Maine Library Commission Minutes, June 17, 2013

Maine Library Commission

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Meeting called to order at 1:00PM.

Attendance:
Commission Members Present: Beth Edmonds (Chair), Joyce Rumery (Vice Chair) by VTC, Jeff Cabral, Charlie Campo, Deborah Clark, Elizabeth Doucett, Michael Hays, Mike Kennedy, Molly Larson, Barbara McDade, Dick Thompson, Art Turley

Absent: Debe Averill, Karen Baldacci, Steve Podgajny

Also present: Linda Lord, James Ritter, Janet McKenney, Mamie Ney, Stephanie Zurinski, Valerie Osborne, James Jackson Sanborn, Susan Preece, Kevin Davis, Pam Turner, Rich Boulet

Minutes from the May 20, 2013 meeting approved

Library Standards:

Summary: Library standards were presented to the Commission at the March 25, 2013 meeting with the intent to review them and have discussion and take action at the May 20, 2013 Commission Meeting. At the May 20, 2013 meeting the Commission voted unanimously to adopt the standards.

Subsequent to the discussions and approval at the May 20 meeting, the Commission agreed that a two week comment period would commence to allow for reaction to the adopted standards from the library community at large. The “Standards Committee” would then meet prior to the June 17, 2013 Commission meeting to digest suggestions and recommend any modifications to the standards. The June 17, 2013 Commission Meeting would be the designated forum to discuss those reactions.

Understanding the time required to discuss reaction to the standards, B.Edmonds moved directly to an open discussion regarding the standards. As was similarly noted in the May 20, 2013 meeting, the conversation regarding the adopted standards was impassioned and lively. Numerous Commission members and public librarians provided input and shared both common opinions and opposing opinions. The bulleted items below summarize the major points made regarding the standards:

A.Turley  Opened discussion and recapped feedback and the initial presentation of the standards:

- Reiterated that the standards were developed taking the most pertinent components of standards developed previously by the Maine Library Association and making them more accessible. They are structured around three core areas: Governance, Staff and Facility, and Collection and Programming. These three core areas align with the core areas of a Public Library definition created and approved by the Maine Library Commission.
- Summarization of feedback and recommendations of the Standards Committee regarding that feedback:
  - Questions regarding the Commission’s legal authority to create and enforce standards response indicated Maine Statute authorizes creation and enforcement and the statute would now be cited in the actual standards document.
  - Questions regarding Governance definitions and the unique difference between town/municipality. Response indicated that the standards #6 and #9 under Governance will be modified to reflect the nuances between towns and municipalities and their respective oversight of the library.
  - Questions regarding GAAP. Standards Committee agreed to modify language so GAAP standards would not be viewed as punitive, but simply guidance and adherence to acceptable accounting procedures.
Questions regarding two (2) staff minimum in library at all times. The Standards Committee fully understand that this “standard” may be difficult to meet, however, felt that for safety purposes (and sending a message that safety is important), agreed to recommend NOT to modify that standard.

Numerous questions regarding how the document would be utilized and suggestions that it may be viewed (and or is) punitive. Standards Committee acknowledges at some time the Maine State Library Commission may use the standards to determine benefits or services received by the Maine State Library, however as of NOW, the document is intended to be an ‘aspirational’ document that can be used by libraries to individually assess their own organization and perhaps also be used by libraries to engage in discussions with their board, town, funders to provide strategic direction regarding the library’s needs (in context of the standards).

The following comments (Commission Only) are summarized to reflect the totality of comments and discussion presented. They are listed in no particular order of importance, nor are they listed in the sequence in which they were made:

- Punitive: many individuals echoed the feedback from libraries that the document is punitive. When discussing this, individuals cited that if this is a punitive document, then what will be the ramifications? What services might be lost? Furthermore, if this is punitive document than it is far too vague to fairly enforce punitive measures, i.e. it needs to be black and white so that standards can be measured and enforced, and absent that the document only serves to be one to encourage guidance and self-assessment.
  - Outcome to the “punitive” discussion: The document was drawn from specific standards created by MLA and in effect for a decade. Additionally, the document is organized and compliments the Public Library Definition created, adopted, and embraced by the Maine Library Commission. While the Commission has no intention of, or ability currently, to measure and enforce punitive efforts for ‘not’ meeting standards, the document (at some time in the future) could enable that. It is to say that the document isn’t intended to serve a punitive purpose now, but may in the future (especially if resources were significantly reduced). Any such effort would naturally accompany a specific effort to measure libraries against the standards in an objective way. There was significant consensus that a preamble be created for the document that indicates the standards represent “Best Demonstrated Practices” and that the document should be used as a tool to move the library forward. All agreed that any individual library moving to meet any of the standards presented would be a good thing and not a bad thing to do.

