

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on
October 18, 2021
at the Department of Administration,
2nd Floor, Conference Room B,
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908-5816

Members Attending: John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Rosita Hopper, Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Amanda Richman

Members Absent: Cristina Amedeo, Heidi Blais, Annette Feldman, Kenneth Findlay, Louise Herrington, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Marcus Mitchell, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Robert Sloan

Present from the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS): Nicolette Baffoni, Karen Mellor, Pablo Morales Henry

Guests: None

Materials Distributed: None

I. WELCOME

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

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the June 21, 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.

IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

A. OLIS Updates

i. Staffing Updates

Pablo Morales Henry, OLIS' new Library Program Manager, was introduced to the board. Mr. Morales began work on June 21 and leads the Network Services team.

Emily Goodman is OLIS' new Adult Services Coordinator, starting on October 25. Ms. Goodman will support local library development in the areas of workforce development, small business support, adult education, and digital literacy, along with other services provided for adults.

ii. Talking Books Library

OLIS continues to provide core services. Talking Books registration numbers are down, and the team is developing a PR campaign to promote changes to the program, including that students who may qualify for TBL no longer need an IEP to access services, and that the program is increasingly technology based.

iii. Public Library Annual Survey (PLAS)

The Public Library Annual Survey was completed on September 15 with a minimum number of waivers, as libraries are generally open and fully operating. Maintenance of Effort was met across the board. Although library expenditures were down in 2021, in most towns the appropriation level remained the same. The economic health of libraries is generally good, with very few cuts to library budgets. Staffing remains a challenge for libraries.

iv. Delivery

Delivery numbers are down, partly because many schools have not yet restarted their participation in delivery. The Library of Rhode Island (LORI) certification is underway. Public libraries completed certification along with their PLAS. OLIS staff continue to review and approve applications.

v. Summer Reading (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

OLIS disbursed \$36,000 in formula grants to 44 libraries to purchase materials and supplies for summer reading programs. This included \$500 per library for youth programs, \$250 for adult programs, and an additional \$250 per library branch. Libraries used the funds for a variety of projects, including arts and craft kits, StoryWalks, book club materials, and library of things collections. OLIS continued providing the online reading tracker Beanstack to interested libraries, which saw lower adoption than last summer because of increased in-person library activities.

vi. Continuing Education (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

OLIS has launched the OLIS Library Learning Center, hosted through Niche Academy. The entire backlog of recorded OLIS webinars from the pandemic is available to all RI Library staff, as well as curated content across a variety of library topic areas. Creation and curation of content in the Library Learning Center is ongoing.

Danielle Margarida, Youth Services Coordinator, has a slate of programs in development, including a series on Supporting Communities in Crises, trauma-informed services, and best practices for early childhood programming. OLIS will provide a series of trustee trainings, as well as an Engaged Planning series for libraries developing strategic plans.

vii. LORI Grants (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

In Spring 2021, OLIS awarded \$431,000 to 16 libraries (public, academic, special and consortia) as part of the LORI Grant Program. Projects wrapped up in mid-September, and OLIS received the project final reports on October 15. Highlighted projects included Providence Community Library's Spanish-language outreach to the community and North Providence Library's take home office kits. Ms. Page reported that the Woonsocket Harris Library's project to digitize 60 years of the Woonsocket Call newspaper was very successful.

B. American Rescue Plan Act – Ongoing Grant Programs

i. ARPA Technology Grants

OLIS awarded \$520,000 to 48 public libraries to purchase technology, including desktops, laptops, peripherals, cameras, Zoom Rooms and more. Libraries serving communities under 10,000 people were eligible for up to \$8,000, while those serving over 10,000 were eligible for \$10,000. Distressed communities as defined under Rhode Island law were eligible for an additional 25%. Supply chain issues have affected the receipt of equipment and processing of grants. Libraries that ordered early

have received their items, but many are still waiting. Some items may be delayed as far as March 2022.

ii. ARPA Competitive Grants (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

OLIS' is offering two competitive ARPA Grant opportunities to help libraries expand digital access, support learning and strengthen library services in their communities to aid recovery from the pandemic. Mini-Grants are available for projects between \$2,500 and \$7,500, while Project Grants are available for projects from \$10,000 - \$50,000. Applications closed on October 1, and libraries will be notified of awards between October 18 and 22. OLIS received 20 applications for Mini-Grants totaling \$124,000 and 6 applications for Project Grants totaling \$235,000.

iii. ARPA: URI Graduate School of Library & Information Studies (GSLIS)

OLIS partnered with URI GSLIS to offer paid professional field experience to 4 URI GSLIS student interns in 3 public libraries and the RI State Library. OLIS will offer this program again for the Spring 2022 semester, with applications reopening in November. OLIS is also working with the RI Library Association to award 6 Diversity Scholarships for tuition at the URI GSLIS program.

iv. ARPA Statewide Projects

OLIS has sub granted \$405,000 to AskRI. Funds supported adding Tutor.com and Job and Career Accelerator to the AskRI suite of resources along with a complete AskRI website overhaul and substantial advertising campaign. OLIS has also provided Providence Public Library a subgrant of \$230,000 for workforce development and digital literacy programming statewide.

OLIS is confident all ARPA funds will be expended by September 2022. OLIS will explore options to continue funding Tutor.com and other AskRI resources added with stimulus funding, in addition to exploring options for fully funding State Grant in Aid at 25%.

C. Afghan Evacuees

Rhode Island will welcome 60 – 65 Afghan Evacuee families (approximately 250 people). Ed Garcia from the Cranston Library connected with Dorcas International Institute, RI's largest refugee resettlement organization, other library directors and OLIS to discuss how libraries may partner with Dorcas to welcome evacuees to RI. Because there is a housing shortage in RI, families will likely be relocated outside urban areas and scattered across the state.

Libraries will work with Dorcas to get all Afghan evacuees library cards and library welcome packets explaining free resources, digital literacy, ESL, and computer access translated into Afghan languages. Libraries and Dorcas will also explore opportunities to offer programs, perhaps virtual, for Afghan families. Board discussion about additional ideas included partnering with local CAP agencies, and hosting drives for clothes and other donations through libraries.

D. Five Year Plan Evaluation & Development (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

OLIS is required by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to conduct an independent evaluation of OLIS' Five-Year Plan for the use of LSTA funds in the fourth year of the plan, due for the 2018-2022 plan in March 2022. OLIS has contracted with the library consulting firm QualityMetrics to conduct the evaluation, which began in late August. In addition to analyzing OLIS' annual State Program Report to the IMLS and other data sources, QualityMetrics will conduct staff interviews, a community survey of library directors, and focus groups to determine whether OLIS achieved its plan goals. OLIS will begin work on the new plan in early 2022; the new plan is due to IMLS in June 2022.

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

The RI General Assembly has not been in session, and it is unclear if there will be a fall session as proposed at the end of the spring session. Plans for the distribution of state ARPA funds have not yet been taken up by the Assembly. No additional news to report.

ii. Federal Legislation

Senator Jack Reed has been working to include library funding for construction in the upcoming federal infrastructure package. Negotiations are ongoing, though Reed's office is not optimistic.

VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

A. Ms. Blais (Reported by Ms. Mellor for Ms. Blais)

Ms. Blais relayed that it is great to be back to in-person school, and most school libraries seem to be functioning as close to normal as possible.

RILINK has transitioned to "Follett Hosted" for circulation and cataloging for member schools, a project funded with a LORI grant. Advantages of this move are that it has resolved server issues and increased patron security, however, there have also been some bumps in the road as there were many steps involved in the transition process and some are not yet resolved. RILINK staff have been working nonstop to resolve transition issues for member schools. The ILL component of the transition to Follett Hosted is not yet running and will hopefully be functional within the next few months.

