

Governor's Advisory Council
on Library Development

May 13, 2021

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Minutes – Approved at 9/2/2021 meeting

Present: David Belanger
Marsha Everton
Mary Garm
Robert Lambert
Rebecca Long
Allison Mackley
Beth Mellor
Larry Nesbit
Patrick Oates
Susan Werner
Barbara Zaborowski

Excused: Olga Negron

Office of Commonwealth

Libraries (OCL): Susan Banks, Director, Bureau of Library Development (BLD)
Carrie Cleary, Executive Assistant, Office of Commonwealth Libraries (OCL)
Sarah Greene, Director, Bureau of State Library (BSL)
Cindy Heasley, Admin Assistant, Office of Commonwealth Libraries (OCL)
Corri Hines, Library Development Advisor for School-Age Services (BLD)
Heather Sharpe, Division Manager, Grants and Subsidies (BLD)

Guests: Glenn R. Miller, Former Deputy Secretary / Commissioner for Libraries (OCL)
Pamela Smith, Executive Deputy Secretary, PA Dept of Education (PDE)
Christi Buker, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Library Association (PaLA)
Maryam Phillips, Executive Director, Hosting Solutions and Library Consulting (HSLC)
Kerri Milliken, District Trainer, Capital Area Library District
Ed Miller, Special Service Manager, Library System of Lancaster County (LSLC)
Cathi Fuhrman, Pennsylvania School Librarians Association (PSLA)
David Schappert, Director, Corgan Library, King's College

1. Call to Order & Introductions

Garm called the meeting to order at 9:31AM.

Attendees were invited to offer remarks upon the occasion of the retirement of Glenn R. Miller as Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for Libraries. Pamela Smith, of PDE's

Executive Office, spoke on behalf of Acting Secretary of Education Noe Ortega. Christi Buker, PaLA, and Cathi Fuhrman, PSLA, offered congratulations as well. David Schappert, of King's College, commended Glenn for his support of libraries over the years. Garm also offered remarks. All agreed that Glenn will be missed.

Council members and Office of Commonwealth Libraries (OCL) staff then introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the February 11, 2021 meeting

The committee approved the minutes of the February 11, 2021 meeting as submitted.

3. Chair's Report – Mary Garm – no report

4. Acting Deputy Secretary's Report – Susan Banks

Banks announced that Heather Sharpe will take on the role of acting Bureau Director for the Bureau of Library Development (BLD). Sharpe currently serves as Division Chief, Grants and Subsidies, for BLD.

OCL is close to hiring two new staff for BLD, one is the Advisory Services position and the other is the Early Childhood Services position.

OCL communication planning with Trina Walker is in progress. OCL's goal is to improve communication internally and externally with the library field.

Banks is working within PDE and on a statewide level with other agencies on dismantling systemic racism and diversity, equity and inclusion work. This work includes the Including You pilot program. This is an instructional learning journey for library staff and communities. "Including You" trains individuals on how to manage their own implicit biases and microaggressions. Sarah Greene created a working group within OCL. The goal is to create a welcoming atmosphere in OCL as well as in libraries for staff and community members.

Banks will be the keynote speaker for the Michigan Library Association's annual conference in October. She received the invitation as a result of a Library Pros podcast appearance.

5. Bureau Reports from the Office of Commonwealth Libraries

a. Bureau of Library Development (BLD) – Heather Sharpe

Sharpe highlighted elements of her written report which was distributed as an attachment.

b. Bureau of State Library (BSL) – Sarah Greene

Green highlighted elements of her written report which was distributed as an attachment.

6. Drexel University Capstone Project: State Institutions and the Professional Development of Public Library Workers – Kerri Milliken, Capital Area Library District

Milliken shared a report on the learning needs analysis she performed as a part of her education.

The goal was to provide more guidance as library staff work on completing continuing education (CE) requirements. Milliken reached out to the library field for clarification on the issues and areas which need support. These studies only focused on the requirements, not a support structure. She reviewed how each state in the US supports continuing education. American Library Association (ALA) and Niche Academy offered data on certification and continuing education studies. This data was collected through January of 2021.

Most states offer support through websites. Pennsylvania uses sites such as POWER Library and the Compendium. The study results showed that librarians want CE to be timely, free, and flexible. 42% of those looking for CE accessed the PA Library Staff Academy (Niche Academy) and are looking for a centralized place to find CE.

