ILF Advocacy/Legislative Committee
Meeting Minutes from May 14, 2019

Meeting was held at Indiana Library Federation and via Zoom.


1) Kelly Ehinger opened the meeting at 10:30am.

2) Minutes and clarifications
   a. With motion by Greta Southard and a second by Fonda Owens, approved minutes from April 9.
   b. No questions on items sent in advance.

3) Dept. of Labor Rulemaking – Discussed the pending deadline related minimum salary for exempt staff, given that certain public library directors are paid less than the proposed minimum. Consensus not to file any comments and to support ISL in its provision of information to trustees about requirements, if and when effective.

4) Legislative Wrap-up and Assessment –
   a) Committee shared items to celebrate and what went well. In no particular order, list included:
      i) HEA 1001 funding of INSPIRE and Internet Connectivity – especially with challenge to INSPIRE by certain advocacy groups and when many legislator conversations included dispelling of misinformation and explanations of INSPIRE, school internet policy and filtering.
      ii) HEA1343, library bill - engagement of members and legislators; successful inclusion of guardrails (may need to remind ourselves and members that the first version would have allowed zeroing out the budget and levy and was mandatory binding review).
      iii) Efforts on SB64, criminal background bill – that we were successful in navigating this bill and in advancing reasonable modifications before it eventually died.
      iv) Relationship development – we were successful in meeting with newly elected legislators and key leaders, as well as strengthening relationships with many legislators across all caucuses.
      v) Statehouse Day – The number of appointments, attendees and positive energy at a critical point in the legislative session was outstanding. Lucinda reminded that the number of successful in-office appointments may not be able to be exceeded in the future, as schedules often change.
      vi) Member and supporter engagement – The Advocacy Update engaged people outside the libraries in the work. More members attended Third House sessions and were meeting with or contacting legislators. Need to keep this momentum going forward.
      vii) CQ Roll Call /Grassroots contacts with legislators. Whether library people emailed directly or through our Action Center, the use of CQ product proved effective in the last weeks of session.
      viii) Communications and Zoom meetings on Mondays – We had 30-50+ participate on each Monday virtual meeting with many positive comments about feeling more informed and engaged in advocacy process.
ix) **Bi-partisan legislator support** – We maintained, and even grew, our bi-partisan support of libraries as evident by HB1343 final votes. Discussed how critical it is to avoid any appearance of partisan support or votes.

x) **Successful navigation of sensitive issues with INSPIRE challenge and DQSH challenge and provision of materials to members.** We were successful in managing communications with legislators, stakeholder groups and members and in keeping these out of news media.

b) Committee discussed ways to improve

i) **Messaging and Quick Processing on Responses** – Lucinda and Amy shared that library directors and the Advocacy Committee may work to become comfortable with ambiguity and with emotion over statistical information. During the fast-paced amendment and conference committee process, we need to provide more timely responses and that appeal to hearts. Discussed how this is difficult for information professionals who want to be very thorough in analysis and facts. Amy shared example of how she works with another organization that completes DISC training (personality tests and profiles about communications styles) and encourages leaders to “sell” something to person of opposite communication style. Discussed importance of sales training as similar to advocacy work.

ii) **Acceptance of realities of statehouse work** – Several committee members discussed their disappointment with what they saw in terms of legislators not telling the truth to or about ILF, legislator alliances, etc. and their disbelief that HB1343 could gain such support from legislators who otherwise support libraries. Discussed how legislators can simultaneously support libraries and support additional scrutiny or oversight. Discussed that legislators have relationships with other legislators or stakeholder groups that they may prioritize over relationship with library—especially if library-legislator relationship is not deep. Amy reminded the committee of how HB1343 was different this year because of the addition of influential Rep. Holli Sullivan as a co-author. Need to work on developing deeper relationships with legislators outside of session so that when receiving conflicting information, legislators will be more likely to support libraries.

iii) **More training, training, training** – Discussed how members, not just directors, need advocacy training about legislative process, library law and ways to advocate. Committee discussed different strategies, including videos, best practices (i.e. bringing a board member to meetings), sharing experiences, telling library story succinctly, etc.

