

Minutes
MLA Legislative Advisory Panel
November 2, 2012, 10:00 a.m.
Anne Arundel County Public Library - Headquarters
Annapolis, MD 21401

Attending: Mary Baykan (Chair), Jay Bansbach, Darrell Batson, Joan Bellistri, Alan Bogage, Kay Bowman, Margaret Carty, Denise Davis, Natalie Edington, Jim Fish, Martha Graham, Valerie Gross, Mary Hastler, Sharan Marshall, Irene Padilla, John Sondheim, Chuck Steadman, Lynn Wheeler and Carrie Willson-Plymire. Donna Denny was the recording secretary.

Guests: Maureen Sullivan, President (2012-2013), American Library Association (ALA); and Lynne Bradley, Director, Office of Government Relations, ALA.

Mary Baykan welcomed Maureen and Lynne and explained the purpose of the Maryland Library Association's Legislative Advisory Panel. She thanked them for coming to answer questions raised at the October meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Minutes

Chuck moved to approve the minutes of the October 12 meeting, as corrected. Jim seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as corrected.

Federal Legislation

Natalie said there is no federal legislation to report. The General Election is November 6. National Library Legislative Day in Washington, D.C., sponsored by ALA, is scheduled for May 7 and 8, 2013.

ALA President – Maureen Sullivan

Mary said at the Panel's last meeting, many expressed frustration over the eBook prices charged by publishers. They would like to know from Maureen about ALA's initiatives and her perspective on this and other current issues impacting libraries.

Maureen noted that on September 24, ALA released an open letter to the US publishing industry about e-lending. The following day, the Association of American Publishers (AAP) released a statement in response, which may be found here <http://www.publishers.org/press/81/>

In this statement, AAP announced it would host an event on September 27, welcoming Maureen and providing her with a platform to speak to members of the publishing community. Maureen said the event included representatives from fifteen independent publishers. There were about 70 attending, as well as an additional 30 who participated via telephone conference. Maureen provided the opening remarks and spoke of ALA's serious concerns for the communities libraries serve.

The responses she received indicated that publishers were aware of the problem. Several challenging statements were also made, as if libraries were asking for the same price for eBooks and actual books. A representative from Wiley publishers said they were constrained, and most of the publishers said the same. Maureen then described some developments which happened since the meeting.

Maureen said ALA's goals are to keep the lines of communication open with publishers, reach out to the public with information, and engage authors in this issue.

It seems to be publishing business leaders who don't understand the issue. They are not as connected to, or understand libraries as well as others in the publishing industry. Profits are the single most important aspect to them. They feel they will lose revenue via sharing and are unwilling to let content out of their hands.

In a discussion, the following suggestions and comments were made:

- It would be beneficial for ALA to address this issue in some way at its annual conference.
- Select and educate elected leaders to champion issues concerning digital content.
- Create a taskforce to focus on messaging and create a factual paper to share.
- Provide a message to share during visits with legislators on National Library Day.
- Actual examples which show the impacts will be necessary to convey these issues.
- Users are angry at us and then baffled when we try to explain the issues. Inform patrons why we can't buy what they want and encourage them to contact publishers.
- Publishers delaying our access for six months to new titles degrades library effectiveness and quality overall. It makes libraries less relevant and unable to meet user's needs. Library "super users" will leave if they can't get the materials they want.
- If our current mode is keeping communication open and not turning adversarial, when does this change? If a corporation is a person, then what are we? When do we claim discrimination?
- We are more likely to win a public information campaign than a legal fight, which could be tied up for years. Publishers have more resources than the library community.
- We want to be unified in our message.
- Early adapters are one thing, but publishers need to address the larger population. Who has access and who doesn't? This question is important to legislators.
- MLA could be a leader in customizing issues for its elected officials, in harmony with ALA.

- The current Congress is interested in intellectual property issues.
- Libraries are at risk of having less ownership of material, threatening access.
- MLA should take advantage of the fact that Maureen is the current ALA President and she is from Maryland.

The discussion turned to intellectual property in general. This included threatening letters from Getty Images, claiming that images shown on web pages are owned by them. Apparently, the success of Getty Images has spawned a whole industry of "ambulance chasers" who find this an easy target for extortion.

