

Montana State Library Commission
Final Meeting Minutes for December 14, 2005
Helena, MT

Attendees:

Commissioners: Bruce Morton, Cindy Carrywater, Caroline Bitz, Ron Moody and Cheri Bergeron.

Staff: Darlene Staffeldt, Julie Stewart, Jim Kammerer, Jim Hill, Sarah McHugh, Jennie Stapp, Bruce Newell, Julie Klaus, Bob Cooper, Sue Crispin, Tori Orr, Sara Groves, Christie Briggs, Sue Jackson, Allan Cox and Tom Marino.

Visitors: Jeneen Brookie, Bonnie Williamson, Honore Bray, Bridgett Johnson and Judy Hart.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30

Introductions:

McHugh introduced Jennie Stapp, who is the new Montana Shared Catalog Technical Assistant. She's been working very heavily with five new libraries. Orr introduced Julie Klaus, who is the new outreach librarian and has been busy visiting agencies and preparing for new employee orientation session.

Bitz introduced Judy Hart, the new director of the Lewis and Clark Public Library. She began working there in September of this year.

Hill introduced Tom Marino who is our new web manager. He's working on conversion of the Montana State Library (MSL) website to the Governor approved web page template. He's also been interviewing all managers in an attempt to provide MSL with a web approach that integrates all programs.

Staffeldt recognized Sarah McHugh with a five year pin, Mike Price with a five year pin and Christie Briggs with a ten year pin.

Approval of Minutes

Moody made a motion to accept the October 2005 minutes. Carrywater seconded. Motion passed.

State Librarian Report

Staffeldt said Tracy Cook is leaving the Library Development staff and the State Library. She moved onto a challenging position in academic library work. We have her position open and two other positions in the Library Development unit open. The trainer position that the Commission agreed to funding through LFTA for at least a year is currently being advertised. Also there is an administrative assistant position within the Library Development unit being advertised. This is a position we got back in the last legislative session.

Briggs has an open position in Talking Book Library due to Cheryl Christopher's retirement.

Research Indemnity Trust (RIT) fund is about \$400,000 for our natural resource information system piece of the Digital Library. The last legislative session set up a subcommittee and asked them to take a really good look at the RIT funds. There have been two meetings and we've been invited to both meetings. Jim Hill did a presentation at the second meeting. We listened via computer to the following day and we were not listed as one of the top five or the bottom five. We did get a final call. There were two votes. The first vote was how important the services are to the state and 4 was a high vote and we have two 3s and two 4s. The other vote was whether or not the RIT were appropriate funding for the group. That vote we didn't come out as high. Overall we are closer to the lower five, however, we felt good in that the committee values our services and feel that is important to the State of Montana. We're hoping that means they will work with us to find alternative funding if they don't think the RIT funding is appropriate funding. Their next meeting is in March and they will hear testimony of the user groups of this fund. Moody asked what the issue in the minds of the legislature as RIT as the funding source? What is the problem there? Staffeldt responded they asked to have it looked at because there are 34 programs asking to use this money. There is so many groups asking for the money and there are so many strict reasons for use of these funds. Hill said it's an issue of the interpretation of the statute. Under the interpretation, a lot of programs have received funds in the past. The committee is now taking a closer look at statute and who should receive the funds. He doesn't think there are serious hazards as to losing the funds.

Last week Staffeldt attended the Bibliographic Center for Research board meeting in Denver. She heard praises for Bruce Newell from everyone from Alaska to Kansas. They were all talking about his white paper on rural libraries. It's nice to have a staff member who is well known and appreciated throughout the library world.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Staffeldt said Kris Schmitz apologized for not being in attendance at the meeting. She trusted that Staffeldt and Hill would be able to answer all questions. It's the first quarter report almost to the end of the second quarter. The personnel budget is stretched a little thin, because of the new pay plan, but Schmitz feels we're doing fine.

EXECUTIVE PLANNING PROCESS (EPPs)

Staffeldt said this is a list of items to be considered for Executive Planning Process. This is the governor's budget preparation for the next biennium. We will be asked to put together a list of 'new proposals'. It is possible we will have to do a phone call meeting prior to the next Commission meeting to vote on these. This list is not all of the items. The final list going to the Governor may not have all these items on it. When we have the final list for you, there will be numbers and impact statements for each item.

The RIT is on this list. We may have to deal with this funding for our digital library program. Gale statewide database was a legislative audit issue that may or may not come back. The Talking Book staff continues to need help. We're down two in the recommended standards from the federal government as to how to run the Talking Book Library. Staffeldt said we need a budget for recruitment, interviewing and hiring. We keep losing top candidates because we can't give them enough money to come in for interviews, we can't offer them enough for moving expenses.

Ron asked if Darlene is specifically talking about being able to provide travel expense to bring a candidate in for an interview. You're talking about actual recruitment process?

Staffeldt said our current standard practice is to offer an interviewee \$300 to help them get to Helena for an interview. Most people can't even get an airline ticket for that. That comes out of the program budget. We don't have a recruitment budget and we need one so that we can make these hires and not lose candidates because we're trying to find enough money, they go find employers that can fly them first class and put them up in a nice motel.

