



44 Stelton Road, Suite 330 TEL: 732-752-7720 librarylinknj.org
Piscataway, NJ 08854 FAX: 732-752-7785
Kathy Schalk-Greene, Executive Director Kathy@librarylinknj.org

EXECUTIVE BOARD SPECIAL MEETING
Thursday, October 30, 2019, 10:00 AM
In Person – Talking Book and Braille Center

MINUTES

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Present

Phillip Berg
Chris Carbone
Steve Chudnick
Karen Cohen (phone)
Cory Fleming
Allan Kleiman
Bonnie Lafazan
Deborah Magnan
Laurie Matassa
Michelle McGreivey
Ricardo Pino
Jennifer Podolsky
Elizabeth Sosnowska
Irene Sterling

Absent

Courtenay Reece (excused)

Also Attending

Kathy Schalk-Greene, Executive Director
Kathleen Moeller-Peiffer, NJ State Library
Abby Straus, Consultant

Public

Dave Hanson, BCCLS

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by President Chris Carbone, who announced that the meeting was in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Abby Straus facilitated a discussion of strategic directions for LLNJ:

1. What does the future hold for the people of NJ. How might libraries meet citizens where they are/where they will be?

What's happening in NJ? What is on people's minds?

- A rise in mental health and drug issues
- Apathy from fear/overwhelm

- Consumer health. Population aging. More people take care of elders. Dementia is rising as an issue. Cancer also. Health providers to libraries to centers for seniors to make information accessible. Particularly drug costs.
- Food insecurity.
- Getting what they need as quickly as possible.
- Mass shootings. Anxiety from that. Suicide rates are up.
- More services for less money. Fewer services available.
- People are fixated on taxes. People from other countries notice this.
- People don't have the time to get to us in public libraries.
- People don't want to hear the other side. Bubble effect. People look for information that affirms what they believe. Confirmation bias.
- People perceive a lack of time.
- People want things and they want them now.
- Political polarization. Trickle down to the local level. Constant election cycles.
- Politics: you get this in your head. People are sick of all this...divisiveness. It's gotten to be noise for many people. When you wear different hats, people are concerned about people's rights being taken away in DC.
- Public institutions are being asked to expand their scope as their resources are shrinking. Moving further away from their initial missions.
- Rising cost of everything.
- Schools are being called upon to handle mental health. Crisis level. SEL curriculum. Anxiety, depression lots affecting young people. At Bonnie's school 40% of students have mental health issues.
- Similar but different concerns throughout the state
- Urban centers have concerns about immigration, policing, water, internet access.
- Weather. Anniversary of Sandy. Climate change.
- What's not being expressed? The confusion and fear about the state of the world.
- Work is so demanding.

About Libraries

- We focus on all types of libraries.
- Libraries can impose a lot of steps that get in the way of people getting in and getting services. Immigrants, for instance, may feel cut off from participation.
- There is the difference between what people express and what they really need. If you're looking as a library, what are you responding to? If people don't know how to explain what they need/how they feel, it's hard to know.
- Nice shiny new buildings. Bond act.
- Libraries get stuck in a plot of land and they don't have the opportunity to move. When Steve was in school in NC, the library was part of a shopping center.
- If our primary reason for being is delivery, that's one thing. The modern library is more than that...safe space, space of interaction. Technology isn't a panacea. Libraries are a refuge. A

place to get help. Tech will help. We focus way too much on physical delivery. We may be sharing more digital things.

- Tech can be used by LLNJ to help members help their patrons.
- We can still walk into any library and get a respite from everything. Everyone can find a friendly face in libraries where someone will try and help. Libraries have become the last refuge. We have a big issue with mission creep because people have so many needs.
- It's exhausting pushing the value of what we do and who we are.
- Idea: Uber eats for libraries. Delivery...Uber reads.
- Alan: Self check machines at Wegmans. Neighborhood always in flux. Changing demographics. Don't see my hometown's library understanding the change in neighborhoods.
- In Calif. Social workers in libraries to work with patrons.
- View of libraries is changing but not fast enough. People don't know what libraries have to offer.
- If we keep our libraries in the role of providing content, then we're missing something.
- There is an opportunity to embed librarians elsewhere in the community. Like town halls. Bringing librarians to people. Send them to dorms. Have to be flexible to people's needs. Most towns have a department of health.
- Electronic book technology doesn't meet the needs of many people. Many people want print.
- Karen: what I see is fewer and fewer physical visits and more digital visits, e-books, audio books increased by 4-fold in 5 years. Maybe because we have a transient population. Interactions haven't decreased but there's been a change.
- We're still grappling with virtual delivery.

