

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
Monday, October 22, 2007
MINUTES

Members Present: Chair, Mark McKenney, Alice Barrows, Mary Cummings, Peter Deekle, Phyllis Humphrey, Shirley Long, Leslie McDonough, Tovah Reis, Joan Ress Reeves, and Ruth Sullivan

Members Absent: William Allen, Cristina Martins Amedeo, Regina Connor, Jay Litman, Rose Ellen Reynolds, and Joshua Teverow

Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS):
Howard Boksenbaum, Debbie Cullerton, Donna DiMichele, and Beth Perry

Observers: Alfred Arsenault, Johnston, R.I., New England Tech

Reporting: Debbie Cullerton

Materials Distributed:

1. Agenda
2. Glossary of Library Terms (Updated)

The meeting convened at 4:20 p.m.

I. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the September 17, 2007 meeting were unanimously approved and accepted as submitted.

II. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Mark McKenney noted that he has started with the new group in Providence that is made up of some members of the board (Providence Public Library Board of Trustees) as well as members of the public and city appointees. Based on that one meeting it does appear that there are some very good people who are involved and truly hoping to find a common ground before we get to a crisis again.

III. CHIEF LIBRARY OFFICER'S REPORT

GRANTS-IN-AID FY 2008

Those have been level funded from previous year. OLIS managed to negotiate with Providence Public Library, which was the only grant that was increased this year (Statewide Reference Resource Center Grant) to share some of that with the institutional libraries. Institutional grants had been left out of the budget and we were able to fund them from Providence Public Library. Many thanks to Providence for helping out with that. Institutional grants seem to be back in the budget for FY2009.

PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORTS

All of them have been very responsive this year on the annual reports. We have almost all of the data in. The exciting thing this year is we have purchased the second half of the Bibliostat product that we use to collect the data. Connect will let anybody who has a license to go in and get information. This is a powerful tool for library managers to use. We have managed to get a license for all the public libraries in the state and the staff at OLIS is licensed as well. This will make it possible to respond to requests from people who aren't public libraries.

KARLA HARRY COMMISSION

The commission did meet on the 10th of October. The meeting was primarily a recap of things that we have done before. Reports were received from the subcommittees. There are now 5 subcommittees. The 3 original subcommittees are One Catalog, Surf RI, and Legislation. The 2 new subcommittees are Preservation & Digitalization, and School Library Standards.

The commission seems to be interested in putting through the legislation to straighten out all the language in the existing legislation.

The commission will be looking again for 1.6 million for surf RI. There is some hope that the Surf RI demo of last year might be repeated this year.

Currently the commission is obligated to make its final report in April 2008. A suggestion had been made to seek an extension. Betsy Dennigan suggested that the commission look to a permanent position instead of extension. The commission will be thinking of that.

Mark McKenney commented that sometimes your better off not having a permanent commission. Sometimes there are so many commissions that they get pushed into a corner and forgotten about. When you have a temporary commission you have a deadline to get the job done.

Discussion followed on the pros and cons of permanent versus limited commissions.

Howard Boksenbaum will carry the message back to the commission of the Library Board's concerns.

IMPACT OF GOVERNOR'S REDUCTIONS

As we have heard, the Governor is serious about his 414 layoffs. The best information that we have been able to get through the Department of Administration is that it is very unlikely that OLIS will be able to fill either of the 2 vacancies. Mr. Boksenbaum noted that the executive director has stated that the Department of Administration has served up no current or active members of the Office of Library & Information Services for reduction. It doesn't sound like we are going to lose somebody who is here. The 2 positions that will not be able to be filled are the Library Program Specialist positions from Frank Iacono and Sheila Carlson. Also Dolores Caruolo, who is one of our Information Services Technicians, is planning to retire in December. From what we are hearing that puts another position that we are not able to fill. At that point, our staff will be down to 14.

Mark McKenney stated that sadly, services will have to be affected, and when they are; let's hope we are in a position to make the best possible case to clearly tie the loss of services to economic development. Mr. Boksenbaum noted that brainstorming has already begun to discuss which of our services are the most important.

IV. GRANT APPLICATIONS

The opportunities for additional grant funds are not necessary the ones we would be looking for to fund the holes in our budget, but one of the things that we could provide as a service to the library community is to be aware of what's going on out there and go for it. Two proposals that we have pending are

a. Connecting to Collections

Howard Boksenbaum worked with the state archives to make a proposal to IMLS for about \$40,000 worth of training for the heritage collections that are of archival value. If we get the funds we could adapt an online tool that the New England Document Conservation Center has created.

b. Prime Time

We are in the midst of applying for a grant from ALA called Prime Time. It requires no matching funds. The grant is for OLIS to coordinate 4 public libraries in offering the Prime Time Family Reading Time Program. It is meant to appeal to people in low income level areas and Spanish speaking populations. The program is to encourage parents with school age children to continue reading to them even after they enter elementary school. The program funding is for sets of books to be circulated among the 4 libraries, Cranston Public Library, Central Falls Public Library, Providence Public Library, and West Warwick Public Library who all have populations that fit into the low income and Spanish speaking categories. Sessions will be held and at each session they will have a story teller that will read the book in Spanish and in English. Parents and children will participate together. Discussion will be on the cultural theme of the book and activities will take place. The grant will also provide monies for transportation. The deadline for applications is November 1st. The next Library Board meeting is scheduled for November 19th, so we might have an answer by next LBRI meeting.

