

## LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on

September 14, 2020

Online Via Zoom

**Members Attending:** Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Annette Feldman, Kenneth Findlay, Rosita Hopper, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Leslie Page, Amanda Richman, Robert Sloan

**Members Absent:** John Bucci, Heidi Blais, Cristina Amedeo, Louise Herrington, Marcus Mitchell, Doug Norris

**Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS):** Karen Andrews, Nicolette Baffoni, Karen Mellor

**Guests:** Jennifer Shaker, Director, Willett Free Library; Laurel Clark, Director, South Kingstown Public Library

**Materials Distributed:**

- LBRI Legislative Committee Report, September 2020
- Public Library Minimum Standards Compliance and Waivers
- Proposed LBRI Meeting Schedule, 2020-2021

### I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:22 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 20-25 which allows public bodies to conduct public meetings online, providing all other requirements of the Open Meetings Act (RIGL §42-46-5(b)) are observed, including ensuring public access to the meeting of the public body. The meeting was posted, and public access information made available.

### II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the June 15, 2020 meeting

**Moved By:** Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo

**Seconded By:** Mr. Findlay

The minutes were approved as presented.

### III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed board members.

#### A. Virtual Grand Reopening of the Providence Public Library

The virtual ribbon cutting ceremony for the renovated Providence Public Library is Monday, September 21 at 10 am. Ms. Mellor will forward the Zoom link for the ribbon-cutting ceremony; more events information is online at [www.provlib.org](http://www.provlib.org). OLIS is reimbursing, through the Public Library Construction Reimbursement program, nearly \$9 million of the \$23 million project cost.

## IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

### A. OLIS Updates

#### i. State Budget

RI does not currently have a budget for FY21; state agencies are receiving monthly budget allocations at the FY20 or FY21 budget level, whichever is less. OLIS is funded currently at the FY20 level. The state budget will be taken up by the General Assembly after the November elections.

#### ii. Library Grant-in-Aid (GIA)

OLIS was recently advised it could award public library annual grant-in-aid based on Governor Raimondo's proposed FY21 State Budget. The GIA application and certification sections of the Public Library Annual Survey were made available to libraries on September 11; the annual survey is due on October 2, nearly 3 weeks later than its original due date of Sept 15.

The GIA process has been transformed into a completely online process using eSignatures through DocuSign, a secure platform for contracts and agreements with legally enforceable signature protocols that meet stringent US and global standards. OLIS is currently training libraries in the new processes.

#### iii. Beanstack Reading Tracker

OLIS deployed the Beanstack as a summer reading tracker statewide and is conducting a survey to understand the application's effectiveness and impact on engagement with summer reading programs. Five libraries opted not to use the Beanstack program, two of which were using other reading tracking software; those libraries will be reimbursed for their reading tracker expenditures.

#### iv. Library of RI (LORI) Learning Grants

The LORI Learning Grants process is wrapping up, with final reports due October 31. West Warwick Public Library used their grant for a teen writing program showcased on September 11 in a Kent County Daily Times online [article](#). OLIS' Youth Services Coordinator, Danielle Margarida, will organize a presentation of select learning grant projects for the October LBRI meeting.

#### v. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Mini-Grants

OLIS provided \$55,000 in CARES Act mini-grants to 45 applicant libraries for assistance with COVID-19 response efforts, including mitigation supplies and service adaptations.

### B. Community Engagement Projects (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

#### i. Census 2020

The Census has been extended to the end of September. OLIS worked with the Complete Count Committee to provide RI libraries with promotional materials and to conduct direct outreach in hard-to-count communities to promote census participation.

#### ii. November 2020 Election

In partnership with the RI Board of Elections, all library locations received mail ballot applications. OLIS hosted a seminar with Rob Rock, Director of Elections at the RI Secretary of State, to inform libraries about the primary and November election. OLIS is working with the Board of Elections to place mail ballot drop boxes at public libraries willing to host them.

### iii. COVID-19 Vaccination Registration Community Centers

OLIS is collaborating with the RI Department of Health (RIDOH) to potentially designate RI public libraries as COVID-19 vaccination registration sites. OLIS is coordinating distribution of free disinfectant and information about seasonal flu to libraries through RIDOH.

### C. Continuing Education (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

September and October CE programs are posted online. OLIS is reviewing new models for deeper learning programs including online learning cohorts and project series. A 3-part series titled 'Mindfulness during Ordinary and Extraordinary Times' begins at the end of September. Four cohorts of 10 librarians each will participate in 'Project Ready', a 26-part online anti-racism program series scheduled for youth services librarians over the next year; the series will be moderated by Ms. Margarida. OLIS will partner with the RI Library Association (RILA) on future Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) programs, primarily about anti-racism.

Ms. Baffoni presented an annual overview of virtual programming statistics highlighting the differences between anticipated pre-pandemic in-person programming compared with virtual programming statistics from the past six months; attendance was markedly higher during the pandemic period. In the past year, 114 online programming sessions were attended by over 3,500 participants. Based on these statistics and heightened interest in online programs, OLIS will incorporate more virtual programming into the CE program schedule.

### D. Public Library Service Status

OLIS continues to post information online about public libraries' opening status and services.

### E. Reopening RI Libraries

Regularly updated reopening resource information is available for libraries on OLIS' online LibGuide.

## V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. Federal & State Legislative Updates (Mr. Coutu reporting)

The LBRI Legislative Report was presented in an updated easier-to-read format that includes legislation. The Library Stabilization Fund Act of 2020 (H.R. 7486 and S 4181) was proposed by Senator Jack Reed with recommendations from OLIS. No legislative action is anticipated until after the November election.

## VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

No board member reports.

## VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. Minimum Standards for RI Public Libraries under COVID-19

Ms. Mellor gave an overview of the legislative process for Minimum Standards for RI Public Libraries and regulations governing temporary emergency measures for legislation.

During mandatory COVID-19 closures, the PL Minimum Standards open hours' requirement was suspended. During Phase 3 of Reopening, most libraries reopened their buildings and are providing basic services. With Rhode Island largely reopened with safety protocols in place and GIA level-funded, compliance with PL Minimum Standards is being re-assessed.

Ms. Mellor presented library opening status information shared by Ocean State Libraries (OSL); data is collected weekly for use with the Capira application. Of the 48 public library systems, 3 remain closed (Foster, South Kingstown, and New Shoreham); a total of 9 library buildings are closed, including branch libraries in communities with open libraries, such as Warwick and East Providence. Ten libraries meet the open hours' requirement, and overall, open libraries meet 69% of the required hours.

Ms. Mellor presented a proposal for PL Minimum Standards open hours' requirement, recommending that libraries must file a waiver if they do not meet the open hours requirement or any other standard. She also noted that requiring an appointment does not constitute free access to the library, and as such, libraries are discouraged from requiring appointments. Libraries unable to meet any standard may submit a Request for Waiver to OLIS. OLIS will consider the impact of the pandemic in granting waiver requests.

Ms. Feldman, Ms. Clark, and Ms. Shaker discussed public library reopening concerns and challenges, Dr. Hopper outlined issues facing academic libraries, and Mr. Coutu noted that libraries are grappling with staffing shortages because of retirements and hiring process challenges.

Input received from the library community and at today's meeting will inform OLIS approval of waiver requests. Public libraries must certify compliance with PL Minimum Standards by Sunday, October 4, the first full week in October. Should a Request for Waiver be denied, the library may appeal the denial to the Board.

#### B. 2019 School Library Report

Per Ms. Blais' request, Ms. Drnach asked that the 2019 School Library report be added to the October agenda under Unfinished Business.

### VIII. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

### VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

### IX. FUTURE MEETINGS

The LBRI 2020-2021 meeting schedule was submitted for approval.

**Moved By:** Mr. Findlay

**Seconded By:** Mr. Coutu

The meeting schedule was approved as presented. The LBRI online calendar will be updated and the board emailed an approved schedule.

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2020, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., online via Zoom.

### X. ADJOURNMENT

**Moved By:** Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo

**Seconded By:** Mr. Findlay

The meeting was adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

## LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on

October 19, 2020

Online Via Zoom

**Members Attending:** John Bucci, Heidi Blais, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Kenneth Findlay, Rosita Hopper, Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Robert Sloan

**Members Absent:** Cristina Amedeo, Annette Feldman, Louise Herrington, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Marcus Mitchell, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Amanda Richman

**Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS):** Karen Andrews, Karen Mellor

**Guests:** None

**Materials Distributed:** None

### I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 20-25 which allows public bodies to conduct public meetings online, providing all other requirements of the Open Meetings Act (RIGL §42-46-5(b)) are observed, including ensuring public access to the meeting of the public body. The meeting was posted, and public access information made available.

### II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the September 14, 2020 meeting

**Moved By:** Mr. Findlay

**Seconded By:** Mr. Coutu

The minutes were approved as presented.

### III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed board members and noted that LBRI meetings will be held via Zoom for the foreseeable future.

### IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

#### A. Providence Public Library (PPL) Grand Re-Opening

Ms. Drnach and Ms. Mellor attended the virtual ribbon cutting celebration for Providence Public Library's grand reopening on September 19. Ms. Mellor will email links from the PPL open house events, and members interested in a tour of the new construction may contact Ms. Andrews for arrangements.

#### B. OLIS Updates

##### i. State Budget

The FY21 state budget will be taken up by the General Assembly after the election. Because of the state's projected revenue shortfall for FY22, state agencies are requested to submit FY22 budgets

with a 15% reduction. Ms. Mellor will update the board about any changes to services due to budget reductions when information becomes available.

ii. OLIS Vacant Positions

With Ms. DiMichele's retirement in March, both OLIS Library Program Manager (LPM) positions became vacant and Ms. Mellor now provides all agency managerial support. The state has implemented a hiring freeze and vacant positions are currently not being filled unless they are necessary for COVID response and recovery. Ms. Mellor will continue to make the case to fill at least one of the vacant LPM positions. In the last 21 years, OLIS has seen a 50% reduction in personnel while outsourcing only one service.

