

**IDAHO BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS  
MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 9, 2021, 10 A.M. MST  
HELD VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE & AT THE  
IDAHO COMMISSION FOR LIBRARIES, BOISE**

The Idaho Board of Library Commissioners meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. MST on Thursday, December 9, 2021. Participating in the Boise office were Chair Michael Strickland, Commissioner Janet Franklin, State Librarian Stephanie Bailey-White, E-Services Program Supervisor Dylan Baker, TBS Program Supervisor LeAnn Gelskey, Partnerships and Programs Supervisor Amelia Valasek, Administrative Services Manager Jamie Smith, Public Library Consultant Ash Whitwell, and Financial Specialist Katy Place. Participating via Zoom were Vice-Chair John Held, Commissioner Dawn Wittman, and Commissioner Dave Mecham. Recording the meeting was Office Specialist II Josie Bradford.

**I. Call to Order**

**A. Introductions**

Strickland called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. Introductions were made. Dawn Wittman introduced herself as the new northern Idaho representative, and Ash Whitwell introduced himself as the new public library consultant. All welcomed Wittman and Whitwell.

**B. Agenda Review Approval – action item (board document 22-19)**

**Franklin/Mecham** moved that the agenda for this meeting be approved.

Roll call vote: Strickland: aye; Mecham: aye; Franklin: aye; Held: aye; Wittman: aye

*Motion carried unanimously.*

- C. Announcements: Bailey-White announced that Matt Farina is the new budget and policy analyst in the Legislative Services Office (LSO). Bailey-White stated that he may join this Board meeting or future meetings.

II. Public Comment - none

**III. Minutes Review / Approval**

**A. August 12, 2021, Minutes – action item (board document 22-18)**

**Mecham/Franklin** moved that the minutes of the August 12, 2021, Board of Library Commissioners meeting be approved as distributed in Board Document 22-18.

*Motion carried unanimously.*

IV. Legislation - Policies – Rules

- A. Legislation
- B. Policies
- C. Rules

## V. Federal Fund

### A. Finances

### B. LSTA grant applications received – information item (board document 22-20)

Bailey-White said this document shows the continuing education (CE) grants that have been awarded since the last board meeting. Overall, CE grant applications have been down because conferences have been canceled or held virtually. Held noticed that several grantees canceled. He asked if this was because they decided not to attend. Bailey-White explained that yes, several of these conferences took place during the second surge of COVID, and some people decided not to attend. Wittman asked if the CE funds not spent are rolled over to the next fiscal year. Bailey-White answered that yes, they will be rolled over, and since the ICfL is only half-way through this fiscal year (FY), more CE grant applications will continue to come in. This spring the Public Library Association (PLA) conference will be held in Portland, OR. This is a national conference, and it will be a good opportunity for professional development for Idaho library staff.

## VI. General, Miscellaneous Revenue, & Library Services Improvement Funds

### A. Finances – FY2023 budget submission – information item (board document 22-21)

Smith explained that this document shows the comparison between the FY22 and the FY23 budget submissions. Due to the Information Technology Services' (ITS) modernization, the ICfL will see a decrease in one full-time position (FTP), bringing the total FTP to 36.5. The ICfL's general fund is increasing by 9.3% based on two requests that were supported by the governor's office. The request for \$307,000 is to support the IDEA K-12 e-book and e-audiobook collection, and the other request for \$40,000 is to supplement funding for the Education Opportunity Resource (EOR) Act for public library broadband reimbursement.

The 4.9% increase in federal funds is based on a projected increase in the agency's LSTA allocation for FY23 and an additional \$50,000 increase in personnel to support the bilingual bicultural project coordinator position. It also includes \$30,000 in Trustee & Benefits (T&B) for increased federal sub-grants. The one-time CARES funds from FY22 will be expended, and a small portion of the FY22 ARPA funds will be carried over into the first three months of FY23. The ICfL is slated for an addition \$3.5 million in the "Telehealth at Libraries" initiative. In addition, the ICfL will lead the "Digital Access for All Idahoans" planning effort using up to \$1.25 million in funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Held stated that he noticed that the ARPA funds reflected are \$3,350,000. He was wondering if there was other funding that brought the total up to \$3.5 million. Smith explained that \$150,000 is in operating to support the telehealth program, which brings the total to \$3.5 million.

**B. Program****C. Kindergarten Readiness grant applications received – information item (board document 22-22)**

Bailey-White stated the Kindergarten Readiness program includes ten sub-grants that were awarded to libraries for projects that ranged from kindergarten readiness workshops for parents and caregivers, to kits, computers, and tablets. All the projects funded by the grants had an emphasis on reaching underserved families. The amount of \$4,000 was left over from the \$60,000 budgeted for the grants, and it will be put toward the Bucks for Books program.

