

**VERMONT BOARD OF LIBRARIES
MINUTES OF MEETING**

**April 12, 2016
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Waterbury Public Library**

Members present: Bruce Post, Chair; Lucy Comstock-Gay, Maxie Ewins, Josh Fitzhugh, Jim Gish, Deborah Granquist, Martha Reid

Others present: Margaret Woodruff, Vermont Library Association
Mary Kasamatsu, Waterbury Public Library Director
Tess Adone, Executive Assistant to the State Librarian
Mara Siegel, State Library Interlibrary Loan Head and Continuing Education Coordinator

Via teleconference: State Librarians:
Ann Joslin, Idaho
Anne Craig, Illinois, with State Library Outreach Coordinator Taran Ley
MaryKay Dahlgreen, Oregon

Call to Order:

Chair Bruce Post called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.
Lucy Comstock-Gay was presented with a gift, as she is leaving the Board due to a move.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of January 12, 2015 were approved unanimously, with no changes.

Strategic Direction: Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants' Final Report

Martha Reid offered her response to the recommendations for Department restructuring outlined in the Himmel & Wilson report. As a result of diminished state funding for Department of Libraries' services and staff, Reid agrees that the Department is at an important crossroads for determining future direction and program priorities. The Consultant's report recommends an organizational structure that supports two divisions: (1) Information and Access Services (Vermont State Library, services to state government, and statewide resource sharing), and (2) Library Advancement, with a focus on local public libraries. Supporting the work of these two divisions (and continuing the associated statutory responsibilities) presents a major challenge for a Department that has been reduced to just 19 positions. Other state library agencies have been presented with similar challenges, and Reid arranged for three state librarians (Oregon, Illinois, and Idaho) to join the meeting virtually to talk about changes they have made in their organizations as a result of diminished resources, changing roles of libraries, and opportunities to set new service priorities and develop more impactful programs.

Strategic Directions in Oregon, Illinois, and Idaho: Guest Virtual Testimonies

The three state librarians invited to participate via video/teleconference provided information on how they have weathered challenging budget and staff cuts and the models under which they currently operate:

- Illinois State Librarian Anne Craig, at the [Illinois State Library](#) (ISL), talked about their service model: a

functioning state library for state government and programs/services for local libraries.

[Outreach Coordinator](#) Tarn Ley described her outreach services from the State Library to individual state employees. Tarn Ley markets this service using the [Little Library](#) model, delivering books and other library resources (including popular materials) directly to state agencies. Anne Craig said state employees appreciate the personal service, which includes training on information databases, a focus on print collections, e-resources (e-books) and the research needs of state employees. Illinois employs a user-centered approach rather than providing bibliographies or traditional reference desk service. Getting the word out about what the library can offer is important, especially since competition for resources is high. Ley agreed that success is by word of mouth, which spreads faster through an agency than group training. Not every state employee needs the ISL for research; EPA, AG, DOT have their own libraries and library staff. Sometimes staff questions from those agencies are referred to ISL, and they are avid supporters of ISL within their agencies.

The Illinois State Library administers continuing education, as well as construction and literacy grants to libraries, but local libraries are managed by their own governing bodies.

- [Oregon State Librarian MaryKay Dahlgreen](#) moved her agency at the [Oregon State Library](#) (OSL) from a traditional “state library” model to one-on-one service to state employees. Public (State Library) services were cut when there were too few patrons to justify staffing. This included a controversial decision to close a large (and grand) state library reading room. The services to state employees and associated staff are supported by assessment fees paid by state agencies that use the service. Dahlgreen reported that the Oregon Natural Resources and Health agencies tend to be the heaviest users of State Library resources, probably because of their need for evidence-based materials, which are available electronically. The legislature is one of its agencies, and while its use is small, legislative staff use is higher. OSL also provides training and instruction on the use of digital resources, as well as interlibrary loan and document delivery to state employees.

While it has faced budget challenges, OSL currently has a good budget situation. Seven reference librarians are assigned to specific agencies, for which they do collection development in their respective policy areas. The collection does not contain popular literature and consists mostly subscription information databases. Database purchases are expensive; however, [Safari Books Online](#) has been wildly popular, in part because it has a lot of information technology-related materials. OSL recently conducted a brand audit which showed a need for more visibility, and they are now working on a marketing plan.

OSL services include: Library Development (largely funded with federal LSTA), NLS Talking Book and Braille service, and (mostly digital) reference service to State Government. Like Vermont, the OSL has no power or authority over local libraries, though Oregon does have libraries organized by metropolitan areas, counties, and interconnecting taxing districts. OSL provides a small amount of funding for children’s services through a “Ready to Read” Grant for use in early learning and summer reading programs. There are 128 public library jurisdictions in Oregon.

