

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
Monday, April 21, 2008
MINUTES

Members Present: Chair, Mark McKenney, Mary Cummings, Ed Garcia, Bart Hollingsworth, Shirley Long, Leslie McDonough, Joan Ress Reeves, Rose Ellen Reynolds, Mary Ann Slocumb, Ruth Sullivan, Thomas Viall

Members Absent: William Allen, Regina Connor, Peter Deekle, Phyllis Humphrey, and Joshua Teverow

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

Observers: Jackie Lamoureux, RIEMA, Christopher LaRoux, Greenville Public Library, David Macksam, Cranston Public Library, Dale Thompson, Providence Public Library

Reporting: Debbie Cullerton

The meeting was convened at 4:25 p.m.

I. WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND NLLD DELEGATION - INTRODUCTIONS

Tovah Reis, an outgoing Library Board Member after six (6) years, came to say good bye to the Library Board. She stated it was a pleasure to serve on the Library Board and that she learned a lot and met many interesting people on the state level. Ms. Reis wished all the best for the new members, beginning their terms.

Mark McKenney made note that people don't always fully understand and appreciate the amount of time that folks on this Board, and on all charitable and volunteer boards, have put in. And every now and then it's worthwhile to remind ourselves that what we are doing is good and noble and very much worthwhile.

The Chair went around the table for introductions of all Library Board Members. Also introduced were the Rhode Island delegates who would be attending the National Library Legislative in Washington, D.C.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the February 11, 2008 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

III. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – MARK MCKENNEY

Mark McKenney stated that he was pleased to welcome all new Board Members and gave the floor to the Chief Library Officer to proceed.

IV. CHIEF LIBRARY OFFICER'S REPORT - HOWARD BOKSENBAUM

NLLD

Howard Boksenbaum shared legislative information from the ALA Washington Office Website outlining the major issues that they will be focusing on for National Library Legislative Day. The URL was provided. (www.ala.org/ala/washoff/washevents/nlld/nld2008.cfm)

Mr. Boksenbaum stated that ALA does a very good job of defining legislative issues but their website is more and more complex and it makes it difficult to use. There are several issues mentioned below that can be found on the website. Some of these issues have been seen going on in the legislature year after year.

- [FY 2009 Appropriations and Budget](#)
- [E-Government, Open Government, and FDLP Issues](#)
- [School Libraries \(No Child Left Behind and the SKILLS Act\)](#)
- [Telecommunications and Broadband Issues](#)
- [E-rate and Universal Service Issues](#)
- [Privacy, National Security Letters & FISA Reform Issues](#)
- [Copyright](#)

Brief explanations of these issues were mentioned and discussed.

THOUGHTS FROM THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Boksenbaum had the privilege of being a part of PPL's strategic planning implementation committee. Howard Boksenbaum wanted to share PPL's resultant new vision with the Board as an example of an excellently crafted library planning vision:

The library is both a physical and virtual presence and is the premier free personal learning institution in Rhode Island. All ages and backgrounds engage in a robust and vigorous lifelong learning which incurs in ways from delightfully serendipitous to intensely purposeful. The library is a committed partner with each individual in meeting their intellectual and cultural goals, and with the broader community of reader/learners to achieve an informed, enlightened and engaged citizenry.

BUDGET HEARINGS/FTE'S/GRANT-IN-AID

Thoughts about the future came from the Budget hearings and the consideration of what's going to happen to OLIS down the road in terms of money and FTE's. As the Board is aware, OLIS is not fully funded this year and there have been considerable rescissions in fiscal year 2008, to the extent that it is not at all unlikely that we will fail to meet our maintenance of effort for the federal grants this year. Which means we will have a proportional reduction in our FY2011 federal LSTA grant. At the latest Budget meeting it did sound like the Central Business Office was going to come up with some of the shortfall for us, which would reduce the extent of the reduction. When this is all settled Mr. Boksenbaum will prepare a presentation that will put it into context for the Library Board. It is difficult to be optimistic and OLIS will not have the resources it needs. For example, it looks as if we will have to abandon the idea of having any LSTA Sub-Grants at all.

Mr. Boksenbaum reminded the Board that they are the ones charged with deciding how we distribute funds that come to OLIS.

With some staff leaving us, we will be saving money because of longevity and step increases. This might help get us through the year; however we will be losing all the skills and knowledge that they have developed. OLIS has six potential retirees out of a total of 15 positions. We do know that 2 of them will be leaving us not too far into the fiscal year. The Board was made aware that Beth Perry and Melody Allen have definitely decided to retire. As mentioned in the paper and on the news, the great incentive is the Governor's plan that state employees who don't retire now will lose out on some major retirement benefits. It does sound as if we will be able to fill these positions. Right now we do have the money and the FTE's.