2. How might we optimize our thinking and action?

Our members are facing the same issues. These are today's issues. We'll have new ones. What kind of infrastructure can we create to help members deal with any issue? How can we put together a network that will help our members do their jobs?

Flexibility for LLNJ. Agility to change as times change: the rate of change has accelerated and will continue to do so.

We represent all types of libraries in the state.

People don't know how to differentiate LLNJ from other state organizations.

"People don't fund need. They fund vision." Mary Chute heard this.

Ricardo: What is the core organizing principle for LLNJ that says we need to be together? Should there be smaller bodies?

If we could stop reinventing the wheel, operating in silos. We can identify the correct medium and we need to communicate that we're not alone. YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Catalyst for new ideas. For innovation. Seeing trends and coming up with things.

If we could stop reinventing the wheel, operating in silos. We can identify the correct medium and we need to communicate that we're not alone. YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Our funding structure limits our ability to "turn on a dime". VR and AR...MD and CA have done big projects. Look for things that all libraries can benefit from.

Sharing and dissemination hasn't been good. Projects die when the money is gone.

Until we change this we are only the delivery agency.

We have to have something of value to replace delivery options. In exchange for cost sharing or other ideas there has to be value offered.

Why do we need LLNJ? What would be impact be on the world if we went away?

Chris: we need to offer more and there may be cheap ways to do it. *We should call delivery shared collection...no one cares about delivery...resource sharing.* Capitalize on the knowledge our members all have. We could set up an information clearing house where people in all libraries could share what they're doing.

We need to address real questions now.

Dave (BCCLS): a fundamental structural problem. Is the consortium here to make individual members stronger or is it about joining something important? There are things that we do designed to make individual libraries better. Other things to join that are bigger than yourself. Mr. Miagi from Karate Kid, you can either take a stand or run down the middle of the road, where you get hit. Is LLNJ doing this? We need to answer the question.

How do we get to hear from people we don't usually hear from?

How do we change the perception that LLNJ doesn't function correctly?

Deb: we are a multitype collaborative. We talk about public libraries as if they're all the same. But they're not. We need to be careful not to drop all public libraries into one bucket. County library systems as well.

Kathy M-P: it's been difficult since the other three regions went away. You were physically closer to the people you served before. There are distinct needs and priorities in different parts of the state, and it was easier to respond and have ownership. LLNJ is now one for the entire state and trying to have people feel a connection.

Kathy SG: you see a huge range of circulation across the state. There are trends involved. It's a very diverse state. There is equal diversity politically in NJ, very poor, suburban, and wealthy. Different messages will resonate with different groups.

How do you manage the centralized for efficiency/decentralized for local needs paradox?

3. Whom should we be in touch with about the future?

Irene's list:

We need to listen to what others are saying not just talking about the value of libraries.

- **League of Municipalities** njlm.org
 - Annual Conference November 18-21, 2019
 - Atlantic City
- **Center for NonProfits** njnonprofits.org
 - Annual conference December 4, 2019, The Palace at Somerset Park, Somerset NJ
 - Potential partners and funders, banks, etc.
- **New Jersey Future** njfuture.org
 - Redevelopment Forum on Friday, March 6, 2020
 - [Hyatt Regency New Brunswick](#)
- **National Consortium for Creative Placemaking** cpcommunities.org [based in NJ]
 - Northeast Regional Meeting March 26-27

- Drexel University, Philadelphia
- Placemaking is a collaborative process. Opportunity zones. There is one in every county. Is Paterson an Opportunity Zone? Asset maps.
- **To Watch for in 2020:**
 - Governor's Conference on Housing and Economic Development in September
- **Key takeaway**
 - from Arts and Humanities workshop presented by Senator Booker 10/28:
 - **"Placemaking"** used by National Endowment for the Arts, IMLS, panel on community engagement and the panel on Opportunity Zones.

