

**IDAHO BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 3, 2021, 10 A.M. MDT
HELD VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE & AT THE
IDAHO COMMISSION FOR LIBRARIES, BOISE, ID 83702**

The Idaho Board of Library Commissioners meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. MDT on Thursday, June 3, 2021. Participating in the Boise office were Chair Janet Franklin, Commissioner John Held, and State Librarian Stephanie Bailey-White. Participating via Zoom were Vice-Chair Michael Strickland, Commissioners Dave Mecham, and Commissioner Pat Raffee. Participating via Zoom from the Idaho Commission for Libraries were: Administrative Services Manager Roger Dubois, E-Services Program Supervisor Dylan Baker, Talking Book Service Program Supervisor LeAnn Gelskey, Partnerships and Programs Supervisor Amelia Valasek. Also joining the meeting from the Legislative Services Office was Budget and Policy Analyst Janet Jessup. Recording the meeting was Office Specialist II Josie Bradford.

I. Call to Order

A. Introductions

B. Agenda Review / Approval – action item (board document 21-52)

M/S Raffee/Mecham moved that the agenda for this meeting be approved. Roll call vote: Strickland: aye; Mecham: aye; Raffee: aye; Franklin: aye; Held: aye
Motion carried unanimously.

C. Announcements

II. Public Comment - none

III. Minutes Review / Approval

A. April 8, 2021, meeting – action item (board document 21-51)

M/S Held/Mecham move that the minutes of the April 8, 2021, Board of Library Commissioners meeting be approved as distributed in Board Document 21-51.
Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Legislation - Policies – Rules

A. Legislation – 2021 session overview – information item (board document 21-53)

Bailey-White explained that this board document was prepared by Field Consultant Kevin Tomlinson and is a summary of bills that had an impact on the Idaho library community or the ICfL in the 2021 legislative session. The \$6 million Preschool Development Grant, discussed at a prior board meeting, was not voted on by the House before they recessed and staff are unsure what will happen to funding to support early literacy efforts. Bailey-White opened this topic up for discussion. Franklin stated that it was a good session overview. Mecham was glad the legislature was able to pass a resolution that sick leave, in addition to vacation leave, could be donated to other employees.

B. Policies

C. Rules

V. Federal Fund

A. Finances – Update on ARPA funds – information item (board document 21-54)

Bailey-White stated that this document was prepared to provide additional information to the board about how the ICfL is using the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. There is currently a grant application open to public, school, academic, and special libraries that is due June 15, Funds will be awarded in mid-July. Currently five applications have been submitted, but more will come in as it gets closer to the due date. If grant applications exceed \$1 million, the ICfL may request an object transfer to move operating funds in Trustee and Benefits (T&B) to try and meet as many needs as possible. The timing for this grant was not ideal with summer reading programs beginning and schools being on summer break, so the ICfL would like to open another round of grants if funding allows.

The ICfL is currently advertising for a Bilingual/Bicultural Project Coordinator as a limited full-service, full-time position. This person will help the ICfL build library capacity by consulting with the library community, schools, and community partners to help strengthen partnerships, and meet the needs of the Hispanic community.

On May 3, 2021, the ICfL hired Anna Langrill, at up to 10 hours per week, to help with collection development for the Idaho Digital E-book Alliance (IDEA). She has a lot of experience in collection development, and this has freed up time for Hawley-House and Baker to focus on other aspects of the IDEA project.

Public libraries will be able to utilize up to \$2,000 in ARPA funds for each library building and bookmobile to provide OverDrive e-book content. Other preliminary plans for the ARPA funds include a PR blitz for the Talking Book Service (TBS) with the goal of increasing the patron count. The TBS staff is hoping to reach out to nursing homes and residential care facilities across the state to let people know about the TBS. Upgrading the recording studio equipment and getting more books recorded for the TBS patrons, and supporting more early literacy initiatives are other areas that may be supported with ARPA funds. Bailey-White will report at each meeting on how these projects are going. Funds need to be spent by September 30, 2022.

Franklin asked what the average costs for e-books were. Baker stated that it varies depending on limits and restrictions for checkouts. Some e-books are \$15 with limited-use restrictions, and others can cost up to \$100 with unlimited use.

Raffee asked for the approximate number of TBS patrons. Gelskey reported there are currently 2,509 patrons, which is down about 800 patrons from last year. Raffee asked why the number decreased. Gelskey explained that a lot of it was pandemic-related, and it was also difficult to do outreach with COVID-19 restrictions.

B. Program

C. Grants – LSTA Applications Received – information item (board document 21-55)

Bailey-White specified that these are the applications that were received since the last board meeting. This list included applications received for Continuing Education (CE) grants, as well as the summer intern grants.

