

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
Monday, June 16, 2008
MINUTES

Members Present: Chair, Mark McKenney, Mary Cummings, Ed Garcia, Bart Hollingsworth, Phyllis Humphrey, Shirley Long, Leslie McDonough, Joan Ress Reeves, Mary Ann Slocomb, Ruth Sullivan, and Thomas Viall

Members Absent: William Allen, Regina Connor, Peter Deekle, Rose Ellen Reynolds, and Joshua Teverow

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

Observers: David Macksam, Cranston Public Library

Reporting: Debbie Cullerton

Materials Distributed:

1. Article: Is Google Making Us Stupid?
2. Article: Revolution In The Stacks
3. Packets of Information from National Library Legislation Day

The meeting convened at 4:30 p.m.

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mark McKenney welcomed everyone and went around the table for introductions of all Library Board Members.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the April 21, 2008 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

III. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – MARK MCKENNEY

Mark McKenney reported on the successful trip to Washington, DC for National Library Legislation Day. The attendees met with most of the Rhode Island Delegation. Senator Jack Reed was fantastic, as usual, and his staff was great. Senator Reed has always made it a point to meet with the visiting Rhode Island group. The group also met with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and Representative Patrick Kennedy. Representative James Langevin was unable to clear his schedule but the group was received by his staff. The Chair noted that it was another very productive session.

Joan Ress Reeves, a member of the Library Board who also attended, commented that she found the Webinar information on lobbying, that the group received before the trip, helped put a different spin on bringing up library issues to delegates. Ms. Reeves stated that she had a wonderful time.

The Chair also reported on Providence Public Library. Mr. McKenney has been involved with the LPAC (Library Partnership Advisory Counsel). A subcommittee of that counsel is looking into long range planning. One of the things that the subcommittee is looking at is co-location.

They are trying to look at the cost of maintenance beyond the bricks and mortar and dual use of physical buildings. An intern is doing an independent study over the summer. She will provide the committee with a presentation and a report.

IV. CHIEF LIBRARY OFFICER'S REPORT - HOWARD BOKSENBAUM

NATIONAL LIBRARY LEGISLATION DAY

On our trip, one of the things that we were able to mention to Representative Kennedy along the lines of the mental health issue was the continuing education workshop on disruptive behavior in the library.

Even though the group was unable to meet with Representative Langevin, they were able to walk away with an invitation to invite him to an event during the Summer Reading Program either at Meeting Street School or Bradley Hospital.

RETIREMENT FRONT

On the 20th of this month, people are going to be discovering that it is no longer gainful to work for the State of Rhode Island, because the benefit package upon departure has been slashed. There are other people who are planning to retire for other reasons. OLIS has 5 people eligible to retire out of a staff of 15. We have been informed that 3 of them will definitely be leaving.

One person gave a whole year's notice. That happens to be somebody who has contributed an awful lot, not just to OLIS over the years but to the whole concept of librarianship in the State of Rhode Island. We had to make sure that Beth Perry was here today so we could say an official good bye to her. For 37 years she has been working libraries in RI. The list of things that Ms. Perry has made possible is enormous. She has worked in the library at Rhode Island College, the State Library, and Department of State Library Services, which then became the Office of Library & Information Services. It is difficult to recount all the things that we have to thank Beth for. Her involvement with everything having to do with disabilities, her connection with TechAccess, Meeting Street School, Legislation, and the expanded area, which is known as Talking Books Plus.

Mark McKenney presented Beth Perry with a plaque on behalf of the Library Board of Rhode Island in appreciation for all that she has done. Ms. Perry thanked the Board and expressed her pleasure and enjoyment with all the people and groups she has worked with. She thanked everyone for their support and friendship.

The two other people that will definitely be leaving are Ken Marold who has worked for over 30 years with the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (Talking Books Plus), and Melody Allen. Ken Marold will be leaving on June 20th and Melody Allen (Library Children's Specialist) as has been mentioned previously, will be leaving at the end of September. Mark McKenney brought up the fact that he and Howard Boksenbaum both have received numerous letters regarding support for Melody Allen's position. Mr. Boksenbaum explained that when Melody announced last December at a planning meeting for the children's librarians that she was planning to retire, things got a little accelerated with the Governor's announcements of benefit cuts to retirees staying past October 1st. With the anxiety of not having a Children's Consultant Librarian at OLIS over 44 letters have been received urging us to make sure that when Melody did depart that we would replace her with someone who could handle the job. Besides the letters, OLIS received 8 petitions with

hundreds of signatures also pleading their support. This could prove valuable in case we hit a snag filling that position.

