

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
Monday, March 19, 2007
MINUTES

Members Present: Chair, Mark McKenney, Mary Cummings, Peter Deekle, Donna Good, and Ruth Sullivan,

Members Absent: William Allen, Cristina Martins Amedeo, Deborah Barchi, Alice Barrows, Regina Connor, Jay Litman, Leslie McDonough, Joan Ress Reeves, Tovah Reis, Rose Ellen Reynolds, and Joshua Teverow,.

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

Observers: Phyllis Humphrey, Shirley Long, and David Macksam

Reporting: Debbie Cullerton

Materials Distributed:

1. Draft Agenda
2. Surf RI Bookmarks
3. Legislative Status Report

The meeting convened at 4:25 p.m.

I. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the February 26, 2007 meeting were approved by acclamation.

II. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Mr. McKenney noted that he is continuing in our efforts to seeking the approval of new board members from the Governor's office. It is his understanding that the Library Board is not the only board having issues with appointing new members, however, he has yet to determine a reason why. The Chair intends to write a letter to the governor once again.

Mr. McKenney noted that we are all aware of the Providence situation, and at this point there is an effort undergoing to try to reach some agreement with the city. There will come a time when the Library Board should weigh in, however at this point it is best for us to see how things continue with the working group and see how things play out. Mr. McKenney said that on behalf of the Board he has made every effort to provide whatever information that he could to keep the Board involved in these discussions.

III. CHIEF LIBRARY OFFICER'S REPORT

Howard Boksenbaum stated that this is Sunshine Week.

The url is <http://www.openthegovernment.org>. This is the umbrella organization that is sponsoring sunshine week. Sunshine week celebrates the fact that our government is open with us and makes government information available to us.

Olis Budget **SRP**

There is some good news. At last meeting when Mr. Boksenbaum spoke of the budget it was all negative and one of the things that people responded to most was the Summer Reading Program. Melody Allen (an OLIS Staff Member) never lets any grass grow under her feet and she has found some solutions to some of it. RIPIN (Rhode Island Parent Information Network) has agreed to fund the calendar. This is the transition to kindergarten calendar. One calendar will go out to every child that can be identified in Rhode Island. It will start out as a pilot.

Here again, is an instance where the shame is that with all this state agency involvement and the tiny little numbers that it requires to take this huge step in literacy, that we have to go out and look for money. Mr. Boksenbaum passed around the new calendar.

The other good news is that McDonald's will once again be a sponsor of the Summer Reading Program. They will donate 9,000 ice cream coupons, fund the cost of newspaper supplements that will go to all the schools. Monies have been set aside for paper back books as prizes and the cost of posters.

Unfortunately, we are still unable to participate in subsidizing the performers for the programs at the libraries.

Internally

We had previously cut out travel reimbursement for staff which looked like we weren't going to be able to make many field services visits. We have been able to relax that policy through some discoveries of accounting practices. We believe we have recovered enough into the budget by unencumbering funds that shouldn't have been encumbered in the first place, to free up enough to subsidize staff travel until the end of the year. Also we might have enough to purchase some much needed office supplies. We are in a little better shape than we were before.

Finally, in our budget one of the most disconcerting items was the elimination of institution grants. OLIS has been supplying the Budget Office with information and justifications and we are now on the top of their list for putting things back into the budget. Depending on the fate of the supplemental to the budget, it is looking better.

The Library Commission

Has been working primarily promoting SurfRI. Mr. Boksenbaum stated that we should tell everyone about it and check it out ourselves. A link from the OLIS website is provided on our homepage. You will be able to try out the many databases available and we are hoping to get back a lot of good feedback.

Beth Perry reported on the kickoff for SurfRI. She stated that it was well represented. Everyone was encouraged to contact their local representatives to get support of SurfRI.

Mark McKenney stated that one of the most effective ways in reaching legislators in efforts such as this is to have individuals contact their local representatives. For a legislator to receive telephone calls from people in their district is the best way for them to take notice.

David Macksam noted that Karen Quinn is chairing the database group and we had a meeting on Friday. In the works are the distribution of 6000 postcards publicizing SurfRI.

Peter Deekle stated that 74 databases are being offered on trial now. Depending on what we could afford, we would be able to acquire 25 to 45 databases.

Discussion followed on the benefits of the databases and the cost.

5 Year Plan

The 5 Year Plan is due in June. A draft will be available to the Board in May. The Board will have a month to give Donna DiMichele corrections. The Board will vote on it at its June meeting. In preparation for that, LSTA also requires that we have an evaluation of our LSTA programming. For that evaluation we hired Kimberly Wilson a consultant to do that for us. We are in the throws right now of collecting the staff comments and making corrections so the consultant will have time to make those corrections.

Mr. Boksenbaum read a little outtake from the evaluation report. It was very favorable. He commended the staff for a fantastic job and gave thanks to staff for giving such great lengths to get the job done. A round of applause was given by the Board.

Donna DiMichele provided the Board with a schedule.

Donna DiMichele noted the time frame is very compressed. We knew it was due June 30th however our Chief resigned, Beth Perry was acting Chief, which meant we were downstaffing even further, we lost some staff through passage, and then Howard just started in January. The planning process with someone who has only been on the job a week didn't make sense. The other problem was that the draft was 6 weeks late. We were really relying on that draft for something to go by.

In January, we had focus groups, school librarians, academic librarians, public librarians, literacy program participants as well as teachers.

Bear in mind under goals, we have federal guidelines and that is what we will use to shape our plan and use our federal money.

Library Legislation

Beth Perry gave an overview of the Legislative Status Report. (See handout) This information was given on any bills and/or laws relating to libraries.

Ms. Perry noted that the information is updated fairly regularly on the Legislative Website.

The board will be notified of any hearings where their testimony is needed.

National Library Legislation Day

Howard Boksenbaum reminded the Board that on May 1 & 2 is National Library Legislation Day. An invitation has gone out to those that would like to attend the 3 day event sponsored by ALA in Washington, D.C. Those interested should contact OLIS as soon as possible.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning & Budget Committee

None.

Public Relations Committee

None.

Legislation Committee

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Deekle would like the next Library Board Agenda to reflect the Shareholders input in regards to the 5 year-plan.

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.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board is tentatively scheduled for Monday, April 23, 2007 in Conference Room C in the DOA building.