

**Commission Meeting
Minutes for August 7, 2002
Helena, MT**

Attendees:

Commissioners: Ralph Atchley, Cheri Bergeron, Rosemary Garvey, David Johnson, Bruce Morton, Al Randall, Gail Staffanson

Staff: Karen Strege, Jim Hill, Darlene Staffeldt, Jim Kammerer, Sue Crispin, Bruce Newell, Tracy Cook, Anastasia Burton, Barbara Duke, Christie Briggs, Suzy Holt, Kris Schmitz, Catherine Love

Guests: Lois Fitzpatrick, Steve Prine, Rand Simmons

The meeting was called to order at 9:00.

Announcements and Introductions

Rosemary Garvey and Karen Strege introduced Gail Staffanson, the new commissioner appointed by Governor Martz. Staffanson lives with her husband and children on a farm in Sidney and is a former teacher/librarian.

Strege announced that Anastasia Burton who had been working as a temporary Outreach Coordinator has been hired as a permanent, part-time Communications and Marketing Coordinator.

Darlene Staffeldt introduced Jim Kammerer, who was hired in June as the State Publications Center Coordinator.

Jim Hill introduced Catherine Love, the new GIS Technician. Love will perform administrative functions for NRIS, as well as performing GIS and database duties.

Bruce Morton and Strege mentioned they might be called out of the Commission meeting to testify at the special legislative session taking place.

Approval of minutes

Morton noted a correction needed to be made to the minutes from the July teleconference meeting. The word "of" should be inserted after "approve" in the last paragraph under action items. Morton motioned to accept the June minutes and the July minutes with the correction made. David Johnson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

State Librarian's Report

Budget cuts have taken up most of Strege's time since the last meeting. Many hours were spent discussing proposals with program managers, the Governor's office and the library community over the past six weeks. Strege did attend meetings with the Office of Higher Education and with Brian Wolfe from ITSD, but many of the committees Strege sits on have postponed meetings for the summer to cope with the special session. Kris Schmitz is attending a hearing today on HB 10, which affects the Library's funding from the coal tax severance fund, and will call Strege if she is needed at the hearing. Global cuts for all state agencies are also being discussed later in the day.

The State Library received information about a new grant program from the Gates Foundation called the "Staying Connected" Grants Program. The program offers 1:1 matching grants in four different categories: public access computer upgrade or replacement, broadband connectivity upgrade, training sustainability and technical support sustainability. The computer upgrade grant would provide matching funds to buy computers and software for certain impoverished Montana libraries. The broadband connectivity upgrade is very important for the state's libraries because the grant would provide almost \$100,000 to upgrade libraries' Internet connections. The training sustainability program might provide funds for further technology training. The technical support sustainability program would provide \$60,000 for a help desk, to hire staff or to contract for technical support for public libraries. This program may not be feasible because matching funds may not be available in MSL's budget. More information is needed from the foundation regarding this program.

The Gates Foundation has said it will look at applications and take into account the fiscal situation in the applicant state to determine if federal money can be used as matching funds. The first cut-off to let the Foundation know of an interest in applying for the grants is September 15. Strege asked for the commission's permission to express to the Foundation the State Library's interest in applying and permission was granted.

Program One Updates

The Gates Summer Institutes in Bozeman and Missoula went very well and an institute is being held in Billings this week. Trainers from BCR taught sessions at the institutes, as did Matt Beckstrom from the Lewis & Clark Public Library and Mike Carroll from the State Library.

Al Randall complimented institute staff on the quality of training this year. His staff members mentioned that they like having beginning and advanced classes.

Tracy Cook and Suzanne Reymer will attend the state fair in Billings to market libraries and let people know all the valuable services offered by their local libraries. The fairs are very labor intensive, but they may be a great way to generate interest in libraries. Their effectiveness will be evaluated in deciding whether the fairs will be a permanent part of the State Library's PR program.

73 public libraries report that they meet public library standards this year. Two, Darby and Drummond, were granted a deferral from the hours open standard. Three libraries are not meeting standards - Cut Bank for hours and Red Lodge and St. Ignatius for number of board members. All three plan to either meet the standard by the deadline or apply for a deferral.

