor and Mr. Spohn)

Ms. Mellor reviewed initiatives underway to find solutions to the ever-increasing costs of delivery and eBook acquisition. A study to be commissioned by OLIS and OSL will perform a deep review of the usage of both physical and digital library materials and will include an analysis of socio and economic characteristics of library users and non-users by incorporating Census and consumer data. The study will inform potential policy changes and provide understanding on how to better serve the public through improved services and materials availability.

Stephen Spohn, Executive Director of Ocean States Libraries (OSL) presented an overview of the 'OSL eZone Sustainability Report' generated from a January 27 Q & A discussion about the sustainability of the eBook program. Findings determined that a small segment of the patron population accounts for a large portion of eBook holds; OSL will review ways to improve policies to provide equitable service to all Rhode Islanders. Increasing costs are a primary factor in the procurement of digital materials for patrons. eBooks are licensed for a specific time period, frequently making their reacquisition necessary. Various digital media purchasing models are being examined to determine the best procurement methods.

OLIS will continue to work with RILINK (the school library consortium) to identify ways to make eBooks and materials more readily available to schools

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

IX. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2021, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., online via Zoom.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By: Mr. Findlay

Seconded By: Mr. Norris

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.