VI. General (state funds), Miscellaneous Revenue, & Library Service Improvement Funds

A. Finances – Donation from Hal Bunderson, STEM Action Center sponsorship – action item (board document 21-56)

Bailey-White explained that the ICfL received funding from the STEM Action Center for two projects. They will be providing the ICfL with \$20,000 to support the STEM Curiosity Collection. Funds will be used to purchase nonfiction STEM e-books and e-audio titles that will be made accessible through the IDEA. The ICfL is working on getting the word out about this collection to the Summer STEM grant recipients and others to make sure they have access to this collection. The STEM Action Center will also be providing \$11,600 for a collaborative virtual book club for the second edition of *Coding as a Playground*, by Marina Umaschi Bers. This book club will be headed up by Jennifer Redford and colleagues at the STEM Action Center with the goal of helping libraries and partners introduce computational thinking concepts to preschool-aged children. The ICfL has been very pleased with its relationship with the STEM Action Center. Their new interim executive director spoke at the last library development meeting, and ICfL staff are working closely with them on some of their initiatives, and they are supporting the ICfL's as well.

The ICfL also received an \$8,200 donation from former legislator and library supporter Hal Bunderson for the purchase of his books in order to get them out to the library community. Those funds were placed into the miscellaneous revenue account, and staff wanted to make sure the board was aware of this donation and where our funds are going.

M/S Strickland/Raffee moved that expenditures of up to \$31,600 from the Library Services Improvement Fund be approved for implementation of projects outlined in Board Document 21-56. *Motion carried unanimously*

B. Program Draft Strategic Plan, FY 2022-2025 – action item (board document 21-57)

Bailey-White stated this is the meeting where the ICfL brings the draft strategic plan to the board for approval. She said this year Hawley-House gathered input from staff about how the ICfL can best leverage funds and build capacity. There were a few changes and some reorganization from last year, but overall, it is a good, solid plan. Bailey-White asked the board if they had any questions about the document or if there were any suggestions.

Franklin stated that this year she has been a bit concerned about the roles controversial

organizations are playing in legislation and library management, and she was wondering if the ICfL has any plans to address these issues. Bailey-White agreed that this has been a big concern, and there is still a lot of work that needs to be done to help Idahoans understand the ICfL's role in supporting libraries and the libraries' roles in providing equal access to materials to all Idahoans. Bailey-White thought that there may be some action steps under the strategies that could meet this challenge by reaching out to local library boards and staff to help them educate their communities and stakeholders.

Raffee asked for clarification under goal number four, strategy two, increase the awareness of Idaho libraries as a source of many essential community resources. She explained that organizationally, it would make more sense for it to fall under goal number two or goal number three. Bailey-White explained that the ICfL has some time before the report must be submitted to the Division of Financial Management (DFM), and it can be reviewed before the next meeting. Mecham stated that it is wise to not approve it today and have Hawley-House revisit it to make sure that it fits into the right place. It was agreed that the context of the goal was important, and to table the motion until the August meeting. Franklin asked if the revised version of this document could be sent earlier than the rest of the board documents to give the commissioners time to review it.

- C. **Grants – Summer STEM – information item (board document 21-58)** Bailey-White reported that funding for both the Summer STEM grants and Make It grants were made available through the STEM Action Center and the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The ICfL was able to fund everyone who applied to participate in these programs.

VII. Operations Report

- A. **Management Team members' reports – information item (board document 21-59)** Bailey-White reported that the ICfL hosted an online forum for public library directors who serve populations of 10,000 or more. Fifteen directors attended, and all of them indicated that they would like the ICfL to continue to provide a venue for them to network with peers. There were some new directors who attended this forum, and it was nice to build relationships and address topics such as population growth and ARPA funding. The ICfL plans to continue these discussions every six months.

Hawley-House was not present due the birth of a granddaughter, but Bailey-White said it has been a busy time for Hawley-House and the library development team. They are currently gearing up for Summer Summit, which will take place in July. The plan is to hold some trainings in person but also to offer a hybrid model for participants who want to attend virtually.

Held wanted more details on the webinar "Looking for Mirrors in the Library." Bailey-White explained that this webinar came about because Children's Librarian Mandi

Harris, at Coeur d'Alene Public Library, came across a news article about a grant that a school library received to diversify their collection, and she noticed there was only one or two titles that addressed the Native American population. Harris is a tribal member and she has served on the American Libraries Association (ALA) subcommittees, so she has a lot of expertise on libraries and the Native American population, and she offered to be an expert for a training on this subject. Guest speakers included American Indian Services PREP Director Sunshine Shepard and Coordinator for the Indian Education at the Idaho State Department of Education Johanna Jones. Bailey-White was unable to attend this training, but she heard that there was a good discussion among the 65 library staff members who attended about how libraries can better address the needs of this community.