**D. Bucks for Books and School Library Access grant applications received – information item (board document 22-23)**

Bailey-White reported that this is the third year the ICfL has partnered with the Idaho Lottery Commission (ILC) to support the Bucks for Books program. This is a great partnership, and each year they have increased their funding. This year, the ICfL was able to move some money left over from the Kindergarten Readiness grants and the School Library Access (SLA) grants to increase the total awarded to libraries to \$105,000. The last graph in this board document shows the school library book budgets for the 43 schools that applied. The ICfL's records from the last ten years show that one in four school libraries have a book budget of \$0 - \$500 dollars. This year, the amounts are similar, and the libraries that received these grants were extremely appreciative to have extra funds to support their collections.

Franklin asked why some grants were declined. Bailey-White stated that typically there is a rubric, and they are rated by both the ILC staff and the ICfL staff. It's possible that the declined applications were just not strong enough, and there just wasn't enough money to award every library.

Franklin stated that she did not see Popplewell Elementary school on any of the applications. She explained that she had a conversation with the new librarian at the Buhl Public Library who is very enthusiastic and has an MLIS, and the librarian stated that she would reach out to the school to see why they are not taking advantage of these funds. Bailey-White stated that she will also pass this information on to School Library Consultant Jeannie Standal. One of the grant requirements is that there is a school librarian on staff to manage the funds and make sure they are spent responsibly. Bailey-White will see if there is anything Standal can do to work with them. Mecham stated that it is unfortunate that elementary schools are not required to have a school librarian, and it can be difficult to convince people that it is a necessary position in public education. He explained that it is a really important position and either parents or someone in the district really needs to be advocating for it.

**E. School Library Access grant applications received – information item (board document 22-24)**

Bailey-White reported that the SLA grant program has been going on since 2012 and the ICfL has awarded \$1.25 million in grants since the program began. This year, fewer libraries applied for the program. As presented in the board document, three libraries were awarded funds but then had to decline. Most of the reasons the grants were declined were COVID-related. Remaining funds were transferred to the Bucks for Books program due to the similar goals of this program.

This year, the SLA grants will be open to all grade levels and hopefully there will be a more robust applicant pool. One of the requirements of the program is that all children must be allowed to check out books. School librarians had feared that children in the younger grade levels would not return books. However, the SLA grants encouraged schools to change their check-out policies, which provided greater access to quality books and resources and encouraged children to become proficient readers. Another requirement for the second round of SLA grants was that schools must provide a match to the grants. This has encouraged schools to increase their school library budget, and while the ICfL had hoped that the budget increases would be permanent, that hasn't always been the case.

Mecham stated that the SLA grant program has been a great blessing to the Firth School District. The match doubled their school library budget, and the budget has not been reduced this year.

**F. LSIF Approval Consideration – action item (board document 22-25)**

Bailey-White explained that this is a revised document. On Tuesday, the ICfL got the good news that the Blue Cross Foundation for Health awarded \$50,000 to expand the Telehealth in Libraries program.

This year, the STEM Action Center is awarding \$50,000 to support the 2022 Summer STEM from your Library program. This is an increase of \$10,000. This program is a very popular program for school and public libraries throughout Idaho.

The Idaho Scottish Rites Foundation presented the ICfL with a check for \$15,500. This is the second year they have donated to the ICfL. The money will go directly for summer reading books. Library Consultant Staci Shaw has put together a report that outlines how this money has been spent, and she would be happy to share it with the board.

The final item is a request for \$500 from the Library Services Improvement Fund (LSIF) for a subgrant to the Richfield Library. The library is seeking funds under the Best Practices program for signage. This is not an allowable cost under LSTA funds, so the ICfL is requesting this amount from the LSIF.

Held stated that it's good to see the continued support from the STEM Action Center. Bailey-White is also very happy with our partnership with them. She explained that they also provided an addition \$20,000 for STEM e-books in the ICfL's IDEA collection, and we are hoping to ask for additional funding to continue to support this in the second part of the fiscal year.

**Franklin/Strickland** moved that the expenditure of up to \$116,000 from the Library Services Improvement Fund be approved for implementation of projects outlined in Board Document 22-25 (rev.).