Mary thanked Maureen and Lynne and invited them to Maryland Library Day in Annapolis on February 13, 2013. In addition, she invited Maureen to accept the official proclamation for Maryland Library Day at the State House and to formally address guests at the evening reception.

Maureen thanked Mary and the panel and then spoke a bit more about the importance of advocacy, community engagement and the roles libraries play.

State Report – Potential Library Legislation

Current legislative focuses are:

Capital Grant Funding Formula Revision

Mary said the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrator (MAPLA) met with representatives from the law firm of Alexander and Cleaver to focus on legislative issues for the coming year. Together they are moving ahead with a new bill to change the formula for next year's Maryland Library Capital Grant Program, based on concerns raised by the legislature last year. Alexander and Cleaver will provide a legislative briefing on Maryland Library Day in Annapolis on February 13, 2013.

Library Road Signs Restoration Project

Mary reported that this project will not go forward via legislation. Instead we will ask legislators to reach out to state highway officials and ask them to reconsider their stance on this issue. We were rebuffed in our own attempt, but the recent designation of libraries as an essential service should encourage legislators to speak for us on this issue.

Mary asked Jay if he was aware of any legislative news affecting schools. Jay said that a task force focusing on digital content will begin meeting next Thursday, and he will report on results.

Chuck asked if revenue from legalized slots and gaming, promoted as a funding source for schools, could also help fund libraries.

This led to a discussion in which the following ideas were shared:

- If the current election referendum fails, there will be another proposition to bring it up again. Perhaps that would be the time to try to insert library funding into the argument.
- If it passes, some counties where parlors are located, such as Anne Arundel, will benefit.
- Cecil County received some gambling revenue for a capital project as recommended by a community committee. Good relationships with these groups matter. As they develop their grant criteria, try to insert libraries into the process for a capital project such as a new roof, or outreach projects such as Summer Reading Club.
- Slots also pay for the redevelopment of local areas that include libraries.
- We should watch to see what passes, asks questions and get feedback from leaders.
- Libraries should be cautious about becoming dependant on gambling funds, which rise and fall. Ohio public libraries suffered from this. Whatever we do, if it becomes a revenue source, let us not get into the position where this is where e get all our support. Capital funding, which is limited to specific projects, might be the best way to proceed. We should discuss this potential with Alexander and Cleaver.

DLDS

Irene asked to be kept in the loop on any developments concerning library signage on state roads.

DLDS has been conducting interviews for a public libraries branch chief and the interview committee's decision will be made next week. It was a great interview panel which included Sharan, Jay, Parker Hamilton and Ann Smith.

DLDS is doing what it must concerning issues related to IMLS and LSTA funding. This is a long time problem and they must continually say the same thing over and over to different people who don't understand the issues. Information in response to an audit report is being sent.

MLA President

Lynn thanked Margaret for gathering information on state roads and library signage. She also thanked both Margaret and Valerie for their work in preparing for Maryland Library Day 2013.

MLA will be educating its constituency on the topic of eBook availability with programs and workshops. Working with the ALA office to develop a proactive model on this issue is a priority.

MLA Executive Director

Maryland Library Day 2013

Margaret reported that Valerie's mailing campaign raised \$3,300 toward the Legislative Reception for Maryland Library Day to be held on February 13, 2013. Biddle Street is once again the caterer and will provide an edible martini for guests, which should be a crowd pleaser. MLA coffee will be provided as gifts and 350 packets have been ordered. More large white pins will also be ordered.

Jim reminded all that the "off-duty" gathering place will be the Galway Bay Irish Pub on Maryland Avenue.

The Delaware Library Association had indicated that they wish to partner with MLA again for the annual conference in 2014.

In light of the poor economy, MLA decided last year not to send holiday cards to members of General Assembly, but only to library trustees. After discussion, a decision was made to return to sending cards out to all.

MLA will host a visit from a Pratt Library bookmobile as part of a neighborhood stop on November 13.

Other

The 2012 Annual Meeting Maryland Library Trustees and Citizens for Maryland Libraries will be held tomorrow, Saturday, November 3, 2012, from 10:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m., at the new Waldorf West Branch of Charles County Public Library.

The meeting concluded at 11:30 a.m. There will be no meeting in December and the next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 4, 2013.

Respectfully submitted, Donna L. Denny, Executive Assistant, AACPL.