- [Idaho Commission for Libraries](#) State Librarian Ann Joslin reported that three significant budget cuts have occurred in the past 20 years, with the latest large reduction in 2009-2011. In 2002, ICFL had a division that provided information services to state employees, a library development division, a collection that served as backup for reference and interlibrary loan for public libraries, the NLS Talking Books program, and a large print collection for loan to public libraries. ICFL was also a state and federal document depository library.

Following a significant round of cuts in 2002-04, ICFL looked at ten years of state appropriations trends and found that while its funding for personnel and operations had increased overall, capital support for materials collections had essentially been eliminated. Not having funding for collections for two years sent a strong message that ICFL would find it difficult if not impossible to recover its collections and maintain its former footing. They looked at their (minimal) statutory mandates (state documents and general library services to the public) and the impact of new technologies and digital resources. In an assessment of service patterns they found a lack of consistent approach across clientele groups and decided to concentrate on providing quality services in just those areas where no one else was providing similar service and where they could have the greatest impact.

ICFL started with two major assumptions: 1) continue NLS Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped services, and 2) maximize use of its federal LSTA funds. They developed a service plan, reduced their collections, ended their status as a federal depository, discontinued service to state employees, and moved to a digital state depository. As they moved from their former model, they maintained the Library for the Blind and Handicapped but cut all services except circulating large print books to the general public, and expanded and refined library development services to local libraries. The board approved a change to the mission “to assist libraries to build their capacity to better serve their communities,” reflecting a new focus on library development, and in 2005, they changed from being called Idaho State Library to Idaho Commission for Libraries. The NLS Talking Books program is now their only direct service with a library collection.

Joslin said most of their work is with public libraries and library trustees. There are 103 public library jurisdictions. Their three public library consultants work with public libraries on planning, problem solving, budgeting, personnel, daily operations, and management. Like Vermont, most ID libraries lack MLS-degreed staff. Their continuing education programs have moved from on-site workshops to creating online basic library education segments through its Alternative Basic Library Education website, [ABLE](#). It is periodically updated, and people worldwide take the courses. Higher level continuing education focuses on community engagement, helping libraries understand their need to develop partnerships in the community. ICFL brings in nationally-known speakers and provides early literacy training, which can be customized at the local library level.

Following the presentations from other states, Board members had a short discussion:

Bruce Post asked why ID state agencies weren't interested in State Library collections and services. Joslin reported that information services to state agencies had a high per-transaction cost, and staffing a reference desk with little use did not make sense. While more robust marketing might have made a difference, they did not make a major effort and determined that many state employees did not need research services, and those who did had established other professional and information networks. From 2009-2011 ICFL weathered an additional 35% budget cut, which included losing staff. Since 2011, ICFL has recovered enough to secure ongoing state money for mini-grants to elementary school libraries, and statewide databases have been maintained. The budget still limits hiring additional staff, which in turn limits growth. Nonetheless, the agency is much stronger now and has better visibility with the legislature.

Josh Fitzhugh repeated the finding that though the Himmel & Wilson Report recommended doing something similar to what OSL is doing, feedback from Vermont Administration officials questions the need for developing any new centralized information services for state agencies. Though there is no data to prove it, it seems that our state employees have found ways to meet their own research and information needs. Are there benefits in providing centralized services? And does it make sense for the Department of Libraries to do this work with such a small staff and diminished resources?

Jim Gish said the flow of technology today is aimed at decentralization and questioned the Department's capacity to develop a working centralized repository.

Deborah Granquist noted that a focus on helping local libraries would be welcome and that such a role would be easy to explain to the legislature and others. The State Library and developing services to state government is complex and might be a harder “sell.”

Lucy Comstock-Gay noted that an effective state government needs good information. Library service to state employees is needed and the Department could leverage funding by making a strong case for developing new and more effective services.

Fitzhugh questioned the Department's ability to meet the Himmel & Wilson's recommendations of supporting both the Library Advancement division and State Library services with the current reality of reduced

resources and capacity, and suggested that emphasis should focus on public libraries. If the Department determines a need for the other (State Library) services, the Oregon model could be cost-effective.

Other Business

Because time for discussion was short, the Board agreed to have a follow-up phone conference to continue this conversation before the end of April.

The July Board meeting will be a Public Hearing for Geographic Naming, Reid will work with the Governor’s office to fill two Board vacancies before that meeting.

Adjournment: 12:03 p.m.

Mary Kasamatsu, Director of Waterbury Public Library, provided some historical background about the library and conducted a tour of the new library, which opened in February.

2016 Meeting Schedule

The Board of Libraries meets quarterly (January, April, July, and October) on the second Tuesday of the month, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Board Committee meetings are scheduled as needed.

All meetings are posted on the [State of Vermont public meetings](#) list.

Date	Time	Location	Purpose
January 12, 2016	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Midstate Library Service Center	Regular meeting of Board Annual Election of Officers
April 12, 2016	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Waterbury Public Library	Regular meeting of Board
July 12, 2016	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Rockingham Public Library	Geographic Naming public hearing
October 11, 2016	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Bixby Memorial Free Library Vergennes	Regular meeting of Board