Dubois reported that the ICfL is wrapping up the fiscal year. There will likely be an encumbrance of \$7,000 remaining for security upgrades. The ICfL plans on installing some cameras for additional surveillance. The building security is up and running, and Dubois is happy to show anyone how the additional security measures have made it safer for the ICfL staff and customers.

Dubois also reported that the LUMA transition has been postponed until FY23. This will be better for the ICfL since this is Dubois's last month, and he will be able to leave the agency in a better position to operate. There will be a lot of new spending as the agency moves into the next FY, but Dubois feels like the ICfL is in a good position to implement its goals and strategies this coming year. He wanted everyone to know that it has been an absolute pleasure to work for the ICfL these past 10 years. This is a great organization, and he thanks everyone for all that they do. Franklin thanked Dubois for his service and told him that he has done an excellent job. Strickland stated that his clarity and depth of knowledge were appreciated. Everyone wished Dubois well and thanked him for all he has done for the organization.

Gelskey reported that the Talking Book Service (TBS) Advisory Committee met on May 26. There was a lot of information on ARPA funding and how it can be used to increase marketing. The next advisory committee meeting will be held in September, and hopefully it will be an in-person meeting.

The TBS staff participated in the National Library Service (NLS) conference. The NLS is aware that they are a bit behind on technology, and they are hoping to get caught up. The TBS customer service survey will close on June 15. The surveys have provided good information in years past and Gelskey will provide a full report to the board after the surveys are all in and reviewed. Held applauded Gelskey for volunteering to be part of the equipment test pilot program for the NLS. Gelskey stated that it is exciting and the patrons who are eligible for this program will be glad to participate. They will get to keep the devices once the test is over.

Franklin thanked Gelskey for the TBS promotional ear buds. Mecham asked what the return rate was on the TBS surveys. Gelskey stated that they have received about 500 back of the 2,500 that were sent out.

Baker was happy to report that the IDEA collection continues to grow. Since he wrote this update, 49 public libraries have been added to the alliance. At this point, most Idaho public libraries have been connected to the IDEA, and he applauds everyone for making this happen so quickly.

The ICfL was appropriated \$307,000 in CARES Act funds that will be utilized to purchase additional e-book and e-audiobook titles. Since this is CARES Act funding, it must be spent by the end of the calendar year, so there will be a lot of work done to spend this money in the next six months. Some of the ARPA funding has been allocated to help get more libraries and schools connected to OverDrive. Baker is working with Library Technology Consultant William Lamb to track federal broadband funding opportunities. They will be hosting several webinars to let libraries know about the \$3.2 billion Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) and the \$7.2 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) and how libraries and schools can take advantage of these funding sources. Baker also worked with Lamb and Web Developer Doug Baker to launch a new webpage on digital inclusion with the intent to educate library staff and trustees about digital inclusion and digital equity, and how the ICfL can support libraries in addressing issues related to these topics.

Valasek reported that she been the co-lead on coordinating the Students Learning/Adults Earning ARPA grants. She is working with Bailey-White, Project Coordinator Kristina Taylor, and Grants Officer Jamie Mott to get information out to communities about these funds. The round-one applications are due June 15. There will be a group of five ICfL staff who will be reviewing the applications, and funding decisions are expected to be made by early July.

Valasek stated she has continued to work on updating the Let's Talk About It (LTAI) program. The booklists are finalized, and the program will be infused with up to 40 new titles. The LTAI website has been updated. On the homepage there is a summary of updates to the program, and the draft booklist will be listed as soon as it is ready.

Valasek also reported that eight libraries are busy working to get their summer interns on board. Staff are currently working on a welcome video for interns. There will be a meeting in late July where all the interns get together to talk about library careers, library work, and job skills.

Valasek is also working to transition her team back to the office and is getting processes and procedures up and running again, as well as getting a new receptionist on board. Held asked Valasek to email the LTAI link to the board. Bailey-White stated that she will

include the link with the rest of the board info.

- B. **Personnel – information item (board document 21-60)** Emily Sitz resigned from her position, which was based in northern Idaho. The ICfL decided that that position will be filled, but the office in northern Idaho will be closed. The new field consultant will work out of the Boise office. An email will go out to library directors to let them know about this change. Hawley-House has been taking phone calls from directors and trustees in the interim, and she is monitoring the number of requests, how much time it takes to respond to these requests, and other interactions such as trustee training and questions about library construction.

