

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND⁴
The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on
June 12, 2023
at William Hall Library
Program Room, Lower Level
1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905

Members Attending: John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Leslie Page, Robert Sloan

Members Absent: Cristina Amedeo, Heidi Blais, Annette Feldman, Kenneth Findlay, Louise Herrington, Rosita Hopper, Marcus Mitchell, Doug Norris, Amanda Richman

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

Guests: Walter Dzialo

Materials Distributed:

- Proposed Meeting Schedule 2023-2024
- LBRI Legislative Report, June 2023
- LBRI Letter of Testimony Draft – H6066
- LBRI Letter of Testimony Draft – H5148/S0498

I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:20 pm.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the May 15, 2023, meeting

Moved By: Mr. Bucci

Seconded By: Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo

The minutes were approved with a change to Section VI, Item A.i.b., ‘Mr. Coutu will draft a LBRI letter of testimony *supporting* S0498 and H5148.’

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach expressed gratitude to past and current members for their board commitment.

IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

A. OLIS Updates

i. Board Appointments

A Senate Education Committee hearing was held on June 7 and attended by Ms. Mellor and 5 of the 8 appointees named by Governor McKee. Senator Mark McKenney, former LBRI Chair, spoke in support of recommended LBRI appointees. The committee approved all 8 appointees and will send the names to the full RI Senate for confirmation on June 13.

Reappointments and appointments for expiring members will be made during the 2024 legislative session. Ms. Drnach will continue to serve until a new Chair and General Library User is appointed next year. Ms. Mellor extended thanks to Mr. Coutu for serving as Vice-Chair in Ms. Drnach's absence. The new board will be oriented this summer.

1. Public Schools: Michelle Steever, Librarian, Jamestown Schools, replaces Heidi Blais, Librarian, Cranston East High School
2. Academic Institutions: Laura Kohl, Director of Library Services, Bryant University, replaces Rosita Hopper, retired Dean of Libraries, Johnson & Wales University
3. Small Public Libraries: Tien Tran, Director, Exeter Public Library; replaces Annette Feldman, Director, Louttit Library, West Greenwich
4. Large & Medium Public Libraries: Cheryl Space, Director, Community Libraries of Providence; replaces John Bucci, retired, Cranston Public Library
5. Public Library Trustees: Christopher LaRoux, Trustee, East Providence Public Library, replaces Robert Sloan, Jr., former Trustee, East Greenwich Public Library
6. Corporate or Special Libraries: Kate Wodehouse, Director, Providence Atheneum Library, replaces Amanda Richman, Systems Librarian, Lifespan
7. General Library User: Jessica David, Co-Owner/President, Good Worth Working for LLC, replaces Cristina Amedeo, Director, United Way 2-1-1
8. General Library User: Karisa Tashjian, Director of Programs, Digitunity/National Cristina Foundation, replaces Marcus Mitchell

ii. State Budget

In the FY24 budget passed by the House, OLIS is funded at the current service level of 13 full-time employees (FTE) with a small increase for delivery services. State grant-in-aid (GIA) was funded at 25% of municipal and library endowment expenditures. The statewide reference resource center (SRRC) was increased by 2%. GIA for state institution libraries at the Adult Correctional Institution (ACI) and the RI School for the Deaf was increased by 14%. The state budget will be heard by the Senate on Thursday (June 15) and following approval, sent to the governor's desk for signature.

iii. New OLIS Website

OLIS' updated website will launch next week. Mr. Morales Henry leads the OLIS web team and has added new features to the website. The site was redesigned to utilize the state's new content management system and the template for all RI government websites. The new design improves the user experience across all devices and includes a new searchable document center developed by Mr. Morales Henry. Ms. Mellor currently oversees the state's Enterprise Technology Strategy & Services (ETSS) digital services section which developed and supports the new web content management system.

B. Summer Planning

i. Continuing Education (CE)

OLIS recently conducted a continuing education (CE) survey to assess professional development needs for the library community. Survey results will inform upcoming CE offerings. OLIS currently partners with Niche Academy to offer asynchronous online training from a variety of sources; OLIS also offers live online and in-person sessions. Needs identified include library management training specific to budgeting and policy development. Sequential multi-part training on a variety of topics, strategic planning, and new content for Niche Academy are planned.

ii. Field Service Team Library Visits

OLIS staff will make visits to all public libraries this summer as the Field Service Team resumes onsite service. Team members will visit with directors to learn more about the programs, successes, and challenges of public libraries, while highlighting certain OLIS programs such as CE and the Talking Books Library. In addition, team members will highlight the importance of clear policies and procedures to manage any intellectual freedom or other service or program challenges.

iii. Public Library Annual Survey & Library of RI (LOR) Certification

The Public Library Annual Survey (PLAS) and Library of RI (LORI) resource sharing certification open July 17. The submission deadline for the PLAS is September 15; LORI Certification is due on September 15 for public, academic, and special libraries and September 29 for school libraries. The technology scan portion of the LORI certification survey was removed this year for revisions that will make gathered data more easily searched and disseminated.

iv. Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS) Five-Year Visit

A representative from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) will visit OLIS on July 18-20 for a standard five-year review of the use of Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds. An IMLS program officer will meet with OLIS staff and tour libraries as part of the visit.

v. Digital Public Library of America (DPLA)

Rhode Island's Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) hub application submission is scheduled for this summer and the hub launch is anticipated at year-end. OLIS will develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for libraries contributing to the hub. The Brown University Library is hosting the data aggregation tool for the collections being assembled.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Letters on Pending Legislation (Mr. Coutu)

Mr. Coutu reviewed LBRI Letters of Testimony drafts for H6066, H6324, H5148, and S0498. The legislative session ends this week, and no further action is expected on these bills.

i. Intellectual Freedom Challenges:

House Bill No. [6066](#): An Act Relating To Criminal Offenses - Obscene and Objectionable Publications and Shows, 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. Held for further study.

House Bill No. [6324](#): An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Obscene and Objectionable Publications and Shows, 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. Introduced, no action.

ii. eBook Pricing: S [0498](#) and H [5148](#)

House Bill No. [5148](#): An Act Relating to Commercial Law-General Regulatory Provisions-Electronic Book Licenses to Libraries and Schools, 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. Held for further study.

Senate Bill No. [0498](#): An Act Relating to Commercial Law-General Regulatory Provisions-Electronic Book Licenses to Libraries and Schools, 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. Held for further study.

While no new testimony is being heard on the bills, Mr. Couto will draft letters of testimony for the bills noted above as most will be reintroduced next session. Members should contact Mr. Couto with comments; the letters will be emailed to the board for consideration at the September meeting. The board discussed the recent book challenge outcome at Westerly High School Library.

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

Ms. Mellor extended an invitation to remaining and departing board members to join future LBRI meetings and committees and participate in grant application reviews.

C. [Minimum Standards for RI Public Libraries](#)

No new information to report. Committee actions will resume in the fall.

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. Couto)

Mr. Couto noted that the following bills were scheduled for their final hearings this week and most likely would be passed and signed into law during the 2023 session:

S0444 & H5380 established June 19 (Juneteenth National Freedom Day) as an official state holiday.

S0494 and H5671 repeal the requirement that a physical copy of the local school committee policy manual be maintained in the public library, school library, and administrative buildings, and available on school websites.

ii. Federal Legislation

No federal legislation discussed.

VII. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

No board member reports.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

X. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2023, 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: Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo

The meeting adjourned at 5:26 p.m.