RILINK has purchased SORA (Overdrive for K-12 students) as its eBook platform. So far, it is working well, with an attractive and user-friendly interface and a large selection of titles available. SLRI has been meeting with the RI Department of Education regarding the Right to Read Act. As a result of those meetings, a group of librarians and other unified arts teachers are collaborating to develop lesson plans that connect with the Right to Read initiative.

B. Ms. Richman

Ms. Richman reports that the Lifespan Community Health Institute, a community health outreach program focused on reducing health disparities, has been working with her at Lifespan Library. Following discussions with Ms. Richman, the Institute is interested in working with OLIS to expand its outreach work through public libraries for community health programming.

C. Dr. Hopper

HELIN is hosting two upcoming continuing education institutes for librarians in member organizations. The first will focus on hiring for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Andrea Baer from Rowan University will present a second session on the topic of talking to students about misinformation in mass media. Both will be conducted online, so HELIN may open attendance to non-member librarians.

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Revision of Public Library Minimum Standards

Ms. Mellor has put this project on hold due to the demands that distributing ARPA funds have had on OLIS' capacity.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. American Rescue Plan Act – Final Projects

OLIS is seeking ideas for the expenditure of remaining ARPA funds. Ocean State Libraries' proposed RFID project will not be going forward, and those funds must be reallocated. OLIS will offer a new grant round for self-check machines, but it is unclear if the demand will be enough to expend the remaining ARPA funds. OLIS is seeking feedback from public library directors about additional needs and input from the Library Board.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

IX. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for November 15, 2021, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., at the Department of Administration, Conference Room B, 2nd Floor, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908.

Note: Ms. Dzialo indicated DOA was locked and not accessible on Oct 18; OLIS will work to ensure this does not happen again.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By: Mr. Bucci

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
November 15, 2021
at the Department of Administration,
2nd Floor, Conference Room B,
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908-5816

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

Members Absent: Cristina Amedeo, Louise Herrington, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Marcus Mitchell

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

Guests: Stefanie Blankenship, Director, North Providence Union Free Library; Mike Crispino, Head of Information Services, North Providence Union Free Library; Cheryl Space, Director, Providence Community Library

Materials Distributed: None

I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:25 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the October 18, 2021 meeting

Moved By: Mr. Bucci

Seconded By: Ms. Page

The minutes were approved as presented.

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed members.

IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

A. OLIS Updates

i. Onsite Work

As of November 15, OLIS staff members will work onsite a minimum of 3-days a week as State divisions adopt return-to-office policies. Throughout the pandemic, some OLIS team members have worked hybrid schedules while others have worked primarily remotely, with no loss of agency productivity.

ii. Ongoing/upcoming

a. LORI Delivery

a. Bi-annual Item Count

Pablo Morales Henry, OLIS Library Program Manager, worked with Ocean State Libraries (OSL) to develop an application to automate the delivery item count for public libraries. Previously, OSL staff manually queried the system each night of the item count to gather data. The delivery count identifies the number of items moving through the Library of RI (LORI) delivery system; public libraries constitute over 90% of the material moved through delivery. The item count is conducted twice a year.

b. LORI Certification

The LORI annual certification process concluded with 148 libraries of all types certified to receive delivery service and participate in the LORI resource-sharing network.

c. Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Clearinghouse

ILL clearinghouse material requests have increased in recent months as libraries resume full services. The clearinghouse obtains materials from outside the LORI network for LORI members. School libraries appear to be placing more ILL requests because the new RI school library catalog implemented by RILINK, the school library consortium, does not yet have an ILL module; RILINK is working on a solution.

b. Five Year Plan Evaluation

The evaluation of OLIS' Five-Year Plan for the use of Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding is in process. An independent evaluation of the plan's implementation is required by the Institute of Museum and Library Services in the fourth year of the five-year plan. Ms. Baffoni will distribute a survey to libraries this week to gather feedback on the implementation of OLIS' plan.

c. Brownstone Book Fund

OLIS was contacted this summer by Diane Brownstone of the Brownstone Book Fund, a New York-based philanthropic organization focused on making reading accessible to young children, especially those without easy access to reading materials. The Foundation works with state library agencies to distribute 100 books each to 100 local libraries. Because RI has under 100 public libraries, OLIS recommended distributing books to RI school libraries in communities with high percentages of children living in poverty. Danielle Margarida, OLIS Youth Services Coordinator, and Ms. Baffoni, worked with RI school librarians to identify 100 books for elementary, middle and high school libraries in underserved communities. The Brownstone Book Fund is currently distributing the selected books to RI school libraries. The donation value is approximately \$100,000.

iii. Continuing Education (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

a. Project Ready

The year-long 'Project Ready' program (Reimagining Equity and Access for Diverse Youth) has concluded. Four- cohorts completed a robust program of multiple learning modules in early October with the final meeting this week. To maintain project momentum, OLIS will

provide \$350 grants to program participants for collection development or programming; the grant program launches this month.

b. Preparing to Support Communities in Crisis

Ms. Margarida will lead a six-month learning series designed to develop skills and relationships to support communities in crisis. Participants will meet monthly and complete assignments to build knowledge and confidence to better serve young people, especially non-dominant youth during times of crisis, such as the recent pandemic and racial unrest. The program is limited to 25 participants; registration closes November 24.

c. Talking Books Library (TBL): Institutional Accounts

Alicia Waters, OLIS Library Services Coordinator, will host training for libraries interested in becoming TBL institutional members, including account setup and best practices. Participants will learn about the Braille and Audio Reading (BARD) program and National Library Service audio players.

OLIS Library Learning Center OLIS launched the OLIS Library Learning Center, powered by the Niche Academy learning platform, to provide on-demand learning resources and courses for the library community. Users are creating accounts with 355 engagements realized. Popular programs currently are Customer Service and De-escalation Techniques.

A full calendar of Continuing Education programs will be available in 2022.

iv. Partnerships (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

a. Afghan Refugees

OLIS is working with the Dorcas International Institute to support Afghan refugees relocating to RI. Refugees will be issued ID cards by the City of Providence; these ID cards also serve as library cards as part of an ongoing collaborative project between the Providence Community Library, Providence Public Library, and the City. A library welcome package is being compiled for distribution to refugees.

b. Lifespan Community Health Institute (LCHI)

OLIS is working with Ms. Richman and Carrie Bridges Feliz of Lifespan Community Health Institute to identify medical and trauma-informed trainings that may be useful to librarians. Libraries will connect with LCHI to host or promote flu and vaccination clinics and potentially offer LCHI programs such as babysitting certification, general health literacy, and CPR.

c. Healthsource RI

OLIS will work to connect libraries with Healthsource RI to promote open enrollment for health insurance by providing materials in Spanish and English. Additional information is available on the [Healthsource website](#).

B. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

i. ARPA Technology Grants

Supply chain issues are impacting ARPA technology grants for some libraries; grants were awarded based on specific equipment and costs. Increased prices and product unavailability have resulted in OLIS and Ocean State Libraries (OSL) staff responding to and reconciling price changes and substitutions for unavailable items. OLIS will work with libraries and OSL to ensure libraries are not negatively impacted by price changes.

ii. ARPA Technology Grants, Round 2

OLIS will fund self-check machines and potentially other technology for public libraries; self-check machines will be the primary focus with funds for additional technology purchases as available. A library survey will assess technology requests to determine the demand for self-checks and other technology. OLIS will work with OSL to streamline and simplify the acquisition process; input on the process is welcome.