Some areas being reviewed include possible expansion of pre-approved CE, allowing written forms from staff as proof of attendance, clarifying who gives final approval – OCL or local authority, simplifying the amount of CE required, verifying that guidelines contain clear language, and creating required CE categories such as those used by Indiana and Montana.

Susan Banks noted that the research was inspired by Drexel's head of program who spoke at a January 2020 GAC meeting. Banks and Milliken got in touch, and Milliken began working with Diana Megdad, Coordinator of Continuing Education at OCL. Milliken has, with very little guidance, produced a great outcome.

Christi Buker, PaLA, asked whether the guideline update will include recognition of the associations that offer CE. Belanger said it is under discussion, nothing has been determined but a new outline has been developed. Milliken added that there is a large section in the current draft pointing to associations and where CE can be found.

Garm commented that requirements for CE and certification, while two different things, have come into our consciousness as something that needs to be dealt with. This information is very helpful when looking at CE guidelines. Garm appreciated the highlight on the difficulty of finding information as it's in many different places that people may not know about.

Becca Long asked if the guidelines could include a category for technology skills and it could be tied to the PA Forward program and a library earning stars. This would

encourage staff to develop their skills. Garm remarked that incorporating what is happening with PA Forward and those competencies is an idea is worth considering.

7. State Librarian Search Committee – David Belanger

The committee will meet bi-weekly to identify the leadership qualities and skill desired in this position and will then develop a position description based on those requirements. Once this is accomplished, the position will be nationally advertised. When interviews are completed, the GAC will recommend a candidate to the Secretary of Education, who will make a recommendation to the Governor. Previous searches took about 5 to 6 months to select a candidate.

8. American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) and Libraries – Susan Banks

Pennsylvania will receive about \$4.75 million through ARP provisions made to libraries through the IMLS.

The majority will go to public libraries and can be distributed more broadly than CARES Act funding. Early plans are that approximately \$1.75 million will go to underwriting statewide projects but this is a work in progress. State-wide electronic resources becoming available to all is a project being considered for funding. This will have an impact and touch on POWER Libraries in some ways, but nothing has been determined yet. COVID-19 has shown how virtual library services are provided and how they impact equity and every community. Funds from this program must be expended before end of September 2022.

Other entities that are part of PDE, such as schools, are also receiving funding through the American Rescue Plan Act. Schools and school libraries will be making decisions on how to spend their own ARPA funding. Some funding must go to home-based childcare so OCDEL at PDE is talking with OCL as to how to distribute the funding.

PA Humanities Council also has funding available and will focus on competitive programs to support humanities content through a competitive grant process. There are new funding mechanisms for building, infrastructure, and broadband expenses to counties and municipalities.

OCL will communicate with the field about those funding streams. ARP funding is going out directly to communities through local fiscal recovery funding, so reach out to your government entities to learn about funding for needs generated by the pandemic.

Marsha Everton remarked that the business community is struggling to get people back to work, lack of childcare/schooling is a huge part of the problem. She asked if there is anything Libraries can do to help in this situation.

Beth Mellor commented that school districts have been eliminating the school librarian position, but municipalities are doing the same to public libraries, could ESSER funds be

targeted to putting librarians back to work? Banks replied that she is making sure the school library advocates & public library advocates are being heard in stakeholder feedback to PDE, and that should impact PDE's guidance. Banks encouraged advocacy at the local level, and OCL will help by providing support to develop that focus at the municipality and county level.

9. Update on Lancaster Public Library and District Library Center – Susan Banks

Banks noted that progress is being made towards a general understanding of what a District Library Center (DLC) can and should be, and the committee is on a path to negotiating agreements. Data collection from the member libraries has been great - providing a strong idea of what the priorities and needs for Lancaster. It has been a very collaborative process and the agreement will clarify details and answer needs.

Ed Miller, District Consultant at the Library System of Lancaster County, explained that the committee is mixing old and new concepts to build collaboration and cooperation. The planning group is getting close to a decision stage.

10. COVID and Public Libraries – Carrie Cleary

Cleary remarked that public libraries are dealing with changing mitigation orders such as maximum occupancy limits. However, masking requirements are in effect until 70% of adults in Pennsylvania have been vaccinated or June 28, 2021.

Libraries are expanding their hours open and services available to meet the needs of their communities. She encouraged libraries to reach out to their communities to find out what their patrons need. At the local level, some libraries are reducing the amount of time they quarantine materials. However, some libraries seem to be having trouble hiring workers. Issues are lower pay, lack of benefits, and childcare obligations.

