

**MONTANA STATE LIBRARY (MSL) COMMISSION MEETING**  
**4:00 p.m., June 14, 2022**  
**Grizzly Room, Montana State Library and Zoom**

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDEES:**

**Commissioners:**

Chair Kenning Arlitsch (Commissioner of Higher Education Appointee), Elsie Arntzen (Superintendent of Public Instruction), Tammy Hall, Dalton Johnson, Robyn Scribner, Peggy Taylor

**Absent Commissioners:**

Kristin Kerr

**MSL Staff:**

Malissa Briggs, Evan Hammer (Zoom), Sharon Hardwick (Zoom), Genevieve Lighthiser, Jennie Stapp

**Guests**

Nancy Hall (Office of Budget and Program Planning), Representative David Bedey

Agenda: [Attachment 1](#)

**Call to Order and Introductions at 4:00 pm**

The meeting began with a welcome and introductions by Chair Kenning.

**Commission work session to discuss Executive Planning Process priorities with Interim Budget Committee Chair Rep. David Bedey**

**Modified FTE Analysis: [Attachment 2](#) and EPP Priorities: [Attachment 3](#)**

Jennie Stapp introduced the Modified FTE Analysis document and discussed the recommendation to change 16 current MSL modified FTE positions to permanent FTE by moving this request forward in the EPP process and then on to the legislative session. A discussion with the Commissioners, MSL staff, Representative Bedey, and Nancy Hall followed.

Tammy Hall asked how many current MSL staff are FTE. Jennie Stapp stated that there are 30 staff now. The additional 14 would total 46 FTE staff. These are the positions considered permanent. Grant funded positions will still be Modified FTE.

Kenning Arlitsch asked what the benefit of this move would be. Jennie Stapp answered that MSL is seen as smaller than the library actually is. She would like to be more

transparent. \$2 million dollars of personal services is shown in a grant account, and this is not transparent.

Tammy Hall asked if the process is the same to layoff FTE vs. Modified FTE. Jennie Stapp answered that grant positions have an end date to the position. For positions that are not grant positions, the RIF/layoff position would be the same between FTE and Modified FTE.

Tammy Hall asked how many positions at MSL are grant positions. Jennie Stapp answered six to seven staff, and they are listed as modified.

Robyn Scribner asked to clarify that some of the current modified have been at MSL since 1999. Jennie Stapp answered yes. Tammy Hall stated that not all the Modified FTE are long-timers. Some are only 1-2 years. Robyn stated that the positions go way back even if the current employee has only had the position for 1-2 years.

Nancy Hall explained that currently, the modified FTE funds are legislative expenses that need to be moved to personal expenses. MSL must ask for the move. In the future with this proposed change, when the budget is created then the positions would show as personal services not operating budget. The legislature could see the pay for all the positions, and they could fund all 46 positions as personal expense.

Kenning Arlitsch asked Representative Bedey what his opinion in this recommendation was. Bedey stated it was prudent, but due to the dynamics of the Legislature, it will be seen as growth of government. It is a battle that will be waged in the Appropriations Committee and on the Floor. He recommended it but noted that if it is not in the Governor's budget, then he will take heat for the idea. If it is in the Governor's budget, he can share the heat.

Tammy Hall asked about the term "Position Inception" in the document, and whether that was when the person or the position started. Jennie Stapp answered that the position inception is when the position started and the time in position is when the staff member started.

Tammy Hall asked if it was typical to have this many modified FTE in other agencies. Elsie Arntzen answered that modified are there for the reason of flexibility. Taking modified to permanent has arduous optics and will be challenging.

Jennie Stapp stated that all the MSL positions were reclassified last year with the job audit. She is confident in the classifications.

Representative Bedey stated that the political optics are difficult but sometimes you must do what is right.

Elsie stated that it is important to point to efficiencies and better services. That would make the recommendation a better sell. She recommended prioritizing the sixteen Modified FTE and doing it incrementally.