C. Public Library Annual Survey

The annual process for gathering public library statistical data and certifying libraries for state grant-in-aid (GIA) is wrapping up. Due to the pandemic, the GIA certification and application start date was delayed until September 11 and the deadline extended until October 2. Many libraries completed the application and certification immediately upon release and OLIS processed more than 2/3 of the applications within the first two weeks of the process. With the exception of two applications, the process is on-track to be completed this week; a week ahead of the regular schedule.

The GIA certification and application was transitioned to a completely digital process that now uses eSignatures. Library GIA was level-funded at the pre-pandemic amounts included in the Governor's budget, which was released in January. This year GIA will be distributed in four payments rather than the previous three-payment schedule.

Of 48 public libraries, 25 libraries meet the Public Library Minimum Standards open hours requirement. The remaining 23 libraries are currently open an average of 85% of the required hours; many will be at full compliance with the hours requirement by the end of October. Libraries unable to meet the requirement or other standards may submit a request for waiver through an online process.

D. Library of RI (LORI) Certification & School Libraries

The annual LORI certification process enables libraries to participate in network resource sharing services, including interlibrary loan (ILL) and delivery. Last year, 170 public, academic, school, and special libraries were certified for membership in the LORI network. The process was totally digitized this year, including the utilization of eSignatures, with 117 libraries certified to date and 53 library certifications pending.

E. 2020 Grants Processing Summation

In the last 9 months, OLIS has processed 48 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act grants totaling \$55,000; 45 were awarded for libraries for reopening expenses and the adaptation of services, and 3 for the purchase of online reading tracking software for summer and other reading programs.

By the end of October, \$8,800,000 for 64 public library GIA applications and over \$200,000 for 12 grants to public libraries and Ocean State Libraries consortium were processed.

## F. Community Engagement

### i. Census 2020

The 2020 Census closed on October 15. In RI, 99% of households were reached, with a 61-62% self-response rate. In addition to determining federal funding for RI, census data is used to draw boundaries for congressional, state senate, and state representative districts.

### ii. November 2020 Election

Ballot drop boxes were not placed at public libraries as had been discussed with the Board of Elections. Concerns were raised about the burden placed on municipalities and boards of canvassers to retrieve ballots from multiple locations.

### iii. Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH)

OLIS is working with RIDOH to distribute free hand sanitizer and disinfectant to libraries. Libraries are anticipated to be COVID-19 vaccine registration sites and to help disseminate information on seasonal influenza.

## G. Continuing Education (CE) Fall Updates

The third part of the 'Mindfulness during Ordinary and Extraordinary Times' series is scheduled for next week. OLIS' Youth Services Coordinator, Danielle Margarida, is moderating 'Project Ready', a 26-part online anti-racism program series scheduled for youth services librarians over the next year. Ms. Margarida will provide an update on the program at the November meeting. Complete CE program information is available on the OLIS website.

## H. Reopening Libraries

OLIS' Reopening Libraries online resource is updated regularly with COVID-19 guidance, including information from the Governor's Office, RIDOH and the CDC.

## V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. Federal & State Legislative Updates (Mr. Coutu reporting)

Mr. Coutu reported that there has been no legislative movement on bills pertaining to libraries. Ms. Mellor reported that funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in the proposed House of Representatives' Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act was increased from \$5M to \$135M.

## VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

No board member reports.

## VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. 2019 School Library Report: Identification of Potential Action Items

Ms. Mellor reported that no additional action has been taken on the report at this time. It is published on the OLIS website, and information from the report has been used in conversations with the RI Department of Education (RIDE).

Ms. Blais reported that Mary Moen and Sarah Hunicke of the School Librarians of Rhode Island (SLRI) are updating the School Library Standards and seeking to have them added to the RIDE website; she will provide updates at the November meeting. The SLRI documentary [Overdue: The Value of School](#)

[Librarians](#) is now available. Ms. Blais reported on actions taken by school librarians to ensure that library materials reach students, and the reduction of school librarians statewide.

Mr. Coutu reported that there are no school librarians working in the Cumberland, RI school system.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**IX. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2020, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., online via Zoom.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved By:** Mr. Findlay

**Seconded By:** Dr. Hopper

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

## LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on  
November 16, 2020  
Online Via Zoom

**Members Attending:** John Bucci, Heidi Blais, Melody Drnach (Chair), Annette Feldman, Rosita Hopper, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Amanda Richman, Robert Sloan

**Members Absent:** Cristina Amedeo, Aaron Coutu, Kenneth Findlay, Louise Herrington, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Marcus Mitchell

**Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS):** Karen Andrews, Nicolette Baffoni, Danielle Margarida, Karen Mellor

**Guests:** Rasha Al-Sasah, Head of Youth Services, and Amber Bliss, Head of Information Services, West Warwick Public Library; Laurel Clark, Director, South Kingstown Public Library; Heather Field, Director, Ashaway Free Library; Nomi Hague, Director, Langworthy Public Library

### **Materials Distributed:**

- School Libraries Report, November 2020
- School Libraries Staffing Report, November 2020

### **I. WELCOME**

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 20-25 which allows public bodies to conduct public meetings online, providing all other requirements of the Open Meetings Act (RIGL §42-46-5(b)) are observed, including ensuring public access to the meeting of the public body. The meeting was posted, and public access information made available. Members are requested to identify themselves when making a motion.

### **II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the October 19, 2020 meeting**

**Moved By:** Mr. Bucci

**Seconded By:** Ms. Blais

The minutes were approved as presented.

### **III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Ms. Drnach welcomed board members.

### **IV. Special Topic: Serving Youth at RI Libraries: Learning Grants and Project Ready**

#### **A. Project READY: Reimagining Equity and Access for Diverse Youth**

Danielle Margarida, OLIS' Youth Services Coordinator, presented an update on Project READY: Reimagining Equity and Access for Diverse Youth. The 26-part anti-racism program series was developed as a free online professional development resource by the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The program was created to help improve understanding about racism and racial equity, and focuses on improving relationships with youth of color and Native youth while instructing youth services librarians in the

design of more diverse and equitable programming. Ms. Margarida coordinates the Project READY sessions (4 cohorts of 10 librarians); the sessions will continue until October 2021.

#### B. Library of RI (LORI) Learning Grants

In early 2020, OLIS awarded \$14,000 in IMLS funds to public libraries for 8 LORI Learning Grants; 5 for Summer Learning projects, and 3 for Connected Learning projects. Librarians from Ashaway Free Library, Langworthy Public Library, and West Warwick Public Library were on-hand to present overviews of 2 grant projects.

##### i. Libraries of Hopkinton Joint Project: Creature Connections: Explore Rhode Island Wildlife and Nature at Your Library

Nomi Hague, Director of Langworthy Public Library, and Heather Field, Director of Ashaway Free Library, partnered on a summer series of nature-based programs for elementary school-aged children to learn about animals. Programs presented by animal specialists from various nature groups afforded children the opportunity to interact with live animals while learning about their life cycles, biology, and natural environments. Children participated in hands-on activities, broadened their knowledge of the natural world and local wildlife, discovered how to impact nature in constructive ways, and learned about looking at the world from a scientific perspective.

##### ii. West Warwick Public Library Project: Summer Writing Camp & Teen Anthology

Rashaa Al-Sasah, Head of Youth Services, and Amber Bliss, Head of Information Services, at West Warwick Public Library, held a Summer Writing Camp for teens aged thirteen and older. Teens cultivated writing skills with instruction from authors and publishing professionals, participated in lectures and activities about diverse writing forms, and studied publication processes. Upon completion of the program, an anthology of their work was published that is freely available in physical and digital formats in RI libraries.

### V. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

#### A. OLIS Updates

##### i. State Budget

When the General Assembly convenes, action on the FY21 budget is anticipated to resume. Although the state budget deficit was recently reduced by half to \$350M, the state hiring freeze is still in effect. Ms. Mellor continues to work with OLIS' parent agency to fill at least one of the vacant Program Manager positions and will provide updates when available.

##### ii. Public Library Annual Survey

The annual public library survey and grant-in-aid (GIA) application process wrapped at the end of October. All GIA applications are processed with the exception of 2 libraries, one with Public Library Standards compliance issues, and another with a GIA Maintenance of Effort issue. Both situations are expected to resolve and the libraries approved for GIA funding.

##### iii. LORI Certification & School Libraries

LORI certification affords libraries the opportunity to participate in resource sharing services, primarily delivery. Last year, 170 libraries at 240 locations were certified. Currently, 145 libraries have recertified, including 80 schools; 19 schools have not completed certification.

Because of Covid-19 shutdowns, only 22 schools, 19 public and 3 private, are receiving delivery; 91 schools were receiving delivery in March 2020. OLIS anticipates an additional 8 schools will be added to delivery in December as certification remains open until January. The LORI delivery team is working with the delivery vendor and public libraries to ensure that school materials are returned to owning libraries. The delivery schedule is refreshed monthly to accommodate ongoing changes in libraries.

Chaichin Chen, OLIS' Resource Sharing Coordinator, has coordinated a day long Resource Sharing Summit to look at the future of sharing electronic and physical materials. Originally scheduled as a regional summit, 270+ people nationally have signed up to attend the November 18 meeting.

## B. Continuing Education (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

### i. Continuing Education (CE) Schedule

To accommodate pandemic meeting 'fatigue' and enable OLIS staff to remain responsive to immediate community needs, a lite version of the regular CE fall schedule was planned. Regular meetings of Communities of Practice continue, and programs are scheduled throughout the fall. The OLIS CE calendar includes offerings from Ocean State Libraries (OSL) to provide 'one-stop' program information for the library community.

### ii. Programming

Dr. Richard Moniz, Director of Library Services at Horry-Georgetown Technical College in South Carolina, facilitated three October sessions of 'Mindfulness in Ordinary and Extraordinary Times for Library Staff' to assist staff in applying mindfulness practices in the library as a method of managing stress. Each session had 35-40 attendees.