SUCCESSION PLAN/BUDGET/FTE'S

Howard Boksenbaum was required to submit to the Director of Administration, a succession plan that he could share with the governor that indicated who was eligible to retire, and who was likely to leave, and who was definitely going to leave and what we were going to do about it. That plan has been approved. Being approved means we have the tentative approval to fill that position. It has been a long time since we have been able to hire somebody. The Chief Library Officer is encouraged by a couple of things. One of them is, last December just after Melody made her announcement, some of you may recall that Dolores Caroulo who had also been one of the paraprofessionals in the Talking Books Plus Program retired. It took from then until today to get the opening posted.

At this point, what has come out of the House Finance Committee in terms of the agency's budget is significantly smaller than it ought to be. It is certainly smaller than it was last year and it is not going to meet of federal maintenance of effort, but it will be adequate to fill those positions.

Unfortunately in the budget proposal that was reported out to the house floor on Wednesday, there was something that did not involve the numbers that was significant and we are going to have to move really quickly to do something about it. The budget article went back to Title 29 and removed the maintenance of effort clause. Discussion followed on the reasons why that would not benefit libraries.

A great deal of behind the scenes activity is working on this right now. David Macksam stated that an emergency meeting of librarians has been called for tomorrow morning. Getting the word out will be the main topic of discussion. It looks like they are going to be voting in the House starting Wednesday afternoon. Questions that have come up are what is it that we would like the House to do. We would like them to vote against the article, get the article removed. Mark McKenney noted that in terms of getting the word out, that Howard Boksenbaum very quickly put together a letter and sent it out to library supporters. Mr. McKenney suggested that the letter also be sent to the Speaker of the House, even if it does not produce any good, at least it would put the Library Board on record and weighing in and saying that we recognize what is happening and we are raising our voice in protest.

V. UPDATES AND REPORTS

UPCOMING DIRECTORS' MEETING

OLIS is now having quarterly meetings of Library Directors. The next board meeting will be taking place at the Jamestown Philomenian Library on June 19th.

CONNECTING TO COLLECTIONS GRANT – DONNA DIMICHELE

Donna DiMichele briefly announced that she had started working on the grant. We have a Steering Committee consisting of 17 individuals. They are representatives from museums, large university libraries, and from public libraries. So we have a nice variety of types. The Steering Committee's role is going to be to help the Northeast Document Conservation Center adapt this electronic disaster plan template to the Rhode Island theme.

WEBJUNCTION – KAREN MELLOR

We have finally got the keys to Webjunction last week. There have been some glitches in it and some new platforms but it is very rich in content. OLIS will be going through the 17 pages of information that is available to us through Webjunction and identifying what we feel would be the most pertinent to Rhode Island librarians. We want to try to customize WebJunction and integrate it with the OLIS website. We are hoping to have a soft launch that it July 21st.

CONSTRUCTION – KAREN MELLOR

Some good news comes out of the General Assembly. Johnston has been approved to out to bond. So on the ballot in Johnston, a referendum for 3 million dollars to construct a new library. Hopefully the voters in Johnston will approve that.

Also Greenville has a bond referendum. They are seeking 6.35 million. Originally they were seeking more however they have scaled down the size from 37,000 to 27,000 square feet in hopes of getting this passed.

The Bristol Library is going to be completed by the contractors in the beginning of July. They will be having an opening on Wednesday, September 17th. This is really exciting, for it has been a project that has been a long time coming.

Foster is looking at options of building a single structure. They have merged earlier this year and now they are looking at building a new library office. West Greenwich is also looking to put an addition on their building. Tiverton is hoping to build a green building. They have a green architect helping them work on plans for the building.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

The Chair entertained a motion for the Library Board of Rhode Island to go on record in contacting the Speaker of the House with copies to the Governor and to the President of the Senate advising them of our great concern with respect to a number of initiatives that we see as threats to libraries in Rhode Island. Those would be the elimination of the maintenance of effort, the weakening of the 25%, losing the librarian at Eleanor Slater, and the closing of the Department Health Library. With those points in mind, we want to make sure that the powers are fully aware of our concern.

The motion was made by Mary Ann Slocomb. The motion was seconded by Joan Ress Reeves. A vote by the Board was taken and it was unanimously approved to get this out the next day.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

VIII. FUTURE MEETINGS

A proposed meeting calendar for 2008 – 2009 was distributed and accepted by the Board. There was one change in the October date.

The next meeting of the Board is tentatively scheduled for September 15, 2008 in the DOA building.

VIII. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.