

Illinois Library Association  
Public Policy Committee Meeting Minutes  
August 30, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Sam Adams-Lanham at 1:01 p.m.

**Attendance**

***Voting Members***

**Present:** Sam Adams-Lanham, Brian Chase, Monica Dombrowski, Ryan Livergood, Rebecca Malinowski, Dee Anna Phares, Donna Schaal, Kyla Waltermire, Catherine Yanikoski

**Absent:** Melissa Gardner, Daniel Matthews, Nikeda Webb

***Ex Officio Members***

**Present:** Derek Blaida, Deirdre Brennan, Elizabeth Clarage, Veronica De Fazio, Nanette Donohue, Diane Foote, Jeanne Hamilton, Lou Ann Jacobs, Heather Jagman, Betsy Mahoney, Greg McCormick, Ellen Popit, Magan Szwarek

**Absent:** Suzanne Arist, Patrick Molloy

**Guests Present**

Troy Brown, Dennis Danowski, Monica Harris, Tina Hubert, Jim Kregor, Cyndi Robinson, Aaron Skog, Mary Witt

**Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the July 14, 2021 meeting were approved unanimously.

**Public Policy Principles**

The Public Policy Principles currently published on the ILA site are a bit dated. Suzanne Arist and Betsy Mahoney reviewed the revised Intellectual Freedom section and confirmed the language can stand as it is. There is flexibility within the language. Dates of revision and review, and by whom, should be included when publishing. No additional questions or discussion.

Monica Dombrowski moved to approve the updated Public Policy Principles as presented, seconded by Dee Anna Phares. Motion carried.

**Public Policy Handbook**

The Public Policy Handbook codifies how the Public Policy Committee operates. The ranked choice system of voting is employed to identify the order in which proposals are recommended to ILA's Executive Board.

Catherine Yanikoski moved to approve the updated Public Policy Handbook as presented, seconded by Donna Schaal. Motion carried.

## **Federal Update**

Diane Foote reported that ILA has communicated all current details regarding both the Build America's Libraries Act and the American Rescue Plan Act.

## **State update**

Derek Blaida reported there is no update on the state budget or redistricting.

Diane Foote reported that ILA wholeheartedly supports the Diversity in Literature bill, and it is a priority to ensure the bill is implemented as initially intended. It is important to proactively monitor this bill and assess any proposed changes in language.

## **Legislative Proposals**

### **1) Broadband (Budgetary)**

Troy Brown of IHLS provided background regarding ICN and its potential to better serve public libraries. State CMS absorbed ICN and now provides public K-12 schools with free internet at speeds of at least 1 gigabit per second. Troy believes public libraries should also be eligible for this program. ICN does not install fiber to end users, so other partners would be involved. Funding would be required.

### **2) Cards for <18**

Deirdre Brennan of RAILS discussed waiving fees for all unserved residents under 18. This is not a mandate, but rather an optional expansion of the Cards for Kids Act. This same topic was discussed by PPC previously. Senator Laura Murphy pledged to file this legislation in January. Deirdre acknowledged there is some uncertainty regarding potential costs for libraries surrounded by unserved residents, but the focus should be on doing all we can to expand access – especially to children. Gail Borden Public Library adds unserved residents who request a card to the tax bill immediately. Greg McCormick confirmed that non-residents do not count toward per capita totals. Diane Foote reiterated this should not be a mandate, thus providing choice for local libraries.

### **3) E-book pricing**

Ryan Livergood shared his concerns regarding what libraries have had to deal with to provide e-books. He referenced the recent bill in Maryland that ensures public libraries have the right to license and lend e-books. Ryan proposes similar legislation in Illinois to require publishers to offer e-books and digital audiobooks to libraries at reasonable terms, and to allow libraries more control over the e-book environment. Opposition from publishers is expected. Similar legislation is being pursued in New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. The expense of, and long waiting lists for, e-books were mentioned as motivators for a better model.

### **4) ISL Databases (Budgetary)**

Deirdre Brennan proposed \$2.5-\$5 million annually to purchase a suite of databases, to be determined via RFP, for Illinois libraries. There is bipartisan support to establish a task force to

explore this initiative. Funding would come out of the Illinois State Library budget. Legislators may be hesitant to fund new programs with continuing appropriations, but Deirdre indicated initial feedback from legislators is positive. Colorado is the only other state that does not negotiate databases state-wide.

**5) Levies & GF**

Donna Schaal shared her desire for local libraries to have greater flexibility in optimizing use of levy dollars. Funds are sometimes too restrictive regarding allowable expenditures, which negatively impacts the ability of libraries to best respond to changing conditions. The .15% cap for the general corporate account is her main concern, due to it being based on EAV. Areas with a stagnant EAV will see very little increase in this levy, though other levies may be overfunded for their intended purposes. This proposed change is technical, and does not require new funding.

**6) Mergers**

Deirdre Brennan proposed eliminating barriers for two public library entities who wish to merge and/or form a district. This proposal would eliminate the need for one of the library entities to be a district, and it would do away with the requirement that the two entities be contiguous – thus allowing annexation of unserved territory existing between the entities. Residents and boards would have the voting authority to merge library entities.

**7) OMA Training**

Sam Adams-Lanham proposed that libraries be included on the list of public bodies who can satisfy the Open Meetings Act training via an alternative to the PAC training, which has been inaccessible for months due to a hack of the PAC site.

The next PPC meeting will take place on October 4, 2021.

Sam Adams-Lanham adjourned the meeting at 3:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Chase