OLIS sponsored 6 adult services librarians to attend a four-week CE course, 'Creating Virtual Programs for Adults', available through the library training organization InfoPeople. OLIS hosted a panel of course participants to share their learning with other RI librarians; the session was well-attended and feedback was positive. Web Junction offered a free webinar, 'The Accidental Facilities Manager', specifically for directors to aid in facility management; a webinar follow-up discussion group hosted by Ms. Mellor and Kelly Metzger is scheduled for tomorrow.

### iii. Spring 2021 CE Programs

OLIS will partner with the RI Library Association (RILA) on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) training, using an in-depth small group learning model known as "learning circles." With training and support from Peer To Peer University and RILA, OLIS will provide facilitator training in learning circles to 10-20 individuals.

Ms. Margarida will team with the Connecticut State Library and Massachusetts Library System to develop a Summer Learning webinar series for youth services librarians in the winter of 2021. She will also run a cohort for teen librarians to explore how to adapt Connected Learning principals to virtual environments. Ms. Baffoni is investigating a Workforce Development program series focused on helping libraries provide services to address the economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis on their communities.

OLIS CE program information is available on the OLIS website.

## C. Rhody Radio (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

In the early months of the pandemic, OLIS' Adult Services Round Table began investigating ways for libraries to continue offering engaging programs. A working group of adult services librarians met and developed Rhody Radio, a weekly podcast for library listeners. The program premiered in August and 15 episodes in various formats have been produced by 5 participating libraries. The RI Council for the Humanities provided a grant for the project.

#### D. Coronavirus Updates

Rhode Island has averaged 850 new coronavirus cases per day for the past 7 days. As of November 1, 100% of libraries were open, however, because of positive cases, three libraries are now closed temporarily per municipal guidelines.

OLIS communicates with libraries weekly as pandemic information changes or becomes available. OLIS' online Covid-19 guide 'Reopening Libraries' is updated regularly and a new section about testing has been added. The Covid-19 FAQ for Libraries now includes information about testing and response to positive cases among library workers.

### V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### A. Federal & State Legislative Updates (Ms. Mellor reporting)

Jamestown approved a bond referendum for a library renovation project with 70% approval. In Narragansett, membership of the Town Council shifted substantially and now includes a majority of members who have voiced support for the library. Narragansett voters approved three several local referenda relating to the library, including a \$5.8M bond for renovation of the former Belmont grocery store into a library.

The library community lost two library advocates in the recent primary and election. Representative Jacquard of District 17, Cranston, did not seek reelection, and former LBRI Chair, Senator Mark McKenney of Warwick's District 30, did not win his primary runoff [MK(1)].

### VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

No board member reports.

### VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### A. School Libraries Committee Report: Updates on School Library Standards

Ms. Blais provided reports updating current and future activities and efforts by library advocates from the School Librarians of RI (SLRI), the University of RI Graduate School of Library and Information Studies (URI GSLIS) and the Rhode Island Library Association to gain endorsement of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) National School Library Standards from the RI Council for Elementary and Secondary Education.

SLRI members are working on the RI School Library Curriculum Guide that is aligned to the AASL National School Library Standards and planning a December presentation to the RI Council for Elementary and Secondary Education.

Ms. Blais provided detailed updates on school librarian positions at Cranston and Providence public schools.

#### B. Trustees Resources

Ms. Mellor recommended the activation of the committee previously formed to address support for trustees, including improved resources and training, and an updated Trustees Manual. Ms. Drnach and Mr. Coutu had previously volunteered to work on this committee.

#### C. Public Library Standards

Ms. Mellor recommended a 2021 committee board to review the Public Library Standards for possible revision.

#### D. LBRI Member Appointments

Ms. Mellor reported that LBRI member appointments and reappointments will be [MK(2)] addressed when the General Assembly begins its new session in January. Some member appointments have expired, with some members eligible for reappointment and others ineligible because they have served two terms. Ms. Mellor extended her gratitude to all LBRI members for their service.

### VIII. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

### VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

### IX. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for December 21, 2020, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., online via Zoom.

### X. ADJOURNMENT

**Moved By:** Mr. Norris

**Seconded By:** Mr. Bucci

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

## LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on

January 11, 2021

Online Via Zoom

**Members Attending:** John Bucci, Heidi Blais, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Annette Feldman, Rosita Hopper, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Kenneth Findlay, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Amanda Richman, Robert Sloan

**Members Absent:** Cristina Amedeo, Louise Herrington, Marcus Mitchell

**Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS):** Karen Andrews, Nicolette Baffoni, Karen Mellor

**Guests:** None

### **Materials Distributed:**

- Providence City Council – School Library Media Specialist Resolution - Thursday, January 7, 2021
- RI Office of Library and Information Services Expenditures: Federal Fiscal Year 2020 (Oct 1, 2019- Sept 30, 2020)

### **I. WELCOME**

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 20-25 which allows public bodies to conduct public meetings online, providing all other requirements of the Open Meetings Act (RIGL §42-46-5(b)) are observed, including ensuring public access to the meeting of the public body. The meeting was posted, and public access information made available. Members are requested to identify themselves when making a motion.

### **II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the November 16, 2020 meeting**

The minutes were approved as presented.

### **III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Ms. Drnach extended New Year's salutations to the board and thanked members for their on-going library support. Meetings will be held on Zoom for the foreseeable future.

### **IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT**

#### **A. OLIS Updates**

##### **i. State Budget**

The General Assembly passed the FY21 State Budget in December. As anticipated, grant-in-aid (GIA) to libraries was level-funded; FY21 GIA applications had been approved based on that expectation. The FY22 State Budget is in development and scheduled for release March 11 instead of the usual January delivery. OLIS estimates FY22 GIA funding, based on level funding, as 21.8% of local funding, up from 21.7% in FY21. The increase is a result of reduced expenditures in some cities and towns due to the pandemic.

ii. Public Library Annual Survey

Three remaining libraries in two municipalities received approval for FY21 GIA funding upon resolution of compliance and maintenance of effort issues. Public libraries will receive their second FY21 GIA payment in early February. Kelly Metzger, OLIS State Data Coordinator, is preparing select annual report data to submit to the federal government in March as required.

iii. Federal State Program Report

The annual federal state program report was submitted December 30 to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Ms. Mellor extended her gratitude to Nicolette Baffoni, OLIS Learning and Community Engagement Coordinator, for her assistance on the report.

iv. Continuing Education Programming, Spring 2021 (Ms. Baffoni Reporting)

The Spring Continuing Education (CE) Schedule is light to remain flexible and responsive to library needs and new program requests. Children's Services librarians will vote on the annual Mock Newbery awards on January 14. Children's Services and Young Adult roundtables continue to meet monthly.

On February 10-11, OLIS will partner with the Massachusetts Library System and Connecticut State Library for a Tri-State Summer Learning Summit to discuss strategies for summer reading in 2021. In late February and March, OLIS adult and youth services roundtables will host additional sessions looking back on lessons learned during the 2020 Summer Reading Programs and planning sessions for the 2021 program.

OLIS and the RI Center for the Book will host an informational session for Reading Across RI; the 2021 book selection is *Stamped* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendri.

All scheduled CE programs are posted on the OLIS website.

B. Reopening Libraries

i. Coronavirus Updates

Rhode Island is currently second in the nation for reported coronavirus cases, with an average of 1,100 new cases reported daily. RI libraries are in Phase 3 of Reopening RI, with some additional restrictions instituted during the December Pause. While some libraries closed temporarily due to virus exposure or staffing shortages, most libraries continue to offer limited in-building services, including computer access.

OLIS provided regular pandemic updates to libraries via email in December and early January and continues to partner with Ocean State Libraries (OSL) to host regular Zoom meetings to keep libraries informed about coronavirus developments and library projects; meetings are well-attended.

ii. Vaccinations for Library Staff

OLIS submitted a request to the RI Department of Health (RIDOH) Vaccination Team to add library workers to the state's high-risk groups' eligibility list that accelerates receipt of the Covid-19 vaccine. As front-line workers, library staff have regular contact with the public. RIDOH is considering the request; more information will be forthcoming.

### C. OLIS Annual Report

Ms. Mellor provided an overview of the state program report submitted to the Institute of Museum and Library Services in December for federal fiscal year 2020 (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020).

OLIS expended \$1.1 million dollars in federal funds, an increase of \$16,675 from FY19; matching state funds were \$1.5 million, an increase of \$182,000 from FY19. OLIS' actual state FY20 budget increase from FY19 was \$37,000, with matching funds including partial expenditures in FY2021. OLIS provided \$8.8 million in GIA funds to municipalities for library services. Providence Public Library received \$700,000 to manage AskRI, the Statewide Reference Resource Center.

Reporting categories remained consistent with 2019 categories, as defined by OLIS' Five-Year Plan. Coronavirus activities were incorporated into existing 2020 projects as opposed to being reported as a stand-alone project. Projects were not revised but delivery methods were modified for some activities in response to coronavirus restrictions.

OLIS' full-time employee (FTE) count was 12 for approximately half the federal reporting period, decreasing to 11 when Donna DiMichele retired on April 1. All OLIS staff were working remotely by March 24. Three staff members participated in the state's summer workshare program. While most staff continue to work remotely, several staff have opted to return onsite on a limited basis.

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) funds supported the purchase of reading tracking software for reading programs and mini grants to public libraries to support response to and recovery from the coronavirus. Jason Ackermann, OLIS Digital Resources Coordinator, built an online tool for grant applications and led a team to manage the CARES mini-grants process. OLIS staff time dedicated to these activities was reported in the 2020 report, but the outcomes of the activities will be reported in FY21 per federal guidelines.

### D. Upcoming Projects (Ms. Mellor & Ms. Baffoni reporting)

#### i. Learning Platform

OLIS will be acquiring a license for Niche Academy, a learning management system that provides a platform to store, create, and share tutorials, and track learning. The system's library component provides tools and services specific to libraries and is used by 30 states, many of which contribute content to the system, thereby expanding the library of courses available to subscribing states and libraries. The cloud-based system will allow OLIS to provide access to content created locally and nationally, and to track usage.