C. LORI Grants: Featured Projects

i. Providence Community Library: Conectando Nuestra Gente

The Providence Community Library received an OLIS LORI grant of \$48,200 for Conectando Nuestra Gente, a program designed to expand visibility and relevance of the library in neighborhoods where over 40% of the population is Spanish speaking. Cheryl Space, Director of Providence Community Library, discussed how the library expanded and strengthened existing programs to better serve Spanish-speakers, and presented information about new initiatives developed with input from Spanish-speaking artists and educators.

ii. Mayor Salvatore Mancini Union Free Library: Any Place Office Space

Stefanie Blankenship, Director, and Mike Crispino, Head of Information Services, of Mayor Salvatore Mancini Union Free Library in North Providence, presented an overview of their library's \$11,250 LORI grant project. Grant funds were used to purchase technology to assemble ten mobile office kits. Each kit contained a wireless printer, laptop, mobile hotspot, wireless mouse, paper, and flash drive. Patrons can check out the kits for a three-month period. Kits have been used to conduct job searches, take online classes, prepare taxes, make medical appointments, and to support a small business owner. The project addressed the increased need for devices and broadband access that the library had identified as a result of the pandemic.

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

No current updates on state legislation affecting libraries.

ii. Federal Legislation

The recently passed infrastructure bill did not contain funding for library construction, nor does the pending budget reconciliation bill. Libraries seeking construction funds should consult with their local municipality and investigate potential construction funds available through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds distributed to cities and towns. Senator Reed, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and the American Library Association (ALA) will continue to promote legislation for library construction funding.

VI. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

No board member reports.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Public Library Minimum Standards

Public Library Minimum Standards review remains on hold due to time constraints.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Digital Equity Act and Broadband Affordability

The Digital Equity Act, part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“infrastructure package”), provides \$2.75B over 5 years for broadband connectivity and digital inclusion programs. It will offer funding to provide access, training and content necessary to fully utilize broadband connectivity while expanding digital equity. Ms. Mellor welcomes input on how OLIS may engage with this program to promote digital skills and broadband adoption through libraries while limiting the burden on libraries in terms of grant application and limited resources to execute additional programs.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

IX. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2021, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., at Providence Public Library, 150 Empire Street, Providence. Free street parking will be available in Providence from 10am-9pm during November 27 to December 31.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By: Mr. Bucci

Seconded By: Mr. Norris

The meeting was adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on
Monday, December 13, 2021
at the Providence Public Library, Seminar Room
150 Empire Street, Providence, RI.

Members Attending: Heidi Blais, Melody Drnach (Chair), Doug Norris, Leslie Page

Members Absent: Cristina Amedeo, John Bucci, Aaron Coutu, Annette Feldman, Kenneth Findlay, Louise Herrington, Rosie Hopper, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Marcus Mitchell, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Amanda Richman, Robert Sloan

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

Guests: Jack Martin, Director, Providence Public Library

Materials Distributed: None

I. Welcome

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:23 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes from the November 15, 2021 meeting

Quorum was not present, no vote was taken.

III. Chairperson's Report

Ms. Drnach thanked members for attending and expressed her thanks to Providence Public Library for hosting the meeting.

IV. Chief of Library Services Report

A. OLIS Updates

- i. OLIS' annual State Program Report on the use of Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds is due to the Institute of Museum and Library Services on December 30, 2021. Progress is well underway.
- ii. OLIS has hired an outside evaluator, QualityMetrics, to conduct the required five-year evaluation of the OLIS Five Year Plan for the use of Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds in Rhode Island. The evaluation is progressing, with a survey of libraries closing this week. Focus groups will be convened at the start of the new year to gather input on various services supported with LSTA funds, such as youth services, subgrants, the Talking Books Library, and public library support.
- iii. Continuing Education
OLIS is developing its schedule of continuing education programs for spring, which will feature a more structured approach in comparison to the more fluid schedule

implemented during the pandemic. The calendar will be released in mid-January. The schedule will include a return to regular roundtable meetings (Children’s, Young Adult, Special Collections, Adult) as well as a few new communities of practice, including new directors and library directors serving socio-economically disadvantaged communities.

Youth Services will be offering sessions including Online Privacy for Youth, Mind in the Making training for early literacy, an Introduction to Trauma with Bradley Hospital and a New England Summer Summit, a collaborative summer reading conference with other New England states to prepare for Summer 2022. Other programs will include Engaged Planning, Project Outcome (rescheduled from March of 2020), and sessions to help libraries and organizations prepare for a Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) hub. OLIS will continue to promote Niche Academy and other learning opportunities in WebJunction and Udemy.

B. Coronavirus.

RI is currently in a state of high transmission and OLIS is working with RI Department of Health (RIDOH) to stop the spread by promoting opportunities for libraries to serve as pop-up sites for vaccination. In addition, OLIS will help distribute at home test kits to libraries.

C. American Rescue Plan Act Grants

- i. In partnership with URI’s Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, OLIS will open a second round of grants to support Professional Field Experience with paid internships. Six students are seeking placement in the spring semester.
- ii. OLIS will offer a second round of Technology Grants to support the acquisition of self-check machines in public libraries. OLIS is conducting a survey to assess interest and other technology needs in public libraries that will be funded in this final ARPA grant round. Preliminary results indicate that large and medium sized suburban libraries are interested in self-check machines while smaller libraries are interested in additional technology, including upgrading computers and circulating technologies. Other needs include subscriptions to services such as Hoopla and Kanopy, or programming and supplies related to pandemic recovery.

V. **Committee Reports** (Ms. Mellor reporting)

A. Legislation

The General Assembly will convene again in January. The Governor’s proposed budget will be released in January.

VI. **Board Member Reports**

A. Ms. Blais

Ms. Blais provided the following update on school libraries: the new Follett ILS (Integrated Library System) only supports inter-library loan (ILL) within a school district, which limits access to resources. RILINK, the school library consortium, will introduce the new ILL module in January which should restore borrowing with libraries outside beyond the district. RILINK is also offering a series of professional development workshops over Zoom. The documentary produced by School Librarians of RI, *Overdue: The Value of School Librarians*) has been receiving attention around the state and was recently viewed by the Coventry School Committee.

VII. Unfinished Business

A. Digital Equity Act and Broadband Funding (Ms. Mellor reporting)

- a. The Rhode Island Library Association (RILA) is considering inclusion of support for access to federal broadband funding as part of its advocacy agenda for the 2022 session of the General Assembly. Last year, RILA supported legislation to create a Broadband Commission and successfully advocated to include OLIS as a member of that commission; the bill was held for further study in 2021.

RILA will explore advancing support for the creation of the Commission and for the development of a Digital Equity plan for RI; both elements are necessary in order for RI to access federal funding for broadband and digital equity.

VIII. New Business

No new business.

IX. Public Comment

No public comment.

X. Future Meetings

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2022, 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., at the Department of Administration, Conference Room B, 2nd Floor, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908.

XI. Adjournment

Moved By: Mr. Norris

Seconded By: Ms. Blais

The Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Mr. Martin provided a tour of the newly renovated Providence Public Library; the \$23 million renovation was partially funded through a \$9 million reimbursement through OLIS' Public Library Construction Reimbursement Program.

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on
February 14, 2022
Online Via Zoom

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

Members Absent: 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, Pablo Morales Henry

Guests: None

Materials Distributed: None

I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:17 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 22-01 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 15, 2021, and December 13, 2021, meetings

November 15, 2021

December 13, 2021

Moved By: Mr. Norris

Moved By: Ms. Blais

Seconded By: Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo

Seconded By: Ms. Feldman

The minutes were approved as presented.

