

**LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND**  
**The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held**  
**January 08, 2024**  
**at William Hall Library**  
**Auditorium, Lower Level**  
**1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905**

**Members Attending:** John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Jessica David, Christopher La Roux, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Cheryl Space, Michelle Steever, Kate Wodehouse

**Members Absent:** Melody Drnach (Chair), Kenneth Findlay, Laura Kohl, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Karisa Tashjian, Tien Tran

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

**Guests:** None

**Materials Distributed:**

- Library of RI (LORI) Resource Sharing Facility & Interlibrary Loan Summary - 2023

**I. WELCOME**

Mr. Coutu called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** from the December 11, 2023, meeting

**Moved By:** Ms. Page

**Seconded By:** Ms. David

The minutes were approved as presented.

**III. REPORT OF THE VICE CHAIR**

Mr. Coutu welcomed members.

**IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT**

**A. OLIS Updates**

**i. OLIS Budget**

The governor's FY25 budget to be released within the next two weeks will include public library grant-in-aid (GIA) funding. OLIS anticipates agency funding at current service levels. Information will be published online when available.

**ii. Annual State Program Report**

Ms. Mellor and Ms. Baffoni are compiling the annual State Program Report due January 30 to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The report accounts for the expenditure of federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds on OLIS programs and services. A 2023 activity overview will be presented to the board.

### iii. Grants

#### a. Professional Field Experience (PFE) Grants

Professional Field Experience grants were awarded to 4 University of RI (URI) Graduate School of Library and Information Studies (GSLIS) students to complete a 14-week public library internship. Ten libraries and 4 students submitted applications. Students begin internships on January 9 in East Providence, East Smithfield, Warren, and West Warwick.

Ms. Steever inquired why only 4 students applied for the grants. One idea theorized by faculty at GSLIS is that students are not seeking positions in public libraries and therefore do not seek a public library experience. Ms. Mellor advised more internship grants will be available in Summer 2024. Grants are awarded at the discretion of OLIS.

#### b. Library of RI (LORI) Project & Mini-Grants

OLIS recently offered two simultaneous rounds of [LORI Grants](#), project grants and mini-grants. The application process closed on December 22 and awardees will be notified by January 19. Grant applications were submitted through the [eCivis](#) grant management system (GMS); user issues for this round were minor and easily resolved.

OLIS has \$200,000 in grant funds to award and received \$270,000 in applications. Twenty applications were received: 9 for mini-grants and 11 for project grants. Project grants are available from \$10,000-\$27,200, and mini-grants from \$2,500-\$7,500.

A request for grant viewers was made to the board. Mr. Norris, Ms. Steever, Ms. Wodehouse, Ms. Space and Mr. LaRoux volunteered to review grant applications. Ms. Baffoni will update reviewer materials and conduct an orientation session.

#### c. Summer Reading Grants

OLIS staff will be reviewing and modifying summer reading grant criteria to encourage substantive projects focused on learning. The formula grant program will open in March and grants will be awarded in April. Summer reading programs end in August. Public libraries may apply for \$600 for youth programs, with an additional \$300 for each branch in a system, and \$300 for adult programs.

Ms. Space inquired if OLIS could pay teens to work in libraries with funds not utilized from the PFE grant program. Ms. Mellor advised that the proposal will be considered if funding is available.

#### iv. Brown University and Providence High School Libraries Project

Brown University Library is working with the Providence Public School Department on a three-year project to provide up to \$500,000 per year to high school libraries for collection development, equipment and furniture, and professional development. Ms. Mellor, who is a member of the steering committee, coordinated a professional development session with the high school librarians and representatives from the Community Libraries of Providence and Providence Public Library. The public librarians reviewed learning resources available at their libraries and on AskRI, which is coordinated at Providence Public Library and funded by

OLIS. Clarification was provided on how students could apply for public library cards and participate in public library programs, including paid library internships. Brown University Library and OLIS are discussing additional opportunities to collaborate on supporting school libraries in Providence and statewide.

Ms. Space reported on Community Libraries of Providence working with Providence high school libraries. United Way funds will be used for shared professional development and summer reading program collaboration. A committee will be formed when project approval is received from Providence school administration.

