

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
Monday, February 26, 2007
MINUTES

Members Present: Chair, Mark McKenney, Cristina Martins Amedeo, Alice Barrows, Regina Connor, Mary Cummings, Donna Good, Jay Litman, Joan Ress Reeves, and Tovah Reis

Members Absent: William Allen, Deborah Barchi, Peter Deekle, Leslie McDonough, Rose Ellen Reynolds, Joshua Teverow, and Ruth Sullivan.

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

Observers: Shirley Long and Phyllis Humphrey

Reporting: Debbie Cullerton

Materials Distributed:

1. Draft agenda
2. FY 2008 Governor's Budget for OLIS
3. Proposed Public Library Grants-in-Aid Breakdown by Town

The meeting convened at 4:25 p.m.

I. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The revised minutes of the November 20, 2006 meeting were approved by acclamation. The revision had deleted the words "working on new delivery contracts" from the LSTA Report Section of the minutes.

II. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Mark McKenney stated that the Board was continuing its efforts to build the Board. A number of Library Board Members terms have already expired and more are looming. Mr. McKenney has contacted the Governor's office a number of times and he had put in a call to Deb Smith to see if we could get some action on at least the recommendations pending, in particular Shirley Long's & Phyllis Humphrey's appointments. The concern is the Board's ability to reach a quorum in the future.

Mr. McKenney reported that he went to the COLA Annual Meeting and brought greetings from the Library Board. He acknowledged the great work that they do.

Mr. McKenney stated that he knows that any number of people have questions on the Providence Public Library situation and he noted that from his perspective as representative of the state on the board of the Providence Public Library OLIS is monitoring the situation. At this point, the state has chosen not to inject themselves into

it. Should there be a request for information or any assistance, they have made it known that they stand ready and willing to help out in any way.

III. CHIEF LIBRARY OFFICER'S REPORT

Howard Boksenbaum stated that this was an extremely exciting time for libraries despite all the budget constraints we are facing.

Mr. Boksenbaum reported that he has been meeting with OLIS staff and hearing their views and comments on what they think ought to be happening. He has also been visiting with the various library organizations to hear their points of interest and make known his open door policy. He wants us all to work together.

LSTA Reports

OLIS is in the process of developing a new LSTA 5-year plan. We are gearing up to do some general planning for OLIS and also for libraries statewide. The board will be seeing the draft of the new 5 year LSTA plan in May and voting on it in June in order to get it in on time.

Fiscal Fitness

The fiscal fitness team has approached Mr. Boksenbaum to start talking again about where OLIS falls in the structure of government. He received a much more friendly response than the Office had previously

Public Library Construction

Karen Mellor gave an update on construction activity.

The Town of Bristol has signed a construction agreement. The project is now out to bid. They have much better plans than they did before, and will have about 4 times the size of the existing library. Burrillville's library construction project is progressing very quickly. Every stage is being carefully documented.

RI.GOV

A tentative award has been made to National Information Consortium, parent company of New England Interactive, who currently holds the contract; hence, the same folks that have been doing it all along. The state has now entered into contract negotiations and it will probably come to fruition by the end of the fiscal year. The new contract will cover another 5 years with the (2) 1 year extensions. The portal has its own IT facility and under the new contract will probably move the hardware there, Virginia seems to be the locale. Offices including designers and programmers will continue to be located in RI.

Senate Bill S390

The Harry Commission has submitted legislation to realign the law that creates OLIS' library network. It renames OLIS (OLIS instead of State Department of Library Services) It also names the network: Library of Rhode Island and updates reference to the statewide one catalog. Beyond the name changes, it also adds the provision of statewide databases to list of the state's library responsibilities. This enables OLIS to fund the statewide library catalog and to fund statewide databases. This is step 1 from the commission. Step 2 is a roll out on March 6 of a trial access to databases, for free, for all Rhode Islanders. There will be a lot of publicity on this. Announcements can be found on <http://www.olis.ri.gov>.

Discussion followed on the meaning of the word “databases” to the average person and how terminology is very important. Public relations should be concentrating on down to earth, plain language for the average person.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning & Budget Committee

None.

Public Relations Committee

None.

