

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on
February 13, 2023
at William Hall Library
Program Room, Lower Level
1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905

Members Attending: John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Kenneth Findlay, Leslie Page

Members Absent: Heidi Blais, Cristina Amedeo, Annette Feldman, Louise Herrington, Rosita Hopper, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Marcus Mitchell, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Doug Norris, Amanda Richman, Robert Sloan

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

Guests: None

Materials Distributed:

- LBRI Legislative Report February 2023
- State Program Report Year Review 2023-0213
- OLIS Annual Overview 2022

I. WELCOME

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

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the January 09, 2023, meeting

The minutes were not approved because the board quorum requirement was not met.

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed members.

IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

A. OLIS Updates

i. Staffing

A job posting has been published to fill the position vacant position of Resource Sharing Coordinator.

ii. Budget

Governor McKee's proposed FY24 budget contains grant-in-aid (GIA) for public libraries fully funded at 25% of local expenditures. Narragansett's Maury Loontjens Memorial Library will receive an increase of over \$100,000 due to a 50% reduction in municipal funding in FY20; funding was restored to the previous level by a new town council elected in November 2020. Narragansett's substantial increase in municipal funding resulted in other communities with funding increases of less than 5.5% experiencing a decrease in GIA from FY23, when GIA was

funded at 25% by the General Assembly. The governor's [proposed state aid](#) to libraries is posted on the OLIS website.

The Governor's proposed budget also includes a 2% increase for AskRI to cover contractual increases and continue subscriptions to resources acquired in early 2020 including the Job and Career Accelerator and Tutor.com.

OLIS was funded at the current service level, including 13 full-time employees (FTE). The revised FY23 budget for OLIS increased delivery funding by \$57,000 to cover contractual costs.

iii. Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants

The FY23/24 Library of RI (LORI) grant program will include non-competitive Summer Reading and discretionary LORI grants; discretionary grants will be \$5,000 to \$25,000. OLIS recently awarded FY23 LSTA Grants to States allocation from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) includes an increase of \$170,000, which will be used for discretionary grants.

The RI Department of Administration (DOA) implemented a [grants management system](#) in 2022. State agencies are currently transitioning to the new system through which all federally funded grants will be administered. including documentation and requests for payment. This system will replace the system developed in-house by OLIS during the pandemic. Ms. Baffoni will customize the state grant application for OLIS grants, with the objective of maintaining a streamlined and user-friendly application. OLIS will provide training on the new system to support libraries in their grant applications.

B. Annual Review of OLIS Activities

Ms. Mellor reviewed the State Program Report submitted in January to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for October 2021 to September 2022, plus the 17-month American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) award. OLIS reported on \$3,464,009 including \$1,233,676 in Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) and \$2,230,333 in ARPA funds; the state funding match was \$1,724,848.

Ms. Baffoni reported that 83 professional development programs were attended by 872 librarians and staff in FY22. In FY21, 127 programs were provided with 1,412 attendees, and in FY20, 4,240 participants attended 141 programs.

LSTA Sub-Grants awarded included 124 ARPA grants totaling \$2,200,519, 43 Library of RI (LORI) Summer Reading grants totaling \$40,491, and \$36,449 in LORI grants. All grant data collection and application activities were managed through an online system.

The FY22 Summer Reading Program (SRP), 'Read Beyond the Beaten Path', saw a return to in-person programming with the result that attendance returned to pre-pandemic levels: 14,278 children and teens participated. In FY21 there were 9,364 participants, 7,529 in FY20, and 14,378 in FY19. OLIS provided the Beanstack Reading Tracker to all participating libraries.

The Talking Books Library (TBL) staff circulated 50,243 items to the blind and print disabled, provided support to 1,300 patrons, and managed 4,813 customer interactions.

The statewide delivery service delivered 1.5 million items to 150 LORI libraries.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Minimum Standards for RI Public Libraries

OLIS, with input from the board, is identifying information for review in addition to library waiver requests and reported staffing issues. Kelly Metzger, OLIS Data Coordinator, will serve as a resource to the committee. Committee members will be Ms. Drnach, Ms. Page, Mr. Bucci, and Mr. Coutu; Ms. Mellor will assemble other interested parties to include input from small, medium and large libraries.

B. Ad Hoc Committee on State Aid to Libraries Funding Formula

The committee will study the state funding formula to assess equity and potential improvements.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Federal & State Legislative Updates

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

i. Rhode Island Legislation (Mr. Coutu)

H5118 would have exempted municipal and school district employees with 10+ years of service from the greater of 50% or \$5,000 of real and tangible personal property taxes; the bill was withdrawn.

S0112 exempts municipal and school district employees with 10+ years of service from the greater of 50% or \$5,000 of real and tangible personal property taxes; referred to committee.

H5148 requires publishers to provide reasonable terms for eBook licenses to libraries and schools when a publisher offers eBooks and audiobooks to the RI public; referred to committee.

H5181 repeals the law allowing employers to pay certain employees under 19 years-of-age who are full time students less than minimum hourly wages and requires employers to pay employees the minimum wage; referred to committee.

H5159 requires installation of designated electric vehicle charge-capable parking spaces by specific entities in existing or new parking lots as of 1/1/2024; referred to committee.

H5266 permits all members of a public body aged 65+ years to participate in public meetings by telephone/electronic communication; scheduled for hearing on 2/7/2023

H5432 requires RI internet service providers to follow net neutrality requirements and provides penalties for state contractors engaging in deceptive trade practices; referred to committee.

ii. Federal Legislation (Ms. Mellor)

Ms. Mellor will attend back-to-back events in Washington DC in March, a Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) meeting on March 7, and the American Library Association (ALA) Congressional Fly-In event to advocate for libraries on March 8-9. The preliminary agenda for library advocacy includes increased funding for the Library Services and Technology Act, and \$20M for a nationwide library facilities survey as an initial step for securing federal funding for library construction.

The IMLS is convening a national Information Literacy Taskforce with federal agencies to to advance information literacy and develop resources for communities.

VII. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

No board member reports.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

X. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for March 20, 2023, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., William Hall Library, at 1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905. Board members will be notified of date or venue changes.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.