#### ii. Support for New Directors

OLIS is creating a series of training courses to engage and support new library directors. Twenty-five percent of RI public library directors are new to their positions or have less than 2 years of experience as a director.

## V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

### A. Federal & State Legislative Updates (Mr. Coutu and Ms. Mellor reporting)

No library-specific bills have been proposed on the federal or state level, but the following bills are under development at the federal level:

i. Library Stabilization Fund Act

Ms. Mellor is working with Senator Jack Reed's office and the American Library Association (ALA) on a bill to provide coronavirus relief funding to libraries to support operations, increase connectivity and expand access to digital networks, content and services. The bill should be presented in late January.

ii. Build America's Libraries Act

Senator Reed's \$5 billion Build America's Libraries Act was introduced in December to provide library construction and renovation funding for low-income, marginalized, and underserved communities. The bill will be reintroduced in the new Congress.

## VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

No board member reports.

## VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. School Libraries Committee Update (Ms. Blais reporting)

The documentary, [Overdue: The Value of School Librarians](#), is complete and viewable; it aired twice in December on RI PBS. The Providence City Council passed a resolution on January 7 recognizing the value of school libraries and the contributions of School Library Media Specialists.

### B. Trustees Resources and Support (Ms. Mellor reporting)

In addition to tools and training, OLIS is examining ways to provide support and resources to public library trustees. Mr. Coutu, Ms. Drnach, and Mr. Findlay will serve on a committee to review the Trustees Handbook. Mr. Findlay recommended the creation of a template for trustee by-laws. A meeting will be scheduled to begin the review process; additional volunteers may contact Ms. Andrews.

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Resource Sharing: Delivery Service and eBooks (Ms. Mellor reporting)

Libraries are facing two major resource sharing challenges, delivery services and eBooks; cost of these services and wait times for eBooks are growing library concerns. Ebook publisher licenses require libraries to relicense books annually; OSL's annual projected cost to meet current eBook demand exceeds \$1 million. Long hold lists force patrons to either purchase their own media or wait, sometimes for months, for eBooks. Cost-effective ways to manage both services are being investigated.

Ms. Mellor is working with OSL to determine patron usage, inquiring of other library systems about their management of these issues, and considering hiring a study consultant. Ms. Mellor inquired whether the board should consider forming a review committee.

Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo recommended soliciting collaborative purchasing for audiobooks. Mr. Norris suggested deep data-gathering activities to ensure the issues are understood thoroughly. Ms. Drnach recommended data gathering activities be performed prior to initiating a committee. OLIS will gather more information on the issues and report the findings to the board.

## VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

## **IX. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for February 08, 2021, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., online via Zoom.

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved By:** Mr. Findlay

**Seconded By:** Mr. Norris

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

## LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on

February 08, 2021

Online Via Zoom

**Members Attending:** John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Annette Feldman, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Kenneth Findlay, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Amanda Richman, Robert Sloan

**Members Absent:** Cristina Amedeo, Heidi Blais, Louise Herrington, Rosita Hopper, Marcus Mitchell

**Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS):** Karen Andrews, Nicolette Baffoni, Karen Mellor

**Guest:** Stephen Spohn, Executive Director, Ocean States Libraries

**Materials Distributed:**

- Ocean State Libraries eZone Sustainability Report, February 8, 2021

### I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 20-25 which allows public bodies to conduct public meetings online, providing all other requirements of the Open Meetings Act (RIGL §42-46-5(b)) are observed, including ensuring public access to the meeting of the public body. The meeting was posted, and public access information made available. Members are requested to identify themselves when making a motion.

### II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the January 11, 2021 meeting

**Moved By:** Mr. Norris

**Seconded By:** Mr. Bucci

The minutes were approved as presented.

### III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach commended [Overdue: The Value of School Librarians](#), the advocacy documentary produced by the School Librarians of Rhode Island (SLRI), a section of the RI Library Association (RILA); its viewing and distribution is recommended. Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress, was interviewed by Robin Givhan of the [Washington Post](#) on February 5 for Black History Month.

### IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

Ms. Mellor recommended the January 25 *Providence Journal Bulletin* [article](#) about RI library adaptation efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic. Directors from Charlestown's Cross' Mills Public Library, Tiverton Public Library, and Burrillville's Jesse M. Smith Memorial Library were interviewed.

#### A. OLIS Updates

- i. OLIS Annual Award Notification

OLIS received \$35,000 additional Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the Institute of Library and Information Services (IMLS) for federal FY21, and \$112,000 more funds in FY20. The increases bring OLIS' annual LSTA funding to just over \$1.2 million, slightly less than 50% of OLIS' annual budget. Ms. Mellor has been working with Senator Jack Reed's office, other state library officers, and the American Library Association (ALA) on legislation to increase LSTA funding to states, particularly for states with small populations.

ii. Library Program Manager Positions

OLIS was approved to post both vacant Library Program Manager (LPM) positions. Responsibilities for both positions were redefined to ensure the most efficient and effective agency management structure in alignment with the current strategic direction of the agency.

The Library Development LPM position was posted last week and is anticipated to be filled by the end of February. The position supports library development activities including Youth, Adult and Learning services, and manages federal funds and grant programs.

The Library Services LPM will manage resource-sharing services including delivery and AskRI statewide databases hosted at Providence Public Library (PPL), the Talking Books Library (TBL), and digitization services, including development of Rhode Island's [Digital Public Library of America](#) (DPLA) hub. The position is expected to be posted this month. RI is one of four states that do not have a local DPLA hub. The Digital Public Library of America is a national gateway to library collections, especially those of historic and culture significance.

iii. Public Library Annual Survey

OLIS will release salary data gathered through the annual public library survey by the end of the week; the comparative analysis informs libraries about current salaries and is useful for hiring and library budget development purposes. Kelly Metzger, State Data Coordinator, is convening a committee of librarians to review job categories used in the annual survey. The categories are currently not granular enough in certain areas and do not adequately capture current job responsibilities. Results of the project will be incorporated into the FY2021 public library annual survey.

iv. Continuing Education (CE) Programming, Spring 2021 (Ms. Baffoni Reporting)

Danielle Margarida, Youth Services Coordinator, began phase 2 of Project READY: Reimagining Equity & Access for Diverse Youth, an ongoing series of trainings for cohorts of school and youth service librarians. The five-week 'Be the Connection: Libraries, Teens, and Connected Learning', that focuses on programs that connect teens to real-world opportunities, meets February 2 – March 2. The virtual Tri-State Summer Summit for youth service librarians, hosted by the Connecticut State Library, the Massachusetts Library System, and OLIS, is February 10-11. 'New Ideas for Virtual Library Programs for Young Children' is scheduled for February 26.

The Adult Services Roundtable will discuss 'Accessibility for Virtual Programs' on March 17. Ms. Baffoni is working with the Thriving Libraries organization to craft a program for new library directors titled 'Engaged Leadership'; more program information will be forthcoming.

All CE programs are posted on the OLIS website.

B. Projects and Grant Programs (Ms. Mellor & Ms. Baffoni reporting)

i. Summer Reading Program (SRP) Mini-Grants

In 2020, OLIS repurposed funding for summer reading presenters to a competitive round of SRP Learning Grants. This year OLIS will offer a non-competitive grant program to support summer reading activities at all public libraries across the state; the program is modeled after the successful 2020 CARES Act grant program that provided reimbursement for eligible expenditures. The Summer Reading Mini-Grant Program will support summer reading program activities for children, teens and adults. Libraries may apply for up to \$500 for youth services programs and an additional \$250 for each library branch; libraries may also apply for \$250 for adult programming for their system. An instructional webinar for applicants is scheduled for March 8. The application and award process will be entirely digital.

OLIS will again offer the Beanstack Reading Tracker software to libraries to support summer reading activities; libraries not participating in the Beanstack program will be reimbursed for their reading tracker expenditures.

ii. Other Grants

OLIS is reviewing other needs for project funding for statewide library initiatives; an additional grant program to support projects relating to access to library materials, digitization, and other identified needs is in development.

C. Reopening Libraries: Updates

i. Coronavirus Updates

RI coronavirus cases are trending down, with 450 average cases per day and hospitalization stays decreasing; 8.2% of Rhode Islanders have received at least 1 dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. Vaccinations are being administered based on age, not occupation, except for health care providers and first responders. Library workers had been seeking to be vaccinated earlier due to their substantial interaction with the public; Ms. Mellor had requested this accommodation for library workers when the State was seeking input on its vaccination plan. Library workers will be vaccinated in accordance with the age-based or underlying health conditions schedule.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Federal & State Legislative Updates (Mr. Coutu and Ms. Mellor reporting)

i. Rhode Island legislation

- a. H 5148. The RI Broadband Development Program bill establishes an 11-member council, including a representative from Ocean State Libraries (OSL), to establish a plan for creating a statewide fiber optic network in all RI communities. Mr. Ed Garcia, RILA Legislative Action chair, will investigate the addition of OLIS as a council member.
- b. H 5054. The Community Antenna Television Systems and Internet Service Providers bill would require internet service providers to follow internet service neutrality requirements.
- c. S 2592. The bill's passage would amend Section 11-47-60 of the General Laws in Chapter 11-47 entitled "Weapons" to reflect that 'No person shall have in his or her possession any firearm or other weapons on school grounds' except for law enforcement officials or security personnel. RILA is seeking perspective from the School Librarians of RI.
- d. H 5700. To protect student privacy, the bill for Student Privacy on School-owned Technology provides that no educational institution without an opt-in shall compel students to participate in a take-home technology program.

ii. Federal Legislation

a. Build America’s Libraries Act

Senator Jack Reed introduced the Build America’s Libraries Act to provide funds for library construction or renovation; the federal government has not provided library construction funds in over two decades. The \$5 billion bill will provide \$10 million to each state and additional funds based on population. In addition to construction and renovation, funds will support creation of external spaces, HVAC system upgrades, advanced technology purchases - including Wi-Fi for rural locations, and address hazard remediation and disaster preparedness.

b. Coronavirus Relief

Senator Reed introduced a bill to increase IMLS LSTA funding by \$200M. The temporary funding will increase each state’s base grant by \$2M for response and recovery to Coronavirus.

**VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

No board member reports.

**VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. Trustee Resources and Support Committee

The committee has been unable to meet because of time constraints. Trustee information from other states has been investigated and will be available when the committee convenes next month. Ms. Drnach, Mr. Coutu, and Mr. Findlay will serve on the committee.

B. Resource Sharing: Delivery Service and eBooks (Ms. Mellor and Mr. Spohn)

Ms. Mellor reviewed initiatives underway to find solutions to the ever-increasing costs of delivery and eBook acquisition. A study to be commissioned by OLIS and OSL will perform a deep review of the usage of both physical and digital library materials and will include an analysis of socio and economic characteristics of library users and non-users by incorporating Census and consumer data. The study will inform potential policy changes and provide understanding on how to better serve the public through improved services and materials availability.

Stephen Spohn, Executive Director of Ocean States Libraries (OSL) presented an overview of the ‘OSL eZone Sustainability Report’ generated from a January 27 Q & A discussion about the sustainability of the eBook program. Findings determined that a small segment of the patron population accounts for a large portion of eBook holds; OSL will review ways to improve policies to provide equitable service to all Rhode Islanders. Increasing costs are a primary factor in the procurement of digital materials for patrons. eBooks are licensed for a specific time period, frequently making their reacquisition necessary. Various digital media purchasing models are being examined to determine the best procurement methods.

OLIS will continue to work with RILINK (the school library consortium) to identify ways to make eBooks and materials more readily available to schools

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**IX. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2021, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., online via Zoom.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved By: Mr. Findlay

Seconded By: Mr. Norris

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

## LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on

March 15, 2021

Online Via Zoom

**Members Attending:** Heidi Blais, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Annette Feldman, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Kenneth Findlay, Rosita Hopper, Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Robert Sloan

**Members Absent:** John Bucci, Cristina Amedeo, Louise Herrington, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Marcus Mitchell, Amanda Richman

**Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS):** Karen Andrews, Nicolette Baffoni, Karen Mellor

**Guest:** None

**Materials Distributed:**

LBRI Legislation Committee Report, March 15, 2021

### I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:18 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 20-25 which allows public bodies to conduct public meetings online, providing all other requirements of the Open Meetings Act (RIGL §42-46-5(b)) are observed, including ensuring public access to the meeting of the public body. The meeting was posted, and public access information made available. Members are requested to identify themselves when making a motion.

Some pending RI laws will allow LBRI meetings to continue to be held online; more information will be forthcoming.

### II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the February 08, 2021 meeting

**Moved By:** Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo

**Seconded By:** Mr. Findlay

The minutes were approved as presented.

### III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed members to the meeting.

### IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

The recent RI gubernatorial transition and subsequent agency head adjustments should not affect OLIS. Jim Thorsen is the new Acting Director for the Department of Administration (DOA).

#### A. OLIS Updates

##### i. Budget

The FY22 state budget was released on March 11. Library grant-in-aid (GIA) was level funded. OLIS' budget is funded at the current services level including 13 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions and current programs.

ii. OLIS Positions

a. Library Program Manager (LPM): Library Development

Ms. Nicolette Baffoni is the new Library Development Manager. The position functions as the Library Service and Technology Act (LSTA) Coordinator, manages the state LSTA grant, and oversees Continuing Education (CE), Youth & Adult Services programs, and other programs to support public library services.

b. Library Program Manager: Network & Library Services

The Network & Library Services LPM position was posted, and interviews were conducted; OLIS expects to fill the position soon. The position oversees Network Services, Disaster Preparedness, and Digitization efforts, including the development of Rhode Island's [Digital Public Library of America \(DPLA\)](#) hub.

c. Library Program Specialist

OLIS anticipates filling Ms. Baffoni's prior position, Library Program Specialist. The position will be redefined to support current priorities, in alignment with OLIS' strategic plan.

iii. Continuing Education (CE) Programming, Spring 2021 (Ms. Baffoni Reporting)

Engaged Leadership, a five-workshop series for new public librarians, begins this week. The series will provide comprehensive leadership and library management training targeted to directors hired in the last two years. The majority of new directors, some assistant directors, and other library leaders will attend the training.

Mental Health Impacts of COVID-19 on Youth, presented by Bradley Hospital, is March 19. Beanstack Refresher webinar is April 20; [Beanstack](#) is the online reading tracker application purchased for public libraries in 2020 to support the Summer Reading Program.

OLIS partnered with the RI Department of Health (DOH) in March for a COVID-19 vaccine registration workshop. 80 people attended the session, and 90+ viewed the recorded session.

[Niche Academy](#), the online learning platform and learning management tool will launch on April 1. OLIS will migrate 25 recorded sessions to the platform and produce sessions on various topics geared to library staff in addition to curating content available in Niche to support learning for librarians.

All CE programs are posted on the OLIS CE Calendar.

B. Projects and Grant Programs (Ms. Mellor & Ms. Baffoni reporting)

i. Summer Reading Program (SRP) Grants

The non-competitive SRP Grant application process opened on March 8 and ends April 9; grants are open to all public libraries. Each library may apply for \$500, an additional \$250 for each branch, and \$250 for an adult services program. Ms. Baffoni and Danielle Margarida, Youth Services Coordinator, hosted a grant workshop on March 8, with 50 Adult and YS Librarians in attendance; the recorded session had 40+ views.

ii. Library of RI (LORI) Grants

Competitive LORI grants will be available in amounts from \$10,000 to \$50,000 to support the advancement of library services in Rhode Island. The application process closes on April 2 with a September 15 project completion deadline. OLIS is seeking projects that are ready to implement in

categories that expand access to library materials and services, feature new uses of technology, expand use of library services or the role of the library in the community, or create more inclusive or accessible library services for all members of the community. Ms. Mellor and Ms. Baffoni will host an online workshop on March 16. LBRI members may be requested to review grant proposals.

#### C. Reopening Libraries: Coronavirus Updates

March marks the one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic; OLIS staff began teleworking March 16, 2020. Most libraries are open and providing limited services, with random closures due to virus exposure.

Rhode Island is in Phase III of Reopening RI; updated state guidelines were released March 12. The limit of one person per 100 square feet will be increased to one person per 50 square feet on March 19, increasing library capacity. In-person programs should continue to be held outside. Approximately 25% of Rhode Islanders have had coronavirus or been vaccinated and virus cases have plateaued or slightly increased. Masking remains a state requirement.

#### D. Kids Reading Across RI (KRARI)

*Becoming Muhammad Ali* by Kwame Alexander and James Patterson is the 2021 KRARI selection. A virtual author event will be held April 29 at 1 pm; attendees may register on the OLIS website. OLIS will provide funds to the RI Center for the Book (RICFB) to distribute book sets to libraries.

#### E. National Library Legislative Day (NLLD)

Selected individuals from target states will participate in a virtual NLLD day to meet with legislators. Ms. Mellor and Ed Garcia, Director, Cranston Public Library, were invited to attend meetings with Rhode Island legislators.

### V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### A. Federal & State Legislative Updates (Mr. Coutu and Ms. Mellor reporting)

Federal and State bills about libraries may be found on the [OLIS legislative webpage](#).

##### i. Rhode Island Legislation

###### a. H5652 - RI Sanctuary State Act

The bill designates schools, places of worship, and courts as sanctuary locations requiring a judicial warrant for federal immigration authorities to access those locations to enforce immigration laws. RI Library Association (RILA) seeks to amend the bill to include libraries as sanctuary sites. A bill hearing is scheduled for March 17.

###### b. H5148 - RI Broadband Development Program

The bill establishes a state broadband coordinator and council. RILA seeks to amend the bill to replace Ocean State Libraries (OSL) with OLIS as the library representative on the broadband council.

###### c. H5671 & S0289 - RI General Laws (RIGL): State Aid to Libraries

The bills amend sections of RIGL §29-6 and 29-3.1 to remove outdated provisions and update language to reflect current practices affecting library technology and GIA. The bills also change the Statewide Reference Resource Center (SRRC) contract period from 2 to 5 years. Changes to §29-

3.1-2.2 clarifies the appointment of the chair of the Library Board of RI. Ms. Drnach submitted a letter of support for the bills on behalf of the board.

d. S0032 - Student Privacy On School-owned Technology

The bill establishes certain student privacy rights regarding school-issued take-home technology devices.

e. S0073 - The Harold M. Metts School Safety Act Of 2021

The bill prohibits possession of firearms on school grounds except for peace officers, retired law enforcement officers, contractual school security personnel, or unloaded firearms in locked containers/racks in motor vehicles.

f. H5054 & S0342 - Internet Service Providers: Net Neutrality

The bills require internet service providers to follow net neutrality requirements.

ii. Federal Legislation

a. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) includes provisions of Senator Jack Reed's Library Stabilization Fund Act (LSFA) providing \$200 million to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for libraries. Each state is guaranteed a minimum of \$2 million with additional funds based on population. RI will receive \$2.2 million ARPA funds, in addition to its current Library Services and Technology Act award of \$1.2 million for federal fiscal year 2021.

## VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

### A. Ms. Blais

Rhode Island Library Information Network for Kids (RILINK), the school library consortium, held a statewide school professional development day today; RI public schools schedule a professional development day every two months. RILINK is migrating its catalog to a cloud-based system. RILINK will also move from their current eBook platform to [Sora Overdrive for Kids](#) to expand eBook options; the platform change will increase costs to school districts but provide a better interface and better integration with educational websites.

*Stamped* by Ibram X. Kendi has been well-received by schools and is being used in many school programs. Ms. Blais is hosting a virtual book club at Cranston HS East for 30 students and faculty featuring *Stamped*. Cranston Public Schools have 3 unfilled librarian positions, including the District Library Program Supervisor. The district has reduced print and non-print budgets by 50%; one elementary school now has a \$100 book budget.

When the pandemic situation resolves, Ms. Blais recommends the November 2020 School Library Report be promoted again on a legislative level to bring awareness to school libraries.