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed members.

IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

A. LBRI Member Terms

Most LBRI member terms have expired; some members are term limited. Ms. Mellor is working on new member appointments and welcomes suggestions. The Governor's office submitted a digital form to OLIS for board member completion; the form will be distributed to members.

B. OLIS Year-In-Review

Ms. Mellor presented an overview of the Federal FY21 Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) State Program Report; Ms. Baffoni assembled the report with OLIS staff assistance. The report detailed expenditures of Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) funds totaling \$1.3 million. LSTA grant funds increased by \$112,000 in 2020 largely due to Senator Jack Reed's work in procuring CARES Act funds specifically for libraries; this added \$96,000 to OLIS' federal funding in 2021. Funding from the State increased by \$64,000.

OLIS provided \$8.8 million in Grant-in-Aid (GIA) to cities and towns for public libraries, \$700,000 to Providence Public Library for the Statewide Reference Resource Center (AskRI), and \$62,000 to state institutional libraries.

IMLS reporting categories were the same as Federal FY20 with OLIS working from the same strategic plan. OLIS had a deficit of two staff members through June 30. Most grant activities were incorporated into current leadership and library development projects. All CARES Act expenditures were reported in Federal FY21 due to reporting requirements, though most funds were spent in the previous fiscal year. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) 2021 staff activities were reported this year, but all ARPA expenditures will be reported in Federal FY22 as required by IMLS.

Most OLIS staff worked remotely during the report time period, with some staff choosing to work onsite part or full time. Staff moved to a hybrid work schedule as of Summer 2021. Staff who currently work a hybrid schedule are remote 2 days per week. There were no interruptions of services while staff worked offsite.

C. OLIS Updates

I. OLIS Staff

Jeremy Cutler, Information Services Technician, left OLIS on January 28 to work for the RI Emergency Management Agency. Mr. Cutler was with OLIS since 2009 and was responsible for processing OLIS' financial transactions while also providing support for several OLIS programs, including Youth Services and the delivery system. The position has been posted and is anticipated to be filled soon. Ms. Andrews has assumed responsibility for financial transactions which streamlines well with her grant documentation duties.

II. OLIS Five-Year Plan Evaluation (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

Every five years, OLIS must conduct an independent evaluation of its Five-Year Plan for the use of federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds. The Five-Year Plan Evaluation data collection activities will conclude this week; the evaluator, QualityMetrics, is conducting focus groups with youth service librarians, library directors, and grant recipients. OLIS will receive an evaluation draft by the end of February with the final report due to the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) by March 31. The Evaluation will inform the new five-year plan.

III. New Five-Year Plan

In addition to the Evaluation, OLIS will conduct a survey and convene focus groups to gather input from stakeholders, including the Board, for its new Five-Year Plan. OLIS envisions a revision to the current plan rather than developing a new plan. A draft of the plan will be presented at the May meeting for review and discussion with a vote scheduled for the June meeting. Progress updates will be provided at the March and April meetings. The new five-year plan will be in effect October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2027.

IV. Continuing Education (CE) (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

The Spring CE calendar, released in January, resumes pre-pandemic session programming. The monthly newsletter has recommenced to highlight programs, point to asynchronous and archived sessions posted in Niche Academy, and promote useful learning opportunities from external sources.

Sara Goek, Program Manager at the Public Library Association (PLA) will present a virtual 2-part program, 'Measure Your Impact with Project Outcome'; attendees will learn how to use Project Outcome tools to understand the impact of library programs and services. Erica Freudenberger of

Thriving Libraries will present a 5-part virtual training series, 'Engaged Planning', to teach strategic planning to public libraries using techniques designed to engage the community in the process and develop library programs and services that are responsive to community needs and interests.

'Copyright First Responders Rhode Island' will be presented by Kyle K. Courtney, Copyright Advisor for Harvard University's Office for Scholarly Communication. The program empowers participants to develop a shared understanding of copyright issues in the community.

OLIS Staff Danielle Margarida and Emily Goodman are working on programs to support Summer Reading, including 'Camp iREAD: Designing Your Summer Reading Adventure at the Library', a New England Libraries Summer Summit, and a Summer Reading Mini-grants Workshop. Ms. Mellor and Ms. Baffoni will present a Trustee Overview & Resources program on March 2 to provide an overview of public library trustee roles and responsibilities.

The complete [CE calendar](#) can be found on the OLIS website.

D. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grants – Round Six

i. Self-Check Machines

OLIS will award a direct grant to Ocean State Libraries (OSL) to purchase self-check machines for interested public libraries. The direct grant will eliminate the need for individual libraries to apply for funding for self-check machines, streamlining the process for OLIS, OSL, and the libraries. OLIS conducted a survey to determine interest in acquiring self-check machines, finding that large urban and medium-sized suburban libraries were more interested in purchasing self-checks. The survey also gathered data that will enable OLIS and OSL to determine the funding required for this grant.

ii. Technology Grants

Libraries that are not interested in acquiring self-check machines will be offered the opportunity to apply for a second round of grants for technology purchases, including public access computers, circulating devices, and other equipment to support public programming and services.

Library construction, maintenance, and repair projects are not eligible for ARPA funding.

iii. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

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

i. Rhode Island Legislation

No new state legislation information was discussed.

ii. Federal Legislation

No new federal legislation information was discussed.

V. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

A. Ms. Blais

The new Follett integrated library system provided by RILINK does not currently support interlibrary loan (ILL) outside a member's district, making acquisition of materials beyond a school district unwieldy. In addition, wait times due to delivery system delays are excessive, resulting in materials being received past the time they were needed. RILINK is working with Follett and will implement an

ILL module soon that will facilitate ILL between schools in different districts, which should alleviate the ILL issue. Ms. Mellor inquired about the delivery issues, and Ms. Blais confirmed that delivery delays are compounding the challenges of ILL in the schools.

RILINK is offering professional development (PD) sessions monthly and on statewide school PD days. The RILINK Summer Conference will be July 19-20. School Librarians of RI (SLRI) are providing monthly online member discussions. To encourage membership in the organization, SLRI, a division of RILA, has waived annual membership fees; members may now pay just the annual RI Library Association (RILA) membership fee.

B. Mr. Norris

Mr. Norris noted book banning in other states and inquired if there are reports of same in RI. Ms. Blais reported that there are incidents reported in RI and that legal counsel recommends that libraries have specific policies in place for responding to challenges. Ms. Baffoni noted that RI does not have as many challenges as other states currently, and they seem to be limited to certain districts. Mr. Norris inquired if the board will be issuing a written statement on the issue. Ms. Drnach recommended revisiting the issue at a future meeting.

C. Mr. Findlay

Mr. Findlay commended Ms. Mellor and OLIS for the state employee Virtual Book Club; 25% of his staff participated in the program. Ms. Mellor commended Ms. Baffoni for initiating the program.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Digital Equity Act and Broadband Funding. (Ms. Mellor reporting)

The RI General Assembly broadband bill would provide OLIS with a seat on the broadband commission. A hearing was held last week on the bill, and it was held for further study; RILA is monitoring this legislation. Ms. Mellor is on the working group developing the statewide plan for broadband. In order to apply for federal funding for broadband, states must have a broadband plan in place. RI is eligible for over \$100 million in broadband funding through the federal Infrastructure Investment and Justice Act. RI is also eligible for over \$100 million in funding through the Digital Equity Act, which strives to ensure equity in digital access, digital literacy, and digital services. States must have a broadband plan and a digital equity plan to access this funding; a separate group is working on the state's digital equity plan, with libraries represented through the Providence Public Library.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Public Library Standards: Staffing and Hours Open During the Pandemic

Mr. Bucci has been approached by public library staff requesting a short-term suspension of the Open Hours requirement of the [Minimum Standards and Regulations](#) due to staff shortages and diminished library use during evenings and weekends. Mr. Bucci recommended the requirement be suspended until September 2022 when a public library director poll can be conducted to determine if library use and staffing issues are resolved.

