

**Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates**  
**Minutes of the Board Meeting**  
**November 3, 2015**  
**Cranston Public Library, Main Branch, Meeting Room**

Present: Gale Eaton (Chair), Emilie Benoit, Donna DiMichele (OLIS), Tom Evans (CRIARL), Neeltje Henneman, Valerie Karno (URI GSLIS), Sarah Morenon (SLRI), Patricia Raskin, Joan Ress Reeves, Rose Ellen Reynolds, Tom Viall, Pnina Pressburger (guest)

- A. The meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm. After brief introductions, the minutes of the October 6 meeting were approved with minor corrections.
- B. Treasurer's Report
- Business Fundamentals Checking: \$3,552.89
  - Business Investment Account: \$5,745.65
  - Total: \$9,298.52
  - Neeltje reported that the accounts hold about \$650.00 less than we had this time last year.
  - Gale asked for approval to have additional copies of the newsletter and flyer printed at Staples in the service of increasing membership. Rose Ellen moved to approve this expenditure, Neeltje seconded and the board unanimously approved. Gale will bring both to the November 12th event.
- C. Committee Reports
- School Library Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee (and **SLRI report** – Sarah Morenon):  
As members of the School Librarians of Rhode Island Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee, Sarah Morenon and Meredith Moore met with representatives of Senators Reed's Washington and Rhode Island offices. SLRI was aware that Senators Reed and Whitehouse had inserted some school library language into the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and wanted to better understand what this would mean. The main change is to make Title 1 money available for school libraries. Unfortunately, there are no mandates. Senator Reed's representative suggested that Senator Reed would be interested in attending a SLRI event. Rose Ellen Reynolds asked if schools involve parents (the PTO) in their outreach. Sarah said they are looking into that. She has suggested that they keep track of parents who have expressed the most interest. We could include an advocacy email address in the online newsletter that is going out on Thursday.
- D. Fall event update:
- We expressed thanks to Donna for the work she has done on the November 12th event – a presentation by Nancy Kranich at the Cumberland Public Library. Projected attendance is low. Sarah will list the event on the SLRI listserv and suggested that we invite the League of Women Voters. We discussed reasons why turnout might be low but came to no conclusions. It should be a great program. Rose Ellen says it behooves us to ally with RILA. Gale said it might also be useful to align with SLRI in the future. She suggested the Harry Potter Alliance as a possible feature for a joint advocacy program.
- E. Strategic Plan:
- Gale led a discussion about goal two of the strategic plan (public relations), with an emphasis on areas that need continued attention. We considered how else we might create awareness about COLA.

In the past we have talked about creating a COLA fact sheet. Currently we do have a lot of the elements of such a fact sheet on our website, but we could package it better and disseminate it further afield. Tom V. asked for clarity about the vision. Who's the target audience and what kind of facts do we want to highlight? Tom E noted that it made sense to target city and town councils. Gale reiterated Howard's perspective that we should be offering libraries tools they can use in their advocacy to their town councils. Tom E. suggested that if we are looking to create a toolkit for support groups and trustees, there must be material out there. Gale says there is. Much of it is linked to our website and wouldn't take long to customize. Donna asked what local libraries (who are focused on their particular budgetary needs) have to gain from joining COLA. Joan replied that COLA advocates for state funding (which helps local needs). Tom V. commented that what makes COLA unique is that local libraries can be self-serving in their advocacy while COLA has no financial interests at stake; we are just in the service of supporting libraries. The point is that we want local libraries to let us know both what their needs are and what they need from us. We should promote what we are and what makes us different. Valerie suggested a flyer with the tagline: COLA: advancing information literacy for all citizens, followed by specific bullet points (assisting school librarians, for example). Tom V. asked whether the ultimate goal is to increase the membership or to fulfill our mission. Joan replied that both are important because we are better with more members. Tom E. noted that advocate is simply another name for lobbyist, and we need to advocate to the powers that be. Donna said that since COLA lobbies for funding, why not include that information in our communication with trustees. Sarah asked if we provide training on how to advocate. Joan said we should. Gale asked how? Tom E. replied that there are two levels – how to advocate for your own library and how to advocate for all libraries. Rose Ellen and Sarah agreed that SLRI has not done this well. Sarah noted that the SLRI advocacy committee is a recent addition, and they recognize that they have to arrive at some clarity around what they want to communicate before they can get COLA's help. Rose Ellen suggested that taxpayers should also be part of the solution (not just library employees). Gale said that we could email our membership and ask them to be more involved, but we agreed that it is important to be specific (such email communication is probably best timed when budgets are being approved). Gale asked if Tom E. would email her some starting points. Tom E. said that currently you can sign up for email notice about any state or municipal entity that's having a meeting. Gale will continue to work with Tom E. on a plan and then we can communicate with our membership to find out whether they are willing to be on standby. Finally, it was noted that there are a lot of resources available through ALA. Gale asked that we continue the conversation next month.

#### F. Reports from the organizational representatives:

##### **OLIS Report (Donna DiMichele):**

- OLIS is pleased to be working with COLA on the trustee event on the 12th.
- OLIS is hiring a state data coordinator, and this will fill their 12th position.
- They are planning to develop a new strategic plan in coming year, and they hope to have support from COLA in putting it together.

##### **CRIARL (Tom Evans):**

- The group held a meeting two Fridays ago at PPL. During this meeting members talked about revamping the website.

- The Steamship Historical Society may join the group.
- CRIARL cards (which allow faculty and staff of institutional members to go to into another member's library and borrow materials) are in demand since HELIN lost 3 members.
- They are considering modernizing the bylaws.
- Tom suggested that COLA could advocate for someone to take the lead on need for a statewide resource (a digital library). Tom V. replied that Providence is making a big effort to digitize a lot of their material. Gale thinks we could get behind a person or individual with a viable proposal for state support. Tom E. replied that there could be some statutory language that designates a who and a how and a funding source. Tom E. also suggested that this could tie into governor's interest in re-branding RI. Tom V. suggested that we need to see if we can identify a private partner and work toward a private - public partnership.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55.

Our next meeting will take place on Tuesday, December, 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Neeltje Henneman  
Secretary

**Rhode Island Coalition of Library Advocates  
Treasurer's Report  
December 1, 2015**

**Business Fundamentals Checking**

<b>November 3, 2015</b>	<b>\$3,552.89</b>
<b>December 1, 2015</b>	<b>\$3,552.89</b>

**Business Investment Account**

<b>November 3, 2015</b>	<b>\$5,745.65</b>
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Income:

Nov. 3, 2015 (transfer from Paypal)	\$72.22
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<b>December 1, 2015</b>	<b>\$5,817.87</b>
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<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,370.76</b>
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