

# MINUTES

## IOWA COMMISSION OF LIBRARIES

### STATE LIBRARY ADVISORY PANEL

Date: March 8, 2022  
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Location: Ola Babcock Miller Building Room 310  
and Online via Zoom

**Commission Members Present:** Joe Lock, Carrie Falk, Sarah Latcham, Bob Gast, Dan Chibnall, Zachary Stier

**Advisory Panel Members Present:** Lisa Leuck, Rebecca Bock, Anne Coulter, Tena Sunde, Greta Grond, Sarah Rosenblum, Stacy Goodhue, Lorrie Pellack, Emanuel Mitchell, Alison Ames Galstad, Sarah Uthoff, Dianna Geers, Sarah Sellon

**Staff:** Michael Scott, Marie Harms, Emily Bainter

#### 1.0 Call to Order and Welcome

**C. Falk** called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

#### 2.0 Set Agenda

**S. Latcham** made a motion to approve the agenda as written. **J. Lock** seconded. Motion carried.  
No other comments on agenda.

#### 3.0 Action Items

##### 3.1 Receive and Approve January 2022 Meeting Minutes

**J. Lock** made a motion to approve the November minutes; **B. Gast** seconded. Motion carried.

##### 3.2 Receive and Approve Financial Reports

**M. Scott** went over the financial reports. One of the line items indicates we are over budget 1,000%; this comes from the closure of the Sioux City office in the NW District and transitioning staff to home offices; the charges were to move some furniture out of the former office space. Otherwise everything is on track for spending.

**J. Lock** moved to approve the financial reports, **S. Latcham** seconded. Motion carried.

##### 3.3 Change of Date for next Commission meeting: June 10, 2022

**M. Scott** proposed moving the next meeting to June 10, 2022 and canceling the May and July Commission meetings. The next 5-year Strategic Plan is due to be submitted at the end of June and this would allow the plan to be reviewed by the Commission closer to the due date. The meeting would be an in-person work session from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The schedule change was approved with unanimous consent.

#### 4.0 Public Comment

No public comment

#### 5.0 Communications

##### 5.1 State Librarian's Report

**M. Scott** presented the State Librarian's Report. Brenda Hall, the new Library Program Director will start March 25, 2022. Marie Harms will retire as Library Program Director at the end of the month after 18 years with the State Library. Statewide projects using ARPA funding are coming along, including the People's Law Library website in partnership with the University of Iowa Law Library. The Social Work in Libraries project has kicked off with a webinar with Dr. Beth Wahler from the University of North Carolina and a survey for Iowa library directors and front-line staff on the psychosocial needs of their patrons. Another subgrant opportunity with ARPA funds was just announced for community college libraries, which can apply for up to \$5,000 for technology or other items that meet the grant requirements. All ARPA funding must be spent by Sept. 30,

2022.

## 5.2 Commission Reports

- **D. Chibnall:** Iowa ACRL and IPAL's joint conference is in May at UNI. Drake was one of 25 libraries nationwide that received a grant for an exhibit on the history of women's suffrage and community conversations around five books on the subject.
- **Z. Stier:** The Ericson Public Library received a Libraries Transforming Communities grant to develop an equity-based project. They are engaging new stakeholders and will design a website to show progress. The grant has concluded but the project is continuing and the library will publish a toolkit with ISU. The library also has an early literacy pilot project called Little Engines which continues to grow and is moving into Story County; they are looking to develop a toolkit for that program as well. The library also anticipates applying for an AARP grant for a community-based project.
- **S. Latcham:** The Wellman-Scofield Public Library had several summer library performers cancel, so the director is looking at replacing them. She noted Teacher Librarians were not eligible for the \$1,000 retention bonus from recent state legislation. Iowa City schools are looking forward to Book Madness program to create brackets with students voting a winner.
- **C. Falk:** The Shenandoah children's librarian retiring and they will be looking to fill the position. The library recently received seeds from Ely Public Library to begin a seed lending library which is a joint venture with the Page County Extension office.
- **B. Gast:** no report.
- **B. Lock:** no report.

## 6.0 Adjournment of Business Portion of the Iowa Commission of Libraries Meeting

Next meeting will occur June 10, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in person at the Ola Babcock Miller Building Room 310.