Other suggestions:

- ALA midwinter
- Business, chambers of commerce
- Consortia: Be more tuned in to other consortia. Or make our own network of consortia. Hold a meeting at midwinter. **Executive director needs to do this.** Other consortia have had the same experience of being downsized. We can learn from each other.
- Educause
- League of Municipalities: Talk to our mayors.
- New Jersey Conference of Mayors
- Next City:
- NJEDA (Economic Development)
- Stanford Social Innovation Review (SSIR)
- Vendors: Knowing what they are doing. We need to know what people are making and why.

Notes:

Put aside time in the Feb meeting for report from ALA midwinter.

How do all the NJ library groups get together as a united front for events?

4. How might we use data?

Kathy S-G has data on circulation. How do you get the data for other types of libraries? Is there a central org that keeps track of academic or school or special libraries that would give us comparative data? IPEDs for academic.

Data shows:

1. Increasing loans of electronic items
2. Stable numbers of reciprocal borrowing, significant amount of total-resource sharing
3. Impact of 2018 delivery issues. ILLs to and from other libraries...disruption of 1-2 months had a definite impact.

"Geography is destiny" If there is a consortium you can join, you have significantly more resources. Otherwise, you're on your own. There are libraries all over in this position, not just rural libraries.

Alan: "we have a model of no models" unlike MD where everything is in a county except for Baltimore. Different delivery model.

Explosion of the number of journals. Charge to publish, etc. Makes it hard for people to differentiate and for us to help them negotiate what's out there.

Data is coming from LLNJ Delivery Task Force.

Data from schools: Vale, IPEDS, State library statistics (only as good as what they've got),

Ricardo: What other factors are not being captured in the data we have? There are nuances that we may have to look qualitatively at.

What other data would be useful for understanding our situation and what's going on in NJ?

5. ED Search: What qualities would we like to have in a new executive director that will make them effective in addressing the opportunities and challenges we've identified?

- Ability to think in business terms.
- Actively wants the project to establish a vision/to be part of the process/I can shape and form this
- Be an advocate
- Change agent
- Collaborative
- Come in with some big ideas
- Cross-discipline experience
- Demonstrated skills with a team
- Detail skills, lead and manage, implementer
- Doesn't know it can't be done.
- Emotional intelligence/facilitation skills
- High comfort level with adapting to changing technologies.
- Later 30s early 40s.
- Leader, not a manager
- Marketing/negotiation/facilitation skills
- Membership org experience.
- MLS or equivalent degree, logical other field. Public policy.
- Must have an MLS
- Non-profit experience.
- Project management.
- References other than librarians
- Relationship builder
- Responsive.
- Risk taker
- Some who will roll up their sleeves, doing the work, not waiting for others to do the work
- Someone who is comfortable with ambiguity
- Someone who thinks outside the box in terms of funding

- Someone who understand the relationship between NJSL and the LLNJ
- This needs to be a mission for them, someone who believes that this is a worthwhile mission, because we're going to ask them to engage their passion.

We need to know who we are in order to attract the ED.

6. Commitments to action

1. What do LLNJ, the State Library and NJLA do?

Meeting with the three orgs to discuss the roles of each org.

Committee. Subset of board. Suggestion: meet with each org. separately. [Note from Abby: It may be a good idea both to meet separately and to have a meeting with all three organizations present. Part of the problem thus far has been people working in silos and not having tough conversations with a good process for getting results. I think this needs to happen for real progress to be made.]

Chris will make a doc about what state orgs do so everyone knows.

2. Decide what LLNJ is passionate about? What might we be? Form one or more hypotheses and test them. What is the big gap in the state? Chris: No strategic vision for library service with a goal. What does what we want for the state of NJ look like in the library community? We can lead the shift or be lead.

Sharing resources (delivery, digital, knowledge, collaboration)

3. Abby to meet online with board at board meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dave Hanson, BCCLS, said that membership organizations have two options:

- Make a member library stronger individually
- Have member libraries join something bigger than oneself.

NEW BUSINESS

A motion was made by Jennifer Podolsky to hold an Online Town Hall meeting on December 18, 11-12 PM. Seconded by Ricardo Pino, and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Corey Fleming moved to adjourn the Meeting. Elizabeth Sosnowska seconded the motion, which passed. The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Deborah Magnan
Secretary