### B. Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo

Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo expressed concern about the recent controversy to ban some Dr. Seuss books; she expressed opposition to banning books in libraries and historical revisionism.

## VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. Trustee Resources and Support Committee

Ms. Mellor requested the agenda item be removed until there is sufficient time and resources to address the issues; OLIS has completed some preliminary work on the item. Committee members, Mr. Coutu, Ms. Drnach, and Mr. Findlay will let Ms. Mellor know when they are available.

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Public Library Minimum Standards

The PL Minimum Standards were substantially revised in 2013, with minor revisions in 2018. With the current review of library job categories in the Public Library Annual Survey in progress and the resulting information derived from that review, Ms. Mellor recommended the establishment of a committee to review the PL Minimum Standards to assess staffing requirements and other standards that may need revision to align more closely with library service post-pandemic. Mr. Coutu, Ms. Feldman, and Ms. Page volunteered to join a review committee.

Ms. Feldman recommended that library employee benefit information be gathered in the PL Annual Survey in addition to salary data to provide more accurate information about personnel costs. Library salary information can be found on the OLIS website, [Public Library Annual Survey Comparative Statistics Reports](#).

Ms. Mellor reported that the next PL Annual Survey will gather more granular data for library positions.

### B. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

The Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) will meet with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) on March 18 to discuss ARPA funds allowable expenditures; state libraries may begin to receive funds in April. Preliminary information indicates that funds may be disbursed similar to 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act funds. CARES Act funds were provided primarily for connectivity, including hotspots, digital services, and response and recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. Because ARPA funds will be distributed under current Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) priorities, funds may also be used in accordance with OLIS' current Five Year Plan for the use of LSTA funds.

Once allowable expenditures are more clearly identified, OLIS will develop a plan for the use of ARPA funds based on library needs. OLIS plans on focusing on strategic statewide projects and individual grants to libraries to support libraries now and strengthen library services post-pandemic. OLIS will be surveying libraries to collect data on library needs and challenges.

OLIS welcomes input for funding allocation. Ms. Mellor recommended a sub-committee of LBRI members and members of all types of libraries be convened to identify funding priorities. LBRI members may contact Ms. Mellor with funding ideas or if they wish to join the committee.

Ms. Blais recommended funds be used for online tutoring services such as Tutor.com. She reported that the RI Department of Education is promoting free tutoring via Zoom at [Schoolhouse.com](#), but this does not provide the individual help found in commercial products.

Mr. Findlay inquired about providing ventilation or automatic doors for libraries; Ms. Mellor noted that LSTA funds may not be used for construction purposes. Senator Reed introduced a bill, Build America's Libraries Act, to provide funds for library construction and renovation.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**IX. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for April 19, 2021, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., online via Zoom.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved By: Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo

Seconded By: Mr. Findlay

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

## LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on

April 19, 2021

Online Via Zoom

**Members Attending:** John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Rosita Hopper, Leslie Page, Robert Sloan

**Members Absent:** Heidi Blais, Cristina Amedeo, Annette Feldman, Kenneth Findlay, Louise Herrington, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Marcus Mitchell, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Doug Norris, Amanda Richman

**Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS):** Karen Andrews, Nicolette Baffoni, Karen Mellor

**Guests:** None

**Materials Distributed:** None

### I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:19 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 20-25 which allows public bodies to conduct public meetings online, providing all other requirements of the Open Meetings Act (RIGL §42-46-5(b)) are observed, including ensuring public access to the meeting of the public body. The meeting was posted, and public access information made available. Members are requested to identify themselves when making a motion.

Some pending RI laws will allow LBRI meetings to continue to be held online; more information will be forthcoming.

### II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the March 15, 2021 meeting

**Moved By:** Dr. Hopper

**Seconded By:** Mr. Coutu

The minutes were approved as presented.

### III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed members to the meeting.

### IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

#### A. OLIS Updates

##### i. Open Positions

OLIS awaits approval to move forward with the hiring processes for the Library Program Manager and Library Program Specialist II positions.

##### ii. Continuing Education (CE) Programming (Ms. Mellor & Ms. Baffoni Reporting)

Chaichin Chen, Resource Sharing Coordinator, and Katie Holcomb, Instruction Services and Assessment Librarian, Community College of RI (CCRI), will hold a Library of RI (LORI) Resource Sharing

Procedures workshop on April 22. Danielle Margarida, Youth Services Coordinator, hosts a Beanstack refresher workshop on April 20. [Beanstack](#) is the Summer Reading Program (SRP) performance-tracking application sponsored by OLIS for libraries in 2020 and again this summer. A Special Collections Roundtable focused on Trends and Special Topics will be presented by Jason Ackerman, Digital Resources Coordinator, on April 27.

The 'Project READY: Reimagining Equity & Access for Diverse Youth' series of trainings for cohorts of school and youth service librarians is ongoing. The 'Engaged Leadership for New Directors' program series has been well-attended and positive feedback received.

All CE programs are posted on the OLIS CE Calendar.

#### B. LORI Bi-Annual Item Count

Ms. Mellor presented statistical data from the delivery item count held March 21-27; the first item count since Fall 2019. The item count was not performed in 2020 because of cessation of delivery in the spring and library closures in the fall. The item count informs OLIS about the number of items moving through the delivery system and is held in Spring and Fall; item counts are typically higher in Spring.

In 2019, 135 libraries reported a total of 42,000+ delivery items during the spring count and 41,000 items in the fall. Approximately 31,000 items were reported in March 2021, with fewer libraries reporting than 2019; school participation in delivery declined from 86 school libraries in 2019 to 43 in 2021. Public libraries account for most of the delivery volume and the largest 2021 comparative reduction. Delivery volume should increase as library activities resume and pandemic restrictions are lifted. Most libraries continue to quarantine materials for 24 hours or longer.

Ms. Hopper noted that academic item count reductions may be attributed to a lower student campus population rather than library material quarantine practices.

Mr. Coutu noted that pandemic eBook use increased by approximately 10-12%.

#### C. OLIS Website

The state is migrating to a new Content Management System (CMS) that will require an extensive revision of the OLIS website. In preparation, OLIS staff are reviewing the website and updating and revising as necessary. While the changes will not substantially impact the website design, it will become more dynamic and easier to navigate, with enhanced accessibility options.

#### D. Projects and Grant Programs (Ms. Mellor & Ms. Baffoni reporting)

##### i. Summer Reading (SR) Grants

OLIS staff approved 42 public library SR grant applications that support summer learning and reading programs and library activities for all ages; 2 library applications are pending. The grant base amount is \$500 for youth programs, \$250 for adult programs, and \$250 for each additional library branch for youth programming. Awards will total just under \$40,000.

##### ii. Library of RI (LORI) Competitive Grants (LGP)

Sixteen libraries will receive a total of over \$400,000 for projects that enhance access to library services and support digitization. Awardees include public, special, and academic libraries, and library consortia. Specific information about the libraries and grant projects will be posted on the OLIS website.

Ms. Page reported that Woonsocket Harris Public Library (WNS) will receive a LGP grant to digitize 317 rolls of microfilm from the Woonsocket Call newspaper; the searchable digitized content will be available online for everyone. All digitization projects were required to include metadata, which will facilitate content ingestion for the planned RI hub of the [Digital Public Library of America](#). LORI grants are funded through OLIS' Library Services and Technology (LSTA) award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

#### E. Reopening Libraries: Coronavirus Updates

Libraries were informed on April 12 at the monthly meeting for libraries that they may resume more library activities as the state loosens restrictions. Vaccinations are now available for individuals 16 and older, and over 50% of Rhode Islanders are at least partially vaccinated. Capacity and per person occupancy has been increased in public spaces to 1 person per 50 square feet. Public programming may be resumed within these limits in well-ventilated spaces. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released new findings on surface spread, confirming that surfaces are not a primary route of transmission for the virus and that the risk of infection is generally considered low. OLIS has relaxed its recommendations on quarantine of library materials as a result, to 24 hours.

#### F. Senator Jack Reed, Library Town Hall

A virtual library town hall was convened on April 5 with Senator Jack Reed and RI libraries. Librarians from West Warwick Public Library and Providence Community Library shared stories of impact realized through library grant funding; pandemic response was also presented by Westerly Library and Rogers Library in Bristol. Senator Reed discussed his Build America's Libraries Act (BALA) that would distribute \$5 billion to state library agencies through the IMLS. The funds would be available to libraries for construction and renovation, including capital projects that address pandemic response and broadband accessibility.

#### G. National Library Legislative Day (NLLD)

Jack Martin, Executive Director, Providence Public Library, Ed Garcia, Director, Cranston Public Library, and Ms. Mellor met virtually with Senator Reed and his staff on April 6 as part of the American Library Association's National Library Legislative Day. The meeting included discussion on the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in RI libraries and strategies to promote passage of the Build America's Libraries Act.

### V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### A. Federal & State Legislative Updates (Mr. Coutu and Ms. Mellor reporting)

Federal and State bills about libraries may be found on the OLIS legislative [webpage](#).

##### i. Rhode Island Legislation

Most bills that may have impact on libraries have moved into committees and been held for further study, including H 5671 and S 289, which would amend RIGL § 29-6, removing outdated provisions regarding state aid to libraries and library network services. Also included in this category are a number of bills relating to open meeting laws in an effort to continue virtual meetings and provide more public access to such meetings.

## VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

### A. Ms. Blais (Ms. Mellor reporting for Ms. Blais)

On April 6, School Librarians of RI (SLRI) members Mary Moen, Sarah Hunicke, and Deanna Brooks made a presentation to the RI Council on Elementary and Secondary Education requesting that the RI Department of Education (RIDE) endorse national school library standards developed by the American Association of School Librarians. The council voted unanimously to accept the request. SLRI representatives will meet with Senator Jack Reed later this month for a town hall to discuss the needs of school libraries in RI.

## VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

OLIS will receive \$2.2 million in ARPA funds earmarked for pandemic response and recovery for libraries, in addition to the annual \$1.2 million allotment of LSTA funds; ARPA funds must be expended by September 30, 2022. The Institute of Museum and Library Services will administer the funds according to LSTA guidelines, and OLIS will distribute ARPA funds as outlined in OLIS' Five-Year Strategic Plan and its plan for the use of ARPA stimulus funds.

OLIS convened forums with public libraries to gather information and feedback about libraries' challenges, concerns and needs. Forums were held for large/urban, medium/suburban, and small/rural libraries along with a session for youth services librarians. OLIS also conducted an online survey to gather additional input about the impact of the pandemic and library needs. A primary concern in libraries, particularly small libraries, is staff shortages. Other recurring topics were access to digital content (eBooks, databases), programming for youth and job seekers, access to equipment and technology, and the impact of the pandemic on mental health.

ARPA funding distribution will focus on digital access, learning, and strengthening library services. Digital access grants will be available to libraries for up-to-date computer technology, Wi-Fi access, statewide access to digital content, including eBooks and materials for the visually-impaired, and additional AskRI database subscriptions.

Learning funds will support resources for remote learners, provide increased opportunities for acquisition of digital workforce and career skills, and strengthen reading and learning programs to address youth pandemic learning loss. OLIS will explore adding an online tutoring service for K-12 students and continue subscriptions that support workforce development. Online databases will be offered through AskRI, the Statewide Reference Resource Center (SRRC), which is managed by Providence Public Library.

Grant funds for strengthening library services will include providing training to librarians to support the delivery of services and programs through new technology, the automation of library processes, and exploration of centralized methods of program delivery. Grant funded projects will benefit all Rhode Islanders through a wide variety of programs made accessible through all types of libraries.

Ms. Mellor welcomes board input on how the funds should be allocated and requested that the board be prepared to vote on a detailed plan at the May meeting. OLIS will partner with library organizations, engage consultants, and work with the library community to identify strategic projects and grant programs that will have long-term impact, positioning RI libraries to effectively and pro-actively serve their communities in both the short and long-term.

Mr. Bucci noted that the LBRI should maintain oversight on grant fund distribution to support and guide OLIS decisions.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**IX. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for May 17, 2021, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., online via Zoom.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Moved By: Mr. Bucci

Seconded By: Dr. Hopper

The meeting was adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

## LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on

May 17, 2021

Online Via Zoom

**Members Attending:** Heidi Blais, John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Annette Feldman, Kenneth Findlay, Rosita Hopper, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Amanda Richman, Robert Sloan

**Members Absent:** Cristina Amedeo, Louise Herrington, Marcus Mitchell

**Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS):** Karen Andrews, Nicolette Baffoni, Karen Mellor

**Guests:** None

**Materials Distributed:**

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Funding Distribution Plan
- Legislative Report, May 17, 2021

### I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:22 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 20-25 which allows public bodies to conduct public meetings online, providing all other requirements of the Open Meetings Act (RIGL §42-46-5(b)) are observed, including ensuring public access to the meeting of the public body. The meeting was posted, and public access information made available. Members are requested to identify themselves when making a motion.

Some pending RI laws will allow LBRI meetings to continue to be held online; more information will be forthcoming.

### II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the April 19, 2021 meeting

**Moved By:** Mr. Coutu

**Seconded By:** Mr. Bucci

The minutes were approved as presented.

### III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed members and thanked them for their continued commitment to the board.

### IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

#### A. OLIS Budget

The state fiscal year ends on June 30. OLIS closes the fiscal year strongly having funded all planned projects plus a round of competitive grants while providing additional resources for libraries and Rhode Islanders through AskRI, the Statewide Reference Resource Center (SRRC) at Providence Public Library. Funds from staff positions that were vacant during part or all of FY21 were reallocated to services for libraries.

## B. OLIS Updates

### i. Open Positions

- a. The Adult Services Coordinator position originally held by Ms. Baffoni was approved for posting; the posting closes on May 27.
- b. Pablo Morales Henry has been selected to fill the Library Program Manager (LPM) position. Mr. Morales Henry comes to OLIS from Harvard's Radcliffe Institute Schlesinger Library where he held the position of Library Senior Developer and Archivist for Born-Digital Materials. He has substantial experience in the area of digitization and digital materials, including work with the Digital Public Library of America ([DPLA](#)). The LPM position oversees the Talking Books Library (TBL), the Library of RI (LORI), web development, digitization, and preservation. Mr. Morales Henry will join OLIS on June 21; his appointment will be announced in mid-June.
- c. The OLIS team has worked remotely since March 2020 and will return to the office with a hybrid-work plan over the summer. Staff performed seamlessly during remote work, providing all services without exception and going "above and beyond" to serve Rhode Island's libraries.

### C. Continuing Education (CE) Programming (Ms. Mellor & Ms. Baffoni Reporting)

OLIS will launch [Niche Academy](#) in June; the platform will provide access to asynchronous learning opportunities. Users will have access to previously recorded OLIS webinars, courses from state library agencies across the country, and courses developed by Niche Academy. Webinars and courses from OCLC's [WebJunction](#) will also be available. The platform's statistical data compilation functions will provide user activity data to inform OLIS' future program planning. Content will be available for all types of libraries; recommendations for content is welcomed.

OLIS resumes a full calendar of live programs in September. All CE programs are posted on the OLIS CE Calendar.

### D. RI Library Association (RILA) Annual Conference (Ms. Baffoni Reporting)

The RILA annual conference will be held virtually on June 3-4. This year's theme is "Well + Connected: Libraries and Healthy Communities". OLIS is a sponsor of the event and Ms. Baffoni is currently the conference committee chair. An event app supported with OLIS' sponsorship will provide networking and engagement opportunities for presenters, attendees, and exhibitors. Keynote speakers are Patty Wong, American Library Association (ALA) President Elect and Dr. Nicole A. Cooke, Associate Professor at the School of Library and Information Science, University of South Carolina. Registration is now open.

### E. Grant Programs (Ms. Mellor & Ms. Baffoni reporting)

The LORI and Summer Reading Grants programs are underway; 60 libraries were awarded a combined total of \$473,000 for library projects and activities. Sixteen libraries received a total of \$436,000 for LORI grant projects, and 44 libraries received \$47,000 for Summer Reading programs. Jason Ackermann, OLIS Digital Resources Coordinator, built an online tool for the Summer Reading grants to provide a user-friendly and efficient grant application and reporting system for libraries.

### F. Public Library Annual Survey (PLAS) Updates

Ms. Mellor presented an overview of library job categories recommended for the PLAS; the categories have not been updated in 20+ years. A committee of librarians representing all types of public libraries convened to review library job categories and recommend changes based on current library position

and responsibilities. The committee recommended expanding the categories from 12 to 15 to accurately define library work. The updated categories will replace existing job categories when the PLAS launches in June. The work will also inform the review of the RI Public Library Standards

#### G. Reopening Libraries: Updates

The state opens at 100% capacity on May. In accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), masks are not required for vaccinated people as of May 18. Libraries were notified on May 14 that they may resume most services as of May 21; libraries may use their discretion with regard to mask-wearing. OLIS recommends libraries consult and align their policies with municipal policies on mask and other requirements.

### V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### A. Federal & State Legislative Updates (Mr. Coutu and Ms. Mellor reporting)

Federal and State bills about libraries may be found on the OLIS legislative [webpage](#).

##### i. Rhode Island Legislation

S0289 – The RI Senate will vote on May 19 to amend various sections related to libraries to remove outdated provisions and update language to reflect current practices affecting library technology.

H5148 - Establishes a broadband council to create a plan to increase the use of broadband service in the state and establish a broadband coordinator to access federal funds and coordinate with the council.

RILA is working with legislators to lobby for legislation for libraries.

##### ii. Federal Legislation

There is no movement on federal bills about libraries. Ms. Mellor maintains contract with Senator Jack Reed's office to monitor library developments with the construction funding legislation (Build America's Libraries Act).

### VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

#### A. Ms. Blais

School Librarians of RI (SLRI) members gave a presentation on April 6 to the RI Council on Elementary and Secondary Education requesting that the RI Department of Education (RIDE) endorse national school library standards developed by the American Association of School Librarians. The council voted unanimously to endorse the standards and will post them on the RIDE website.

The standards endorsement acknowledges the value of school librarians and will move curriculums forward while helping establish consistent library staffing.

### VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### A. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Funding Distribution Plan

OLIS received an award of \$2,230,333 through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), which will be administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) OLIS will use the funds as outlined by IMLS ARPA guidance and in alignment with OLIS' current Five-Year Plan. Ms. Mellor presented details for ARPA fund distribution and requested board approval of the plan.

The OLIS ARPA funding distribution plan recommends funds be allocated to libraries to expand availability of digital access through current technologies and the internet, promote learning by providing resources and skill-attainment opportunities, and strengthen library services by offering training to librarians for the support of services and programs.

The fund distribution breakdown would be \$850,000 for Digital Access, \$637,293 for Learning, and \$743,040 in the forms of grants, contracted services, and services. As the fund distribution process advances, project funding would be adjusted and reallocated as required by specific project needs.

The timeline for funding activities would begin this month and conclude September 30, 2022. The final project report must be submitted to the IMLS by January 2023.

Mr. Norris inquired how funding opportunities will be publicized and noted the potential for crossover activities with organizations who may be able to make recommendations for funding. Mr. Bucci recommended posters and flyers be provided to community health centers and dentist offices to solicit participation in certain grant projects.

**Approval of the American Rescue Plan Act: Funding Distribution Plan**

**Moved By:** Mr. Findlay

**Seconded By:** Mr. Norris

The American Rescue Plan Act Funding Distribution Plan was approved.