The Library and Information Services staff has been identifying standing orders and periodicals that will be discontinued due to the first round of budget cuts. LISD has offered training sessions for state employees. John Heldt manages a database of over 600 state employees who receive regular updates about library activities. Jim Kammerer has been busy working with state documents and the GILS project.

The Talking Book Library is pleased to have Steve Prine from the National Library Service visiting to conduct a periodic inspection. He will update the Commission about the digitization project later in the meeting.

Program Seven Updates

Jim Hill updated the Commission on the issue of the role of NRIS as a clearinghouse for framework data. NRIS and ITSD at the Department of Administration have had discussions about defining their roles in data dissemination. NRIS staff drafted a policy statement discussing the issue with the intention of presenting it to the Montana Geographic Information Council, the policy-setting group for GIS in Montana, but that has not yet happened. Hill did present the paper to the Data Access and Dissemination Implementation Team, a group sanctioned by MGIC that looks at technical and policy issues in regard to how geospatial data are accessed in the state. The team's recommended that the two agencies resolve issues about what their respective roles are with regard to geospatial data in particular and information access in general.

Strege met with Brian Wolfe, the state CIO, and Hill met with Tony Herbert, a deputy CIO, to continue the discussion.

Sue Crispin reported that the Heritage program has had some key employees leave in the last couple of months. Richard Caners, who was hired as the botanist, left for personal reasons after being here only a few months. Senior ecologist, Cathie Jean, who came to Heritage from the Forest Service about three years ago left to return to federal service. Recruitment is now underway for these two key positions. Mel Bruhn who manages the office and finances for Heritage has accepted a part-time position with Habitat for Humanity. Heritage has been managing such a large number of grants that a full-time financial administrator will be hired to replace Bruhn.

Crispin shared two reports that Heritage produced within the last couple of months.

Washington State Library Presentation

Rand Simmons detailed the events that lead to the Washington State Library changing from an independent agency to becoming a division of the Secretary of State's office. In February of 2001, Washington experienced an earthquake that damaged the legislature building. While the building was being repaired, the legislature was moved to the State Library building and the library was moved to an office building in Tumwater. In December, the Governor of Washington proposed to abolish the state library as a way to reduce the state's deficit. When the legislature convened in January of 2002, the state library had a lot of support from legislators and the Washington Library Association. A bill was introduced that would place the State Library under the direction of the Secretary of State's office. The Governor introduced a bill to eliminate the State Library, with the exception of the Talking Book Library. The Governor eventually did sign a bill transferring the State Library to the Secretary of State's office and abolishing the State Library Commission. The Secretary of State was very supportive of the library and felt that it was worth preserving. The library is now in the process of reinventing itself in an effort to become more visible to the Governor and the legislature.

National Library Service

Steve Prine, Head of Network Services Section at the National Library Service, gave a presentation about the digitization project for the Talking Book Library. The National Library Service has been providing books in Braille and in recorded formats since 1931. Books and equipment are provided to a network of cooperating libraries across the United States and in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands for use to their patrons for free. Congress provides \$60 million/year to the post office to underwrite the costs of shipping the materials.

NLS is moving to a digital format. The first step was to set the foundation for the development of a standard for digital talking books. There are four other steps in moving to digital technology. First, network libraries need to have the recording booths to be able to record digitally. The Low Complexity Mastering System (LCM) is expected to be released at the end of August and the first model will be installed in the Montana Talking Book Library. The LCM can record digitally and then the recording can be turned back into an analog cassette so copies can be made. An archival storage system for the digital masters and a digital-to-digital duplication system will then need to be developed.

The other steps are collection development, playback equipment and distribution methods. NLS contracts out to produce titles. Over the next three years, cassettes will be phased out and contractors will be required to switch over to totally digital recordings. NLS is also in the process of developing a digital talking book player with a universal design that is easy for a wide range of patrons to use. For distribution, NLS is looking at flash memory, which is used in digital cameras, MP3 players and some computers. The cost of the memory is still rather high, but should come down considerably by 2008. Flash memory has the advantage of being very easily reloaded with information, so they can be reused for new titles when the demand for a particular title dies down. The goal for NLS is to have 16,000 titles in digital format and 50,000 playback machines by 2008 as the start of a transition to a digital environment.