The Grant-in-Aid will be level funded. There was no discussion at any of the hearings that there would be anything happening beyond that to the municipal grants-in-aid. Mr. Boksenbaum wanted to thank Representative Peter Lewiss who is both Chair of the Karla Harry Commission on the Strengths and Weaknesses of Library Services in Rhode Island and the Chair of the Sub Committee of the House Finance Committee on General Government, which is the one that hears our budget. He was very good to us. He brought up library services as a separate item even though it appears in the budget as just a small piece of the Department of Administration. He also brought up Surf RI as well. Discussion on Surf RI followed.

Howard Boksenbaum announced a task that he would like the Board to address. The Department of Administration has a new Director, Jerome Williams. In order to get things organized, Director Williams has instructed all managers to take a look at their rules, regulations, policies, and procedures and bring them all up to date. Mr. Boksenbaum responded that he had a board that does that and that it couldn't possibly be done by the end of the month; however he would bring it up with the Library Board and let them know that this would be something that they would have to address. The last time the Minimum Standards for Public Libraries were revised was in 2000. It is mentioned in the introduction of the Minimum Standards that it would be revisited in 2008. Mr. Boksenbaum suggested that the Board create a committee to accomplish this task. Mark McKenney mentioned that now would be a good time to revisit all the committees within the Library Board and move forward once again on a number of issues including bylaws.

LEGISLATION

Beth Perry referred members to the OLIS website (www.olis.ri.gov) for updates and information on legislation. There was no activity to report at this time. Ms. Perry did note that we were lucky to get our new members approved. Mark McKenney stated that, that in itself was progress.

KARLA HARRY COMMISSION

The Karla Harry Commission was supposed to have a report submitted to the to the House by April 1st that would summarize its activities since its beginning. It took some time for the committee to get going but with the help of the committee members, Mr. Boksenbaum was able to put together a draft. The chair of the committee wanted to take the time to read that draft thoroughly before it went any further. Peter Lewiss told Mr. Boksenbaum this afternoon that the next thing on his agenda was to read through it and get it out to the committee and then to the whole commission. Mr. Boksenbaum believes it should be out sometime this week.

A YOUTH SERVICES TRANSITION TEAM

Previously mentioned was that we are having people retire. That leads to the need to think about succession. Mr. Boksenbaum is in the process of writing a succession plan now at the request of the Director and the Governor. They want a succession plan for all potential retirees. There are over 250 of those in the Department of Administration alone.

The biggest one of those publicly speaking for OLIS is the Youth Services Librarian. Melody Allen has been a guru for Children's Librarians in Rhode Island for years. She has put together an incredible set of programs. In order to cope with the fact that she may not be here for moving from one summer reading program to another, Mr. Boksenbaum has asked Hope Houston to follow her around. We have convened a committee of six (6) children's librarians from across the state. They had their first meeting last week and will be meeting on a regular basis to make sure that nothing falls between the cracks and that all the tasks are covered.

A lot of what has to be covered is making connections again. We get between 10 and 15 thousand dollars from McDonalds. If nobody goes and talks to them that money will not be there. The PawSox are also big players in the Summer Reading Program and they need to be connected with as well.

Mark McKenney interjected that he has experienced the interest level in that position, having just given Debbie Cullerton a stack of letters that have come to him on the subject. Howard Boksenbaum has received a matching set. Clearly, there is a great concern out there that the functions that Melody has been carrying out will continue. We will just have to find a way to make sure that happens.

For those members who were not familiar with the Summer Reading Program, an explanation of the program and its value were discussed.

DIRECTORS' MEETING

OLIS is now convening quarterly meetings of Library Directors. The last meeting took place at CCRI in Warwick where 41 attended. There were three (3) parts to that meeting. The first part was a live presentation from Minneapolis by WebJunction. WebJunction is an online community of library staff that RI will become a state partner of this summer.

The second part was from NELINET. We have switched our membership to a consortial sponsorship so that all LORI members may also have the benefits of NELINET membership. Susan Abell, NELINET director of member service explained the many benefits of the new arrangement.

The third part was an open discussion. Among the topic raised was that of disruptive patrons. David Macksam, Director of the Cranston Public Library and Debbie Barchi, director of the Barrington Public Library had had recent experiences that led them to believe there would be value in a CE session on that topic. OLIS, unable to fund such a session in the very near future, offered any other services that would further that aim. Susan Abell offered NELINET as a resource in creating such an event as well. Much discussion followed, indicating much interest, and David and Debbie are now planning a workshop for sometime in late May.

BURRILLVILLE OPENING APRIL 27TH

The Jesse M. Smith Memorial Library in Burrillville will be celebrating its grand opening on April 27, 2008. Scheduled to appear are Senator Jack Reed, Congressman Patrick Kennedy and Howard Boksenbaum. All are welcome.

V. BOARD ORIENTATION CONTINUED – HOWARD BOKSENBAUM

The Library Board Manuals have been revised. New binders have been created and distributed to new Library Board Members. Updates on sections were also made available to replace the previous Library Board Manuals. OLIS will provide a new binder for any board member needing a replacement. Requests should be made to Debbie Cullerton.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

VII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is tentatively scheduled for May 19, 2008 in the DOA building.

VIII. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.