

**LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND<sup>4</sup>**  
**The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on**  
**April 17, 2023**  
**at William Hall Library**  
**Program Room, Lower Level**  
**1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905**

**Members Attending:** John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Kenneth Findlay, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Amanda Richman

**Members Absent:** Cristina Amedeo, Heidi Blais, Melody Drnach (Chair), Annette Feldman, Louise Herrington, Rosita Hopper, Marcus Mitchell, Robert Sloan

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

**Guests:** None

**Materials Distributed:**

- Legislative Report, April 2023
- Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) Update, April 17, 2023
- Library Budgets Compared to Municipal Budgets Draft, 2022-2023

**I. WELCOME**

Mr. Coutu called the meeting to order at 4:19 pm.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** from the March 30, 2023, meeting

**Moved By:** Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo

**Seconded By:** Ms. Richman

The minutes were approved as presented

**III. REPORT OF THE VICE-CHAIR (Mr. Coutu)**

[Registration](#) is open for the annual RI Library Association ([RILA](#)) Conference at Providence Public Library on May 24-25.

Keynote speakers are Emily Drabinski, Critical Pedagogy Librarian at the Graduate Center of City University of New York who will serve as the 2023-2024 president of the American Library Association (ALA), and Deborah Caldwell-Stone, Director of the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom to Read Foundation.

**IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT**

**A. Staffing**

Ms. Baffoni is attending the Maryland Library Futures Conference in Baltimore this week with Ms. Goodman, Adult Services Coordinator, and Ms. Watts, Digital Resources Coordinator.

The Resource Sharing Coordinator position vacated in December by Chaichin Chen is filled. The new staff member starts April 24; an announcement will be posted on the OLIS website.

## **B. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) accepted OLIS' annual State Program Report with requested corrections completed by Ms. Baffoni. IMLS will conduct an onsite review of OLIS in July, which occurs once every five years; Ms. Baffoni will coordinate the visit to include OLIS staff interviews and library visits.

## **C. Grants**

### **i. Summer Reading Program (SRP) Formula Grants**

The SRP grant application period closed March 20; 10 libraries did not apply for funding. Mr. Norris inquired if the grant deadline is flexible for libraries that had initially not applied. Ms. Mellor shared that OLIS had contacted the libraries that had not submitted applications, with the result that 2 libraries did submit applications; if other libraries missed the deadline or had challenges with the new system and are interested in applying, they should contact Ms. Mellor.

Ms. Page and Mr. Coutu advised the new state Grants Management System (GMS) is not especially user-friendly or intuitive, and municipal issues may be a factor for libraries not applying for grants. Ms. Mellor shared that some libraries declined grants because they lack staff to administer a grant or do not need funds. OLIS staff is available to assist libraries with the GMS; Ms. Baffoni can provide a 'to-do' list on request. GMS portal use is now required by the State of Rhode Island for entities applying for federally funded grants administered by the State.

### **ii. Library of RI (LORI) Competitive Grants**

The competitive LORI grant program application period closes on May 1 for projects ranging between \$5,000 - \$25,000. Projects must be completed by September 30. OLIS will award up to \$250,000 in subawards utilizing federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding.

Mr. Norris and Ms. Richman volunteered to review grants. Grant review is not open to members working in applicant libraries or seated on their boards. Contact Ms. Mellor to participate in the grant review process.

## **D. Senator Jack Reed Town Hall Sessions, April 3, 2023**

OLIS hosted Senator Reed and the RI Commerce Corporation (Commerce RI) at a closed session, 'Advancing Digital Equity and Digital Inclusion', in the morning at Providence Public Library (PPL). The session showcased digital literacy programs led by PPL with funding from OLIS through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Commerce RI will manage RI's share of broadband and digital equity funding from the [Digital Equity Act and the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment](#) programs. Representatives from Cranston Public Library, Community

Libraries of Providence, Pawtucket Public Library, and Cross' Mills Public Library also discussed the impact of hosting digital literacy programs conducted by PPL staff.