Another item on the EPP is full funding of the broadband pay schedule. At the end of June, we changed staff from the old pay plan to the broadband pay plan. In order to do that, the library has left two positions open. One was Darlene's former position. The other is the Water Information System position. Staffeldt would like to get those positions back up and fill them. This will be a struggle as the legislature has gone on record saying if you chose broadband they aren't going to help agencies. However, there are a number of agencies that have moved to broadband and the Department of Administration State Personnel folks have assured Schmitz and Staffeldt that they are taking for the whole state, a proposal to try to get the legislature to fund the broadband.

Ron asked to what extent, can you give us a number of how much of our personnel compensation budget we're financing with vacant FTEs? He suggested this number should be kept in mind.

Staffeldt said at least \$100,000 is being funded by vacancies. We're not even considering filling her old position or the water information system position. We need both those positions, but at this time they are not being advertised.

Ron mentioned that the longer a position is vacant, the more likely the legislature will decide that position isn't needed.

LSTA Reports

Sue Jackson said there is no word about federal budget, so we do not have our 2006 LSTA grant award. This has happened in past years and IMLS will issue a contingency funding. The final report for 2004 grant award is due December 31, so she's working on this report. IMLS uses this report to verify how we've used the grant awards.

Bruce Newell said that director's station has been awarded for shared catalog. That was a long process and he expects that to be installed within next couple months. As of yesterday, the partner libraries have decided to purchase for the entire Montana Shared Catalog a collection of 5,000 net library titles. There are things like cliff notes, computer books, and consumer medical information. The retail value is \$150,000 per library. My regret is it's not being sent to all 741 Montana libraries. This will get these to about half the population in the state.

Staffeldt said we don't have the LSTA 2006 budget yet. The Commission usually tries to take action in December, but we can't take action if we don't have the official word that it's available. You approved the budget at the August meeting, so we have the authority to spend that contingency, but we will have to take official action on any of the sub projects before they can expend any money with the 06 federal monies.

TALKING BOOKS LIBRARY TRUST FUND

Briggs discussed the Talking Book Library Trust funds. She shared the MTBL brochure and many have been distributed throughout the state. In 2008 we will celebrate 40 years of service for the blind in the state of Montana. Prior to 1968 Montana citizens were served through the state of Washington.

Morton asked if either of these requests would be an ongoing project? Is there concern about drawing down the trust without having alternative funding sources?

Briggs said she is working on alternative funding sources. She is working with Montana Association for the Blind for Newsline and Lions Club for the Low Vision Montana. She is looking at other resources to build up infra structure for both of those projects. With Newsline Briggs is concerned that we need to investigate a small amount of money for that service to offset what she thinks the Montana Association for the Blind individual membership wants to do and that is to go to the legislature separate from the EPP

process and have all of the funding of Newslines come out of the TBL. Briggs wants to offset that by investing an amount now and working with them diligently to find other sources. On Low Vision Montana Briggs wants to be a partner in setting up the informational and referral part of their service. They have three legs to their service. One is the mobile unit, which will have inventory; another part is setting up partnerships in community through their VISTA volunteer. That partnership will be with five major communities. The third part is the information and referral service which Briggs hopes to have TBL and Montana Association for the Blind work closely to provide information and services. The seed money for that will initially set up a 1-800 phone services training for people to have information and this has to be maintained. Staffeldt said this request is seed money so that we can see the value and purpose to both Low Vision Montana and Newslines.

Federation Annual Reports – South Central and Broad Valley

Staffeldt said this is the report for July 2004 through June 2005. Bridgette Johnson is the coordinator for the South Central Federation and could answer any questions. Judy Hart is the federation coordinator for Lewis and Clark Public Library.

Montana Natural Heritage Program

Staffeldt said this has been a difficult situation and apologizes for the uncomfortable feeling this has created for the Commission. She feels very strongly that the Natural Heritage Program, the NRIS program and MSL will be fine moving forward if we contract with the U of M. She asked if there were questions.

Moody mentioned that Staffeldt's memo referred to keeping an option available to move this program again, if we decide to move it to University of Montana. Hill said the statute allows the program to be operated by the Library or operated through contract and the contract has always been with the Nature Conservancy. The contract contains escape clauses for either entity and they cover what should happen if the relationship comes to a close. The databases and training of the databases remain at the Library. The contract can be extended and it also can be ended depending on circumstances we may not fully understand today. We would be fully capable of coming to a conclusion later that it would be better to look for another option, including assimilation into the Library.

Bergeron asked what exactly do we own? Hill said we own the name Natural Heritage Program. We purchase a certain set of products and services and that is ours. He doesn't think the Heritage Program can exist without the Library. But if anyone else elected to do field research, we don't have any control over that.

Bergeron asked about the core information that we purchase – as far as access by our clients which is the public – is equal access ensured? If we go to another agency, will it

be more difficult to access? Are our customers going to have equal access as now? Hill said he doesn't see that change at all except to get better. The program has always operated as a separate entity from NRIS. The databases are owned by the state and will reside here and if the relationship ends with the administrator of the program, we will maintain them.

