

**Idaho Board of Library Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes**

April 21, 2023, 10 a.m. MDT  
College of Southern Idaho, Meyerhoeffer Building Room #218  
315 Falls Avenue, Twin Falls, ID 83301  
and Zoom

**Attendees:**

- Idaho Board of Library Commissioners: Chair John Held, Vice-Chair Dave Mecham, Janet Franklin, Michael Strickland, and Dawn Wittman
- Idaho Commission for Libraries staff: State Librarian Stephanie Bailey-White, Deputy State Librarian Dylan Baker, Talking Book Service Program Supervisor LeAnn Gelskey, Partnerships and Programs Supervisor Amelia Valasek, Administrative Services Manager Jamie Smith (via Zoom), Public Library Consultant Clay Ritter (via Zoom), and (serving as recorder) Management Assistant Allison Maier
- Other attendees: College of Southern Idaho Library Director Reba Puente, Deputy Attorney General Kristine Moriarty (via Zoom), and Idaho Division of Financial Management Analyst Erik Olson (via Zoom)

**I. Call to Order**

- A. Introductions** Held called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. MDT. Attendees introduced themselves.
- B. Agenda Review / Approval – Action item (Board Document 23-51)** Mecham moved to approve the April 21, 2023, agenda. Franklin seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*
- C. Announcements**

**II. Minutes Review/Approval**

- A. February 10, 2023, Meeting – Action item (Board Document 23-50)** Wittman moved to accept the minutes of the February 10, 2023, board meeting. Mecham seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

**III. Public Comment**

#### IV. Legislation and Policies

##### A. Summary of Significant Legislation – Information item

Bailey-White noted House Bill 314, which passed the House and Senate before it was vetoed, with the veto sustained by one vote. She said the bill will be coming back next year, and there is a lot of work to do in the interim to educate legislators about the policies libraries already have in place to guide the selection and reconsideration of materials.

Beyond that bill, the ICfL's budget, and the legislature's decision to remove March elections, Bailey-White said she did not see other major legislation that impacts libraries this year.

Wittman asked if the ICfL's guide for parents had been distributed. Bailey-White said the guide is available through the IDEA collection and the ICfL website. It is a one-page resource called "Creating the Best Reading Experience for your Family: A Guide for Parents and Caregivers." It is included as a book parents can access through the Libby or Sora apps. It shares resources parents can use to guide their children's reading choices. It also notes that library staff are more than happy to curate collections, pull titles for students, and help families connect with reading choices that fit their values. The ICfL adapted the guide from the Meridian Library District and Boise Public Library, and Bailey-White anticipates most public libraries will start developing tools like this.

Baker said the guide is very prominently featured at the top of the page when anyone accesses the IDEA collection through Libby, Sora, or the ICfL website. The ICfL tried to make it as easy to find as possible.

Bailey-White said though the guide has not been promoted widely yet, the ICfL is planning to feature it in newsletters so library staff know they can guide people to the resource.

Held asked if the ICfL knows which libraries have selection and review policies in place. Bailey-White said 99% of public libraries have collection development policies, including a reconsideration policy. There are a few smaller libraries that are working on those policies and don't yet have them in place.

Bailey-White said she is less certain about how many school districts have those policies in place, though she thinks most do. She noted that some small school districts in the state don't have a school library, a library staff, or a book budget and may not have a policy. The ICfL can work with them to develop those policies.

Held said it would behoove the library community to ensure policies are in place and quantify that information. Those specifics can be helpful going into the next legislative session. Mecham said it would also be beneficial to help librarians and frontline staff

become more familiar with their own policies so they can respond to patron questions.

Bailey-White said best practice is to have the policies posted prominently, included on websites, and reviewed on a regular basis. She noted that some libraries are revising policies in response to the number of book challenges they are receiving. Because reviewing challenged titles takes hours of staff time, some libraries are limiting the number of challenges an individual can have on the docket at any given time.