An open session was held in the afternoon at West Warwick Public Library where libraries presented ARPA-funded projects. West Warwick librarians discussed their partnership with mental health agencies and the Health Equity Zone in a project to address community mental health along with the use of 'Privacy Pods' to provide private meeting spaces. Tien Tran, Exeter Public Library Director, discussed collection and resource development for homeschoolers. Stephanie Mills from Cranston's Park View Middle School discussed a project to replace unreturned books from the pandemic and develop a collection based on input from the school community. Warwick Public Library's Deputy Director, Ellen O'Brien, discussed a mobile outreach project to disadvantaged communities. Ms. Page discussed the 'Charlie Cart' project implemented at Woonsocket Public Library to provide nutritious food instruction and preparation demonstrations to the community, which was similar to an ARPA-funded program at East Providence. The Hope Library discussed business entrepreneurship through partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce.

#### **E. Library Directors Meeting, April 13, 2023**

A representative from the Veterans Affairs Medical Center discussed suicide prevention and providing literature and training resources to libraries. OLIS is working with the RI Department of Health (DOH) to place [Sharps](#) disposal containers in public libraries.

#### **F. Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), Mr. Morales Henry**

Mr. Morales Henry summarized progress to date on the implementation of a Rhode Island DPLA hub and reviewed DPLA requirements. In 2018, Brown University Library initiated the project with a community meeting, and then worked with OLIS and Providence Public Library to convene other meetings, establish workgroups, and conduct a digital collection survey. In 2022, with OLIS leading the partners, a community DPLA meeting and online survey of digital collections were conducted to update the 2018 work. Following the survey, individual digital collections were assessed in meetings with potential contributors.

The team has identified over 50,000 digital records, which is the minimum number of records to establish a hub. OLIS met with DPLA staff about the application submission process and data requirements. Next steps will be to finalize the application, develop and execute Memoranda of Agreement with participating libraries, complete all necessary system tests on the technology stack, and submit the application. The target date for submitting the application is the end of June; RI's anticipated hub launch is December 2023. A future phase of the project will determine and identify funding necessary to assist libraries with the process of digitizing materials.

Ms. Mellor noted OLIS' focus on funding digitization projects, working with library organizations, and reaching out to all RI institutions to ensure project inclusivity.

## **G. Kids' Reading Across RI (KRARI) Kickoff Event**

The Summer Reading Program [kickoff](#) is May 13, 2023, from 2-4 pm at the RI State House. Dan Santat, author of *The Aquanaut*, RI's 'One Book, One State' 2023 selection, is the featured speaker and will be available to sign books during the event. Attendees can participate in activities offered by RI libraries and organizations. Free parking is available in state parking lots on Capitol Hill.

## **V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. Ad Hoc Committee on State Aid to Libraries Funding Formula: Data Presentation**

Ms. Mellor reviewed a preliminary statewide analysis identifying the percentage of public library funding as part of each municipality's total budget. The analysis excluded school funding, which often makes up more than half of a municipality's budget. In 2020, public library funding ranged from a high of 7% to a low of 0.78% of a municipality's budget; the average was 3%. It was recommended that OLIS explore an equalization factor for funding that will help distressed and economically challenged communities without substantial impact to other communities. The draft analysis will be reviewed and revised to include missing and further exploring the presented data for accuracy and completeness.

## **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

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

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

Mr. Coutu reported most library House bills now have Senate companion bills and are referred for further study. Mr. Coutu acknowledged the RI Department of Education (RIDE) for providing testimony on bills referencing eBook pricing. Ms. Mellor noted RILA is tracking legislation; specifically, eBook pricing and library staff protection.

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

No federal legislation discussed.

## **VII. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

### **A. Ms. Richman**

Ms. Richman provided an update on the status of RI medical librarianship. Care New England recently closed their library, and Butler & Kent Hospitals eliminated library positions, leaving Ms. Richman as the last medical librarian serving RI. Most RI medical practitioners do not have medical library access. Care New England hospitals are Butler, Kent, and Woman & Infants, with Brown University providing medical library access to affiliated physicians of those hospitals. Lifespan hospitals are Rhode Island, Miriam, Newport, and Bradley.

The RI Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries is seeking advocates. When contacted, the National Library of Medicine advised medical librarian advocacy is not within their scope. Ms. Richman will reach out to the North Atlantic Health Sciences Libraries and

Brown University for support. Mr. Coutu requested information for potential RILA advocacy and recommended potential advocate organizations. Ms. Mellor will revisit the issue with Ms. Richman.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business.

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**X. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for May 15, 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**

**Moved By:** Mr. Norris

**Seconded By:** Mr. Findlay

The meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.