Ms. Mellor reported that during the first year of the pandemic, libraries that could not meet the standard were eligible to apply for a waiver. Waivers were approved if libraries met 75-80% of the standard and submitted a plan to meet the requirement. Libraries have been advised to inform OLIS if they are having temporary open hours, staffing or other challenges during the current surge. OLIS will continue to be flexible with libraries having temporary trouble in meeting the standards.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

IX. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2022, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., at the Department of Administration, Conference Room B, 2nd Floor, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By: Mr. Findlay

Seconded By: Mr. Norris

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on
March 21, 2022
Online Via Zoom

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

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

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

Guests: None

Materials Distributed: Legislative Report, March 2022

I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:20 p.m.

Ms. Mellor informed the group the meeting is being recorded and held online under the Governor's Executive Order 22-01 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 February 14, 2022, 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.

IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

A. OLIS Updates

I. OLIS Staff

Interviews are underway for the Information Services Technician II position recently vacated. OLIS anticipates filling the position by the end of April or beginning of May.

II. Annual Federal Report

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) accepted OLIS' State Program Report. The annual report details programs and grants funded through the Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) state allotment. Ms. Mellor congratulated Ms. Baffoni on the report; the report required no updates or corrections for the second consecutive year.

B. Continuing Education (CE) Programs

Continuing education programs are underway with good turnouts. Multi-session programs have experienced decreased attendance due to library staff shortages.

C. Summer Reading Program Grants

The Summer Reading Program Mini-Grants program opened for public libraries. The non-competitive formula grants are available to support children's, teen and adult reading and learning programs during the summer months. This year, educational presenters whose programs result in learning outcomes will be added as an eligible grant expense. Libraries can apply for \$600 for youth activities, up to \$300 for adult programs, and may request an additional \$300 per branch location for youth programs. The grant application process closes on March 28.

D. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grants

i. ARPA Grants 2206

Ocean State Libraries (OSL) will receive an ARPA grant to fund self-check machines for interested libraries.

Libraries that choose not to receive a self-check machine may participate in a second round of ARPA technology grants. The grants fund public access computers, either desktop or laptop, and devices such as hotspots. The application period closes April 30; grant funds must be expended by August 31. Unused funds will be repurposed for other grants. The formula-based grant offers a base amount of \$5,000 to libraries, \$2,000 for library branches and 25% in supplemental funds to distressed communities and urban cores, including Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, Woonsocket, and West Warwick.

Supply chain issues encountered during the original round of ARPA technology grants are being resolved with equipment substitutions. There are currently six active ARPA grant programs.

ii. AskRI Launch Promotions

ARPA funds were used to support the rebrand of [AskRI](#) and a completely redesigned website. ARPA funds were also used to purchase new resources like Udemy, an online learning platform focused on information technology, office productivity, and other workforce skills, and Learning Express' Job and Career Accelerator. Website updates included a new design and logo, creating a more navigable and user-friendly website. OLIS is promoting the revised website with electronic billboards, public radio sponsorships, and RI Public Transportation (RIPTA) bus advertisements. AskRI, the Statewide Reference Resource Center (SRRC), is managed by Providence Public Library.

iii. Digital Learning & Support Services (Ms. Baffoni reporting)

Providence Public Library (PPL) received an ARPA grant for digital learning and support services. OLIS worked with PPL's education department to expand services currently provided into a statewide [Digital Navigation and Career Services](#) program. Learning and career coaches provide adult digital literacy and career development in public libraries around the state based on community needs and library requests. The program will be added to AskRI resources.

iv. eBook Platform Grant

Ocean State Libraries (OSL) will receive a grant to work on the development of an eBook Platform through the vendor agnostic [Palace Project](#); Palace aggregates eBook content from multiple vendors on a single platform. OSL currently purchases eBooks through [OverDrive](#) and some AskRI database

subscriptions provide eBook access. Palace will open the door to aggregate content from multiple vendors, providing more options for the acquisition of eBooks. As part of the grant, OLIS will also fund an initial collection for Palace, which will combine with OSL's OverDrive collection. The project will be launched as a pilot for public libraries; if successful, OLIS hopes to expand to other library types. The project's objectives are to increase the amount, variety, and availability of eBooks for the public.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

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

i. Rhode Island Legislation

S2307 would amend RIGL §29-6-2 to require Grant-in-Aid (GIA) to be funded at 25% of municipal funding for public library services; the bill was held for further study. H7916 would amend RIGL §29-6-2 to require GIA funding at 25% beginning FY23 and empower the state to use ARPA funds for that purpose; the bill was referred to the House Finance Committee. The RI Library Association (RILA) is advocating for libraries to work with their city and town councils to pass resolutions to support a single bill for the fixed funding. The current law states that libraries will be funded up to at least 25%. To meet the full 25%, GIA funding would need to increase by \$1.1 million.

RILA is watching H7138 ("Parents Bill of Rights Act") proposed by Representative Patricia Morgan of Coventry/West Warwick that addresses the presentation of school materials and curriculum that address race, transgenderism, and LGBTQ issues. The Parents Bill of Rights Act supports censorship. RILA is outspoken about the ramifications of the bill for school libraries. The bill specifies libraries, impacts schools and school libraries; it has been held for further study.

H7112 would require the installation of electric vehicle parking spaces with charging capabilities in new, expanded and existing parking lots by January 1, 2023. RILA is monitoring the bill as it pertains to libraries.

ii. Federal Legislation

Rhode Island is eligible to receive \$100 million in broadband funding and \$125 million for digital equity funding for broadband services, devices and content through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (H.R. 3684). However, RI does not have a broadband commission or broadband and digital equity plans, which are requirements for applying for this funding. RI Commerce is working on the broadband plan, and another group is working with the Governor's Office on a digital equity plan.

A notice of funding will be distributed by the bill's funding agency, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), on May 16. The two groups are working to have the required plans in place in time for RI to apply for funding.

Rhode Island's H7083 establishes a 12-member broadband council that would include the Chief of Library Services; the bill was held for further study.

V. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

No board member reports.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business was discussed.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion: Book Challenges

The book *Gender Queer: A Memoir* has been challenged at Westerly Public Library. A national group is challenging books in libraries and schools by asserting parental rights. Mr. Coutu noted a Westerly group regularly brings forward book challenges.

Mr. Coutu reported the book was also challenged at the South Kingstown School Committee and in Cumberland. The woman behind the challenges wrote an article for the Lincoln Cumberland Valley Breeze and allegedly uses local individuals to advance the disputes.

Ms. Baffoni shared information on book challenge national organizing strategies and how challenges are initiated through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. The RILA annual conference will host a session to demonstrate how libraries may respond to FOIA requests.

Mr. Coutu inquired if RIDE has a plan to work on the challenges by providing support and training to school personnel. Dr. Lynch reported that it is an area of concern for RIDE and welcomed suggestions from board members.

Ms. Mellor reported that the North Smithfield School Superintendent has developed a procedure for the challenges. OLIS will continue to monitor situations but encourages libraries to have a clear policy and procedure for handling book challenges.