- Tiers: Significant discussion regarding the tiers within the standards. What do they mean? If a library meets standards in 2-3 Tier 1 categories and 4-5 Tier 2 categories and the remainder of Tier 3, what type of library are they? Do they meet standards or not? The conversation regarding tiers also was woven in with the punitive discussion. Given the example just presented (meeting various standards in various tiers) how would any punitive action be considered.
  - Conclusion to “Tier” discussion: One particular comment suggested doing away with tiers as the standards should simply represent the minimum standards, however many felt comfortable that the tiers represent aspiration opportunities for Maine libraries to set growth objectives. It is this element that garnered the most traction among members, with the understanding the evolution of tier definitions would continue.

The following comments (individuals from Public Libraries Only) are listed in no particular order of importance, nor are they listed in the sequence in which they were made:

- Are grateful for the discussion and attempting to clarify standards as they are important.

- The process seems to have been rushed, and no clear understanding of how the Commission intends to use the standards has been articulated.
• The Commission has taken MLA Standards (over 70 pages) and created a “checklist.” Important items seem to be missing such as Pay Equity and Confidentiality.
• All shared concerns brought up in the Commission only portion of the discussion punitive and vague standards.
• A comment was made that it would be hard for the Commission to make the standards punitive as MSL doesn’t provide any services to libraries anyway i.e. “how can something be taken if nothing is given.”
  o Responses to this particular comment sought to immediately educate on the issue of direct MSL, MSL facilitated, and/or MSL subsidized services, including but not limited to: MARVEL, Overdrive, Internet Connectivity, eRate, Consultant Services, ILL & Van Delivery, and myriad consortia services.
• Candid comment from individual indicating that they would not know where to begin to understand where on the spectrum their library ranked in its entirety with regard to the standards and how that would impact them.

Below is a summary of final comments made by Commission Members and other attendees, as well as the outcome of future Standards discussions:

• Many agreed that the document, as it now exists, is an aspirational and best practices tool for libraries to embrace.
• Larger issues such as Pay Equity and confidentiality can and should be discussed further, with the caveat that an item such as “confidentiality” is already addressed in statute, so avoiding duplication can keep the standards document ‘cleaner’ and/or more simple.
• The issue of scarce resources is not going to go away, and the Commission and MSL will at some point need to address serving entities that are clearly ‘not’ public libraries.
• Conversation will continue. The Standards are adopted, but nothing prevents the Commission from revising them in the future.

Motion made and seconded to revisit the Standards discussion (with any revisions) in October. Motion approved.

Motion made to accept minor changes to the standards based on feedback (already mentioned such as Governance Town/Municipal and GAAP, etc.). Motion was seconded and approved.

Strategic Plan Update:

• L.Lord provided updates on strategic plan and there were no follow-up comments from Commission members.
• L.Lord specifically mentioned that specific language regarding Digital Literacy and Early Childhood Development would be added to the plan.

Maine InfoNet Update (James Jackson Sanborn):

• Diligently working on new website and expects it to go live the following week (June 24).
• Overdrive now the frontline end-user support will be supported directly by Overdrive and not Maine InfoNet.
• RDA Training to occur for all interested in attending. RDA is new version of cataloging standards. Maine InfoNet bringing in facilitator/trainer to lead the meeting. It will be held August 8 in Bangor.
• Continued to inform the Commission regarding the latest developments of discussions with Triple I and a unified system. Maine contingent meeting with Triple I at ALA Conference June 29 and expect a preliminary price quote and further discussions regarding the development of Sierra MT. Following this meeting with Triple I, JJS will have significantly more updates to provide at the September Commission Meeting.
Friends of the Maine State Library:

- The Friends are hosting an author discussion June 21 with Martha White (E.B. White’s granddaughter) to discuss the new book *E.B. White on Dogs*.

Emergency Preparedness  Follow-up to Heritage Pres. Workshop Update (Jeff Cabral):

- A contingent of staff and management from Maine’s various cultural agencies will be meeting July 8 to discuss awareness and disaster planning. The primary purpose of the meeting is to bring people together to start aligning common jargon and common efforts all can take to prepare for emergencies or disasters.
- In addition to cultural agency staff, members of MEMA will attend as well.

State Librarian Report:

- Next ten days to be tenuous due to budget negotiations. MSL being asked to prepare for no approved budget.
- Hiring freeze has been enacted, as well as no out of state travel in light of budget negotiations.
- President Obama has asked FCC for an increase in eRate funding.
- Income from the final tally of Income Tax Check-Off will be reported next week.
- Twelve (12) ‘No’ Annual Report Letters have been mailed (week of Commission)

Consultant Reports:

- J. McKenney informed the Commission that Mamie Ney has taken a position as the Director of the Auburn Public Library. MSL will work diligently to replace the position when the hiring freeze is lifted.
- Continuing Education forum to be held in Portland next Monday.
- MSL monitoring bill on appropriations table which will impact libraries as it pertains to them collecting sales tax on items sold.
- Potential travel restrictions will impact affect leadership at NECS.

Motion made to adjourn. Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting is September 16, 2013 at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Acting Secretary

James Ritter
MSL, Director of Reader and Information Services