Puente asked if libraries post information about titles they have already reviewed. Bailey-White said some library policies note that once the library has reviewed an individual title and made a ruling, they will not review it again for a set period, for example 3 or 5 years. However, she has not seen libraries post those rulings, though it's part of the public record.

Baker noted that the ICfL's annual collection of public library statics includes a question about when a library last reviewed its internet safety policy. The agency could add a similar question about collection development policies. Library statistics are collected between October 1 and December 31 each year.

Bailey-White said the ICfL is hoping to work with the Idaho State Department of Education to start collecting school library statistics, which was piloted about 10 years ago. It is challenging to ask every school library in the state to submit information about circulation, size of collection, and budget. However, the ICfL can't have a complete picture of school libraries without collecting those statistics on a regular basis.

- B. Policies – Annual review of existing policies

## **V. Federal Fund**

- A. Finances
- B. Program
- C. Grants

### **1. LSTA CE Grant Applications Received – Information item (Board Document 23-52)**

Bailey-White noted the ICfL has provided four continuing education grants with Library Services and Technology Act funds since the last board meeting. The board document provides a summary of LSTA grant budget spending.

Wittman asked about financial support for library classes. Bailey-White noted the ICfL offers up to \$1,250 a semester to help students pay for formal library science classes. They must be working at least part-time in an Idaho library to receive the grant. A

handful of individuals are participating, and the ICfL is always trying to get the word out about the opportunity.

## **2. Summer Intern Applications Received – Information item (Board Document 23-53)**

Held noted that the ICfL awarded two more summer intern grants than originally planned for and asked where funds for those additional grants came from.

Bailey-White said the money came from the Trustee and Benefits Continuing Education funds, which the ICfL had increased slightly. With some reimbursement costs from that fund not needed until next fiscal year, the ICfL was able to shift some of the funds over and award Summer Intern Grants to every library that applied.

Valasek noted this is the fifth year the ICfL has offered the grant. This year, the agency officially increased the grant award amount from \$1,000 to \$1,500 to account for inflation and to allow libraries to offer interns fair wages. Some libraries are participating in the program for the first time this year, while others have been doing it for quite a while. The ICfL is hosting an orientation webinar for the grantees.

Mecham asked about program expectations. Valasek said expectations for interns depend on the library, with interns working on a variety of projects, such as summer reading or archiving. The ICfL asks libraries to submit a final grant report, which is set up to guide them in setting expectations and helping interns develop workplace skills. The ICfL also asks for information about the impact the grant program had in helping library staff develop leadership and management skills in their work with interns.

## **3. Report on Library Facilities Project – Information item (Board Document 23-54)**

Valasek said since the publication of the board document, the U.S. Department of the Treasury approved the ICfL's project plan for utilizing \$3.5 million in facilities improvement funds. The ICfL expects to release in-depth grant applications to libraries on April 24, 2023. Applications will be due June 12, 2023, giving libraries seven weeks to complete them. The ICfL will then have a month to review applications, make determinations, send notifications, and work with libraries on their grant agreements. The agreements will likely be tailored for each library to account for complexities in each project. The ICfL hopes to begin distributing funds in mid- to late August 2023.

Valasek reminded commissioners that the ICfL broke the grant application process into two phases, collecting letters of intent from public libraries while awaiting legislative approval on the facilities funding earlier in 2023. This helped narrow down the field of expected applicants and provided information about the location, cost, and types of anticipated projects. It also allowed the ICfL to evaluate the eligibility of projects before libraries invested time on a more in-depth application.

Valasek reported the ICfL received 47 letters of intent from libraries across the state, indicating they intended to request more than \$16 million. The majority of libraries that

applied were in rural communities. The bulk of libraries indicated they attended to apply for the Tier 3 grants – the higher end of funding – and 25 indicated they planned to ask for the maximum funding amount of \$500,000. Valasek said this shows the competitive nature of this grant and level of need that exists across the state.

Wittman asked if there were any commonalities in what libraries needed. Valasek said a lot of new buildings. Some libraries are looking to buy land or start building, while others are partway through a project. Some libraries want to improve accessibility within existing structures or remodel and repurpose existing space.