Commission Goals and Objectives

Carrywater visited the Ft. Belknap College library.

Bitz said Big Sandy is going to get the Imagination Library. It's partnering with the Dollywood Foundation. This helps every child in the community receives a book every month for the first five years of their lives. There has to be a partner within the community to partner with the Dollywood Foundation. The Rotary Club in Big Sandy is putting out a tenth of their budget to do this. Big Sandy will probably have to partner with the school as there has to be a non profit organization.

National Book Festival

Sue Jackson and Sara Groves reported on the National Book Festival they attended in Washington, D. C. We ordered marketing materials and distributed them while there. All of the materials were gone within a few hours. It was a very successful event. There were 60-80,000 people. People were very interested in learning about Montana.

Groves discussed the What's Your Story Campaign. She's heard from librarians throughout the state about how they are using the campaign. Some are using the posters, some are using the programming ideas. We have been contacted by the National Library of Medicine and they would like to partner with us putting a link to our public site on Medline. AARP National was so impressed with the state partnership and are now working with American Library Association and partnering with libraries through the country. We did GIS day – great press from that. A couple classes of 5th graders that came to the library and the NRIS team did presentations for the students. We did the Heritage and NRIS 20 year anniversary party and also had a reception last night at the library. Thompson Gale donated \$1,000 for the reception.

2006 Commission Meetings Dates

These are second Wednesday of every other month. Staffeldt is not proposing that we meet with MLA this year because it's an early May meeting rather than in April and that puts us quite a ways away from our other meeting, so she's recommending that we just have an April meeting and not try to have a meeting at MLA. Staffeldt asked if the Commission wants to sponsor a reception during the MLA meeting. Last year's reception cost more than we collected, so we would want to get a little larger donations

this year from the Commissioners.

Johnson suggested something like Thompson Gale. She said that the Commission is a volunteer board and she's always feels uncomfortable asking boards to give money. Why couldn't we ask a vendor to sponsor this?

Bergeron said when the vendors comes they support the conference and they pay a hefty fee. So we're already asking them a lot.

Moody said he could handle \$40. Carrywater agrees with Bergeron.

Staffeldt also pointed out the dates April 30-May 2, 2006. This is the National Library Legislative Day in Washington, D. C. Traditionally the Commission has offered to help one or two commissioners to attend that conference with the State Librarian. It's a good event and is a chance to talk to our congressional people in their office about library issues on a national level. We do have a \$1,000 in the Commission budget for help to get there. As soon as possible, we need to have names of who will be going.

Moody asked about the Commission travel. He was thinking that the Commission could be very helpful in developing a legislative strategy and budget strategy, but would need time to come together and meet about that. Personally he would like to attend one or two of the NRIS Advisory Committee meetings during the year. Is there a policy or should we create a working session to be associated with the February or April meeting to help Darlene and MSL put together legislative recommendations together?

Staffeldt said at this time she doesn't know if it's essential.

Bitz asked if any Commissioners would like to go to the National Legislative Day in Washington, D. C.. At this point, there was no interest.

Morton said considering the dire circumstances of recruitment and the hiring situation, could funds that have been used for travel of library staff etc. be used for funding additional staff? Morton said it wasn't meant as criticism but considering the problem in paying to get candidates here, any monies that could be squeezed toward that problem, is critical.

Staffeldt said it wasn't taken as criticism.

Bitz asked if there were any problems with the Commission meeting dates for 2006? None were mentioned.

Action:

Morton moved to accept the first quarter financial report. Motion was seconded by Cheri Bergeron and pass unanimously.

Bergeron moved to accept the Talking Book Library Trust request. Motion was seconded by Moody and pass unanimously.

Moody moved to accept the Federation annual reports from the South Central Federation and the Broad Valley Federation. Motion was seconded by Carrywater and pass unanimously.

Moody moved the Commission authorize the State Librarian to proceed with negotiations with the University of Montana to contract for services from the Natural Heritage Program. Final approval of the contract by the Commission is pending outcome of the negotiations. Motion was seconded by Carrywater and motion passed with Morton abstaining.

Morton moved to accept the proposed 2006 meeting dates. Motion was seconded by Bergeron and passed unanimously.

Election of Officers

Staffeldt said that Don Allen said it would be good to stay on schedule and since December is when election of officers typically happens, it should be kept there. He was willing to just reaffirm the officers that were elected in June or consider new elections? Both Allen and Moody's positions will be open in May 2006. Hopefully the Governor will reappoint Moody and Allen will ask to be reappointed.

Bitz asked if there was a motion for a chair person.

Morton nominated Moody for chair and Bergeron second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Carrywater nominated Bitz for vice chair. Morton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

There was no evaluation of the State Librarian today. Nora Smith is compiling the information and is not able to attend meeting today, so that will be on the agenda for the February meeting.

Other Business

Morton said that Bozeman rotary club engaged an organization called the Dictionary Project to provide dictionaries to the third graders. If anyone is interested, they can contact the rotary club.

Moody suggested getting Christy the Word Smith to do a presentation at the Commission meeting when we meet in Bozeman.

Meeting adjourned.