iv) **Timing of and types of communications** – Discussed how Friday night Advocacy Updates were viewed as too late to take action. Discussed tradeoffs associated with timing, frequency, delivery method and completeness of information. For example, if ILF sends out incomplete information, then Lucinda receives tens of emails to which she must respond. Amy and Lucinda reminded that they were often working or meeting with committee members on positioning on Fridays...the message often simply wasn’t ready until later on Friday night. Committee members expressed a preference to have the message—even if incomplete—go out at a regular time on Fridays. Add more short videos like the one created for statehouse day.

v) **Need a flow chart of communications** - Some did not like that certain ILF members with legislators on key committees were sometimes receiving communications before Advocacy Committee members or that other people within ILF were copied on certain messages. Committee discussed who receives communications, including internal audiences, PL directors (members or not), ILF members, and external audiences for the Advocacy Updates and Focus. Discussed that it is not clear who is “in the know” —ILF exec and lobbyist, Advocacy Committee, ILF Board, ILF members, PL Directors and Trustees, entire library community or other supporters.

vi) **Better follow up after asks** - ILF should post bulleted items after Monday meetings and follow up with those who take action. Some felt frustrated they did not know what happened after we asked them to take action and did not like waiting until subsequent Friday update.
5) **Planning for Public Library Sustainability Committee**
   a) Committee discussed the board action in authorizing the committee without the funding for the consultants. Ad hoc committee is to begin meeting and bring plan back to the board, including a budget.
   b) Committee discussed how certain members are 1) skeptical that the library community is in crisis, 2) skeptical that we can get to consensus and 3) still have residual feelings about the last attempt around Kernan-Shepard days. Lucinda reminded that more proactive advocacy was the theme she heard on her listening tour starting in 2016 and was a major element of the ILF Strategic Vision adopted 2017. Committee discussed ways to incorporate learnings from prior efforts to make this effort more successful. Committee discussed that it will be impossible to achieve 100% consensus. ILF should be mindful and inclusive of all opinions and also should move forward with a deliberate process and improved communications. Lucinda and Amy discussed how this is a different time, and that attacks on libraries are not going away—especially with competition under property tax caps. Lucinda reminded the committee about trends in population, tax base, economy and technology that threaten long-term library sustainability. Amy reminded committee about recent legislative session and views of libraries held by many legislators. Committee recalled evolution of challenges to townships and learnings shared by IN Township Association.
   c) Discussed how need to focus on training, structures, surveys and being inclusive of various opinions in library community. Committee discussed possible members for the committee and next steps.
   d) Committee discussed the importance of focusing on messaging about return on investment for libraries in local communities. Discussed possible metrics to use in messaging. Discussed desire to review the Library Code in terms of how the Code reflects 21st Century library services. Need to be clear that the committee does not have a specific agenda—especially not about consolidation or mergers—but about ways to make libraries stronger. Goal to find “low hanging fruit” first that builds support (I.e. library card for foster children, reducing burdensome regulations on libraries) and consensus and then to look more holistically toward longer term goals (addressing unserved areas and long-term sustainability in new tax environment, especially if Local Income Tax changes).

6) **Spent only limited time discussing these 2019 activities**
   a) HEA1343 next steps – Lucinda has requested a meeting with DLGF regarding guidance, as has ISL.
   b) Summer online sessions – ILF will continue the virtual exchanges through summer on various topics that grew out of HEA1343, SB64 and related discussions.
   c) Interim Study Committees – Legislative Council meets May 21; Local Income Tax is expected. Committee briefly discussed the various ideas for legislative changes to LIT that arose during session, including decoupling from max levy, addressing the Hamilton County issue, changing the distribution, aligning with new GIS software that drills down to taxpayer’s address for home and place of employment, splitting between county of residence and employment, and various compositions to phase to other structure over multiple years.
   d) Fall Forum – Did not discuss.
   e) Key Relationship Development – ILF is planning several meetings with key stakeholders such as DOE, SBOE, DWD, school associations, AIC, AIM, DLGF, etc.

7) Committee adjourned at 12:30 pm.
## Attendance on 5/14

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Internal Updates for the Advocacy Committee, 2019-5-14

- **Advocacy Updates** are emailed to over 3,000 every Friday. Virtual Updates are offered bi-weekly with strong attendance, participation and positive feedback.