B. Discussion: Five-Year State Plan for Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) Funding

OLIS' new five-year plan (2023-2027) draft is in development and will be available to the board for the May meeting; it is due to the IMLS on June 30, 2022. The current five-year plan evaluation is due to the IMLS by March 31.

Empower Success Corp (ESC) has been engaged to assist OLIS with the development of the new five-year plan. ESC has experience working with libraries through their work with the RI Library Association, certain RI public libraries and Ocean State Libraries. ESC will conduct an environmental scan of the RI library landscape and library needs through a survey, focus groups with various library stakeholders, and individual interviews. To facilitate the scan, OLIS professional staff presented overviews of trends in their program areas to ESC.

Board members are requested to participate in an online focus group session on Tuesday, March 29 at 4:00pm. Please advise Ms. Andrews if you able to attend.

Ms. Mellor shared a link to the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan Development [webpage](#). and discussed the 17 sustainability [goals](#) from United Nations 2030 Agenda. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) have applied the UN's goals to libraries.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

IX. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2022, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., at the Department of Administration, Conference Room C, 2nd Floor, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By: Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo

Seconded By: Mr. Findlay

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on
April 11, 2022
at the Department of Administration
Conference Room B, 2nd Floor
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908

Members Attending: Heidi Blais, Aaron Coutu, Melody Drnach (Chair), Rosita Hopper, Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Amanda Richman

Members Absent: Cristina Amedeo, John Bucci, Annette Feldman, Kenneth Findlay, Louise Herrington, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Marcus Mitchell, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Robert Sloan

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

Guests: Lorraine Hynes, Mary Ross, & Victoria Wicks, Empower Success Corps

Materials Distributed:

- Legislative Report, April 2022
- OLIS 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan Environmental Scan: Empower Success Corps, April 2022

I. WELCOME

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

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the March 21, 2022, meeting

Moved By: Mr. Norris

Seconded By: Mr. Coutu

The minutes were approved as presented.

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed members.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: FIVE YEAR STATE PLAN FOR LIBRARY SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA) FUNDING

A. Presentation: Environmental Scan for 2023-2027 Plan: Initial Findings

Ms. Mellor introduced Lorraine Hynes, Mary Ross, and Victoria Wicks of [Empower Success Corps](#) (ESC). OLIS engaged ESC to conduct an environmental scan of OLIS' 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan to understand library challenges and collect data about library-served communities. A community needs assessment was conducted through phone interviews, six focus groups, and an online survey that returned 150 responses.

ESC also conducted research on demographics and statewide socio-economic trends, while OLIS staff provided ESC with research on library trends.

Initial findings indicate that libraries filled a critical role in their communities during the pandemic and plan to enhance their position as hubs for learning, culture, and cohesiveness while also

connecting people with social services. They seek to support equity initiatives, provide internet access, eliminate fines and offer an educational safe space. Libraries seek to build collaborations with partner organizations and proactively prepare for potential future operational disruptions.

Key findings and concerns include:

- Social issues including social services, censorship, lack of library staff diversity, and adequately servicing diverse populations
- Continuation of roles as a community resource and a critical evaluator of educational information
- Public notification of library resources at the state level with emphasis on consistent messaging that the library is a safe space for immigrants
- Maintaining pandemic solutions such as virtual training and meetings
- Addressing of library resource inequities
- OLIS is well-respected, responsive, and helpful and their professional development trainings are valued. There is a need for updated trustee training.

The environmental scan also included an assessment of current OLIS services. Respondents indicated that delivery and interlibrary loan are among the most important services provided by OLIS, followed by grants, children and teen services, summer reading program, continuing education, and AskRI. The complete report will be made available in early May.

B. OLIS 2018-2022 Five-Year Plan Evaluation

An [evaluation](#) of OLIS' 2018-2022 Five-Year Plan for the use of Library Services and Technology Act funds was conducted by [QualityMetrics LLC](#); the report was submitted to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) on March 30. The scan evaluated 2018-2020 expenditures and library services focused on the plan's three goals of access, learning, and engagement.

Plan expenditures, inclusive of operational and staff expenditures, for Access projects including interlibrary loan delivery (ILL) and Talking Books Library (TBL) services accounted for 58% of expenditures. Learning projects, including reading and continuing education (CE) programs comprised 18.3% of expenditures and library development and grants funds were approximately 23% of expenditures. A library survey soliciting library input on plan implementation returned 83 responses; responses were similar to those received during the environmental scan for the 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan.

C. Development of 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan

OLIS is currently developing the 2023-2027 state plan and will retain the current plan's 3 goals of access, learning, and engagement. The QualityMetrics 2018-2022 evaluation and the ESC 2023-2027 environmental scan will inform the new plan. Ms. Mellor will provide a draft plan to the board by May 9 for the May 16 meeting.

V. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

A. OLIS Updates

- i. OLIS was notified that the Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) FY22 annual allotment for 2022 will be \$1,245,000, an increase of \$11,000 from FY21. Those funds will be available to OLIS through September 30, 2023, though OLIS traditionally budgets the LSTA allotment for expenditure during the state fiscal year (July 1-June 30).
- ii. The delivery issue of numerous missed stops, especially for school libraries, was investigated and resolved. Cost saving efforts at the local level had resulted in drivers contacting libraries to determine the need for delivery; corporate management has eliminated this practice. Libraries are encouraged to notify OLIS immediately about missed stops.
- iii. The current delivery contract expires in July; a substantial increase in delivery costs is anticipated due to inflation, especially in relation to personnel costs and fuel charges.

B. Summer Reading Program (SRP) Grants

Non-competitive formula SRP grants were awarded to 43 of 48 eligible libraries; 5 libraries did not apply for the grants.

C. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grants

i. ARPA Technology Grants – Round 2

Libraries have been slow in applying for the 2nd round of ARPA technology grants. Mr. Ackermann reported that many libraries have filled their technology needs in previous grant cycles, and others may be suffering from grant fatigue. OLIS is contacting non-applicants, especially smaller or more disadvantaged libraries, to assist them with the grant process.

Some libraries have experienced challenges at the municipal level due to the differences between the state and federal fiscal year: some grant reimbursements may not be received until the new fiscal year and create accounting challenges. OLIS is working with those libraries to resolve such issues, including awarding grants in July with the requirement that all grant funds be expended by August. All ARPA grant projects must be completed by this time as OLIS must close all programs by Sept 30, 2022.

D. Digital Public Library of American ([DPLA](#))

OLIS staff is meeting monthly with Brown University and Providence Public Library to develop the framework for the RI hub of the Digital Public Library of America. A meeting will be held on May 4 to update the library community on the progress of the project and to solicit feedback and participation in the development of the RI-DPLA hub.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

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

A. Rhode Island Legislation

A hearing is being held today on H7359 requiring that both curriculum and teaching practices in Rhode Island schools protect and respect the civil rights of all members of the school community.

Mr. Coutu reported that teachers would be required to post their teaching plans and the bill promotes censorship. Ms. Mellor noted that under this proposed legislation, the 1619 project could not be taught in schools.

S2842 requires publishers to provide electronic book licenses to libraries and schools on reasonable terms. RI Library Association and Ocean State Libraries had input on this revised bill that addresses the concerns of the library community.

S2307 requires the state to contribute the full 25% of municipal funding level for public libraries.

B. Federal Legislation

There were no reported updates on federal legislation related to libraries.

V. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

A. Ms. Blais

I. RI Library Information Network for Kids (RILINK)

RILINK continues to plan and offer professional development sessions; upcoming Zoom workshops include 'Wrapping Up the library at the end of the school year' and 'Inventory Tips'. On the May 11 statewide school professional development day, RILINK will host a session about implementing cross district interlibrary loan. Individual schools are manually managing the interlibrary loan process outside their districts currently as the system does not have the capacity to do this.

