

RHODE ISLAND COALITION OF LIBRARY ADVOCATES
MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

OCTOBER 6, 2015, 5:30 PM
CRANSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, MAIN BRANCH, MEETING ROOM

Present: Gale Eaton (Chair), Joan Ress Reeves, Valerie Karno, Cheryl Banick, Sarah Morenon, Patricia Raskin, Hil Herbst, Howard Boksenbaum, Thomas Viall, Emilie Benoit.

In the absence of Neeltje Henneman, Tom Viall agreed to take the minutes.

G. Eaton called the meeting to order at 5:37 PM.

Minutes of the September 8 meeting were accepted by unanimous vote with minor corrections.

Treasurer Report: A report was not provided for the meeting. J. Reeves expressed a concern regarding the Treasurer's report from September and an apparent loss of funds. G. Eaton explained that the numbers were from two accounts and when totaled showed that there was not a loss. J. Reeves requested that reports offer a sum total of funds available to avoid future confusion.

Organization Updates: The agenda was amended to accommodate representative schedules.

SLA / RI and ARIHSL (C. Banick): SLA hosted its September dine-around at Tortilla Flats. ARIHSL is concerned that the Landmark Medical Center no longer has a certified librarian and is therefore not in compliance with DOCLINE or Department of Health library standards; ARIHSL must cut off interlibrary loans to Landmark until the situation is remedied. ARIHSL was also busily preparing for the North Atlantic Health Sciences Libraries (NAHSL) conference, to be held October 18-20 in Providence.

GSLIS Update: V. Karno reported that the School was hosting a "Twitter 101" workshop that evening.

Committee Reports

Membership/School Library Advocacy: H. Boksenbaum will be looking for additional volunteers to assist in member recruitment. He also recommended that as part of our membership drive we create a larger "buzz" about what COLA does. This led to a productive discussion among the Board members. Highlight: we need to reach out to librarians more, both to access their needs (i.e. what can COLA help them with) and to access the needs and support of Trustee and Friends groups. H. Herbst urged that we listen to and consider the viewpoints of users, not just librarians and administrators. S. Morenon mentioned that the RI League of Women Voters had shown recent interest in libraries (although that interest may be limited to their pending report on State Grant-in-Aid funding). Concerns about the overall view of the importance of professional librarians were also shared – especially an apparent trend toward hiring "managers" rather than "librarians" to head libraries (a recent example of this within the Providence Community Library was referenced). Although there were no specific action items stemming from the discussion, it was the general conclusion that building membership would be more successful if we can frame the threats and opportunities facing libraries more effectively.

Newsletter: G. Eaton informed the Board that she was completing the October newsletter, with major contributions from S. Morenon and H. Boksenbaum. J. Reeves agreed to proof the draft document when ready. It was also discussed if the newsletter email list could be better segmented to make sure we are reaching targeted groups such as school librarians. Discussion about content circled back to the previous membership discussion. The newsletter invites readers to send stories and ideas to our gmail account. Several members agreed that more “stories” could benefit both the newsletter and general advocacy. S. Morenon suggested creating a unique COLA email address for school library issues, to channel a possible spate of input. T. Viall volunteered to work with her on this. H. Boksenbaum suggested that COLA should respond to current media rhetoric, such as a recent *Slate Magazine* article claiming that “Banned Books Week Is a Crook” because nobody censors books anymore. He also suggested COLA membership visits to Trustees and Friends groups could both present and gather short video stories and interviews. P. Raskin volunteered to assist as an interviewer should the idea move forward. T. Viall offered to research Periscope, a growingly popular social media tool designed to offer popup live “narrow-casts,” to access its potential value to this effort.

Strategic Plan: G. Eaton reviewed Goal 1 (Advocacy), and reported that we have taken action on most of the strategic points. To address points 1.1.4 and 1.2.2, she offered to work with OLIS and RILA to compile recent user surveys by RI libraries and carry out a meta-analysis of the data. She would begin by asking libraries what user studies they have done, and what methods or findings they could share. H. Boksenbaum felt that OLIS probably has this information already. T. Viall also pointed out that the national library survey data already gathered by Pew Research would likely not vary from local results. A new survey does not seem to be a high priority. To address point 1.4.2, the development of a “toolkit” on the website was discussed. This area would contain a growing area of helpful resources for those wishing to advocate for libraries. E. Benoit volunteered to assist. Thanks to T. Viall’s newsfeed, much of the necessary material is already there.

Event Updates: G. Eaton shared a tentative narrative provided by Karen Mellor for the COLA/RILA/OLIS event scheduled for November 12th at the Cumberland Public Library: “Why Privacy Matters.” Karen felt the session needed a better name. The speaker, Dr. Nancy Kranich, will focus on “...the important role of library trustees in assuring that patrons’ privacy and intellectual freedoms are preserved... and why privacy matters – to everyone.”

Remaining updates from Organizational Reps:

CRIARL, OLIS, and RILA representatives were unavailable. (A meeting of the Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast (COSLINE) accounted for OLIS.)

SLRI: S. Morenon reported that the SLRI Advocacy Committee 1) has compiled data about statewide erosion of school library services under the current BEP; 2) is beginning work on a replacement BEP that would better support libraries; and 3) has been searching for copies of work done 10 years ago in preparation for the 2009 BEP – work that wasn’t used, but might be salvaged. She also shared frustration that the Cumberland High School Principal Alan Tenreiro had been selected as National Principal of the Year despite a record of cutting funding for libraries in his schools.

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 PM.