- See [Bill List](#) and [Final Bose Report](#)

- **Enacted state legislation** that directly impacts libraries is described below.
  - [HEA1001, the biennial state budget bill](#), includes funding for Indiana State Library operations, statewide library services, as well as our ILF priorities of **stable funding for INSPIRE, Indiana's virtual library, and internet connectivity**, which helps libraries offer free internet to millions of Hoosiers each year. The budget bill also increases funding for K-12 education.
  - [HEA1214, Construction Managers as Constructors](#), adds public libraries to the list of public agencies in a definition that will help with planned building projects by members.
  - [HEA1343, Libraries](#), provides an elected fiscal body the option to pass a resolution to require binding review over a library budget if the "cash on hand" and "anticipated revenues" exceed 150% of proposed budget. HEA1343 allows a Council to cut the budget or levy by no more than 10% and requires public notice. See detailed summary below. New language was added in the final hours of the session that changed the definition and calculation for the 150% trigger.
  - [HEA1427, Local Government Matters](#), makes several changes related to processes with Department of Local Government Finance, enables changes to the distribution of certified shares, and requires an interim study of Local Income Tax and GIS mapping. Many additions were made to this bill in the final hours, and additional new library language was not included in the final version.
  - Bills died ([SB64](#) and [SB436](#)) related to criminal history check for library employees and volunteers. (ILF will continue to work with members over the summer on sample policies.)

- **Next steps on New Laws**
  - ILF is in regular communications with DLGF about pending guidance on both HEA1427 and HEA 1343. [PL members may add questions here](#), which we will share in late May with DLGF team to help inform the guidance they plan to provide in June.
  - The Legislative Council determines which of the myriad of suggested study committee topics will be assigned and provided resources. Leg Council meets 5/21 at 10am.
  - While SB64 did not pass, ILF will work with public libraries on criminal history check policies.

- **Ongoing Online Sessions in Summer** - Only 5/20 and 6/3 are confirmed with speakers; others are to be discussed.
  - ILF held a session on [Property Tax and Libraries](#) with Tamara Ogle and Larry DeBoer of Purdue on 5/1.
  - Continuing sessions over summer - Proposed
    - 5/20 – Local Income Tax – Understanding LIT, certified shares and prepping for Study Committee (Edra)
    - 6/3 – Capital Improvement Plans – Whether a formal plan or a spreadsheet of planned maintenance project, how to estimate and communicate your facility maintenance needs beyond major building projects (Diane Huerkamp, Kelly Currie and her construction contractor)
    - Date TBD not to conflict with 6/17 ISL session – Criminal History Check Policies – Discuss the range of types of policies and practices, with focus on sample policies, who maintains info, who decides if check is positive, etc. (Ingrid? Or your HR person?)
    - 7/1 – Understanding HEA1343 and next steps (Kelly/Kristi)
    - 7/15 – Communicating your budget – How to communicate your budget beyond the numbers (Kristi?)
    - Either 8/5 or 8/19 - Library Board/Staff Relations (Ingrid)
• **School Library Advocacy** – Prior to 4/11 Board meeting, Lucinda prepared a document outlining specific school library actions taken by ILF since 2017 and ideas for 2019 and beyond. On 4/16, Chad, Leslie, Susie, Lucinda and Diane Rogers met via Zoom to discuss school library advocacy. See attached document.

• On 4/23, the AISLE Advisory Board met and prioritized and made assignments on **advocacy activities for 2019:**
  - presentations in teacher and administrator preparation programs and conferences (Leslie Sutherlin, Kym Kramer, Chad Heck);
  - exploration of **update to the Indiana Administrative Code** which is set to expire and where the requirement for certified school librarian and funding for school library materials is based (ILF lobbyists);
  - Development of **AASL Standards-to-Indiana Standards and Curriculum documents** (Chad Heck and Kathleen Rauth).

• ILF worked with Avon High School and many stakeholders (DOE, DWD, Ivy Tech, IUPUI-SOIC) to develop a **graduation pathway for “Library Information Science”** by the 4/30 application deadline. Graduation pathways are required for incoming freshman to meet academic and employability requirements for graduation.
  - Two-fold goals are 1) to introduce library science as a career option to high school students (esp. for diversity and rural areas) to meet future workforce needs; 2) to elevate libraries to administrators, educators and policymakers, including need for certified school librarians to oversee.
  - We anticipate an iterative process for possible approval, but received strong response to date from DOE. We should know in June. If approved, any school in the state could use it. Main barrier is low wage.