Mecham asked about the types of projects that would have priority. Valasek said there are federal requirements for the funding, and the ICfL has a detailed scoring rubric that looks at community need, the need of the library itself, project quality and feasibility, risk assessment, and the overall accessibility of the final project.

## **VI. General, Miscellaneous Revenue, and Library Service Improvement Funds**

### **A. Finances**

- 1. Summary of FY24 Appropriation Compared to Current Year – Information item (Board Document 23-55)** Smith said the board document outlines a comparison of the ICfL’s budget from the current fiscal year 2023 to what is appropriated for fiscal year 2024. There is a \$3.7 million – or 42% – increase in spending authority. That is mostly due to large grant initiatives. Funding will shift around between fiscal years, with some grants closing and others opening. The big grants are:

Digital Access for All Idahoans – The ICfL received spending authority for \$1.75 million and reappropriation authority for up to \$250,000 for the planning portion of that grant.

Facilities Improvement – The grant Valasek discussed above, which is \$3.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars.

Smith noted the ICfL is also seeing a decrease in full-time employment, or FTE, count. This is due to HR consolidation and Information Technology Services modernization. Two FTEs will shift from the ICfL’s count to those agencies.

Smith said other increases include an additional \$40,000 in the general fund for kindergarten readiness subgrants, \$6,000 for virtual hard drive space for the Talking Books Service, contract inflation costs, changes in fee structure, technology replacement items, and change in employee compensation – the legislature approved up to \$1.20 per hour per position for staff.

### **B. Program**

## C. Grants

**1. Summer STEM Grant Applications Received – Information item (Board Document 23-56)** Bailey-White said the ICfL received funding from the Idaho STEM Action Center for the fourth year in a row to support summer STEM activities. The small grants of \$500 each help school and public libraries connect with consumable materials – such as filament for 3D printing or slime ingredients – or pay for guest presenters for summer programs.

She said most libraries in the state have institutionalized the STEM component with summer learning – for example, providing maker spaces or a weekly STEM program. She said this reflects the work the ICfL has done with professional development and offering small grants like this one.

## VII. Operations Report

### A. State Librarian and Management Team Reports – Information item (Board Document 23-57)

Bailey-White provided her report to the board:

- It was another tough year in the legislature. She spent a lot of time monitoring legislation, watching hearings, and answering questions.
- Since the legislative session ended, she's been on the road every week. That included attending Capitol for a Day in Gooding and several digital access events: focus groups, an event in Sun Valley with the University of Idaho Extension, and the Idaho Rural Success Summit. It has been nice to have funding through the Digital Access for All Idahoans grant to have a presence at these events and talk about the ICfL's work on the digital access plan. She enjoyed the focus group she attended in Salmon, which had great turnout. It was an opportunity to hear about challenges and to start thinking about solutions and ways to utilize funding.
- In June, she will attend the Western Council of State Libraries conference for chief officers in Hawaii. She is the secretary for the group.
- When she returns, her focus will be preparing the Digital Access for All Idahoans plan.

Wittman asked what can be done on a local level to provide information about library policies and practices. Bailey-White said ensuring that library policies are easy to find and that library directors and staff are prepared to respond to questions. Though many libraries are not seeing book challenges, they still need to be prepared.

Baker provided his report to the board:

- He's happy with the work Boise State University's Idaho Policy Institute (IPI) – the ICfL's contracted partner – is doing on the Digital Access for All Idahoans plan. They have concluded 10 out of 13 originally scheduled focus groups – events in Pocatello and Preston were cancelled due to weather, and one scheduled in Nampa did not have participants. The team is excited to crunch the data and pull out quotes from the focus groups.
- The IPI is also working on a statewide phone survey. That has been held up slightly because the survey had to be approved by BSU's human subject research institutional review board, which took six weeks. Now the survey needs federal approval, which will hopefully be complete in the next few weeks. At that point, the IPI will be able to proceed with the survey. The quantitative survey data will supplement the qualitative information from the focus groups.
- The final Digital Access for All Idahoans plan is due in mid-November. The ICfL is hoping to have it complete well before then.

