

Idaho Board of Library Commissioners Regular Meeting – Minutes

September 29, 2023, 10 a.m. PDT / 11 a.m. MDT
North Idaho College Molstead Library
875 W. Garden Avenue,
Coeur d’Alene, Idaho 83814
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, Administrative Services Manager Jamie Smith, Partnerships and Programs Supervisor Amelia Valasek (virtual), E-Services Program Supervisor William Lamb (virtual), Public Library Consultant Clay Ritter, and (serving as recorder) Management Assistant Allison Maier
- Other attendees: Theresa Birkett, Community Library Network Alliance; Ruth Brown, Idaho Public Television; Erik Olson, Idaho Division of Financial Management

I. Call to Order

Held called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. PDT.

- A. Introductions** Attendees introduced themselves.
- B. Agenda Review / Approval – Action item (Board Document 24-14)** Wittman moved to approve the September 29, 2023, meeting agenda. Strickland seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*
- C. Announcements** Bailey-White said Idaho Deputy Attorney General Kristine Moriarty, who had been the ICfL’s legal counsel, has moved on to another position. A new contact should be in place in the next couple of months.

II. Public Comment Held proposed moving review of **Board Document 24-16** – Board Communication and Public Comment Guidelines – up in the agenda. Franklin moved to approve the public guidelines for Idaho Board of Library Commissioners meetings and email communications as outlined in the board document. Mecham seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

Held opened the meeting for public comment.

Birkett introduced herself as the leader of a group called the Community Library Network Alliance. She explained the group of community members formed about a year ago to support the Community Library Network, battle extremism and censorship, and focus on voter education and library advocacy.

III. Minutes Review/Approval

- A. **August 10, 2023, Minutes – Action item** Mecham moved to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2023, board meeting. Wittman seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

IV. Legislation – Policies – Guidelines

- A. Legislation
- B. **Policies – Grant Program Eligibility Requirements – Action item (Board Document 24-15)**
Bailey-White said the grant program eligibility requirements are part of the board’s annual review and approval of policies. This year, the agency added eligibility requirements for non-library grant applicants in anticipation of federal United States Digital Equity Act funds expected to come to the state in 2024. Adding non-library applicants to the eligibility requirements will allow for nonprofits, extension offices, cities, and other agencies to apply for that funding. The ICfL is awaiting further federal guidance on eligibility guidelines for such entities.

Franklin moved that the board adopt the Grant Program Eligibility Requirements Policy as outlined in the board document. Strickland seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

V. Federal Fund

- A. Finances
- B. Program
- C. **Grants**
 - 1. **Library Facilities Improvement Grant Awards – Information item (Board Document 24-17)** Held thanked the group that vetted the grants. Wittman said she appreciated that the grant awards are big enough to make a difference. Bailey-White extended kudos to Valasek for leading the grant effort.

Valasek noted that assessing project risk was a factor in selecting awardees.
 - 2. **Library Services and Technology Act Continuing Education Grant Applications Received – Information item (Board Document 24-18)** Held said he wanted to know which conferences the recipients of First-Time Conference Attendance Grants were attending. Bailey-White said many are attending the Idaho Library Association Annual Conference in Twin Falls. ICfL staff will include more of those details on future board documents.

VI. General (state funds), Miscellaneous Revenue, and Library Services Improvement Funds

- A. Finances
- B. Program
- C. **Grants – Connecting Communities Program Applications Received – Information item (Board Document 24-19)** Bailey-White explained the ICfL distributed Chromebooks and accessories through a second round of the Connecting Communities program. Libraries could apply to

receive up to 20 devices. Libraries provide digital skills and cybersecurity training to program participants, focusing on underserved populations such as aging individuals, veterans, and refugee communities. Bailey-White noted that by establishing or strengthening community partnerships through the program, libraries will be ready to ramp up efforts when federal digital access funds roll into the state.

Lamb said the ICfL was able to offer 175 Chromebooks for this second round of the program. The total number of devices requested from libraries was 180, and the ICfL was able to meet every library's minimum need.

VII. Operations Report

A. State Librarian and Management Team Reports – Information item (Board Document 24-20)

Bailey-White provided her report to the board:

- She has been on the road visiting recipients of Facilities Improvement Grants, handing out Chromebooks, and meeting with legislators. The grant awards have received media coverage.
- Many ICfL staff members will attend the Idaho Library Association (ILA) Annual Conference in Twin Falls at the beginning of October. The ICfL is hosting a preconference session on digital access.

Baker provided his report to the board:

- He is not attending the ILA conference this year due to a two-day Idaho Division of Human Resources training.
- The ICfL received 10 public comments on the draft Digital Access for All Idahoans Plan. The ICfL is working with its contracted partner, Boise State University's Idaho Policy Institute, to revise the plan based on the feedback. The agency expects to have a final version of the plan ready to submit to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) by mid-October – ahead of the November 14, 2023, deadline. NTIA may have additional feedback from there. Idaho will be one of the first states to complete its plan.
- In August, a group of ICfL staff members toured the Idaho State Correctional Institution and met with the head librarian there. The ICfL is looking at opportunities to partner with the Idaho Department of Correction on enhancing library and re-entry services.
- The ICfL's Management Team had a half-day retreat at the end of August. They focused on staff capacity and plans for a two-day staff retreat and training at the end of November.