Commission Goals and Objectives

Randall will be going to Missoula for the Pacific Northwest Library Association conference after the commission meeting. He spent time the day before the commission meeting trying to catch up with Senator Bill Crismore in an effort to save some of coal tax money for the library.

Garvey wrote the article for this month's newsletter. Atchley will do the article for the next newsletter.

Financial Reports

The FY03 budget was not included with the financial reports as it usually is because the budget is in flux and the figures will change once the special session is over. The budget will be available at the next meeting or at the special teleconference call that is likely to be scheduled when the special session concludes.

For FY02, Program 1 had a small operational plan change of \$5,700, which was moved from the operations budget to the book budget. Most of the funds in function 90 are ongoing projects, so not a lot of money was reverted. The reversion for Program 1 was about \$5,300.

Program 7 had a few changes to the budget. There was a shortfall in personal services, which was anticipated, and the Library applied to the Governor's Budget Office and received \$16,500 from the personal services contingency fund. NRIS has two interagency agreement contracts with Fish, Wildlife & Parks that needed a few more hours budgeted. NRIS entered into two new contracts and those will carry over to FY03. The reversion for Program 7 was about \$1,900.

State Budget Reductions and Special Session

The state's budget deficit has become more acute and the Governor called for a special legislative session, which commenced this week. The House appropriations committee

met two weeks ago and made a series of additional cuts including a freeze on new hires and cuts in the coal severance tax funds for the Library. The new cuts as of last night total about \$96,397 – a 1% cut in general fund overall and 2/3s of the equipment budget which includes books.

The total cut for the Library is now \$365,000, which is 20% of our budget. At this time, it is not known how many of the cuts will actually make it through the session. The equipment budget has a negative balance. For personnel, a reduction plan will have to be developed and job consolidation, service reduction and reduction in force will need to be considered. If a RIF or service reduction is necessary, policy requires that the commission approve a plan.

The vacancy contingency fund currently holds \$800,000, but legislators have been reducing this fund and it's not clear whether any money will be left after the special session. The Library has depended on the fund to fill personnel budget shortfalls. Strege and program managers will do what they can to avoid cutting personnel, but may not have a choice.

The online materials budget was reduced by \$50,000 in the first round of cuts and the Library and Information Services staff have been identifying titles to discontinue. If the coal tax reductions are made, additional materials will need to be deselected.

Federation coordinators did not meet yesterday as usual because they did not want to use travel money since they may need to meet after the special session concludes.

Lois Fitzpatrick reported that the across the board reduction in equipment would have a severe impact on the Law Library and the Historical Society Library. The Historical Society may close its library and museum if the cuts remain.

LSTA Report

The planning for the trustee workshops has started with places and dates set and potential speakers identified. The library tour for Idaho is scheduled for September. The Fall Workshop is will be held at the Carroll College campus in Helena this year. Registration forms went out in the last newsletter.

Lake County Projects

Bob Cooper attended a Library Improvement Project meeting in Polson. Lake County had been looking at a county library system, but is now discussing a district system. They have a draft petition and a plan which the county attorney will review. The Committee hired a public relations person to inform the public about the library project. The Committee is also fundraising to support the bookmobile after the grant is complete in September.

MLN

The Montana Shared Catalog project has been going very well and is expected to go live on Monday, August 12. The holdings of 17 libraries will be available through the catalog and other libraries have also expressed an interest in joining the project.

Bruce Newell did some rough numbers of the cost and value of the Gale subscription and found that it is quite cost effective for Montana's libraries. It would cost individual libraries much more to buy a single subscription to Gale or to purchase the full-text magazines available through the database.

Federation Coordinator's Report

There was no report given as the Coordinators did not meet.

Action Items

Johnson moved to adopt the fourth quarter financial reports. Bergeron seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Literature Sampler

Billings is evaluating several different sites for a proposed new public library. A bond election to fund the library will be held in November.

Also included in the literature sampler is an article from the Washington Post detailing the Industrial Designers Society of America's contest to design a digital talking book player.

Good press was received about the upcoming implementation of the statewide shared catalog.

State Librarian Evaluation

The State Librarian's annual evaluation was done in closed session at Strege's request.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15.