Legislation Committee

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Governor’s Budget Proposal for FY 2008

Mr. Boksenbaum made a PowerPoint presentation of the Governor’s proposed FY2008 budget. He noted that the entire budget is available on line at <http://www.ri.gov>.

FY2007; the current year

Because of a number of issues, including the disbanding of the original OLIS into three individual offices (Statewide Planning, Division of Information Technology and Library Programs) in FY2006, the changing of account numbers and implementation of a new chart of accounts government-wide, the new electronic financial system that is still being rolled out, the numbers were skewed in the current year’s budget and were not allocated correctly. OLIS is consequently in financial difficulty. OLIS is using federal funds to fill in gaps in state funding. With funding staff, ILL including delivery and Talking Books+ as top priorities, however, there have had to be severe cuts in programming. By The cuts will affect the Summer Reading Program as well as Continuing Education through the end of the federal fiscal year, September 30, 2007. By being frugal, OLIS should end the state fiscal year June 30, 2007 balanced. However the budget amounts for the next fiscal year are not encouraging.

Staff

All State agencies were initially were asked to cut the budget for FY2008 (coming year) by 15%, The Budget Office heeded Beth Perry & Donna DiMichele who presented strong impact statements as to how that would affect programs as well as services to the community. The outcome was favorable and OLIS was able to maintain the current staffing level of 17 FTE.

Talking Books Plus

What we have is enough to continue providing the services that we do now. There is not a lot of expansion in the budget. The National Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped believes OLIS should have 2 more employees in that unit to handle the increased volume; however that will have to wait.

Equipment

Dramatically cut. Bare bones. Represents computers, printers, etc. We will be living with the same stuff for awhile.

LORI Grants

Given the contracts that we're operating in this year, it actually looks a little better than we expected.

Construction Reimbursements

Those are obligations. We have assurance from the Budget Office that those monies will come from somewhere and not from OLIS's Budget.

Municipal Grants-in-aid

Mr. Boksenbaum went over the handout of the Proposed Public Library Grants-in-Aid – with municipality breakdowns. The backside showed the changes in formula aid. Municipal grants-in-aid were level funded by amending the law to set the reference year back one year to third preceding year for FY2008 only. Consequently future budgets will revert to the second previous year as originally in the law. All state grants to municipalities were level funded in FY2008

Discussion followed with many concerns being brought forward.

Mark McKenney noted that because of time and the importance of the discussions on the budget, that the Presentation on 211 by Cristina Martins Amedeo should be held at the next Library Board meeting. Everyone was in agreement

Institutional Libraries

The grants to State-operated Residential Institutions and the School for the Deaf were not included in the budget, and OLIS is fighting to put them back in. Seems that it was just a failure to communicate how funds were distributed. OLIS is working along with representatives from the various Institutional Libraries.

Discussion on Institutional Libraries uses of the monies that are received followed.

Tovah Reis stated that the money is used for books and computers, based on what the law states.

Shortfalls

The most disappointing cuts are to the current year's Summer Reading Program and Continuing Education Workshops. Other areas are the Out-of-State Travel reimbursement, In-state Travel reimbursement, Delivery supplies, Library materials and Office supplies.

The ramifications of no Out-of-State Travel are that Rhode Island will probably not be represented at places that we ought to be.

The Library Board Members were extremely supportive of the Summer Reading Program. Several ideas were discussed as to how the Summer Reading Program can seek outside help for funding. The Board is more than willing to present a letter of support. Donna DiMichele will relay their message to Melody Allen.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Beth Perry handed out copies of a notice of the URI GSLIS Annual Meeting that will be held on March 30, 2007. URI GSLIS will be awarding the first annual Frank Iacono scholarship, and OLIS would like people to be there for Frank.

Joan Ress Reeves mentioned that Anne Parent, former Chief of Library Services was terrific as the COLA's Sweetheart of the Year at the annual COLA Meeting. She also announced that COLA was sending out a survey via e-mail and encouraged all members to participate.

Mark McKenney noted that with respect to committees, the board will be taking a look at the makeup of committees and trying to get back on track with that.

VIII. AGENDA FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 23, 2007 in Conference Room C in the DOA building. On the agenda, will be the presentation on 211 by Cristina Martins Amedeo.

Meeting adjourned 5:50 p.m.