

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND⁴
The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on
May 15, 2023
at William Hall Library
Program Room, Lower Level
1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905

Members Attending: John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Kenneth Findlay, Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Robert Sloan

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

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

Guests: None

Materials Distributed:

- May 2023 Legislative Report

I. WELCOME

Mr. Coutu called the meeting to order at 4:18 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the April 17, 2023, meeting

MOVED: Mr. Morris

SECONDED: Mr. Findlay

The minutes were approved as presented.

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

Mr. Coutu welcomed members.

IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

Ms. Mellor thanked Mr. Coutu for chairing the meeting in Ms. Drnach's absence. Dr. Hopper, Vice-Chair, has retired from Johnson & Wales University and the Board.

A. OLIS Updates

i. LBRI Board Appointments

Board member recommendations were submitted to the Department of Administration; Governor McKee will recommend candidates for appointment, with the advice and consent of the Senate. Ms. Mellor extended gratitude to all members for their service, dedication, and consistent attendance.

ii. Staffing:

Lori DeCesare was hired to fill the vacated Resource Sharing Coordinator position. Ms. DeCesare has a long library service history including positions at Jesse M. Smith Memorial Library in Burrillville, Ocean State Libraries (OSL), and the Community College of RI (CCRI). Ms. DeCesare will supervise resource sharing activities, including coordinating statewide delivery and the Resource Sharing Working Group.

iii. Koha & Aspen Discovery, New Ocean State Libraries Catalog Transition

Mr. Coutu described the new statewide catalog transition. Koha, an open-source integrated library system (ILS), will replace the current catalog, Innovative Interfaces Sierra. Koha is the ILS, with technical support provided by Bywater, and Aspen Discovery integrates resources such as AskRI databases and eBooks (“eZone”) into the catalog, making all resources discoverable through a single portal. The platform is reminiscent of user-friendly platforms such as Amazon or the current catalog’s Encore module so should be utilized easily by patrons and provide a fairly seamless transition for users. The current catalog will be taken offline at day’s end on May 17 and the new one will go live on May 22; patrons with proper ID may still check out materials during the weekend when the catalog is offline. Statewide delivery will be suspended for public libraries May 18-19 to ease the volume of materials that need to be checked in when the new system goes live.

iv. Kids’ Reading Across RI (KRARI)

The Summer Reading Program (SRP) kickoff was May 13, 2023, from 2-4 pm at the RI State House; approximately 125 individuals attended this in-person event for the first time since 2019. Dan Santat, author of *The Aquanaut*, RI’s ‘One Book, One State’ 2023 selection, was the featured speaker. Secretary of State, Gregg M. Amore attended the event, and Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos' Office delivered a citation for Mr. Santat. Public libraries will receive a total of \$40,000 in SRP grants to support reading and learning programs that will start once school recesses for the summer.

v. Broadband Summit

Ms. Mellor will attend the ‘Internet for All: ConnectRI Broadband Summit’ sponsored by CommerceRI at the Community College of RI in Newport on June 1. The summit will focus on how the state will use federal funds to implement high-speed internet service and digital skills training to ensure digital equity.

vi. Institute of Museum and Library Services Information Literacy Convenings

The Institute of Museum and Library Services’ Informational Literacy Taskforce will hold two information literacy convenings to develop a strategy for ensuring people have the necessary digital literacy skills to safely and effectively navigate the internet. The first event is at Providence Public Library June 1-2 and the second takes place June 15-16 in Jersey City, New Jersey. Ms. Mellor will attend the Jersey City event because of the conflict with the June 1 Broadband Summit.

B. Grants

i. Library of RI (LORI) Competitive Grants

Ms. Mellor extended her gratitude to Mr. Norris, and staff from Ocean State Libraries, RI Center for the Book, and Brown University for reviewing grant applications. OLIS received 20 grant applications totaling \$325,000; funding up to \$275,000 was available. Awards were made for 15 projects totaling \$260,000; library award notification is in-process. Libraries not receiving grants will be offered a project review to assist them in developing a more robust proposal that might be fundable in a future grant cycle.

The new state Grant Management System (GMS) is working well for payment processing. GMS use is state mandated for all federally funded grant programs.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

A new committee will be formed this summer to determine if the current grant-in-aid funding formula can be equalized. Ms. Mellor provided statistics for municipal library funding at the last meeting.

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)

RI legislative bills were reviewed, and a decision made to draft letters of testimony opposing some bills and supporting American Library Association (ALA) values. Mr. Coutu will draft the letters of testimony.

a. Intellectual Freedom Challenges: Review of State Legislation (H 6066, H 6324)

House Bill No. [6066](#), An Act Relating To Criminal Offenses - Obscene and Objectionable Publications and Shows, sponsored by Representatives Morales, Sanchez, Potter, Giraldo, and Felix, was held for further study on March 16, 2023.

The bill establishes, as an affirmative defense to the crimes of circulating obscene publications or shows and selling or exhibiting obscene publications to minors, the person's employment status as an employee of a school, museum, or library.

House Bill No. [6324](#), An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Obscene and Objectionable Publications and Shows, sponsored by Representatives Azzinaro, Fellela, Corvese, Serpa, Costantino, P. Morgan, Lima, and Cardillo, was referred to the House Judiciary on April 26, 2023.

The bill adds cartoons, drawings, comic books, prints, depictions or animations to the list of media that would be prohibited from being sold or available to those persons under the age of 18 years.

MOVED: Mr. Findlay

SECONDED: Ms. Page

Mr. Coutu will draft a LBRI letter of testimony opposing H 6006 and H 6324.

b. eBook Pricing: Review of State Legislation (S 498, H 5148)

Senate Bill No. [498](#), An Act Relating to Commercial Law-General Regulatory Provisions-Electronic Book Licenses to Libraries and Schools, sponsored by Senators Gu, Gallo, Mack, Lawson, Valverde, and Lauria, was referred to the Senate Education Committee on March 7, 2023.

The bill requires publishers to provide electronic book licenses to libraries and schools on reasonable terms, when a publisher offers to license electronic books and digital audiobooks to the public in Rhode Island.

House Bill No. [5148](#), An Act Relating to Commercial Law-General Regulatory Provisions-Electronic Book Licenses to Libraries and Schools, sponsored by Representatives Carson, Cortvriend, Solomon, Caldwell, Speakman, Morales, and Fogarty, was held for further study on March 2, 2023.

The bill requires publishers to provide electronic book licenses to libraries and schools on reasonable terms, when a publisher offers to license electronic books and digital audiobooks to the public in Rhode Island.

MOVED: Mr. Findlay

SECONDED: Ms. Page

Mr. Coutu will draft a LBRI letter of testimony supporting S 498 and H 5148.

ii. Federal Legislation

Federal library legislation was not discussed.

VII. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

No member reports.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

X. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for June 12, 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: Mr. Findlay

SECONDED: Mr. Bucci

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.