Smith provided her report to the board:

- The ICfL submitted its fiscal year 2025 budget to the Idaho Division of Financial Management by the deadline. There is a correction period through October 20, 2023. This is when the ICfL will incorporate Statewide Allocation Cost Plan (SWCAP) fees from other agencies. The budget will go before the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee.
- Luma remains a big area of focus. Smith hosts weekly Luma Lunches for staff to demonstrate processes and answer questions. The fiscal team also connects weekly to work through processes together. The state is providing additional Luma support

resources.

- The ICfL's financial technician, Nancy Holt, retired after more than 30 years with the agency. The ICfL was able to move a temporary employee, Clare McCabe, into the permanent position.

Lamb provided his report to the board:

- The ICfL launched a new program called Connecting Idaho Students: Tablets to Teach and Transform. The purpose is to expand e-book and digital resource access in Idaho classrooms. The ICfL has 200 tablets to distribute to school districts across the state as an incentive to sign up for Sora by Overdrive and learn about Libraries Linking Idaho (LiLI) tools for students. The ICfL has extended the application deadline.
- The ICfL launched a pilot Digital Navigator Program in July 2023. It offers Idahoans one-on-one tech help by phone, email, or chat. They can also access free, self-guided tutorials at IdahoDigitalSkills.org. The ICfL sent bookmarks to all libraries in the state to promote the resources.
- Lamb has been working with the Idaho Office of Information Technology Services to finish upgrading wireless access in the ICfL office. That project will likely be complete by the end of October or mid-November.

Valasek provided her report to the board:

- She has been collecting paperwork from Facilities Improvement Grant recipients and working with the U.S. Department of the Treasury to begin awarding the funds. The ICfL is using operating funds to work with a consulting firm that will provide support to the grantees and to the general Idaho library community through several avenues:
 - A series of webinars on capital project processes, which will be available to the full Idaho library community.
 - Open office hours for grantees each month.
 - A preconference session focused on facilities and open to all libraries as part of the ICfL's Public Library Directors' Summit in March 2024.
- The ICfL will be opening a second round of the Upgrade Your Space telehealth initiative with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. Libraries will be able to apply to receive technology and privacy pods.
- August was a busy month for the ICfL's Youth Services team, with a focus on support for school libraries. That included leading regional training sessions for recipients of School Library Access Mini-Grants. The team also visited more than 20 sites in eastern and northern Idaho, including visits with a couple of tribal groups.

Gelskey provided her report to the board:

- The 2024 Idaho Talking Book Service calendar will celebrate 50 years of the program, featuring photos, history, and Idaho-related book recommendations.
- Work on a designated Idaho Talking Book Service website is underway.
- Grant reporting for the Let's Talk About It program wrapped up in September. Over the next couple of months, the ICfL will focus on spending remaining funds and working with the Idaho Humanities Council to develop a new theme for the program.
- Final reports for the That All May Read Grant are complete as well. Gelskey's report in the board document highlights success stories.
- The Idaho TBS studio has built and uploaded six titles to the National Library Service

catalog since Gelskey's last report to the board. Volunteers are in the process of recording seven more.

- B. **Personnel – Information item (Board Document 24-21)** Held asked if the three current Customer Service Representative positions are enough for the Talking Book Service. Gelskey said there is enough coverage, with additional staff trained to help with walk-ins, take phone calls, and fill cartridges.

Held asked about the support Bilingual/Bicultural Project Coordinator Ismael Mendoza Medina provides to libraries. Bailey-White said he provides regular webinars, consulting services, and newsletter updates.

- C. **Other – Idaho Commission for Libraries 2023 Performance Report – Information item (Board Document 24-22)** Baker said every state agency submits a performance report to the Idaho Division of Financial Management (DFM) along with the budget each year. The ICfL submitted the report to DFM at the end of August. Highlights this year included the Connecting Communities program and American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) grants. Some key stats are still rebounding from the pandemic. The performance report is tied to the annual strategic plan the ICfL submits to the state each year – the strategic plan looks ahead; the performance report looks backward.

VIII. Old Business

IX. New Business

- A. **Overview of Idaho Public Library Statistics – Information item (Board Document 24-23)** Ritter introduced the table of public library statistics from 2018-2022. He noted the past five years were impacted by the pandemic. The table in the board document compares a peak year to the most recent year of stats, in addition to a comparison of the past two years. He walked through items of note in the table, including interlibrary loans, program attendance, circulation numbers, internet use, and the percentage of Idahoans served by tax-supported libraries.

X. Strategic Issues

XI. Meeting Evaluation/Adjournment Held asked for feedback on the board's visits to libraries in north Idaho and the Silver Valley. Commissioners discussed highlights in visiting with recipients of Facilities Improvement Grants and in seeing professionalism, enthusiasm, and innovation among library staff. They noted eye-opening discussions with libraries about the challenges they are facing.

Held moved to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m. PDT.

Next meeting: Thursday, December 7, 2023, at 10 a.m. MST on Zoom