Dr. Lynch reported on new RI Department of Education (RIDE) high school graduation requirements including financial and computer literacies. Ms. Mellor advised efforts will be made to bring Providence high school libraries back into the Library of Rhode Island (LORI), the statewide interlibrary loan (ILL) delivery program.

## V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. Federal & State Legislative Updates (Mr. Coutu)

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

#### i. Rhode Island Legislation

The new legislative session has commenced. The RI Speaker of the House, K. Joseph Shekarchi and President of the Senate, Dominick J. Ruggerio, indicated FY25 funding may be limited because of upcoming state projects. Rhode Island representatives are limited to 15 bill submissions for the current legislative session.

The RI Library Association (RILA) continues to work on new approaches to legislation for equitable eBook pricing and obscenity law protections for librarians and teachers.

#### ii. Federal Legislation

No federal legislation was discussed.

## VII. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

### A. Mr. Bucci

Mr. Bucci reported the 2024 Reading Across RI (RARI), One Book, One State, book selection is [Solito](#) by Javier Zamora. The 2024 RARI Honorary Chair is Teddi Jallow, Executive Director, and Co-Founder of the Refugee Dream Center. [Registration](#) is open for the RARI Kickoff at the RI State House on February 3, 2024, from 2-4pm. The RARI Author event will be April 11, 2024; registration begins in March on [ribook.org](#).

### B. Mr. Coutu

Warwick Public Library will host a 'For Hire Performer/Educator Tabletop [Vendor Fair](#)' on January 25, 2024, at 5:30 pm. The event will showcase 31 program presenters for children, teens, and families. Librarians, teachers, and parent organizations are invited to attend and meet with performers. Mr. Coutu will send event information to the board.

## VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. Public Library Minimum Standards

The Public Library Minimum Standards committee met December 18 to begin groundwork and initiate a process LibGuide. The committee will meet in January and throughout the Spring to review the current standards, with special attention to library open hour and policy requirements and recommend revisions. The standards will be reviewed through an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens with consideration on how to optimally serve all Rhode Islanders while being mindful of constraints on library resources at the local level. Information will be shared with the board as the work progresses.

### B. Resource Sharing and School Libraries Discussion

Ms. Steever reported that school participation in resource sharing is low and anticipated to go lower. Creative ways to encourage school participation are being considered. School libraries are generally underfunded, or some have no or very limited funds to purchase materials. Ms. Mellor noted the school library catalog, and the delivery system process is currently not meeting school library resource sharing needs.

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Utilization of OLIS Resource Sharing Network

Ms. Mellor reviewed 2023 OLIS interlibrary loan resource sharing data. The Library of RI (LORI) network has 79 schools (45% of membership), 73 public libraries (41%), 16 academic institutions (9%) and 8 special libraries (5%). The interlibrary loan (ILL) system processed 2.1 million items in 2023; public libraries lent & borrowed 96% of items. St. George's School in Middletown was the biggest lender (85%) and borrower (54%) of ILL materials provided by schools, primarily because of their Ocean State Libraries (OSL) membership; St. George's is the only school member of Ocean State Libraries. OLIS conducts an ILL item count each Spring and Fall with input from libraries and OSL. Circulation is down overall.

The board discussed the OLIS resource sharing network, how to better meet school library needs, and challenges facing schools and RI service providers. Mr. Bucci noted that public libraries aren't averse to lending to schools. Ms. Mellor advised the current school catalog is not effective for resource sharing outside of a district. Delivery costs have increased substantially and OLIS does not have much latitude for adding additional stops.

Ms. Space reported that OSL was queried about the Community Libraries of Providence adding 35 Providence school libraries. Discussions with OSL leadership will explore any potential participation by schools in the OSL.

**Ms. Steever made a motion to establish a committee to explore solutions to resource sharing among school and public libraries with input from interested parties.**

**Moved By:** Ms. Steever

**Seconded By:** Ms. Space

The motion was approved.

Ms. Space, Mr. Coutu-Jones, and Ms. Steever will meet with Ms. Mellor to form a committee and prepare a committee charge.

**IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**X. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2024, from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m., at William Hall Library, 1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905. Members will be notified of date or venue changes.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved By:** Mr. Bucci

**Seconded By:** Ms. Wodehouse

The meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m.