

# URBAN LIBRARY ADMINISTRATORS CONSORTIUM (ULAC)

## MEETING MINUTES

Friday, January 28, 2022, 10:00am

Meeting virtually, via Zoom

Attendees: Sheryl Bass (Durham), Sylvie Brikiatis (Windham), Randy Brough (Laconia), Amanda Cooper (Hampton), Yvette Couser (Merrimack), Natalie Ducharme (Salem), Todd Fabian (Concord), Marti Fiske (Keene), Miriam Johnson (Bedford), Erin Matlin (Londonderry), Linda Pilla (Hudson), Heather Rainier (Hooksett), Marie LeJeune (Rochester), Denise LaFrance (Dover), Betsy Solon (Milford), Eric Stern (Derry), Denise Van Zanten (Manchester)

### 1. CALL TO ORDER - 10:07

2. Treasurer's Report - \$200 memberships received plus .12 interest totals \$4,913.87.

### 3. Association reports

#### a) NHSL/NHAIS – Michael York (“MY”)

- MY thanked everyone for publicizing grants to media outlets and thanking our elected reps about their assistance in securing the grants. He is really happy about the project ideas and is feeling that the impacts on libraries and communities throughout the State will be positive.
- There was a meeting with Representative Kuster last week and one next Monday, with Chris Pappas. The intent is to thank them both for their assistance in acquiring the funds and to apprise them of the project ideas and the effects librarians believe they will have in their communities.
- Jim Weatherbee, senior NHAIS driver, who has logged 1.2 million miles delivering books around the state, is retiring. A proclamation will be read in his honor on Valentine's Day.
- NHSL has hired a new public services librarian, Mary Ann Niles, whose specialty is statistics. She starts in a couple of weeks and is replacing Tim Rohe, who is off to the world of corrections librarianship!

b) NHLA – Denise Van Zanten (Denise VZ) reports that the first officers meeting went well. They are working on Strategic Plan. They are also keeping an eye on HB 1529. There is a hearing on 2/10/21 @ 11:00am at the Legislative Office, Rooms 305-307. Talking points have been shared with NHLTA and will be shared with NHAIS next week.

c) NELA – Denise VZ reports they are currently starting the process to have joint conference with NHLA. Dues are coming in.

d) ALA; PLA – No report.

### 4. Old Business

- Pandemic update – Is everyone still open to the public? Any notable changes over the past month+?

- Everybody is still open.
- Todd Fabian – Went back to masks mandated in the Library. Council decided no masks mandated for City. City Manager had the authority to mandate masks in the library building, so he did.
- Sylvie in Windham is same as Todd. Only building in the Town that has mask mandate. Schools look like they are dropping mandate next week and library probably will, too, but they won't advertise it.
- Heather in Hooksett – masks are mandated.
- Sheryl in Durham changed all signage to more strongly worded “masks requested and please stay home if you are sick” language due to an uptick in patrons visiting with visible signs of illness.

## 5. New Business

- Challenges with increased presence of unhoused at our libraries
  - Denise VZ reports an uptick in trespasses and unacceptable behavior, probably due to weather issues rather than COVID.
  - Todd asked if the group was prohibiting device charging. Denise VZ had to reign in the charging of devices to only allow charging at charging stations. Patrons don't like this, but it seems to have helped with the behavioral problem.
  - Erin reports reaching out to T-Mobile for assistance with providing some charging stations for her library. Hopes to receive them soon.
  - Denise in Dover seeing unprecedented numbers of unhoused individuals due to a warming station opening up in the vicinity. When they are removed from the warming station, they come to the Library. They are creating major problems in the Library. 10 trespasses in the last week!
  - Randy reports unprecedented numbers of trespasses due to unacceptable behaviors.
  - Denise in Dover asked group about NARCAN in Libraries. Most report that it is too cumbersome to manage with unfavorable repercussions. Amanda Cooper in Hampton reports that in her environment NARCAN availability is preferred. Todd Fabian reports that they don't have it.
  - Discussion about security presence in the Libraries: Todd Fabian is considering adding it to next year's budget if the problem persists. Denise VZ reports that they do have security officers that are getting burned out handling so many problems. Randy Brough is considering a security guard for the first time in his career. Marie Lejeune has cameras throughout Library including the elevator and she feels it really helps with the problems there.
  - Denise VZ commented that she didn't want to give the homeless population a bad name. Feels strongly that it is a few bad apples. Marti Fiske commented that it mostly the drug using population that is the problem.
  - Erin inquired of Denise VZ if they had a social worker on staff. Denise VZ said that she worries that having a social worker on staff would burn them out and there are so many overlapping services who are not effectively communicating with each other.