RILINK Executive Director Dorothy Frechette is retiring in July; the upcoming vacancy is posted [online](#). Sharon Webster, Professional Learning and Technology Support Specialist, is resigning in August. Zachary Berger has resigned as Member Services Librarian.

Ms. Mellor noted that the staff resignations are a concern to the school library community and library community as a whole. Mr. Coutu inquired if the positions will be difficult to fill. Ms. Blais indicated that all positions are part-time.

II. School Librarians of RI (SLRI)

The American Library Association (ALA) reports that book challenges increased fourfold in 2021. An SLRI 'Conversation Series' workshop held this year focused on proactive approaches to book challenges and the implementation of library policies to meet challenges.

The SLRI board will meet this week after a hiatus; discussion topics are book challenges and methods to communicate the benefits of SLRI and RI Library Association (RILA) membership.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

VIII. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2022, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., at the Department of Administration, Conference Room B, 2nd Floor, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI.

The meeting may be moved to a public library. Board members will be notified of any venue change.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By: Mr. Coutu

Seconded By: Dr. Hopper

The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

LIBRARY BOARD OF RHODE ISLAND
The regular meeting of the Library Board of Rhode Island was held on
May 16, 2022
at William Hall Library
Program Room, Lower Level
1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905

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

Members Absent: Cristina Amedeo, John Bucci, Louise Herrington, Marcus Mitchell, Amanda Richman

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

Guests: None

Materials Distributed:

- Legislative Report, May 2022
- OLIS Five-Year Plan 2023-2027: Environmental Plan
- OLIS Five-Year Plan 2023-2027: Framework

I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:20 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the April 11, 2022, meeting

Moved By: Ms. Nazareth-Dzialo

Seconded By: Mr. Coutu

The minutes were approved as presented.

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed members and thanked OLIS staff for the 2023-2027 OLIS Five-Year Plan.

IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

Ms. Mellor thanked William Hall Library staff for accommodating the board and noted recent library renovations.

A. OLIS Updates

i. Ongoing

Preparations are underway for the annual Public Library Survey and Library of RI (LORI) Certification concurrent processes. LORI Certification certifies all types of libraries for delivery services.

The Summer Reading Program (SRP) non-competitive formula grant process is underway, with 43 of 48 public libraries applying for grants. Non-applicant libraries were contacted to confirm their decision not to apply. Beginning in 2022, libraries may expend funds on performers in addition to program supplies. Libraries are eligible to receive up to \$600 for youth programs, \$300 for adult programs, and \$300 for library branches.

OLIS hosted the SRP virtual kickoff event on April 28 with Mae Respicio, author of the 2022 Kids Reading Across RI (KRARI) book, *How to Win a Slime War*. The event had 33 live views, mostly school classrooms, and 38 subsequent classroom viewings. Danielle Margarida, OLIS Youth Services Coordinator, will explore ways to better tabulate attendee data for future virtual events to accurately account for classroom registrations. A total of 1,400 SRP books were requested by 57 school libraries, while 41 public libraries requested an additional 520 books.

OLIS is a sponsor of the RI Center for the Book's (RICFB) Reading Across Rhode Island (RARI) program. The 2022 RARI book is *Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley. The May 26 RARI kickoff includes a virtual author event at 1 pm and an in-person event at 6:30 pm at Salve Regina University with this year's Honorary Chair, Loren Spears, Executive Director of Tomaquag Museum, and Jim Ludes, Executive Director of the Pell Center at Salve Regina University. Emily Goodman, OLIS Adult Services Coordinator, serves as chair of the RARI programming committee.

ii. Digital Public Library of America (DPLA)

The Digital Public Library of American platform provides access to digitized materials from participating US libraries, archives, and museums. Rhode Island is one of four US states without a DPLA hub. OLIS has been working with Brown University and Providence Public Library (PPL) since 2019 to develop a RI hub. Mr. Morales Henry, OLIS Network & Digital Services Program Manager has been working on the project for the last 6 months with staff from Brown and PPL who have expertise in this area.

A virtual meeting was convened on May 4 to re-launch the RI DPLA hub project, share updates, and establish project committees. The meeting had 30 attendees. A survey has been distributed to approximately 200 RI institutions received to assess RI digital collections for inclusion in DPLA. The process will include two phases: an initial phase for libraries with existing digital collections that meet criteria for inclusion in the DPLA platform, and a second phase that will provide support for institutions seeking to digitize collections for inclusion.

Upcoming RI DPLA work will include survey analysis, convening of project committees, and the establishment of a digitization process and services to assist libraries with digitization projects. Application completion is scheduled for Fall 2022 and RI DPLA launch is tentatively scheduled for June 2023.

B. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grants

i. ARPA 2206 Technology Grants

The ARPA technology grant process recently closed with public libraries applying for approximately \$125,000. Additionally, OLIS will fund \$150,000 for self-check machines. The

remaining balance of approximately \$125,000 from OLIS' \$2.2 million ARPA grant funds will be expended by September 2022, including a partnership with Providence Public Library to support and promote statewide summer learning programs.

ii. ARPA 2202 Project Grants

ARPA Project Grants are wrapping up this summer. Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) student teams at Exeter-West Greenwich Junior/Senior High School and Chariho High School built electric cars with OLIS ARPA funds. The teams will race their cars on May 20 at Ninigret Park in Charlestown. The teams were mentored by the RI Computer Museum as part of the Greenpower Electric Car Challenge. OLIS hopes to be able to showcase other ARPA projects at a fall board meeting.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: FIVE YEAR STATE PLAN FOR LIBRARY SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA) FUNDING

OLIS' 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan environmental assessment was compiled by Empower Success Corp (ESC) gathering input through focus groups, interviews, a survey of the library community and analysis of the 2018-2022 Five-Year Plan evaluation and other OLIS data sources. OLIS reviewed the report and summarized the information for board discussion. Libraries indicated the trends and challenges in their community include changing populations, socio-economic issues, pandemic fallout, the digital divide, and political polarization and disinformation. They are concerned about staffing, funding, and funding inequity, especially as it relates to state grant-in-aid (GIA) on the municipal level.

Communities rely more and more on libraries to provide access to current technology and training to use that technology, resulting in the need for increased library staff tech training. Additionally, libraries are increasingly expected to provide social services and be community centers. Respondents indicated interest in a statewide library promotion campaign to generate public awareness about libraries and library services. Community, equity, and collaboration were key library priorities expressed during this investigatory process.

Ms. Mellor referenced Governor McKee's [Rhode Island 2030 Plan](#) which focuses on support for families, education, and business. The [Kids Count RI](#) Factbook released today noted the gap between the rich and poor is widening, with a growing gap between white and Asian children and Black and Hispanic children. In addition, school attendance is decreasing, housing affordability is diminishing, and youth suicide rates are rising. This information will be incorporated into OLIS' environmental scan.

Delivery was ranked the most-valued service provided by OLIS; delivery is approximately 25% of the OLIS budget. Grants, interlibrary loan (ILL), youth services, summer reading programs, AskRI, and continuing education (CE) are also highly valued OLIS services.

OLIS' vision and mission will remain unchanged. OLIS' goals of Access, Learning and Engagement from the current five-year plan continue to be relevant and will remain as the goals of the new plan, however the projects and activities under those goals will be updated to reflect current needs. A detailed draft of the plan will be provided to the board by the week of June 6.

