

**LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND**  
**The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on**  
**November 21, 2022**  
**at William Hall Library**  
**Program Room, Lower Level**  
**1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905**

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

**Members Absent:** Cristina Amedeo, Annette Feldman, Louise Herrington, Rosita Hopper, Marcus Mitchell, Amanda Richman

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

**Guests:** None

**Materials Distributed:**

- American Rescue Plan Act ([ARPA](#)) Spending in RI Libraries Report
- Digital Public Library of America ([DPLA](#)) Rhode Island Hub Update

**I. WELCOME**

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:22 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** from the October 17, 2022, meeting

**Moved By:** Mr. Bucci

**Seconded By:** Mr. Coutu

The minutes were approved as presented.

**III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Ms. Drnach welcomed members.

**IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT**

**A. OLIS Updates**

**i. Staffing**

Chaichin Chen, Resource Sharing Coordinator, is retiring on December 31 after 26 years. The vacated position will be reviewed and redefined as necessary to meet current agency needs. The Digital Resources Coordinator position has been filled and the new staff member will begin January 3.

**ii. Palace Project ([eBook Platform](#))**

Ocean State Libraries (OSL) launched the [Palace Project](#) eBook platform in September; the project was funded with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds provided by OLIS. The platform can aggregate digital content from multiple vendors, including content purchased by OSL from

OverDrive, and free content available through other sources such as the Gutenberg Project. Additional content for Palace is also available for purchase through the Palace Marketplace, a library driven marketplace founded by the Digital Public Library of America that includes licensing agreements with major publishers. OSL used grant funds to secure content through the marketplace to supplement the existing OverDrive collection. The opening day collection added audiobooks from [Audible](#) and a substantial number of young adult graphic novels, in addition to select Amazon eBooks available through Palace's exclusive partnership with Amazon. OLIS is working with OSL to promote the eBook platform and its app to Rhode Islanders.

iii. [Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment \(BEAD\) Program](#)

Senator Jack Reed, the RI congressional delegation, and Gina Raimondo, former RI governor and current US Secretary of Commerce, held a press conference today to announce \$5M in federal funding to RI to develop a statewide broadband plan; an additional \$500,000 will be available for digital literacy training. Ms. Mellor attended the press event.

Upon plan submission, RI will secure an additional \$100M in federal funding for broadband deployment. The BEAD program will provide over \$42 billion to states, Washington DC, and US territories with a base grant of \$100M plus additional population-based funding. The program in RI will be coordinated by the RI Commerce Corporation (RICC). Earlier this month, Ms. Baffoni attended training with RICC in conjunction with BEAD and the development of RI's digital equity plan and provided input on potential roles for libraries.

B. American Rescue Plan Act Grants – Program Overview (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

Ms. Baffoni provided an overview of the \$2.23 million ARPA grant awarded to OLIS by the Institute of Museum and Library Services; the funds were separate from OLIS' annual state grant award and used during the federal fiscal year 2022 (ending on Sept. 30). The grant's goals were to support digital inclusion support, rapid emergency library relief, and meeting community needs through library services.

Rhode Island libraries were awarded \$1.25M in subgrants for technology purchases (including self-check machines) and for competitive grants and mini grants to support community needs. Rhode Island's distressed communities were eligible for additional stipends for technology grants and separate subgrants that primarily supported additional technology purchases.

Statewide projects were funded in the amount of \$890,000 and to support AskRI, Summer Learning, Digital Literacy Training, and the Palace Project. Library workforce funding was \$71,500 and included awards for Professional Field Experience and diversity scholarships to support students at the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Library and Information Studies.

The final ARPA grant report will include municipal grant distribution and anecdotal grant statistics.

C. [Digital Public Library of America](#) RI Hub (Mr. Morales Henry reporting)

Mr. Morales Henry provided an update on the development of a RI hub for the Digital Public Library of America. In 2018, a RI DPLA committee was formed to begin work on the RI hub. At that time, DPLA staff presented hub requirements to the RI committee, however, work was put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

A new committee comprised of staff from OLIS, Brown University, and Providence Public Library convened a statewide meeting on May 4, 2022 and released a statewide survey to digital collection stakeholders on May 9. The survey returned 118 responses and the [survey report](#) was released August 11. Starting in October, committee members began the work of interviewing 30 institutions identified thru the survey to discuss existing digitized collections, and the potential for inclusion in the initial collection of the RI hub.