Representative Bedey recommended getting the Governor's support for the recommendation. It is the end state we want to be at. He asked if the increase of stable funding to MSL at the last legislative session helps to have the funding for this request. Jennie Stapp answered yes.

Representative Bedey recommended having an answer to the question of why this has gone on this long. Jennie stated that MSL has asked to move these Modified FTE to permanent FTE in the past.

Tammy Hall asked if the Modified FTE would feel more entitled if they were permanent FTE. Would it be harder to lay them off? Jennie Stapp stated that these modified FTE positions are already consider permanent staff at MSL. They have the same work contract at permanent FTE unless they are grant funded.

Elsie Arntzen asked if MSL was unionized. Jennie stated no. Elsie asked how many staff could be unionized. Jennie said she would have to check.

Elsie Arntzen asked if Jennie Stapp had shared this with the Budget Committee. Jennie Stapp stated she shared it with the Interim Committee.

Kenning Arlitsch recommended taking the offense. Focus on being transparent and show how the money is being spent.

Dalton Johnson asked if MSL has tried for a smaller ask. Jennie said they did not have luck with that ask in the past.

#### **Library Infrastructure Program Suggestions: [Attachment 4](#)**

Jennie stapp presented the recommendation for a one-time ask for infrastructure needs. She is recommending that the Commission recommend this to the Governor's Executive Planning Process and then the legislature. She is interested in having a conversation with the Governor about a program to give out the funding. The funding would not come to and through MSL, but another agency like Commerce. She also recommended doing a facilities assessment to identify if there is a need for further funding past the OTO.

Representative Bedey stated that this request would go through section F, HB 5. This would be competing with requests from agencies from across the State. You will never get it funded if you do not ask, but you will have to make its case against the other agencies' requests. Nancy Hall stated that would be different if it is funded through a special program like OPI or Commerce.

Tammy Hall stated that she was appalled that these libraries are not ADA compliant. This means libraries might need to move to new locations. She liked the idea of a grant program where libraries present the idea and the solution.

Robyn stated that Geraldine just redid the library. They funded it privately with fundraising. She recommended looking at the idea of having matching funds. Jennie Stapp stated that if the Legislature was open to a grant program, then they could call out stipulations like matching funds.

Robyn Scribner stated that she has a hard time with the quote of \$5,000 per library to assess. Jennie clarified that it would be less for some libraries and more for others.

Elsie Arntzen recommended looking at how this infrastructure request would increase patron services. She also wondered how digital services are affecting the need for physical space.

Dalton asked if libraries are hearing about these infrastructure needs from the patrons or is the ask coming from librarians. Jennie Stapp answered that they have not asked patrons, but the Library Standards process shows that ADA access is a problem.

Tammy Hall asked Representative Bedey for advice to help this succeed. Bedey answered that this would not be his committee. The Budget Director would direct where it needs to go. He was not sure the mechanics of how it gets directed.

Elsie Arntzen stated that libraries do not need a band-aid, they need a longer view of ongoing infrastructure needs. Representative Bedey stated that since these are local libraries, local governments have skin in the game. Ongoing solutions would need legislation, and MSL is not ready to move forward with that.

Jennie Stapp stated that she would like a Facilities Assessment to get a scope of the problem. There would be some possible local funding sources. This could lead to an interim study.

Representative Bedey asked if MSL wanted state funding for a Facilities Assessment and Jennie Stapp answered yes.

Jennie Stapp stated that we are hearing about possible one-time funding that will be available. She wants to make sure that MSL is ready to know what we need.

#### **State Aid Cost Analysis: Attachment 5**

Jennie Stapp presented the State Aid Cost Analysis.

Kenning Arlitsch asked how long has Montana State Aid to libraries been 43 cents. Jennie Stapp stated since 2013. He stated it was troubling compared to neighboring states.

Dalton asked how the Commissioners can support this request at the local library. Jennie Stapp recommended working with the Montana Library Association.

Meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.