

**Special Legislative Commission to Study the Strengths and Weaknesses
of Library Services in the State of Rhode Island**

January 31, 2007

Room 135 – State House

Members Present: Representative Peter L. Lewiss, Chair, Representative Elizabeth Dennigan, Representative John Savage, Senator David Bates, Mr. William Allen, Ms. Suzanne Costa, Mr. Peter Deekle, Tom Evans, Ms. Phyllis Humphrey, Ms. Beth Perry, Ms. Patricia Redfearn, Ms. Mary Ann Slocomb, Ms. Ruth Sullivan, Ms. Dale Thompson.

Invited Guests: Bob Aspri, Howard Boksenbaum, Karen Quinn, Sen. Chris Maselli, Tom Grant, Hope Houston, Bob Aspri

Commission was called to order on Wednesday, January 3, 2007 at 2:10 p.m. in Room 135 State House, by Chairman Representative Peter Lewiss and a quorum confirmed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as distributed.

STATEWIDE DATABASES

Karen Quinn noted that the sub-committee was joined by LibFutures who did most of the groundwork and whose input was very much appreciated.

Trying to provide an equal playing field and equal access to each and every person in Rhode Island. Economic incentives are unlimited.

Name: Students from Barrington came up with a name for the statewide database project: “Surf RI”.

Public demonstration: Bob Aspri from HELIN is willing to set up a statewide public site highlighting six or seven databases for about 5-6 weeks to show advantages to the State of RI. They will also be able to access from office or home for a few weeks. There will be no passwords or Id’s needed to access the website. March 6th from 2-4 p.m. was set as the date for the State House demonstration.

Karen Quinn’s committee will send out invitations to all Senators and Representatives.

Karen Quinn suggested combining with One State One Catalog so it can be seen as a unified project.

Reference Librarian positions - The statewide database will not affect reference librarian positions because guidance will still be needed to make decisions when using the database. In fact, the need for librarians will increase after these databases are installed.

Funding – Question of earmarking a funding mechanism came up and it was decided not to pursue because of the fact that these small funds are all usually swept into operating.

Annual Appropriation – There would need to be an annual appropriation. Chairman Lewiss will speak with various Senators and Representatives to discuss what's realistic. Very clear that education is a priority in the Governor's budget this year.

Surcharges to \$1.6m – Is the \$1.6m a firm price? Ann Parent noted that based on reality, if we were given \$1.6m and the cost changed, we would have to review the databases. Before we sign a contract we would get definite price and know what we're paying for. Howard Boksenbaum added that prices are negotiable.

LEGISLATIVE SUB-COMMITTEE

We need to:

Identify the various agencies which have libraries, i.e., Historical Societies, Dept. of Education, OLIS, Archives, etc.

Two recommendations:

1. Re-introduce legislation – House bill 52-95 which corrects inaccuracies and superseded material pertaining to OLIS.
2. Review 29-6-9 on RI Library Network.

The RI Network section needs to be looked at. Collaboration important. Possibly write new legislation that would move collaboration forward.

We should look at other laws that relate to public libraries such as access to public records and open meetings law.

Chairman Lewiss suggested that focus should be to look at language.

Draft Statutory Governance/Funding Structures – Tom Evans handed out copies of a Draft Statutory Governance/Funding Structures.

Discussion followed and it was decided to make the following changes:

- 29-3.3-1.1 – add “statewide” to (4) ...providing “statewide” access to databases.
- 29-6-9 (1) Provide central support services for the Library of Rhode Island, such as delivery of materials, telecommunications, consultant services, statewide resource sharing and access to bibliographic and other information sources;
- 29-6-9 – paragraph (3)(b) – leave #5 as placeholder
- 29-6-9 – delete #6
- 29-6-9 – add new section (3)(c) to read: “State shall provide from state and federal revenue sources 100% of funding for providing statewide access to databases.”

**MOTION MADE TO ACCEPT THE CHANGES BY ANN PARENT AND
SECONDED BY TOM EVANS. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

REGIONALIZATION

Much more innovation might be possible. Look at various priorities and need to clarify participants needs and wants. Felt the need to know what will be the convergence of shared needs and look at existing brokers, etc.

State Role – Felt that there were on-going protocol and procedures that would specify roles. What would be in place to sustain initiatives? What role would OLIS fulfill in the future? How does LORI represent concerns? Are there agencies that don't need to exist?

Howard Boksenbaum suggested:

1. Committee should be looking at statewide effort.
2. Build on what's here already
3. Seek commonality of needs.
4. Look at economies of scale.

Partnership with other states – Chairman Lewiss suggested that buying power of RI doesn't compare to larger states so partnering with other states is a good.

Website with minutes of meetings – Peter Deekle asked if an archival file of minutes should be part of LibFutures site. Ann Parent said that OLIS has a site already www.olis.ri.gov/news/commission/index.php where minutes can be added. There is also a link to LibFutures.

NEXT MEETING – FEBRUARY 28, 2007- 2 P.M.

ROOM 135
STATE HOUSE