Mecham asked how the IPI is selecting phone contacts for the survey. Baker noted the institute is best known for its annual state policy survey of a representative sample of Idahoans. He said the IPI will be doing something similar for this digital access work. The team has a mechanism in place to randomly select participants. They are focusing more on phone surveys so they can capture people who might have challenges with digital access and reliable internet. They will include at least 1,000 participants through surveys in English and 400 participants through Spanish or bilingual surveys. They will be asking for demographic information to ensure they get a representative sample.

Mecham asked if the IPI is targeting areas that are more rural. Baker said he is not entirely sure how they are selecting phone numbers, but he does know they aim for a geographic distribution across the state. He said he will follow up with the team and noted that someone from the IPI could attend a future board meeting to share details.

- At the end of March, the ICfL held a retreat for its entire library development team, which includes some new staff. The team went off site for a day and a half to focus on a workload analysis. They went to the Meridian Library District's new Orchard Park location, which wasn't yet open to the public. The retreat helped identify pain points and priorities for the team and was a productive use of time.
- There have been a lot of other Digital Access for All Idahoans events, including a "Readying Idaho's Rural Communities to Capture the Benefits of Digitalization" workshop in Sun Valley in April, which was well-attended. Baker is happy with the results of the event and the ICfL's partnership with the University of Idaho Extension's Digital Economy Program.
- At the end of May, Baker will go on a graduate school global experience trip to Serbia.

Bailey-White noted that Strickland was able to attend the Sun Valley digitalization workshop. Strickland noted there are hundreds of millions of dollars coming into Idaho for digital access work. He said that funding and the initiatives underway through the ICfL and their partners will be essential in ensuring communities have the infrastructure to address very large digital access gaps, particularly in rural areas. He said digital access is a necessity for everything from job applications to telehealth to emergency services.

Smith provided her report to the board:

- Luma is her sole focus. That includes getting staff through end-use training in May and June and navigating the new system.
- She is excited the ICfL's fiscal year 2024 budget passed. Now the focus is to build out the spending plan for next year, which will also be in Luma.
- She is closing out fiscal year 2023, including closing out the legacy systems and preparing to shift into Luma on July 1, 2023. The new HR system will be live June 11, 2023.
- A new buyer has joined the finance team. She comes with a great deal of experience after working at Micron for 25 years.

Baker said that E-Services Program Supervisor William Lamb was out sick and could not attend the board meeting. He noted that Lamb's team includes a new graphic / web designer and a new administrative assistant.

Valasek provided her report to the board:

- The ICfL released two administrative assistant job postings at the same time and saw a few candidates who applied for both positions. The first round of interviews focused on the Youth Services positions, and the hiring committee was able to recommend a candidate for the E-Services position through that process. She is excited about the ability to move positions from a clerical focus to these administrative assistant opportunities, which opens a lot of possibilities for the teams.
- The Youth Services team had a very busy couple of months. That included hosting the ICfL's first-ever Teen Convening, a two-day event aimed at staff from public and school libraries. The team plans to hold the event every two years, alternating with the Read to Me Rendezvous, which focuses on younger kids.
- The Youth Services team has been on the road for site visits, presentations, and training – helping school libraries close out the year and helping public libraries prepare for summer.
- As part of the ICfL's work with Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund subgrantees, Youth Services Consultant Jennifer Redford is hosting regional workshops to train library staff on summer reading



programming and to help them form community networks.

- Josie Bradford, previously an administrative assistant, was promoted into the Youth Services program specialist role. The ICfL then backfilled her position, hiring Brendy McConnaughey, who brings a lot of administrative and office management experience.