PLAN APPROVAL

Moved By: Ms. Fieldman

Seconded By: Mr. Coutu

OLIS' Five-Year Plan for 2023-027 was approved as presented.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

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

A. Rhode Island Legislation

H 7916 requires the state's share of library Grant-in-Aid (GIA) in FY23 be fixed at 25% of the amount appropriated and expended by the municipality in the 2nd preceding fiscal year with funds from the RI General Fund and ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Fund. The bill has been held for further study. Mr. Coutu reported the bill has broad, bipartisan support.

B. Federal Legislation

No federal legislation related to libraries was discussed.

VIII. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

A. Ms. Blais

School libraries are facing increased book challenges, including recent challenges on RI Children's Book Award titles *A Place Inside of Me: A Poem to Heal the Heart* by Noa Denmon and *Feed Your Mind: A Story of August Wilson* by Jen Bryant and Cannaday Chapman. Ms. Mellor noted that some book challenges are being heard at certain RI Town Committee meetings. Dr. Lynch reported that national groups are initiating challenges in many states.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

XI. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for June 13, 2022, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., at William Hall Library, Program Room, Lower Level, 1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI, 02905

Board members will be notified of venue changes.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By: Mr. Findlay

Seconded By: Ms. Fieldman

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 13, 2022
at William Hall Library
Program Room, Lower Level
1825 Broad Street, Cranston, RI 02905

Members Attending: John Bucci, Melody Drnach (Chair), Kenneth Findlay, Rosita Hopper, Phyllis Lynch (ex officio), Doug Norris, Leslie Page, Robert Sloan

Members Absent: Cristina Amedeo, Heidi Blais, Aaron Coutu, Annette Feldman, Louise Herrington, Marcus Mitchell, Monica Nazareth-Dzialo, Amanda Richman

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

Guests: None

Materials Distributed:

- Legislative Report, June 2022
- Summer Reading Program Bookmarks
- OLIS Five-Year Plan (2023-2027) – Final Draft
- Proposed State Aid to Libraries 2023, Fully Funded at 25% - Handout

I. WELCOME

Ms. Drnach called the meeting to order at 4:23 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES from the May 16, 2022, meeting

Moved By: Dr. Hopper

Seconded By: Mr. Bucci

The minutes were approved as presented.

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Drnach welcomed members.

IV. CHIEF OF LIBRARY SERVICES REPORT

Ms. Mellor thanked William Hall Library staff for use of the library.

A. OLIS Updates

i. Ongoing

The Information Services Technician position vacated by Jeremy Cutler has been filled; a new staff member begins July 3.

Jason Ackermann, OLIS Digital Services Coordinator, accepted another position in state government his last day will be July 2. The position is tentatively approved to be filled.

OLIS staff is cross-training to ensure smooth duties transition during employee changeovers.

B. Summer Reading Program (SRP)

I. The 2022 Summer Reading Program, '[Read Beyond the Beaten Path](#)', will soon be in full swing. To encourage participation, which has been affected by the pandemic, OLIS used ARPA funds to support RI Public Transportation Authority (RIPTA) bus placards to promote the program. Ms. Baffoni provided SRP bookmarks to members.

II. Rhode Island joined the Illinois State Library's 'Illinois Reading Enrichment and Development' ([IREAD](#)) program this year as it aligns more closely with the goals of OLIS' summer reading program and the needs of RI libraries. The change is a departure from the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) used in previous years. The latest data from [RI Kids Count](#) indicates student grade-level reading rates and math scores are quite low. Public libraries are planning in-person SRP 2022 programs.

C. OLIS Summer Planning

OLIS staff will review OLIS' new Five-Year Plan to develop its work plan for federal fiscal year 2023 (October-September) while assessing and identifying timeframes for projects and activities to be conducted in future years.

D. Annual Public Library Survey

The annual public library survey gathers data from libraries, enables public libraries to apply for state grant-in-aid (GIA), and certifies libraries for interlibrary loan (ILL) delivery through the Library of RI (LORI) network. The survey opens in mid-July and ends September 15.

E. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grants

The first round of ARPA grants providing technology funding is complete. The process was anticipated for completion in October 2021; however, ongoing supply chain issues extended the grant cycle. Other ARPA grant programs are concluding now or will conclude over the summer.

OLIS worked with Ocean State Libraries (OSL) to purchase computers, computer peripherals, and bookcheck machines for libraries to standardize technology and streamline purchasing.

Providence Public Library will receive a grant to support statewide summer learning, summer reading promotion, and AskRI initiatives.

Approximately \$80,000 in grant funds will be provided to distressed communities for technology and summer learning programs, including Central Falls, Pawtucket, the Community Libraries of Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

OLIS will identify a few exemplary ARPA projects for presentation at a future LBRI meeting.

F. Digital Public Library of American (DPLA)

OLIS partnered with Brown University Libraries to distribute a DPLA survey to inventory and identify digital collections at RI libraries for inclusion in the inaugural collection for RI's DPLA hub; the initial data analysis is complete, and the final report will be published online. The launch of the Rhode Island DPLA hub is currently slated for summer 2023.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: FIVE YEAR STATE PLAN FOR LIBRARY SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA) FUNDING

The board reviewed the final draft of OLIS' Five-Year State Plan for the use of federal funds provided by the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS). OLIS' three plan goals, Access, Learning and Engagement, are defined and will be implemented through three high-level projects assigned to each goal. The plan builds on the 2018-2022 Five Year Plan, with certain aligned projects under the old plan combined to streamline the plan. Under the new plan, an 'Advancing Equity' activity was added to each project to explicitly identify how projects will foster more inclusive and equitable library services statewide.

The plan was developed with input from various library stakeholders, inclusive of all types of libraries and OLIS staff, with information gathered through surveys and focus groups, and examination of library trends, statewide and community needs, and OLIS' statutory mandates at both the state and federal level.

Mr. Sloan noted expenditures are not associated with plan goals. Ms. Mellor reported annual work plans define costs associated with individual goal activities through the agency's annual budget; staffing costs are fixed and a substantial portion of goal costs. Ms. Hopper requested a copy of the final approved plan.

OLIS's 2023-2027 Five-Year State Plan Final draft is due to the IMLS on June 30. Once approved, the plan goes into effect on October 1 and will be available on the OLIS website. For each year of the plan, OLIS will create an annual workplan based on the Five-Year plan.

APPROVAL OF THE 2023-2027 OLIS Five-Year State Plan

Moved By: Mr. Bucci

Seconded By: Mr. Sloan

OLIS' 2023-2027 Five-Year State Plan was approved as presented.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Federal & State Legislative Updates (Ms. Mellor reporting)

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

A. Rhode Island State Budget

The proposed FY23 RI State Budget was approved by RI's House of Representatives and sent to the Senate Finance Committee. The budget includes an additional \$400,000 for the Statewide Reference Resource Center (SRRC) to fund resources in 2023 that were purchased last year with ARPA funds, including Udemy, Tutor.com, and the Job & Career Accelerator. The increase will also be used to continue development of statewide digital resources.

The proposed budget also funds state grant-in-aid (GIA) to public libraries at the full 25% of municipal appropriations and expenditures. Ms. Mellor reviewed the proposed state aid numbers; three libraries will experience decreases in their GIA allotments due to reduced expenditures at the municipal level during the pandemic.

B. Federal Legislation

No federal library legislation was discussed.

VII. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

No board member reports.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

X. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next LBRI meeting is scheduled for September 19, 2022, from 4:15 – 5:45 p.m., at a venue to be determined.

Board members will be notified of any venue change.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By: Mr. Bucci

Seconded By: Ms. Page

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

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