Ongoing work will include an assessment of available digital records and data harvesting; 50,000 records are required to launch a hub. A meeting will be scheduled with DPLA staff to further explore the application process and requirements for establishing the hub. The group is currently developing the governance structure, committees and working groups for the hub. Future tasks include development of a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for contributing institutions and the installation and of a metadata aggregator. The RI Hub target date for launch is June 2023.

## **V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. [Minimum Standards for RI Public Libraries](#) Review Committee**

Ms. Page and Mr. Coutu volunteered for the RI Public Library Minimum Standards review committee; the first meeting is anticipated in December. Members should contact Ms. Mellor to be included on the committee. OLIS will solicit participation from a variety of libraries to ensure all voices are represented. Several libraries submitted waivers for staffing and open hours during the recent annual survey process. The committee will review the standards governing staffing and hours in addition to other standards.

### **B. OLIS 2023 Annual Plan Approval**

Ms. Mellor presented a work plan for OLIS operations in 2023 at the October meeting and submitted the plan for approval.

Ms. Drnach inquired about plan completion time frames; Ms. Mellor advised that plan activities commence throughout the year starting in October 2022 through September 2023; OLIS will update the plan with targeted completion dates.

#### **Approval of the OLIS 2023 Work Plan**

**Moved By:** Mr. Findlay

**Seconded By:** Mr. Bucci

The report was approved as presented.

## **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS (Mr. Coutu & Ms. Mellor Reporting)**

### **A. Federal & State Legislative Updates**

Federal and State legislation about libraries may be found on the OLIS legislative [webpage](#).

#### **i. Rhode Island Legislation**

The public library grant-in-aid (GIA) formula will be reviewed. Funding was recently restored to a full 25% of municipal funding.

#### **ii. Federal Legislation**

[S. 5064/H.R. 9056](#)

Senator Reed and Representative Raúl Grijalva of Arizona introduced the ‘Right to Read Act’ to address school library resources access disparities and increase federal funding to support US student literacy. The legislation would reauthorize \$500 million for the Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant program and \$100 million for the Innovative Approaches to Literacy program.

## **VII. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

### **A. Ms. Blais**

#### **i. RI Library Information Network for Kids ([RILINK](#)) Update**

Dorothy Frechette and Sharon Webster retired in June and are serving as RILINK consultants. Karen Shore and Jackie Lamoureux are co-serving as interim Acting Executive Director. RILINK continues to offer professional development for school librarians.

#### **ii. Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and Follett Software Issues**

Schools are experiencing missed stops and substantial delays in material delivery from the OLIS’ delivery vendor. As of the 2021-22 school year, [Follett](#) was no longer hosted at the state level but only at the individual district level. ILL requests are decreasing because students can only search holdings within their district and not the entire RILINK schools’ catalog.

Ms. Mellor advised that OLIS will be working with the delivery vendor to mitigate delivery issues and email school librarians requesting that delivery incidents be reported through the LORI delivery [incident form](#).

Ms. Blais reported that schools are experiencing librarian shortages. Ms. Mellor acknowledged that RILINK and school libraries have ongoing issues that will take creative ideas from a variety of library partners to resolve and noted that Senator Reed’s [‘Right To Read Act’](#) may ease some school library issues.

Regarding the Follett school software, Ms. Mellor advised that OLIS has no regulatory authority over school libraries. Ms. Drnach inquired if school libraries are discussed at Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) meetings. Ms. Mellor reported that some state agencies serve libraries and that school libraries face issues and challenges countrywide.

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Public Library Grant-in-Aid (GIA)**

Held for future discussion.

## **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

## **X. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for December 19, 2022, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., William Hall Library, at 1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905. Board members will be notified of any date or venue changes.

## **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved By:** Mr. Bucci

**Seconded By:** Mr. Findlay

The meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.