## VII. Operations Report – information item

### A. State Librarian and Management Team members – information item (board document 22-26)

**Bailey-White** reported the ICfL staff have been working on the Digital Access for all Idahoans plan. The agency has a great relationship with the Department of Commerce's Broadband Coordinator Eric Forsch, and the state has been supportive of increasing Idaho's broadband access. They have dedicated more than \$200 million dollars for this initiative, and the project has an advisory board that is made up of legislators and telecommunication providers. Taking the lead on the plan for the state is a great opportunity for libraries to shine and take the lead on digital equity and access for all, as well as address other barriers such as affordability, access to devices, cybersecurity and more. Once the state has a digital equity plan in place, additional funds will be channeled to each state. It's a complicated formula but depending on the population and the needs in the state, Idaho is looking at a budget of \$4-7 million in federal funds over the next four to five years.

Bailey-White also reported that the ICfL hosted a "Think Big" forum for 15 library directors serving populations of more than 10,000. This is the second forum that has been hosted for this group. Directors from the larger libraries expressed that they would like the opportunity to network with their peers, share ideas, and discuss issues that affect them differently.

In concluding her report, Bailey-White said that Hawley-House retirement would leave a void in the agency as she has been an invaluable resource to the ICfL and she will be greatly missed. Hawley-House has provided a written report in board document 22-26 with an update on how the library development team is doing. Bailey-White stated the ICfL is currently recruiting for the deputy state librarian position.

**Smith** reported that the fiscal team has been working on the midyear review. This is a process in which each team reviews their budget and anticipates where they will be at the end of the fiscal year. LUMA is also a major thing the fiscal team has been focusing on. This is the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system that will replace much of the accounting and HR functions. LUMA is on track for having the fiscal procurement

and planning implemented by the end of FY22, and human capital management and payroll should be implemented by next January which aligns with the HR modernization process.

In regard to facilities, Smith reported that the ADA-compliant restrooms are currently being installed both upstairs and downstairs. There have been some hiccups in the construction process. However, the bathrooms should be fully functioning by the end of January.

**Gelskey** reported the Talking Book Service (TBS) team continues to work with the public library ambassadors and their designated care facilities. During the Idaho Library Association (ILA) annual conference, the ICfL opened the ambassador program up to all libraries. Ambassadors received a care package of TBS support materials for participating in the program. The customer service representatives (CSRs) continue their outreach efforts with phone calls. Recently, Customer Service Rep Judy Mooney attended the Baby Boomers Expo. She talked with 80 potential patrons and made good connections with care facility staff from across the Treasure Valley.

The TBS virtual book club has continued. The next meeting will be held in March. Gelskey also reported that she attended the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL) conference in Reno. A highlight of Gelskey's trip was that she got to visit the Nevada State Library and network with their TBS team. Finally, Gelskey reported the ICfL's Volunteer Coordinator Colleen Clark has left the ICfL to accept a position at the Idaho Department of Insurance.

**Baker** reported that David Harrell, the agency's IT support, has left the agency and been promoted to a position with State of Idaho's ITS department. Harrell did not want to leave the Commission; however, ITS is working on a modernization initiative, and they have been transitioning all internal ITS positions to a centralized ITS staff. Harrell will continue to be the primary support person at ITS for the ICfL, so we will still get his support. The modernization isn't fully ready to transition until July, so we will need to get by until then. Baker, along with Software Engineer Doug Baker and Library Technology Consultant William Lamb, all have IT experience, so they are available for support until the modernization transition process is complete.

Baker stated that \$307,000 in CARES Act funding was spent on e-books and e-audiobooks for the IDEA collection. Because this was CARES Act funding, it had to be spent by the end of the calendar year, so the ICfL staff have worked hard to get the money spent by the end of the year. The ICfL is hoping to find some additional funding this year to continue to grow this collection.

The Digital Inclusion Summit is planned for March 2 and March 3, and it has pivoted to virtual half-days. The ICfL has secured a couple of exciting keynote speakers, and Baker invited commissioner to join the summit for a day or two to see how we are addressing

digital access initiatives in the library community.

Baker also stated that the ICfL provided technical assistance for the virtual ILA conference that was held in October, and he got to present a couple of sessions.

Mecham asked the average costs of e-books and e-audiobooks that are being added to the IDEA collection. Baker explained that the costs are variable and can range from \$10 to over \$100 per titles. OverDrive has several different check-out models, and costs depend on things such as check-out limits, cost per circulation, length of time, etc. There is a wide range of models, so it is difficult to come up with an average cost. The ICfL hired a temporary employee dedicated to building the collection, and she will be assessing all the models to determine which are cost effective and the best fit for the collection. If there is a popular title, several licenses are purchased. Patrons can also make recommendations for titles.