• **ILF Regional Conferences** in April included 2 sessions important to Advocacy Committee:
  1. **Advocacy session** where we discussed the importance of local tax funding to libraries, local relationships to statewide legislative success, as well as topical issues. Received good feedback about bi-weekly Zoom meetings, as well as feedback that information does not filter through libraries to all staff.
  2. **Directors and Managers meetings** where we invited conversation about “what keeps you up at night?” Topics included board issues; talent recruitment and retention largely due to rural location, pay and benefits; unserved areas; decline in circulation and reframing the modern library both for patrons and for staff; HB1343 issues and how best to message internally and externally; discussion about current climate where information (and misinformation) is posted on social media and sensationalized in news media.

• **US Dept. of Labor** issued a **proposed rule for wage/labor for exempt employees**, raising the minimum salary to $35,308 from $23,660 for exempt employees. While not many, there are Indiana Public Library directors who earn less than the proposed minimum for more than 40 hours/week. Options include filing comments of concern and/or providing support to trustees. (Per 2017 stats, 53 of 236 libraries have director paid less than $35K, though many are not full time.)

• **Federal legislation/funding** – On May 8, the House Appropriators Committee approved its FY2020 funding bills, which contained a $25 million increase for IMLS, including $17 million for LSTA, as ALA and advocates requested. The $17 million increase is dedicated to the Grants to States program. The House markup includes a $2 million increase for the Innovative Approaches to Literacy program, a Department of Education program which provides competitive grants to school libraries (no funding in IN). The House mark would bring overall IMLS funding to $267 million, LSTA funding up to $206.3 million, and IAL to $29 million. Outreach to Senate Appropriations has started. **Neither Indiana senator are on Appropriations.**
On April 11, the ILF Board authorized the creation of an ad hoc committee whose charge is to explore and deliver a comprehensive legislative proposal(s) that advances future public library sustainability. “We want to drive the agenda, rather than having it being driven by others.” A budget for the ad hoc committee was discussed. The Board agreed that funds will be available for the committee, but could not agree on an amount without a more detailed description of the process from the ad hoc committee.

**Elements of comprehensive, proactive policy proposals may include:**

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| Reduce barriers to back-office collaboration, contracting and/or merger (though we will be clear that we are not prescribing countywide systems as the answer) | • Libraries have a difficult time recruiting and retaining staff  
• Salaries, benefits and impacts could be enhanced  
• While it is possible to collaborate and merge, it is takes more time and resources than nec. |
| Strengthen the standards                                                            | Libraries are judged by the experiences. A less-than-stellar library can have ripple effects on funds and policy. |
| Respond to concerns expressed by legislators and taxpayers (transparency, duplication of effort, accountability, what else?) | We lose credibility and trust among policymakers when we are not collaborative, responsive or transparent. |
| Eliminate or revise outdated parts of the Indiana Code regarding libraries          | • Unnecessary regulation is costly, taking away resources from library service.  
• The IC definition of Library Services does not match the activities of the modern library. |
| Reach the goal of Service for All with 100% of Hoosiers having access to library service | • Access to a library should be expected  
• This work can elevate school and academic connections. |
| Elevate the role of libraries with policymakers                                    | When policymakers do not understand the modern effective library or the role of the professional librarian, we risk funding and governance for all libraries. |

**Plan Elements and timing:**

1) Do exercises with both Advocacy Cmte and IPLA Advisory Bd in May, start identifying the what it is and what it isn’t.

2) May – June - Begin normalizing the project - Talking with Public Library directors and Board members in in-person and online meetings. Name the project. Identify initial leaders (see prior page), leaving room for growth.

3) Goal of Cmte - Outline a two-phase process for
   a. 2020 session: Identify “low-hanging fruit” like update library services definition, PLAC, reduce barriers to back-office.
   b. 2021 session and beyond: complete more substantive work around service for all, funding and standards.

4) By August meeting – Bring plan for plan to Board of Directors. Allocate resources for 2 possible consultants - one to facilitate the meetings and another to conduct the financial modeling (property tax, LIT and population projections, comparisons with other states).

5) Late September/early October - Host a 1.5 to 2-day retreat for public library leaders that will provide the deep dive into the elements of the possible comprehensive report, data needs, etc. Identify workgroup leaders. Secure buy-in.