**B. Revision of Public Library Minimum Standards**

Ms. Mellor will convene a committee meeting in the next few weeks to move forward with the Public Library Minimum Standards review.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**IX. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for June 21, 2021, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., online via Zoom.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved By:** Mr. Bucci

**Seconded By:** Mr. Findlay

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

## LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on

June 21, 2021

Online Via Zoom

**Members Attending:** John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Annette Feldman, Kenneth Findlay, Rosita Hopper, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Doug Norris, Leslie Page

**Members Absent:** Heidi Blais, Cristina Amedeo, Louise Herrington, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Marcus Mitchell, Amanda Richman, Robert Sloan

**Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS):** Karen Andrews, Nicolette Baffoni, Karen Mellor

**Guests:** None

**Materials Distributed:**

- LBRI Meeting Schedule 2021-2022, Proposed
- Legislative Report, June 21, 2021
- Library Late Fees: Ineffective & Harmful, Handout

### I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:18 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 20-25 which allows public bodies to conduct public meetings online, providing all other requirements of the Open Meetings Act (RIGL §42-46-5(b)) are observed, including ensuring public access to the meeting of the public body. The meeting was posted, and public access information made available. Members are requested to identify themselves when making a motion.

Pending RI laws will allow LBRI meetings to continue to be held online; more information is forthcoming.

### II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the May 17, 2021 meeting

**Moved By:** Dr. Hopper

**Seconded By:** Mr. Findlay

The minutes were approved as presented.

### III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed members.

### IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

#### A. OLIS Budget

OLIS closes the state fiscal period in a strong position with all planned projects fully funded. New resources were added to AskRI (the Statewide Reference Resource Center) to support learners and jobseekers during the pandemic, including EBSCO's Learning Express Job & Career Accelerator that assists job seekers with resume development, interview preparation, and career exploration.

The FY22 state budget provides level-funding for public library grant-in-aid (GIA). The RI Library Association's (RILA) legislative committee is working with legislators to fully fund GIA at 25% per RI General Law for the next 3 years by using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

## B. OLIS Updates

### i. Open Positions

Pablo Morales Henry is OLIS' new Library Program Manager, starting work on June 21. Mr. Morales Henry will lead the network services team, develop and expand digital services, oversee the Talking Books Library, and coordinate preservation and disaster-preparedness work.

Interviews are underway to fill the Adult Services Coordinator position vacated by Ms. Baffoni.

### ii. Coronavirus Pandemic

Covid-19 cases in RI are decreasing; RI has the fifth highest vaccination rate in the country. OLIS staff have been working remotely for the last 16 months and will gradually resume in-office work. OLIS awaits a decision from Department of Administration (DOA) about a permanent remote/office hybrid work model; staff have not only demonstrated effective job performance but also done an outstanding job while working remotely.

### iii. Public Library Annual Survey

The annual public library survey period will be administered from July to mid-September. The survey gathers data from all 48 public libraries for state and federal reporting. Pandemic-related questions were added to the survey to gather data on how libraries have been impacted by the pandemic. The survey also includes certification of expenditure and application for state grant-in-aid.

### iv. Library of RI (LORI) Certification Process

The annual LORI Certification process runs concurrently with the Public Library Annual Survey. LORI certification qualifies libraries for LORI membership and Interlibrary Loan (ILL) delivery service. Public libraries complete the LORI Certification process as part of the Public Library Annual Survey platform while academic, school and special libraries complete it as a stand-alone process. Approximately 175 libraries will participate in the certification process.

### v. Welcoming Library Project (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

Ms. Danielle Margarida, OLIS Youth Services Coordinator, is coordinating a youth-focused program titled 'Welcoming Library' to spark family conversations about immigration. The Welcoming Library includes a collection of 30 picture books featuring new arrival and new American families representing communities across Rhode Island. The library also includes conversation starters and a crated display unit that can be transported through the delivery system. The program will be piloted at Cranston Public Library (Central), South Kingstown Public Library (Peace Dale), Tiverton Public Library, and Warwick Public Library (Central) through Fall 2021. The 'Welcoming Library' kits will be available to public libraries when the pilot period ends. More information about the project can be found [online](#).

### vi. WaterFire Providence: Eye to Eye Photograph Exhibit

OLIS will partner with WaterFire Providence to bring a traveling art exhibit to RI public libraries in Fall 2021. The 'Eye to Eye Photograph Exhibit' is currently showcased at the WaterFire Arts Center (WFAC) and contains selected works from artist Mary Beth Meehan's four most recent projects. A hosting application will be available to libraries on the OLIS website.

## C. Projects and Grant Programs

### i. LORI Grants (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

The LORI grant process will reach its midway point in July. Some LORI grant projects have received media attention with OLIS credited for grant funding. East Providence Public Library's Fuller Creative Learning Center project 'Kitchen Inspirations' provides a mobile cooking kitchen, the 'Charlie Cart', for youth cooking events with up to 30 participants. The mobile kitchen includes approximately 175 kid-friendly kitchen tools.

North Providence Union Free Library was recognized by the *Valley Breeze* for their 'Any Place Office Space' project that provides a laptop, printer, and hotspot as a traveling office for individuals for extended periods. The *Kent County Daily Register* featured West Warwick Public Library's partnership with the Tomaquag Museum on a project that recruited indigenous youth to write stories for an 'Anthology of Indigenous Voices.' Ms. Mellor proposed a LORI grant showcase for a future board meeting and/or LBRI field trips to view grant projects.

### ii. American Rescue Protection Act (ARPA) Technology Grants

The ARPA technology grant process launched on June 11 will provide over \$500,000 for technology purchases to support library and patron services. Libraries may apply for base grants of \$8,000 or \$10,000 depending on service population, with an additional \$2,500 for each library branch. Distressed communities will receive an additional 25% of the total award. Jason Ackermann, OLIS Digital Resources Coordinator, developed an online grant application portal to facilitate grant application and processing. Ocean State Libraries, the public library consortium, has provided specifications and discounted pricing for specific computers and peripherals and will order equipment on behalf of member libraries; other eligible equipment may be procured through other vendors.

### iii. American Rescue Protection Act Projects - Future

Later this summer OLIS will launch a competitive round of ARPA grants for projects that address recovery from the pandemic. Providence Public Library will receive a grant to provide digital literacy and adult education training for the public in person at select libraries around the state and online. Tutor.com, which provides one-on-one homework and job seeker services, will be added to AskRI, the Statewide Reference Resource Center at Providence Public Library.

### iv. Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF)

Libraries are encouraged to apply for additional technology funding through the Federal Communication Commission [Emergency Connectivity Fund](#) program. The program has been provided with \$7.17 billion through ARPA to help schools and libraries provide technology equipment and services, specifically laptops and hotspots, to increase digital access.

OLIS is working with Ocean State Libraries (OSL) to encourage libraries to apply for these funds and help them navigate the federal application process.

## D. Reopening Libraries

Mask restrictions are lifted for vaccinated individuals as of May 18 and capacity limitations restored to 100% on May 21. Libraries may establish their own masking policies and are encouraged to align masking requirements with their municipalities. It is anticipated that some libraries may retain some new library programs and services developed during the pandemic.

#### E. Fine Free Status, RI Public Libraries

Ms. Mellor presented an overview of late fee/fine policies in RI public libraries. Data was taken from the Spring 2021 public library survey conducted by Kelly Metzger, OLIS Data Coordinator. Of the 41 responders, 19 libraries reported they are completely or partially fine-free, 17 libraries are considering fine-free policies, and 5 libraries will continue to charge fines. Providence Public Library and Providence Community Library will be implementing full or partial fine-free policies soon.

Currently, over 600,000 Rhode Islanders have access to fine-free materials in their public libraries. If the additional 17 libraries implement fine-free policies, 75% of public libraries and Rhode Islanders will have access to fine-free library items.

Fines are often an obstacle to patrons using the library and materials go unreturned because of the stigma of being fined. Materials not returned to libraries are still billable and reminder late notices issued. While some libraries feel that fines incentivize responsible behavior, studies indicate that library material returns have not been adversely affected by fine-free policies in libraries. Colorado State Library resources about eliminating library fines is available on [online](#). Some libraries depend on fines as a source of revenue and governing boards are reluctant to eliminate fines until other sources of revenue can be identified.

#### V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### A. Federal & State Legislative Updates (Mr. Coutu and Ms. Mellor reporting)

Federal and State legislation about libraries may be found on the OLIS legislative [webpage](#).

##### i. Rhode Island Legislation

There is no update on the status of the RI Open Meetings Law for virtual meetings for state boards.

##### ii. Federal Legislation

The American Library Association (ALA) is working with legislators to include funding for libraries in the proposed federal infrastructure bill.

#### VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

##### A. Dr. Hopper

The Higher Education Library Information Network (HELIN) Consortia held its annual business meeting and conference on June 16. This year's theme was the 'Creative Minds of HELIN'. Conference session presenters were members of the HELIN libraries; conference presentations are available [online](#). The HELIN Award, established to honor D. Russell Bailey, Librarian at Phillips Memorial Library at Providence College from 2005 until his death in December 2020, was awarded to Roger Williams University for their digital humanities project about slavery and racial justice.

#### VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

##### A. Revision of Public Library Minimum Standards

Ms. Mellor will convene a committee meeting over the summer and present a revisions draft to the board in September or October. Proposed revisions will consider information about library job categories and staffing hours developed for the public library annual survey. Library open-hours and staffing requirements are currently based on municipal population.

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

A. LBRI Member Terms

Ms. Mellor has proceeded with recommendations to the Governor’s Office for replacements for expired-term board members and second terms for single-term members.

B. LBRI Proposed Meeting Schedule, 2021-2022

Ms. Mellor noted the April 18, 2022 meeting is during school vacation week and recommended moving it to April 11, 2022.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**IX. FUTURE MEETINGS**

Ms. Mellor inquired if board meetings should proceed virtually via Zoom for the 2021-2022 session. Members recommended future meetings be virtual with occasional in-person meetings. Dr. Hopper noted DOA meeting rooms are impersonal and antiseptic, and Providence rush-hour traffic is problematic. Ms. Mellor recommended that occasional in-person meetings be held at public libraries. Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo noted that not all libraries are accessible.

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for September 20, 2021, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., online via Zoom.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**Moved By:** Dr. Hopper

**Seconded By:** Mr. Norris

The meeting was adjourned at 5:36 p.m.