

**MINUTES
ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MARCH 16, 2009**

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Sara Jane Lowry, Cynthia Richey, Joy Gaetano, Brad Fish, Shannon Debes, and (via teleconference) Diane Yates.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: J. Terrence Farrell and Shawn Flaherty

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Marilyn Jenkins, Carolyn Marks, Kathy Robinson, Connie Galbraith, Carolyn Toth, JoEllen Kenney, Kelley Beeson, Kimberley Hrivnak.

6:05 P.M. Call to order – Sara Jane Lowry

A. Determination of Quorum – Quorum established.

B. **Public Comments** – Carolyn Toth, Sewickley Public Library, made a statement to the Board regarding the effect the proposed RAD funding formula would have on her library. Cynthia Richey, Mt. Lebanon Public Library, made a statement from Mt. Lebanon Board members about the effect the proposed ACLA formula for RAD funds would have on many member libraries and the importance of leveraging local government income. Both statements are attached to these minutes.

C. **Consent Agenda** – MOTION made by Fish and seconded by Richey to accept the following items on the consent agenda as submitted:
1. February 16 meeting minutes as amended.
2. February Financial Statements
MOTION carried unanimously.

D. **Requests for Additions or Changes to the Agenda** – Jenkins requested that staff member Kelley Beeson's presentation be moved up on the agenda.

E. **Announcements** – None.

Staff Introduction – Kelley Beeson, Youth Services Coordinator for ACLA, gave a brief presentation on her job responsibilities and duties.

Action and Discussion Items

A. **Looking to and Planning for the Future** – Fish gave a presentation to the Board entitled "Economic Realities and New Thinking." He reviewed the current and future economic conditions and the impact on Federal, State and RAD budgets and resulting impact on library funding. He suggested that libraries need to begin thinking in terms of consolidating

services even if operating in a federated system, so as to improve public service in times of tighter budgets. Discussion ensued. It was agreed Fish would make his presentation at the April General Membership meeting. Participants at the meeting would be asked to break into groups for the purpose of brainstorming ideas for library service going forward. A copy of Fish's presentation is attached to these minutes.

B. Formula Discussion – The following are comments regarding the proposed formula and process:

1. JoEllen Kenney from the Formula Committee noted two particular items that the committee is looking at now:
 - a. A reduction in the number of communities eligible for distressed aid
 - b. The inclusion of Local Government Income (LGI) as a formula factor. Models with a 5% and 10% of funds for this factor are being considered.
2. Kenney noted the proposed formula is spreading money more evenly among the County libraries.
3. Lowry asked for clarification on how the original four formula factors were decided upon. Kenney noted that these came from regional discussion, comments on the formula wiki, and discussions at formula meetings. They were then voted on by the member libraries.
4. Fish asked if the 5% or 10% LGI factor is added what is being reduced. Kenney noted that a reduction to the Population and Base funding factors are being used in these new models.
5. Richey noted the committee is looking at what percentage of population of each library designated distressed is actually distressed.
6. Lowry commented that she didn't think a 5% or 10% LGI factor would make a significant difference to those libraries losing money.
7. Gaetano expressed concerns that libraries see the RAD funding as an entitlement rather than a privilege of operation. She noted that funding performance makes more sense and as a minimum suggested that the formula be revisited every few years so as to be responsive to changing circumstances. She suggested a review period for the formula of three to five years be built in.
8. Kenney noted Performance and Programming were considered as factors, but the committee could not come to consensus on how they be measured or a definition of a "program."
9. Richey noted that members of the committee had stated that this formula represents a shift in philosophy, but that this "shift in philosophy" had not been presented to the members. She noted that some committee members and member libraries did not think this to be a constructive development, that leveraging the local government support of public libraries is important.
10. With regard to performance factors, Jenkins suggested that ACLA could begin tracking the same measures proposed by Library Journal, as suggested by Carolyn Toth in her public statement, even if they weren't being utilized in the formula itself. This could

provide valuable benchmarking information for ACLA members. Gaetano noted this would be a helpful “scorecard” step and libraries could use this information in a strategic approach to service improvement.

11. Gaetano and Yates added the Board needed to continue being supportive of the process and thanked the Formula Committee for their work.
12. Yates stated she was strongly supportive of the LGI factor, noting that the original intent of the RAD funding was to supplement local support. She believes it is not in the best interest of service to take away too much funding from the larger libraries. She also believes that reducing the number of libraries receiving distress aid makes sense to concentrate the impact of the funds.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia K. Richey, Acting Secretary