

# URBAN LIBRARY ADMINISTRATORS CONSORTIUM (ULAC)

## MEETING AGENDA

Friday, August 26, 2022

10:00am – Meeting IN-PERSON, Portsmouth Public Library, Portsmouth, NH

Sheryl Bass (Durham), Sylvie Brikiatis (Windham), Natalie Ducharme (Salem), Christine Friese (Portsmouth), Erin Matlin (Londonderry), Denise LaFrance (Dover), Marie Lejeune (Rochester), Miriam Johnson (Bedford), Heather Ranier (Hooksett), Eric Stern (Derry), Denise Van Zanten (Manchester), Michael York (NHSL)

### 1. CALL TO ORDER – 10:15AM

2. Treasurer's Report – Betsy reported to Eric ahead of the meeting that the current balance is \$6,414.14.

### 3. Association reports

#### • NHSL-

- Michael York reports that it is a slow time at the NHSL, but in they are in the midst of budget planning. COVID has slowed down traffic for genealogical attractions and reference services.
- Busy administering ARPA. The next assignment is the committee work for issuing Moose Plate Grants in September.
  - Christine asked if libraries would benefit from the Moose Plate Grants. She wondered why there was no library plate. Michael said that he has been against giving out a plate for every org/entity who wants one.
  - Libraries have benefited from the grants at about \$65,000.00/year.
  - Towns have become very organized with their records in terms of their applications for the Moose Plate grants.
- The NHSL continues to work hard on NHDB and is always looking to improve the consortium and keep it strong.

- **NHAIS-** NHAIS is working with UNH to digitize all of the Town reports around the State. The materials are heavy with all kinds of valuable info, including genealogy information. Anne Marie Timmons, former journalist, called to ask questions about the project. Michael highlighted the fact that much of the info. that is contained in the Town reports isn't available anywhere else. UNH has been a very good partner. Great way to spend all of the ARPA money, which has been challenging.

- **NHLA-** Bylaw changes for the membership; Annual Conference on Tuesday; joint conference with NELA in October. Going to start working on Mission Statement; and Social media policy. They are conducting the annual financial review; website is up; minutes are posted to the website.

- **NELA-** Conference is October 23-25<sup>th</sup>. Next year's conference is in Springfield, MA.

- **ALA; PLA** – No report

### 4. Old Business

- **Any old business?** – None.

### 5. New Business

- **Loaning chrome books, laptops, and other "big ticket" technology** – discussion of policies and practices.

- Denise asked about policies surrounding loaning out technology.
  - Sylvie, Eric, and Sheryl have policies that involve liability waivers, charging full replacement cost. Will forward policies to Denise.
  - Christine asked about publicizing Library of Things (Realia) items.
    - Erin reports that they use old CD cases to display items. Denise VZ reports that they catalog everything as does Durham.
    - Christine commented that they had a great article in the newspaper that highlighted about 8 libraries and the awesome non-book services that they are offering.
- **Animals in our libraries – dogs, service animals, etc.**
  - Denise VZ says their code of conduct says no animals, but patrons often have animals and won't come in without them. MCL only enforces the policy if an animal is misbehaving.
  - Sylvia says they look the other way until the animals don't "comply" with the Code of Conduct as it applies to humans. 😊
  - Erin – had someone come in from the MA Office of disability services who trained staff on what they could ask patrons, and what they couldn't, in terms of service animals. Was very helpful. Questions you may ask:
    - Is this a service animal?
    - And what is the function of the animal.
    - You can't ask a patron of proof, but if it is violating a code of conduct, they can be asked to leave.
- **Recent book challenges in seacoast area libraries**
  - Sen. Gray who represents District 6 was contacted about books that were LGBTQ+ in nature. Asked to have it but on the agenda at the next City Council meeting. Gray sent the City Manager the list of books being complained about. Coming up at the 8/30 Council meeting. The City attorney drafted an opinion stating that it is not up to the City/Council, the books aren't porn, and it would violate 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment rights to remove the books.
  - The next day a patron called and asked Marie what the Library's position was on censorship. Had three patrons contact her in different ways expressing support.
  - Marie thinks that many adults don't understand that graphic novels aren't for small children.
  - Erin had a comment from a patron who complained about a teen party at the Library. Patron said that the Library encouraging teens to go to a pizza party would encourage them to go to other parties, which would lead to sex trafficking.
  - Sylvie mentioned that making patrons fill out a challenge for each book will dissuade them. Denise told a story about a patron challenge about Playboy Magazine. She passed on some good advice to everyone from Michael York – Don't ever answer a question that wasn't asked. She said her staff handled it well.
  - Denise VZ put up a display about climate change. Rich Gerard, Alderman put it on his FB that the Library was creating propaganda.
  - Sylvie reports that they don't get LGBTQ+ complaints, they get complaints about Black History. Sylvie reports that a patron called the police about a potential terrorist at the Library (really just a middle-eastern student studying) and about a black guy talking on the phone (really just a black guy talking on the phone).
  - Michael shared Joe Dion story. He was the director at Nashua in the 50's. Somebody came in and gathered up a bunch of "communist" books, telling the director that they didn't belong in the library. So Joe put the books on a display and asked other patrons to

reshelve them if they thought the books belonged there. (They did.)

- Collection Development Policies
  - Marie reports that Rochester added language that says that a book can't be challenged again for 5-years after initial challenge.
  - Sheryl asked about the legality of adding language restricting challenges to eligible card holders or residents. Several libraries reported having such language. Eric expressed his belief that such a limitation would be legal, because one has to have "standing" in court to sue. One has to show "injury in fact" to their own legal interests.
  - Christine asked if group had added programming to challenge form or selection/collection policy. Most had done so.
- Denise VZ pointed out that staff members are required to do their job even if it makes them uncomfortable.
- Challenges are opportunities to have difficult conversations about important topics without it getting personal.
- **Other**
  - GMILCS consortium talk. Londonderry is not in, but wants to be in.
  - Erin reports that the Library participated in Londonderry Old Home Days it was a huge success.
  - Marie asked who was in on Koha? Portsmouth, NHSL, & Dover. They are exploring a potential change from Sierra.
  - Christine asked about libraries hours post pandemic. Sylvie commented that there is a lot of staff being annoyed about things. Patrons are snappier, too.
  - Sylvie extended hours on Sunday. Sheryl just added hours back to Wednesday night but will remain closing two hours earlier on Thursdays.
  - Erin asked what interesting things people are doing for staff morale. Coloring contest/ chocolate. Denise at Dover had a staff art show; pumpkin decorating contest. Display of staff baby pictures. Sylvie B. every couple of months have a voluntary staff outing. Manchester had axe throwing; Londonderry has a mobile axe throwing services. Durham had a staff trivia contest.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT – 11:46AM

*Next meeting: Friday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 10am – **Virtual, via Zoom***