Banks commented that the pandemic and ARP funds will be helpful in this aspect. This funding will also help educational resources become generally available on websites for learners of all ages. Centralized programs and services should become more generally available by linking up with PDE resources.

11. School Libraries Update – Corri Hines

According to a PSLA Survey of Lib Staffing in Public Schools study with 100% of Pennsylvania school districts responding, 48 school districts do not have a certified school librarian in any library in that district. This means 90,000 students do not have a librarian in their school, and 38 librarian positions have been eliminated or lost. The problem is growing larger each year. Only two universities in PA currently offer a school library program. School districts without librarians occur in 45% and 2/3 of the Intermediate Units in all types of communities. The study further delineates how libraries are funded, staffed, and whether there is access to broadband internet.

Continuing to look at priorities by finding overlap and building consensus in the areas of funding, staffing, broadband access, standards of operation, method of circulation, services and programs, diversity, and inclusion in school and public libraries. Involves PSLA leadership and youth services consultants.

Video Gaming Clubs of America (VGCA) is bringing more school libraries into the program. The clubs are succeeding, students are coming into the library and using the equipment to release stress and make new friends. This availability allows all students to come together to learn and grow.

Garm thanked her for the information. Allison Mackley thanked Hines for bringing the groups together which will promote cooperation between public libraries and school libraries.

12. Rare Books Fund Update – Larry Nesbit

On Nesbit's behalf, Garm stated that the remaining balance is \$202,332.95 with a total of \$3,341.00 being paid out since January 2021. This year, expenses in February were \$2,972.00 and \$369.00 in April.

13. Committee Reports

- a. Bylaws** – Allison Mackley noted that conversations are parallel to the current bylaws document during discussion.
- b. Communications** – Marsha Everton noted the committee is working with the Strategic Planning Committee on gathering information about how the website is used, genealogy is the biggest category so far.
- c. Education and Advocacy** – Beth Mellor has spoken to OCL and PaLA about developing a platform for advocacy, which will amplify and educate the message from libraries across the state about the value of their work. Right now, the focus is on determining ways to help with the advocacy message and delivering the message to state government.
- d. Guidelines and Policies** – David Belanger commented that the committee is reviewing information and will produce a report in a few months.
- e. Strategic Planning** – Dr. Barbara Zaborowski is working with the committee on developing a statewide survey to collect input on GAC goals.

14. Public Comment

Maryam Phillips, Executive Director of HSLC remarked that HSLC has just concluded its spring training session. Just under 400 people attended and HSLC will expand training to run throughout the year. CE and Act 48 credits are available through this training, which

is offered both virtually and in-person. Training videos will be made available through POWER Library. New videos will be added to the public side of Niche Academy to introduce the public to POWER Library.

Christi Buker, Executive Director of Pennsylvania Library Association (PaLA), noted that Leadership Development (PALS) classes have been offered virtually. PALS has focused on mentoring and skills. The Legislative committee is working hard to increase libraries' visibility and is asking for \$5 million more in funding. Buker encouraged attendees to send letters to leaders in the legislature in support of a funding increase. PA Forward has funding for health programs which libraries can use for summer programming. The annual conference will be virtual, from September 27-29, and registration will open at the end of June 2021. A post-conference in-person retreat will be held October 18 and 19, but it will be limited in size.

Becca Long noted that she posted a job opening for a new executive director for the Erie County Public Library (ECPL) in the chat for this meeting. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been created for ECPL to be the library for the new community college. Keystone grant has been awarded to conduct a feasibility study for a new location for Mill Creek branch, which is looking to relocate. If anyone has any questions, please contact her via email.

Patrick Oates gave an update on the search for a new CEO for the Philadelphia Free Library as current CEO and President Siobhan Riordan is stepping down. The search committee includes members of the Free Library board and foundation and other stakeholders in the city of Philadelphia. Several candidates have been identified and a search firm has been engaged. The process will be very methodical and well-thought out, it will not be rushed but will be intentional. He will provide updates when available.

15. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Heasley, Administrative Assistant, Office of Commonwealth Libraries

Edits made by Mary Garm, Carrie Cleary, and Susan Banks.

Meeting Dates for 2021 – All meetings are virtual

Thursday, September 2, 2021, 9:30 a.m. – Business Meeting

September 29, 2021 – 9:00 a.m. Open Forum at PaLA Conference

Thursday, November 18, 2021, 9:30 a.m. – Business Meeting