

0Minutes
MLA Legislative Advisory Panel
February 1, 2013
Anne Arundel County Public Library Headquarters
Annapolis, MD 21401

Attending: Mary Baykan (Chair), Joanie Bellistri, Alan Bogage, Kay Bowman, Margaret Carty, Denise Davis, Natalie Edington, Ann Gilligan, Sharan Marshall, Irene Padilla, Mary Somers, Chuck Steadman, Lynn Wheeler, Carrie Wilson-Plymire and Evelyn Tchiyuka. Donna Denny was the recording secretary.

Mary Baykan thanked Mary Hastler for chairing the January 4 meeting.

The meeting began at 11:00 a.m. due to inclement weather and some miscommunication.

Minutes

Lynn moved to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2013 meeting. Carrie seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as amended.

Federal Legislation

Natalie reported the following:

- ALA's Midwinter Conference in Seattle, WA, January 25-29, ended earlier this week.
- ALA's January 17th webinar on the *113th Congress and the Library Community* provides information on how the fiscal cliff may impact libraries and what individuals can do about it. See video at: <http://bit.ly/10O27co>
- Legislative visits are being planned for Tuesday May 7, 2013, which is the first day of the National Library Legislative event. This will enable participants to make it to the MLA Conference in Ocean City which begins on May 8.
- Joanie noted that the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) will conduct their legislative visits in Washington, D.C. on April 18.

State Report

Capital Grant Funding Formula Revision - HB 685 Libraries - County Library Capital Project Grant - Wealth-Based Cost Share

Mary reported that our bill to change the capital funding formula dropped in the House, and the Senate version will follow soon. The firm Alexander and Cleaver was most successful in getting sponsors for the bill on the house side. We have a great champion in Delegate Melanie Griffith on the House Appropriations Committee. She is lead sponsor and really went out of her way to get signatures for the bill. The Government Affairs Committee will be

working with her to develop talking points for the hearing when it comes. Mary asked the directors to please do their part to stress the importance of this bill and capital grant funding with their delegates and senators. We will need to have testimony from our library systems supporting this bill, especially those counties that will see a reduced match. If you have ever had to reject an award because your county couldn't come up with the match, we especially want to hear from you once we get a hearing date.

Delegate Griffith indicated she would also be interested in getting our per capita funding increased next year and will be happy to sponsor a bill. She specifically remembers our cooperation with the Budget and the Appropriations Committee in past years when the times were so tough.

Library Road Signs – Restoration Project

Mary learned via Hannah that there was a question about exactly what type of signage is wanted. This was clearly spelled out in the request letter, but a visit was paid to clarify. Denise was curious as to why they would be confused, since she once found the sign in the state's online manual. Later, Denise found could not access the link without a password. The effort to restore library road signs will continue.

Union Activity

The Howard County Delegation approved a bill on January 30 that would offer eligible employees with the Howard County Library System an opportunity to form a union even though the library system's Board of Trustees took a neutral stance on the bill. The bill, which was submitted by the Howard County Delegation Chairs and the County Executive still must be approved by the General Assembly.

A discussion ensued. The Panel will continue to monitor this issue.

Capital and Operating Budgets, plus the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA)

Mary urged everyone to take the time to review both of the state's capital and operating budgets, including the BRFA, to see what impacts they may have on either your community or your library system.

The good news is the BRFA is only six pages this year, so there is little in the way of laws being changed in order to cut or transfer spending to help balance the budget. Libraries are not mentioned in the BRFA at all.

However, we received less than 50% of our capital grant money. Some believe there will be an attempt on the part of the capital budget office to permanently try to cut back the grant, using the excuse that there is not enough demand being shown (projects being approved) to justify tying up \$5 million every year. We will have a fight on our hands to keep this money. The focus of Maryland Library Day in Annapolis on the 13th will be to visit our delegations and demonstrate how important it is to retain the grant funding at the \$5 million level. Mary added that talking points will be shortly developed on this issue and if anyone has any thoughts on specific talking points please pass them along to her.