Gelskey provided her report to the board:

- She attended Fred Riggers Disability Awareness Day and a Buy Idaho event at the state capitol.
- The Talking Book Service (TBS) customer service representatives participated in the Idaho Commission on Aging's first nutrition conference. They were able to meet individuals who work with the homebound community.
- TBS Program Specialist Rachel Welker will represent the program at the National Federation of the Blind of Idaho State Convention while Gelskey is at the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled Western Regional Conference.
- Gelskey worked with Bailey-White and Management Assistant Allison Maier to send TBS mailings to campus disability centers throughout the state. This was in response to a recommendation from the student liaison on the TBS Advisory Committee.
- Staff are wrapping up final reports for the latest session of the Let's Talk About It program. People love the program and appreciate the opportunity to have robust discussions.
- Libraries are working on That All May Read grant activities through the summer. The Eagle Public Library requested TBS training as part of their grant work, and the ICfL hosted two rounds of visits with those employees.
- Held is now a TBS volunteer. He is currently recording "The Warden's Son: Growing Up at the Idaho State Penitentiary."
- Welker is planning a TBS volunteer appreciation luncheon in May.

#### **B. Personnel – Information item (Board Document 23-58)**

Bailey-White said the ICfL has done a lot of reclassification of existing employees, aiming to increase pay closer to a competitive rate for positions such as administrative assistants and customer service representatives. The ICfL does not currently have any positions open.

### **VIII. New Business**

#### **A. FY24-25 Board Meeting Schedule – Action item (Board Document 23-59)**

Bailey-White explained the document outlines the board meeting schedule for fiscal year 2024 and a tentative schedule for fiscal year 2025.

Wittman said she will not be able to attend the upcoming June meeting. Bailey-White

noted that if there are no action items or major business, the board will skip that meeting.

Bailey-White said northern Idaho is listed for the board's next library tour in April 2024. Touring eastern Idaho libraries is also a possibility. She will look at the history of recent board tours and put some proposals together for the board. She noted that libraries in northern Idaho are feeling a little more pressure and may appreciate some board support.

Franklin moved that the FY2024-25 meeting schedule for the Idaho Board of Library Commissioners be approved as described in Board Document 23-59. Mecham seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

#### **B. Board Appointments – Action item**

Bailey-White said Wittman's term on the board ends in June 2023. She is up for re-appointment if she would like to serve another term.

Wittman said she is willing to serve another term.

Held said his term ends in a year. He plans to step down at that point, after 15 years on the board. His seat is in Idaho's first congressional district.

Bailey-White said it is a lengthy process to advertise the seat and interview candidates. The ICfL will likely start the process this summer. The Office of the Governor will make the final determination.

### **X. Strategic Issues**

#### **C. Topic(s) for Next Meeting – Discussion**

Held noted the suggestion from earlier in the meeting about inviting someone from BSU's Idaho Policy Institute to talk to the board about work on the Digital Access for All Idahoans Plan.

Held and Mecham mentioned strategizing about library bills ahead of the next legislative session. Bailey-White suggested inviting Idaho Library Association President Lance McGrath to a board meeting.

Held moved to adjourn for a break until 11:40 a.m. MDT. Meeting temporarily adjourned.

Held called the meeting back to order at 11:41 a.m. MDT.

**XI. Executive Session, Idaho Statute 74-206(1)(b), to consider the evaluation of a staff member – Action item (Board Document 23-60)**

Mecham moved that the board go into Executive Session pursuant to Idaho Statute 74-206(1)(b), to consider the evaluation of a staff member. Wittman seconded. *A roll call vote was taken: Mecham – aye, Wittman – aye, Franklin – aye, Held – aye, Strickland – aye.*

The board entered executive session at 11:42 a.m. MDT.

The board returned from executive session at 12:16 p.m. MDT.

Franklin moved to give Bailey-White an Exemplary performance evaluation with a 5% pay raise. Mecham seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

**Meeting Evaluation/Adjournment**

Mecham moved to adjourn. Franklin seconded. Meeting adjourned at 12:18 p.m. MDT.

**Next meeting:** Thursday, June 15, 2023, 10 a.m. MDT  
Idaho Commission for Libraries, 325 W. State St., Boise, ID 83702