## 7.0 Work Session: Trends (From the Center for the Future of Libraries)

Iowa Commission of Libraries and the State Library Advisory Panel

<https://www.ala.org/tools/future/trends>

Reports from each small group on the trend they think will have the most impact on libraries and how the State Library can help:

- **Group 1:** This group identified the **Resilience** trend in the Environment category as most important. There always seems to be new things and big changes and libraries need to be able to meet those challenges with the pandemic, natural disasters, budget constraints. There's a potential that smaller libraries could close due to staffing shortages and budget shortfalls. This could affect rural areas even more than urban. The group talked about how the State Library could help more in educating how to keep staff and what the libraries can offer staff to stay on despite not being able to pay higher wages; how to improve the culture in the library. Library leadership skills are needed to lead younger generations and engage staff with new challenges. The database funding that used to be offered by the State Library to universities and colleges is now affecting budgets; although public library use was in the decline. The challenge that Iowa is facing as a state is that the majority of libraries are in communities that are losing population. The rural areas are hearing the importance of rural broadband but projects haven't materialized. Iowa needs to embrace how different we are, that we have an aging population, but library staff are mostly millennials and Gen Z and directors have to teach them how to engage with the library users. How can we train staff on those necessary soft skills? There are so many different needs for the variety of libraries; maybe identify library needs based on size. Consultants do a great job but know they have many libraries and it must be difficult to manage and contact all of the libraries in their district. In terms of Resilience, Covid was huge challenge for libraries. Libraries helped get community members connected with vaccine appointments, drive through vaccine clinics, moving programs outside, offering virtual programs, etc. All of them have had to be resilient with budgets; some years having to cut a lot and others having more of a cushion. It's a challenge to constantly validate the library's work with community members, city council, county supervisors, etc. Whenever there is an issue in the community, the library steps up wherever it is needed to provide support, relief, a

gathering space, and more. People don't seem to recognize what the library does; maybe because we don't toot our own horn, but we have to tell our own story. With population decreases, library directors need to find a way to engage and evolve the library to make sure the libraries in those small communities stay resilient and relevant; more community engagement and getting involved with community leaders.

- **Group 2:** This group also chose the **Resilience** trend. Covid and income inequality are still affecting communities; also seeing student deficiencies and mental health gaps in their communities. Changes in libraries, students needing assistance, connecting adults to services and each other. Looking for partnerships to access services, mental health needs. One question the group talked about was what can we offer or connect people to bridge the gap between income inequality, sharing ideas, and in person connection with other librarians. Tutoring programs like Brainfuse help students where they're at, which is great. A state subscription to Zoom would have been nice at the beginning of pandemic but could still be useful to libraries. Internet access inequality; possibly subsidizing hotspots, online educational gaming subscriptions and services to help kids be engaged with their learning. Better help online or a social worker presence in rural areas would help librarians help their patrons.
- **Group 3:** Chose **Collective Impact** under the Society category. They were thinking of all ages from early childhood, students, older adults. Connecting work between libraries and taking advantage of them to help patrons. The State Library could help share the stories of all libraries to have a united, bigger impact. Showing different ways libraries help; education and awareness can be just as important as advocacy. Many don't see libraries as an essential service anymore because we have the internet. They could see a dual-prong approach with advocacy and awareness campaign on how libraries are essential. Libraries know it's important but HOW do you get that education out to the community and share each other's stories and get people to listen? Most libraries don't have a marketing person on board to help get those messages out there. Why is it only librarians and library boards the ones that are responsible for getting the word out? What is the tipping point for libraries to do more with less? It's an assumption that libraries always rise to the occasion and figure out how to function with less and less. Getting stakeholders to understand how the library and community are tied together. Have libraries thought about taking a look at what they offer and choosing to not do things they have in the past? During Covid many libraries looked at services and decided what stayed and what went; some also had staffing cuts and will be cutting hours until the library is back at normal staffing levels. Libraries have to be strategic with taking on new things. Some smaller libraries are moving to volunteers when the director leaves. Some are also finding that certain Standards can be difficult for small libraries to meet and may start giving up on trying to become Accredited. Could the Standards be tailored to libraries by size? Could small libraries cooperate to form systems in order to have a full-time director and offer better library service? This would have to overcome libraries' concerns about potentially giving up autonomy and funding when moving to systems. The courts system had to let some services go before getting attention and finding support again; they are now seeing success with resource consolidation. It was dependent upon the community members stepping up and saying they can't lose these services and then making the case to their local legislators for restored funding.
- **Group 4:** Chose **Income Inequality** in the Economic category. This group talked about food and housing insecurities, as well as learning and social gaps, and mental health needs. They can see income inequality becoming greater with current global events and could see it as a tipping point for getting people back into the library. Devices are changing and people aren't purchasing computers because they have phones and tablets; many don't have printers at home and come into the library to print or use computers for applications that need a desktop. Internet access and hotspots, outdoor spaces with wi-fi are now available at many libraries. The State Library can help with more social workers present or support and facilitating collaborations between agencies. Creating partnerships with Workforce Development, social agencies, Judicial Branch, etc. The current social work project will help identify statewide needs and recommendations for potential projects to support libraries and their patrons.