Library Advisory Council Minutes

April 21, 2016

Mike called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. Those present were Dan Norris, Amy Olsen, Barbara Buchanan, Linda Goodspeed, Paula Stevens, Jennifer Hart, Sara Blow, Marty Reid, Paul Putnam and Mike Richman. Those absent were Linda Gustafson, Walter Taylor, and Mike Charron.

Amy read the minutes and they were accepted as read after a motion was made by Paul and seconded by Amy.

Absenteeism:  Mike said that the section on absenteeism in the bylaws states that if someone misses three consecutive meetings that person loses his/her place on the Council. However, everyone is allowed to send a replacement to one meeting a year. No one has missed three consecutive meetings yet, but Mike said we are going to keep better records. Also some of the terms expire at the end of 2016, so we will have to consider some new members at the October meeting.

Jennifer told the group she is retiring September 30, but is willing to stay on part-time until the transition is complete. Sharon Colvin, who was brought in to help oversee the Special Services Unit after Michael Roche left, is leaving at the end of July. Mike said that Marty needs to keep us informed about what is going to happen with staffing Special Services, and that everyone involved should remember how important the special connection is to blind and visually impaired patrons. Jennifer said that some of Bill Wilson’s recommendations might be used and that his report might be on the Department of Libraries web site.

NLS Discussion: Vickie Collins and Steve Prine from NLS then joined us by conference call. Steve told the group that there were 55 libraries serving the United States and its territories. He said that cassette books are withering away, and that cartridge use is overwhelming. Also, in 2015, there were over three million downloads. When asked if each state is required to have a regional library, Steve said no.

When Mike asked how books are selected, Steve said that the six librarians in the Development Section try to consider a broad spectrum of titles. They read reviews, pay attention to bestsellers and series, and consider special requests from libraries. At least 1,000 commercially recorded books are added through complementary special contracts, and books are also added through volunteer programs at the regional libraries. Steve also told us that a Collection Development Advisory Committee made up of patrons and librarians makes recommendations.

Vickie said she is also happy to receive input from both patrons and librarians. She mentioned that people wanting to keep their magazines on cartridge longer should include at least one monthly in their requests. That way they can keep both their weeklies and monthlies longer. Patrons can also request re-sends. When Jennifer pointed out that patrons could only get two re-send requests, Vickie said there would be no trouble adding more.

NLS is hoping to provide refreshable braille in the same way that machines are presently provided. Marty asked if the regional libraries could lend support to this project, and Steve said it is part of the Library of Congress bill. Steve then told the group that the next generation of machines would probably have wireless capability allowing regional librarians just to push the books through to patrons instead of mailing them. This would free up the librarians from having to manage large collections and mailings and spend more time on marketing and giving special attention to their patrons.

When Steve was asked about future cuts, he said there were none coming up at this time. He also said that Carla Hayden, hopefully the next Librarian of Congress, is very interested in the NLS program. Vickie said that she was very interested in the books produced in the regional libraries. There are about 2,000 of them on BARD now, and she would like to see that increased. NLS has always had good support from Congress. It is never singled out for cuts because it serves every constituency. When asked, Vickie said that Congress provides money to the post office to cover the cost of delivering books and magazines. When Jennifer told her that there had been some difficulty with the postal service in Vermont, Vickie said she would put her in touch with the Post Office Liaison for this area who provides good service.

Steve said that the network of libraries is critical to outreach and that NLS could not operate without support from the states. Finally, Vickie said she would like to see all of the cassettes currently in circulation weeded out by the end of June.

Marty said that Jennifer is Employee of the Year and is having lunch with the governor on May 2.

Mike pointed out that Book Share has practically all of the magazines and newspapers in the country and wondered if the library could have a Book Share account. Dan said institution accounts were for education.

Martha Reid said that the library was not losing any more money next year. She said that physical accounts were being reduced, and in many cases, special databases will be provided. Also some collections are being sent to the Historical Society Library. If all of this happens Marty said there will be two floating positions.

Mike said that the overwhelming majority of library patrons DO NOT want library services outsourced.

Rhode Island uses Perkins library, and he has heard that the service is very quick. But we need the Special Services staff who would then be free to do more marketing and provide more personal service.

Mike then said that we will discuss and review the bylaws at the next meeting which will be Thursday, July 21. The meeting was adjourned at 12:21 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Buchanan, Secretary