**Valasek** reported that the ARPA grants have been awarded, and libraries are busy spending funds. The ICfL is checking in on libraries that received a grant of \$100,000 or more prior to the interim report deadline as a way to keep closer tabs on spending. Most of the libraries that were awarded larger grants were using the funds to purchase a vehicle, and since there are currently supply chain issues, the ICfL wants to make sure they are spending their funds in a timely manner. Some libraries have already made their purchases, and some have a lot of administrative processes they must go through to make purchases. However, libraries are all confident that they will be able to spend the funds by the end of the grant period. Valasek was also happy to share that in addition to getting a vehicle, the Garden City Public Library was also able to hire an on-site social worker for their library with the ARPA funds.

This year, the federally funded, multi-agency workforce system under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is required to revise and resubmit their unified statewide plan. Valasek has been attending those meetings since the ICfL plays a large role in supporting libraries in workforce development, and it is important that we are a part of the plan and represented as a workforce partner.

Let's Talk About It (LTAI) has been relaunched. A few libraries have had to reschedule due to COVID, and some of the larger libraries are still using a virtual model. However, several libraries have jumped back in and had great turnouts. The library in Idaho City had close to 30 people attend their recent session, which is amazing for a small town. This spring, Valasek has invited three authors from the newest books added to the LTAI collection to offer virtual presentations. The virtual series will be held at lunchtime, and the ICfL will be cross-promoting with the Connected Conversations IHC program.

Valasek also reported that the ICfL has wrapped up their Summer Internship grants. Overall, the program achieved its goals, and feedback from participating libraries was positive. The focus shifted this year from being about developing community

partnerships to having libraries take a more active role in offering leadership and mentorship.

**B. Personnel – information item (board document 22-27)**

Bailey-White reported that IT Operations Support Tech Dave Harrell and Volunteer Services Coordinator Colleen Clark have both left the agency and were promoted to other state positions. Deputy State Librarian Hawley-House has retired. The ICfL is sad to see her go, but happy for her retirement opportunities.

Megan Egbert was hired as a temporary TBS tech support training specialist, and Ismael Mendoza Medina was hired as the limited-service bilingual/bicultural project coordinator. The ICfL also hired Ash Whitwell as a public library consultant for regions 1,2, and 6.

ICfL's Grants Coordinator Jamie Mott is also leaving the agency. The ICfL is currently recruiting for the position. Bailey-White stated that there has been a lot of shifts in personnel, but everyone is working together to cover gaps and make things work.

Held asked Whitwell how he feels about being with the Commission so far. Ash replied that it has been interesting to shift from a library position to an administrative position since results are often seen farther along. He stated that he has a real interest in tribal and institutional libraries and is excited to focus on initiatives related to those types of libraries in addition to his work with public library staff.

VIII. Old Business

**IX. New Business**

**A. Digital Access for All Idahoans statewide plan – information item (board document 22-28)**

Bailey-White stated that she is excited about this initiative, and she can't wait to develop partnerships and come up with a solid Digital Access for All Idahoans plan that will meet the needs of all communities across the state. The ICfL staff look forward to partnering with multiple state, local, and community stakeholders to identify and implement strategies to develop digital literacy training, provisions for technical support, and online privacy and cybersecurity resources.

If the ICfL is awarded the funds, they will be available in October 2022, and there will be nine months to a year to get the plan implemented and the funds utilized. Once the plan is submitted, additional funds should follow to assist with implementation. There are also competitive funds that will be available to organizations if additional funding is needed. The ICfL's Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC) presentation is scheduled for February 7, and a pitch will be made for authority to spend these funds on the planning process. A virtual Digital Inclusion Summit is scheduled March 2-3 and Commissioners are invited to attend.

Mecham stated that this is very exciting. It's hard to be a leader without funding, and having funding makes a big difference in what we can propose and what we can promise.

Franklin asked how confident Bailey-White was that the legislature will approve the spending authority for these federal funds. Bailey-White stated that she is fairly confident that they will approve these funds as there are many library supporter that serve the legislature. Bailey-White encouraged commissioners to speak with their legislators and express that there are still many Idahoans who are being left behind in digital inclusion, and they really need the state's support. Franklin asked Bailey-White to email commissioners the names of the legislators who are supportive.

Held commended the ICfL for taking this on. He explained that this speaks well for the Commission and our reputation with the governor's office. Bailey-White replied that the ICfL will be ready to receive these funds and expend them appropriately if this funding is passed.

Strickland asked if there were some strategy sessions commissioners could attend. Bailey-White stated that yes, there will be several, and she will keep commissioners in the loop. The Digital Summit in March will be a big one, and hopefully the ICfL will be able to use some of the \$1.25 million dollars to host some regional focus groups and strategy sessions.