V. The Wheel of Confusion (GLOSSARY)

Beth Perry gave a demonstration to the board, using a visual wheel, denoting many of the acronyms relating to library terms. With assistance from Mr. McKenney, and participation from those in attendance, several explanations on library terms and organizations were reviewed. This exercise was to help the Library Board of Rhode Island become more familiar with the many acronyms being used.

VI. The Hunt for New Board Members Progress Report

Mr. Boksenbaum announced that we have been making very good progress on finding people to fill the categories that need to be filled. We have almost all the paperwork on 4 people to let us submit their name. First they have to go to the governor's office for

approval, then to the senate for approval. Mr. Boksenbaum noted that the paperwork he was referring to was OLIS's recommendations, candidate's resume and a completed ethics form.

Mr. Mark McKenney reported to the Library Board that he had received William Allen's resignation from the Board. Mr. Allen indicated that because he has missed so many meetings, and because of a conflict with his schedule it has made it very difficult for his participation on the Board. He did mention that he will continue on the Karla Harry Commission.

The Chair reminded the Board of previous discussions in regards to always recruiting new board members and getting ready for training and replacement. One of the main concerns is continuity. We stand to lose institutional knowledge that could present a problem in the future. Mr. McKenney noted a conversation that he had with Tovah Reis in regards to their terms having already expired. Mr. McKenney is not rushing to go elsewhere because of the fact that he would like to be able to help train whoever will be taking over. Ms. Reis had mentioned in that conversation that perhaps there is a way, as we look at future legislation, to make the Chair of the Library Board an Ex-Officio. Perhaps that is something for future reference. Another item for future reference is the possibility of an alumni group.

Mr. Boksenbaum reported that we have a number of folks that have already expired or are about to. Jay Litman, Joshua Teverow and Cristina Martins Amedeo all have expired in years past and have been staying on until we get them replaced. We have some people interested in several of those positions. Tom Vial from RI.gov is interested in coming in to take Jay Litman's position, whose position expired in 2003. Ed Garcia is a very interesting, soon to be graduated, GSLIS student, and also a prism scholar. I think he will be a real addition to the Board. He will be coming in to occupy the seat for the Representative for the Economically Disadvantaged that is currently occupied by Cristina Martins Amedeo. Ida Magee, who was the founder of Cornucopia, which is an organization for librarians of color in Rhode Island has recently moved into Rhode Island. She retired from the faculty of Southern Connecticut State College and has expressed an interest to come to the Board as a replacement for Alice Barrows whose term expired in 2006.

At the end of this year, Phyllis Humphrey, Mary Cummings, Tovah Reis, and Peter Deekle are all expiring. Mr. Mark McKenney commented that as we go forward perhaps we can also take a look at making some changes in the legislation so that we are not left in these situations.

Mr. Boksebaum continued that we have 2 categories that we are looking for people right now. One is the Mary Cummings category. We don't have many librarians left who are serving institutions. We are still looking for a public library trustee also. The Library Board was asked to make recommendations and submit by email to Howard Boksenbaum.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Peter Deekle made a request that at a future session of the Library Board, that there be discussion of how other state agencies are organized and the many different meanings of Public Library.

Mr. Deekle also mentioned an invitation to the Library Board. The Friends of the Library at Roger Williams is hosting a really interesting speaker and compelling young man who is a translator for the allied forces in Iraq. He will be talking about the fate or circumstance of libraries in Iraq and the Middle East. The event will take place on Friday at the University Library at the Bristol Campus. The Board was encouraged to attend.

Joan Ress Reeves announced that her son-in-law, Jeffrey Goldberg is speaking on the topic of Iran, Al Qaeda and The Future of Israel, on December 2, 2007 @ 7:30 p.m. at Temple Emanu-El. Electronic invitations will be sent to the Library Board.

Mark McKenney stated that in regards to PR, probably next spring, we are going to want to get our voices heard in regards to saving programs and keeping OLIS up and running. Perhaps through LTV, board members can appear. It was recommended that the PR Committee look into this for spring.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

VII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is tentatively scheduled for November 19, 2007 in the DOA building.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.