- Dover reports that the Police Department in Dover just hired a social worker that they will now have access to.
  - Marti Fiske is working with social workers from outside organization that use space in the Library to make extra connections with persons in need.
  - Yvette reports that most exhibiting behavior problems in town are doing it elsewhere, but occasionally they do find their way to the Library in Merrimack. She has advised staff about being on the “corridor” and encouraged staff to stay vigilant.
- E-book pricing for public libraries – promoting awareness of the cost challenges
    - Denise VZ addressed an email from David Smolen, Director of the Conway Public Library, directed to NHLA, which asked about a plan to address eBook price gouging by the publishers.
    - Sylvie remarks that patrons ask if they can donate money to improve eBook holdings and fill holds, but there is no easy way to do that. She is seeing more evidence that the public is noticing that there are problems/high holds problems in the system.
    - Linda believes that extra money for eBooks is better spent giving it to the Overdrive purchasers, rather than spending it on Advantage titles.
    - Todd Fabian likes Advantage because it increases the number of copies and increases circulation.
    - Heather Rainier invests in Advantage and Cloud Library but is seeing that patrons prefers Overdrive. Heather would feel better about taking a stand if some of the larger libraries in larger markets were taking a stand.
    - Based on the situation in other states, Denise VZ believes that ULAC should continue to monitor the situation, but take no additional action at this time.
- HB1529
    - Randy mentioned specific representatives who should be engaged in the various communities about this bill. Randy affirmed that NHLA is opposed to HB 1529.
    - Denise VZ is going to send out the talking points about HB 1529 to the ULAC group. (See Attached)
    - Eric in Derry explained a bit of the background. The Taylor Library in Derry scheduled a drag queen storytime that was going to be conducted by a volunteer. The scheduling, cancellation, and relocation to another venue in Derry caused a lot of people to become angered on both sides. A NH House Representative from Derry introduced this legislation, and it is believed to be a result of what occurred at the Taylor Library. (In short, wanting background checks on all volunteers = thinly veiled homophobia, in which drag queens = criminals.)
    - Sylvie Brikiatis made the point that when the average person reads the legislation, it seems as if the intent is to background check long term volunteers to just keep people safe, when the unspoken intent of the legislation is much different.

- Marti Fiske asked the group if anyone had anyone representing their boards at the HB1014 virtual meeting law hearing. Nobody in the group responded affirmatively.
- ARPA Round 2 “roundup” – what exciting projects await us?
  - Eric in Derry is acquiring a Zeutschel Omniscan OS 12002 Advanced Digital Scanner to digitize large portions of their library’s historical collection. They have partnered with the Taylor Library, Derry Museum of History, and First Parish Church to do the same for them! This archival scanner will be a game-changer for access to local history materials in Derry.
  - Marti – Keene is getting 3 OWLs and peripherals. Idea is to expand to allow public to use, increasing access to library programs, particularly for patrons with disabilities and caregiver challenges. Lockers that give patrons access to materials 24/7. The lockers also assist patrons who may have accessibility issues.
  - Erin starting a Library of Things collection and hoopla in Londonderry.
  - Denise in Dover is getting a complete website redesign.
  - Sheryl shared how the libraries in Dover, Durham, Rochester, Rollinsford, and Newmarket collaborated. Their grant enables the collective to engage a marketing company to develop a marketing/communications plan to better promote library services to non-users and the underserved in their communities, through a variety of platforms. They hope to share what they learn with other libraries.
  - Sylvie Brikiatis – Windham purchased Owls & Meeting Pods (Sent picture). They are also installing a Storywalk.
  - Betsy Solon – Milford decided to turn a public access computer area into a Teen Room with all the bells and whistles, within sight of the Circ Desk.
  - Heather – Hooksett is getting Smart Lockers of differing sizes for 24/7 access.
  - Denise VZ – Manchester is updating auditorium A/V equipment.
  - Eric inquired of Michael York whether there would be third round of grant opportunities. MY responded that he doesn’t think so because the window to get the money out is so short. More information is forthcoming about that.
- *Thank you Steve Butzel, and the very best of luck to you in your next adventure!*
  - *The ULAC group would like to recognize Steve Butzel as he transitions to the next stage of his career journey. We all thank you for your years of public service at the Portsmouth Public Library and elsewhere. Thank you, Steve, for your contributions to the group and the profession, your friendship, support and encouragement whenever it was needed! You will be missed.*

## 6. ADJOURNMENT – 11:22AM

*Next meeting: Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am – in-person, in Keene! 😊*

### Talking points regarding House Bill 1529:

- Libraries support background checks on employees and volunteers, many **already** conduct the State Background check, which is fairly streamlined and affordable especially for smaller libraries.
- Moving to the Federal check, which does not cover all 50 states, will delay the timeliness of hiring and planning events that utilize volunteers.
- More burden is being put on those who wish to help NH libraries as volunteers will need to schedule finger printing sessions before they can help our library with **(Fill in the BLANK with an example of volunteer usage for your library)**
- The bill states that volunteers are also to be considered employees for this particular section of the law. Yet volunteers are not considered employees anywhere else in State Law so this statement could lead to other interpretations blurring the legal lines between volunteers and employees.
- The bill is an unfunded mandate with almost a 50% increase in costs for NH libraries as they do their due diligence. Passing the financial burden on to members of our communities who wish to volunteer or be employed by a library will hurt community engagement and limit hiring in an already tight job market.