Strickland asked if there is any other potential funding available, such as the Build America's Libraries Act. Bailey-White explained that this did not make it into the infrastructure package that was passed through the House and Senate and signed by President Biden. There is still hope that it may make it into the next round of infrastructure spending. There is bipartisan support in the House and Senate for the Build America's Libraries Act, but it's hard to say if it will pass.

Strickland stated that as some point he would be interested in continuing the emerging discussion about commissioners being more involved in fundraising and building resources through crowd funding. Bailey-White appreciated Strickland's interest in this area, and said that some of those discussions may have to be put on the backburner due to the workload with funding that is coming in. She said it is something she would like to revisit when there is more capacity.

## **X. Strategic Issues**

### **A. Libraries and Telehealth – information item (board document 22-29)**

**Bailey-White** asked the Commissioners if they'd like to take a short break at 11:23 a.m. The meeting was called back to order at 11:30 a.m. Bailey-White presented a slideshow of the "Telehealth in Libraries" pilot sites she visited in August. She explained that some people are surprised that libraries can play an essential part of telehealth services.

However, these pilot sites are showing everyone what libraries have to offer in the telehealth arena. She said libraries have always played a role in improving people's health and quality of life by offering programs geared toward wellbeing and social connections. The Nampa Public Library has started a great "be well" program for its patrons that offers behavioral health courses taught by a counselor. There are also "fit and fall proof" classes and programs that promote social wellbeing, such as Let's Talk About It and storytimes. Telehealth options are just one more way libraries can improve the lives of the people who use them.

Bailey-White showed another slide of the "Check Out a Checkup at Your Library" marketing materials at the Clearwater Memorial Public Library. Challenges to the pilot program have included supply chain issues, pandemic-related issues, and there is a lot on the plates of health care professional right now, but they are also excited for these programs and see the benefits to the community. Both libraries used Blue Cross Foundation funds for upgraded digital equipment, private enclosures, automatic blood pressure cuffs, digital touchless thermometers, and oxygen meters. Orofino also offers laptops and hotspots for checkout if people prefer that option.

The Blue Cross Foundation has offered \$50,000 in 2022 to expand the "Telehealth in Libraries" program. Bailey-White, Baker, and Valasek are meeting to see what this next phase will look like. The ICfL is requesting \$3.5 million in funding from the U.S. Treasury funds to support telehealth in libraries. These funds support construction, and that's not available from other funding sources. The Veteran's Administration and Health and Welfare are also interested in partnering on this program. Baker is working on a "Telehealth in Libraries" Toolkit that should be available this January. Donna Eggers, the ICfL's public information officer, has also been instrumental in designing some PR and marketing tools and resources.

Bailey-White brought up a slide of a modular pod that can be used in libraries for telehealth. These pods contain a UV light that kills germs, soundproof walls, good lighting, and plug-ins. These are the top-of-the-line spaces. Unfortunately, they are 12-15 weeks out because of high demand. Mecham asked for an estimate on the privacy modules. Bailey-White stated that they are around \$24,000 for an ADA-compliant, high-quality model, and about \$4,000 for a small, basic model. A survey was sent out to measure interest, and 25% of libraries in the state may be interested in participating in a telehealth program.

Wittman asked if the libraries themselves initiate the interest in participating, and she was wondering who they can talk to if they are interested. Bailey-White explained that libraries do take the first steps, and they can reach out to the ICfL if they are interested. Wittman commented that this is a wonderful resource for people who live in rural areas or have transportation issues. She explained that this makes it easy for them to connect with specialists and/or counselors who may not live in the area.

Held stated that he is looking forward to seeing the telehealth toolkit when the board meets in February.

**B. Topic(s) for next meeting**

Strickland expressed interest in writing some impact stories about Idaho libraries. He stated that these are very impactful to legislature, and he will draw up a plan on how to start gathering information to write these. The February meeting is scheduled to be an in-person meeting. After some discussion, it was decided that the ICfL will plan a spring board tour to make up for the one that was scheduled this fall. The board would also like an update on the JFAC meeting at the next board meeting.

**XI. Meeting Evaluation / Adjournment**

Held asked Wittman for her opinion on her first board meeting. She stated that it was interesting to have a Zoom meeting, and there was a lot of great information. She appreciated the ICfL sending out the board documents prior to the meeting. Mecham stated that he's amazed at how much the ICfL gets done.

**Held** moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m. MST.

Next meeting: Friday, February 11, 2022, in Boise, at 10 a.m. MST