The hearing on our capital grant funding program will be March 15, by the House Appropriations Committee. On March 21, it will be in the Senate's Budget and Tax Committee. They may not take testimony, but Irene invited Dr. Lowery, the State Superintendent, to join the department's presentation on the capital grants. We are mandated for \$5 million, but only \$2.3 was provided in this year's budget with the rationale that this was the sum total of the approved grants with the old formula of a 50/50 match. DLDS and MAPLA had hoped for an alternative scenario wherein if the bill had passed, the entire \$5 million could be used. The Governor chose to take the lower number. However, we feel optimistic about next year.

We must continue to remain vigilant against the argument that it is not needed. Those who put in a funding request did not put in for more because it could not be matched. Next year, we must make sure our projects come in. Counties are delaying a year or two because of the recession. We need to protect this money and the counties need to protect it as well. This will be among our talking points on Maryland Library Day.

We will also advocate for the state to spend \$1.2 million for renovation of the State Library Resource Center (SLRC). These funds were approved and passed 15-17 years ago, but continued to be pushed out of budget for many years, resulting in cost increases. It is finally in the capital budget now, and for multiple years going forward.

It was noted that the state continues to try to get its *State Center* project underway in Baltimore, at a cost of \$1.5 Billion.

Mary noted that the state library formula aid is much less predictable than it used to be. The Panel determined that it needs to examine this. MAPLA may invite a presentation on the formula from MSDE.

Mary added that besides balancing the budget, other state issues include:

- Launching health programs and determining how they will pay for it, and what kind of network they will set up to help people. Libraries may play some role here as a communication source.
- A new gas tax will be introduced to benefit the transportation fund. Look for rural counties to fight this because they do not use mass transportation. The transportation fund has been raided many times in the past. The tax may end up being used for roads only.
- Wind farm legislation will be reintroduced, although it has failed two years in a row.
- Fracking will be pushed by northern counties such as Garrett who are near the shale band of Pennsylvania. Other counties further south will be against it. A compromise may be brokered.
- A bill to raise the minimum wage in Maryland may arise. One argument against it will be that it could increase unemployment due to stress on small businesses.

Maryland Library Day, Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Mary reviewed the agenda for the day. She noted the addition of LLAM's Lunch and Learn program. Catherine McGuire, Outreach Librarian at the Maryland State Law Library and Pamela Craig, Instruction/Reference Librarian at the Library of Congress, will provide a refresher course on Maryland Legislative History and orientation on the new features and search techniques for Congress.gov, the successor to THOMAS.

The Panel decided to provide a *virtual* Maryland Library Day via Capwiz.

There were no reports from DLDS or the MLA President.

MLA Executive Director

Margaret reported the following:

- ALA's Washington office apologized for moving the date of National Library Legislative Day and creating a calendar conflict with MLA's Annual Conference. They have a new staff person who was unaware of this issue.
- The program for the *2013 Joint Library Conference of the Maryland Library Association and the Delaware Library Association* was mailed out yesterday. The annual conference will be held May 8-10, at the Clarion Resort Hotel, Ocean City, Maryland. Mr. Lee Rainie, from the Pew Research Center, will be the keynote speaker. Be sure to be at the conference on Wednesday at noon, so you don't miss hearing him. He will discuss Pew's *Internet and American Life Project*, about the changing world of reading and the changing role of libraries in their communities.
- Read Across Maryland will kick off on March 1.
- Legislative bills related to the Freedom of Information Act are being dropped in several states and the Panel is advised to stay aware of developments in this area.

The meeting ended at 12:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Friday, March 1, 2013. On that day, AACPL Headquarters will be undergoing recarpeting, so the meeting will be held in Meeting Room A of AACPL's West County Area Branch, 1325 Annapolis Road, Odenton,

Respectfully submitted, Donna Denny, Executive Assistant, AACPL.