Interviews were held for the Administrative Services Manager position, and there were some great candidates. The ICfL has offered the position to Jamie Smith. She has accepted the position and will start June 21. There will be a least a week of overlap with Dubois, during which time he will provide training for the position. Smith comes from the Department of Corrections, so she is knowledgeable about state agency finances and procedures and she is looking forward to becoming a part of the ICfL team.

Interviews for the OSII/Receptionist position will be held next week, and the ICfL will be doing interviews for the bilingual/bicultural position June 23 or 24. There has been a lot of onboarding going on, and HR Specialist Pete Nelson has been busy keeping up with all these changes, as well as looking into how the ICfL can utilize the ARPA funds for contract positions or possibly one or two temporary positions.

Nelson included the results of the employee satisfaction survey in this report. The results held steady, and there were not any major dips in employee satisfaction even with the pandemic. This survey shows that, overall, employees are satisfied with their work and the culture at the ICfL.

- C. Other

VIII. Old Business

IX. New Business

- A. **FY2023 enhancement considerations – discussion (board document 21-61)** Bailey-White said this is the meeting where staff introduce enhancement requests so they can begin the reviewing process and decisions can be made in the August meeting. The ICfL is asking for a \$40,000 increase in the appropriation for the Education Opportunity Resource Act (EOR). This increase would ensure sufficient funds are available to reimburse public libraries for their portion of broadband costs that are not covered by E-rate. Baker stated that the original allocation was \$180,000, and a couple of years ago it was increased to \$192,600. This program has been very popular, and the staff want to ensure the ICfL is able to fully reimburse broadband costs for all eligible libraries in FY23 and beyond. Bailey-White explained that the ICfL may need to come up with

supplemental EOR funding for FY22, and Dubois may put in for an inflationary request. Meetings with DFM and LSO (legislative services office) analysts to talk through funding options will be scheduled soon.

The ICfL is also requesting a \$307,000 enhancement to purchase e-book and e-audiobook titles for K-12 students for the IDEA collection. The ICfL received these funds last year as a one-time enhancement through the CARES Act funds, and Governor Little supported this enhancement. Moving forward, Bailey-White feels that it is important to utilize ongoing state general account funds to support equal access to these resources for all Idaho students. This enhancement amounts to approximately \$1 per Idaho student, but that is not a lot of money for the quality of titles and the ease of access to these materials. Staff is hopeful that they will be able to share feedback from the program and comments from teachers and students during the next legislative session. Held asked if the intent was to make this an ongoing part of the budget, and Bailey-White stated that it was. Raffee was concerned the IDEA collection could be challenged by certain groups. Bailey-White stated the work done by the Board to have a collection development policy in place, as well a process to handle challenges, will help mitigate challenges.

B. Board appointment – action item (board document 21-62)

Bailey-White requested approval from the governor's office to shift the areas Commissioners serve. The request was approved and the ICfL will make those changes on documents and everyone can keep their existing terms. Franklin's term ends June 30, 2021, so she is up for reappointment.

M/S Strickland/Mecham moved that the Idaho Board of Library Commissioners endorse the nomination of Janet Franklin for reappointment as the Board's Southwestern Idaho Representative for a term beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2026.

Motion carried unanimously

C. Election of officers – action item (board document 21-63)

Franklin stated that the board received a letter of resignation from Raffee, and the board needs to begin the process of finding a new north Idaho representative. Held stated that he was sad to see her go. Raffee said she was glad to have served on the board. Everyone expressed appreciation for her library advocacy and diligent work.

Franklin asked what the procedures were for filling a vacancy. Bailey-White explained that she sent out the procedures for the last time the board had a vacancy. Starting next week, the ICfL will put out some advertisements in newspapers and on the LibIdaho listserv. Bailey-White encouraged anyone who knew of a good candidate in northern Idaho to reach out and encourage them to apply. Bailey-White was concerned that there have been a lot of tension in northern Idaho libraries and that needs to be considered when looking for a new board member.

Raffee stated that she did not personally know anyone who could serve, but it would be nice to have a younger person on the board to meet the needs of that demographic. Raffee also suggested reaching out to some of the tribal groups in northern Idaho. Raffee asked if the application would be online. Bailey-White stated that the ICfL is asking interested candidate to email a letter of interest with two references.

Bailey-White said there will need to be a special board meeting in July to narrow down applicants. July 14 is the deadline for applications, and the following week they will be sent out to the board for review. Everyone agreed that July 28 would be a good date to meet via Zoom in an executive session to select the applicants the board would like to interview and finalize interview questions.

