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Minutes

Maine Library Commission

March 3, 2008

The Maine Library Commission met at the Maine State Library on Monday, March 3, 2008 at 1:15 p.m.

Members present: Karl Aromaa, Gretchen Asam (ATM), Charles Campo, Inese Gruber, Moorehead Kennedy (phone), Barbara McDade, Steve Nichols, Steve Podgajny, Jamie Ritter, and Joyce Rumery.

Members absent: Charles Cawley, Barbara Harness, and Elizabeth Moran.

Also present: Dean Corner, Shirley Helfrich, Linda Lord, Gary Nichols, Sylvia Norton, and Gail Waddell.

Minutes:

Shirley Helfrich noted an error in the January 7, 2008 minutes in the section MLA Minimum Standards. Membership in the Maine Regional Library System depends on the nine criteria for special libraries approved by the Commission on November 11, 2002 and approved for Regional Library System membership on May 15, 2006 and not on the Minimum Standards. In addition, it has been determined that the 2010 date for libraries to meet the Minimum Standards was a suggestion and has not been established as a rule by the Commission.

These corrections will be made to the minutes and will be approved at the May 5, 2008 meeting.

Legislation (Gary):

No action has been taken on **LD 793**, funding for Library Resources. Even with the support of Senator Edmonds, this bill may not be passed considering the state's financial condition.

LD 1993, Accountability of Cultural Agencies. The Department of Administrative and Financial Services and the Legislature are satisfied with the audit of the agencies. During the hearing before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, nearly all testifiers were neither for nor against the bill but did point out the pitfalls of the legislation. House Speaker Cummings suggested that a letter be sent to the cultural agencies by the Committee requesting that the Cultural Affairs Council study the current situation and recommend how the Council could be strengthened.

The Committee agreed to do so by a unanimous vote. Several weeks later the sponsor of the legislation, Senator Martin, recommended that the Committee amend its decision by converting the bill back into a resolve of the Legislature which could then be reintroduced there and amended to more closely follow his original language. This was passed unanimously.

The Cultural Affairs Council feels that it should take a lead role in strengthening the cultural agencies and wants to keep them together as a unified entity and not split apart.

LD 1876, Cultural Building Status. The Bureau of General Services' budget had been the initial funding source for hiring an architectural consultant. There has been an amendment to this bill that would use New Century bond funds allotted to the Cultural Affairs Council to fund the consultant.

Senator Rosen has this bill on hold because of questions about the use of bond money rather than state money for this purpose and the use of New Century funds for a consultant rather than bricks and mortar.

Gates Opportunity Online Hardware Grant (Linda):

Gates' latest library project is to assist technology sustainability in communities with high levels of poverty. These libraries must also use WebJunction's Tech Atlas template for a technology inventory and plan. Those who don't have enough computers to meet their patrons' needs or who have outdated computers will be eligible for matching hardware grants. The first step toward getting a grant is to be on the Gates list of eligible libraries.

Of Maine's 223 poverty-eligible public libraries, 156 have completed their technology plans, 33 are not interested in doing so, and 40 have not responded.

MSL Budget (Gail):

In the first round of funding cuts, the FY 08 budget was reduced by \$40,285 – all from the books and periodicals line.

The FY 09 budget was reduced by \$64,137. The breakdown was \$37,137 from books; \$25,000 from electronic databases; and \$5,000 from Newsline, the newspaper reading program for the visually impaired.

The second round of funding cuts included a reduction of \$131,329 from the 09 budget. This included eliminating a vacant Librarian II position in Outreach Services; a vacant part-time Customer Representative Assistant II position in Outreach Services; \$5,000 to each ARRC; \$25,000 in savings from the transfer of our business office staff to DAFS; \$13,093 from our annual share of New Century funding; and \$14,709 from books. This amounts to a decrease of \$68,527 in personnel and \$62,802 in all other lines.

Rulemaking (Dean):

The Commission does not have the authority to create and enforce rules. Therefore, it cannot link the adoption of the Minimum Standards by public libraries with free MSLN connections.

The Commission, on a motion by Ritter and a second by Rumery, voted unanimously to have the State Library pursue legislation that would give the Commission rulemaking authority.

New Century Grants (Linda):

The 2006 application guide and form were distributed. They will be used again for the next round of grants as it was found to be an effective process for libraries and those rating the applications.

E-Rate (Linda):

The MSL staff responsible for monitoring the eligibility of public libraries and schools for MSLN connections and for collecting the necessary paperwork for a consortial application is reaching a crossroads. The process is immensely time consuming and difficult. We will have to decide whether to continue dealing with this and all the schools and libraries involved or to move in a different direction.

Steve Podgajny questioned just how much MSL staff can continue to perform and provide, based on workloads such as E-Rate, related to the size of the staff and budget.

Reader & Information Services (Dean):

The Commission was briefed on the circulation, reference and patron count report. Reference statistics have shown slight but positive growth which is counter to many libraries in the country. Tighter statistical reporting and promotion of reference services has helped. Patron counts have noticeably increased with much of that increase reflecting public computer use.

Poor weather conditions certainly effected January circulation totals. There was a 5% decrease in circulation in 2007.

MSL's new online reference feature, Famous Mainers, was introduced. Discussion followed with questions about criteria for "famous" and "Mainer." Good-natured but pointed debate ensued. The web page will evolve.

Consultants (Shirley):

The Trustees' Steering Committee has been active. An orientation to MARVEL was provided. Also, it is important for trustees to acknowledge the differing roles of a trustee and a director.

\$3,272 has been expended from the \$13,000 New Century grant to the Maine Regional Library System.

There will be a public library director's institute and orientation for new directors on June 9 and 10. The keynote will be the library as commons.

SMLD is working with the Portland Press Herald on a literary map of Maine using quotes from both adult and children's books that mention specific places in Maine.

An updated Bare Bones Reference List is forthcoming. It was created twenty years ago and reference collections have decreased in size since then.

The statewide bindery service collection system will cease existence this spring. Tight funding has cut into the quantity of materials sent for rebinding.

Maine InfoNet (Barbara McDade):

Both candidates who were offered the InfoNet CEO position declined to accept it. Adequate employment for spouses was the deciding factor in both cases.

The position has been renamed Executive Director rather than CEO.

The Minerva summit was canceled because of stormy weather and has been rescheduled to April 23.

Scarborough Public Library, Walker Memorial Library in Westbrook and Unity College will become new member Minerva libraries.

Next Meeting:

May 5, 2008 at the Maine State Library at 1:00 p.m.

Adjourn:

On a motion by Ritter and a second by Rumery, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dean Corner