The board agreed that August 12 would be a good date to hold an all-day board meeting, with interviews in the morning and the regular meeting in the afternoon. The meeting will be held in person, with a Zoom option for participants who are unable to travel.

Bailey-White and the board all thanked Raffee for her service.

Nominations

M/S Mecham/Held nominated Strickland as Chair of the Board of Commissioners for FY22. *Motion carried unanimously*

M/S Mecham/Strickland nominated Held as Vice-Chair of the Board of Commissioner for FY22. *Motion carried unanimously*

X. Strategic Issues: Digital Equity - discussion

The commissioner's homework was to review digital inclusion information, open education resources, watch the movie "Paywall," and review the digital inclusion webpage on the ICfL website. Bailey-White stated this topic is important to all public library and school trustees and everyone should have an overview of the terminology that is used when referring to digital inclusion. She asked the commissioners what they thought about the homework and opened the topic up for discussion.

Mecham stated that the biggest barrier to equalizing things is providing quality home internet access. Every student now has devices and access to Wi-Fi at school, but there is a divide in what students have access to at home. A lot of students rely on home hotspots as their broadband, and those have limitations. The other difficult part about equal access in a small community is the quality of electricity and older facilities and power lines, which cause regular power bumps that affect how broadband works.

Mecham explained that his school district has not promoted the ability to have Wi-Fi

access at home mainly because it is hard to convince people that money should be spent on the internet. The internet can be a controversial subject, and not everyone agrees with open access to information. This issue brings up the importance of digital literacy training and educating the public on the importance of reliable sources, how to distinguish false information, and how to help people identify quality information and filter out misinformation.

Bailey-White appreciated Mecham's perspective. She stated that digital literacy and technical support are the two areas of the five included in the definition of digital inclusion that need more attention as they are more difficult to implement. Libraries are on top of online content by providing quality digital databases and other resources. The ICfL has also paid a lot of attention to affordable, robust broadband services, and schools have been on top of getting quality devices out to students. However, looking at different ways to share digital literacy tools and techniques continues to be a challenge.

Bailey-White also explained that options for better tech support needs to be addressed. She is hopeful that some of the ARPA funds can be used to launch live tech support programs similar to models that are being used in Arizona and Hawaii. These funds are for one-time projects, but hopefully with partnerships through the Department of Commerce and other state agencies, the ICfL could sustain these initiatives.

Mecham stated that the Idaho library community has done a great job of making a massive shift in their identity from the gatekeepers of information to the access givers. The struggle right now is getting the public to see that the shift has been made and that access is there. It still can be improved and enhanced, and it can become universal, but it will take support, time, and money. Mecham said that the Paywall video was really eye-opening. He said it is also going to take more competition in the publishing industries, as well as major universities taking up the fight to get universal dissemination of information and stop the gatekeepers from controlling who has access and who holds power through information. It is not a democratic model.

Held also believed that universities are going to have to change their conservative approach, and publishers will be very hesitant to change since there is not an incentive to do so. Strickland stated that there is not a simple answer, but anything that can be done to increase open access will address information literacy, increase knowledge, and will provide Idahoans with greater access to websites, journals, e-books, and programs that will make a difference.

Bailey-White said the handout about textbook availability and open education resources was prepared by Continuing Education Consultant Annie Gaines and Emerging Trends Consultant Deana Brown. This document shows how students are expected to budget between \$1,200 to \$1,400 per semester for books and supplies, and this is difficult and often unattainable for the average student to budget for. The State Board of Education

did receive \$1 million for open education resources in community colleges, and this will help to continue addressing these issues. Bailey-White stated that this is the year that libraries can narrow the homework gap by using one-time funds to tap into resources and help promote everything from the Emergency Broadband Benefit to mobile hotspots.

Bailey-White stated that digital equity and inclusion is an ongoing conversation, and the ICfL staff are passionate about finding ways to address these topics. She thanked everyone for doing their homework and participating in the discussion.

XI. Meeting Evaluation/Next Meeting: Bailey-White asked for feedback on the homework assignment, and if the board thought it was a useful activity. The board members agreed that the assignments had value and should be continued. Bailey-White asked the board if there was another strategic issue they would like to explore. Held stated that he would like to focus the next meeting on getting a new commissioner. Board members agreed that that would be the focus, along with the strategic plan, and an update on the fall Board Tour.

Raffee moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m. MDT.

Next Meetings

July 28, 2021 – special meeting/executive session to determine who will be interviewed for the vacant board position.

August 12, 2021 – interviews in the morning/meeting in person and virtual in the afternoon.