ILF Legislative Committee
Meeting Minutes from May 16, 2017

Meeting was held at Indiana Library Federation office, 941 East 86th St, Ste. 260, and via conference call and online meeting.

Attendees in person: Co-chair Jos Holman; members Kelly Ehinger, Kristi Howe, MacKenzie Ledley, Michael McCullough, David Peter, Jake Speer, and Edra Waterman; Contracted Advocates Carolyn Elliott and Matt Long for first part of meeting; and ILF staff Brittany Snow and Lucinda Nord. Attendees by phone included Monica Casanova, Naz Pantaloni, Terry Rheinheimer, Nick Schenkel, Leslie Sutherlin. Absentee included Melody Gault.

1) Co-chair Jos Holman welcomed attendees to room and by phone.

2) Amended minutes from April 4, 2017 were approved, after discussion of shared understanding of last section about ad hoc committee role, with motion by Kelly and second by Kristi.

3) Committee reviewed written and verbal reports:
   a) No questions or comments about Bose reports submitted and distributed through ILF Updates from the Statehouse emailed 4/7, 4/14, 4/25, 5/10
   b) A couple questions about the update from ILF Office.
      i) First, Jos asked how the District conference in Evansville, which was combined with EVPL’s staff day, originated and how it went. Lucinda shared that the D5-7 Cmte previously voted not to hold a conference in 2017. The ILF Board also discussed options for District conferences last October in light of newly adopted principles for ILF professional development and our strategic visioning process. As a result, ILF piloted a few new concepts for District conferences, including half-day event, event combined with Staff day of a large library and ILF office-recruited speakers. Surprisingly, the D5-7 had the highest ratings of all conferences and included higher attendance from non-EVPL library staff from SW IN than prior years.
      ii) Second, Jos asked whether Lucinda expected a name for the advocacy newsletter from the committee today; suggestions not expected today, but are welcome, as newsletter will transition from “updates from the statehouse” to more of an overarching “advocacy” newsletter.
   c) Jake provided a few verbal updates from Indiana State Library.
      i) Jake, Connie Bruder and Wendy Knapp met with Danny Lopez from Gov. Holcomb’s staff about priorities and working together. Mr. Lopez was aware and supportive of library issues, as his mother was a school librarian. Jake looks forward to working with Governor’s staff and other agency directors on collaborative projects.
      ii) Jake thanked ILF and Bose Public Affairs for the additional internet connectivity funds. He also reminded the committee that the budget included an additional $1M through IDOA for the ISL roof and building issues.
iii) Jake further mentioned that he, Lucinda, Kirsten Leonard (PALNI), Jackie Nytes (Indy PL) and David Lewis (IUPUI) met with incoming ALA President Jim Neal last week. Group discussed federal advocacy, trends in libraries and in ALA, as well as staff changes in ALA Chicago and D.C. offices.

iv) The ISL Foundation hired Beth Pearl part-time to help promote the Talking Books program around the state, doing outreach to doctor’s offices and many more.

4) Discussion items

a) Statehouse Legislative Wrap-up with Bose

i) Carolyn and Matt shared that Legislative Council will meet May 25 to determine study committees, likely to include alcohol sales, guns (permitless carry), library consortia, ESSA and big box store tax treatment. Group discussed how in prior years, ILF had been involved in the gun law discussions, but had not necessarily mobilized members with calls to action. There is an understanding that Indiana is largely pro-gun, and that library community works more behind the scenes or waits for opportunity to add an exemption if others (like schools) are pursuing a type of exemption.

ii) Carolyn also shared that there are no fiscal changes for public library funding.

iii) Lucinda had circulated an editorial from the Kokomo Tribune about a new version of Kernan-Shepard government reform effort. Carolyn’s contact with Lt.Gov’s office indicates that it is not a priority for her administration.

iv) Lucinda explained how the ILF office will work on thank you letters for all 150 members of statehouse regarding budget outcomes. She will also work to encourage members to connect with state and federal legislators over the summer, i.e. in summer reading and programs. Nick expressed how much he agreed with this strategy, in that it is helpful to have prompts, tools and templates from the office to do this type of important outreach. MacKenzie also shared a story about how her library had always had Sen. Charbonneau present the awards at the summer reading program. She neglected to do this in the prior year and was called on it by Sen. Charbonneau about how he missed doing it. She offered this up as a good reminder.

v) MacKenzie asked for clarification about the Pre-K funds in the budget, and whether libraries could be a part of it. Lucinda explained that the budgeted funds for Pre-K included $22M total, which was $21M for expanded On My Way pre-K, likely to expand first to some of the 18 counties that were identified before the first year of On My Way. These funds are treated as vouchers for the parents to choose a provider and would not be available to libraries. The $1M of the funding that is dedicated to an “online pre-K” support will go to a vendor (Upstart) that provides outreach and devices to families who agree to work with their children 15 min/day. While many in the pre-K community oppose this “online” approach and favor in-person, credentialed pre-K for social-emotional development, vendors have been courting legislators with promises for online and texting supports for families as a way to meet the academic needs in a lower cost way. Committee discussed how part of our messaging challenge is to help people understand the role that libraries already play in early education.

vi) Committee discussed processes and possible nominees for ILF Legislative Award. Committee discussed processes, timeline and requirements in prior years. Seeing consensus within the committee and allowance for verbal recommendation. With motion from Kristi and second from Nick, Committee voted to recommend that Dr. Tim Brown be awarded the ILF Legislative Award based on his actions and support for library funding in the budget. He has a long history of supporting libraries. The office will handle the communications and logistics, including whether he may be presented the award at Fall Forum, Annual Conference or both. Jos and Nick also wanted to highlight that in their wrap-up Third House session the prior week, Rep. Sharon Negele
purposely commented about the library internet funding. In another venue, Rep. Sally Siegrist also mentioned funding for libraries and schools.

b) Attendees commented on their experience with **Federal advocacy through the National Library Legislative Day**.

i) Edra shared that it was a good day and felt that the connections with members of Congress or their staff were positive. She offered how each person who attended offered something different from Edra, Monica and Terry from public libraries, Jake as State librarian, Robin Crumrin as an academic and Lucinda. She also described how we customized each conversation to their specific committee involvements or interests.

ii) Jake described how, to a person, our federal legislators made it clear that they did not agree with the President’s proposed budget. However, at his COSLA meeting the following day, he heard that ALA members in other states heard comments about the need to make cuts if we want to increase defense budget.

iii) Monica described it as a good day, but suggested that flying out, visiting all offices and flying back in the same day was too much—that she would take 2 days next time.

iv) Lucinda described her view of federal advocacy—that if advocacy is one of our highest priorities, then we need to have a year-round strategy and relationships with DC and district-level staff. (She contrasted this with a few state library associations, which simply defer to ALA and stay out of federal advocacy, partly because the majority of funding is at the state level.)

1) Lucinda discussed the need to customize messages and provide in our own state context—not simply provide the ALA-provided messaging. She will include ways to connect with Congressional District level staff or schedulers for August recess in her communications with ILF members about outreach.

2) Lucinda also shared her perspectives about ALA strategies that could be improved to garner more support (i.e. securing Republicans first on the Dear Appropriator letter in order to provide cover for members in competitive districts). Lucinda explained that ILF’s focus should be relationship development and serving as a trusted resource. She explained how in her former position, legislative staff would reach out to her about bill language and initiatives, and that is her goal for ILF federal advocacy.

3) Terry offered that ALA provides main talking points, but that she has always seen them as a menu from which we pick. However, she and committee members had many suggestions about ways to communicate that this is a departure from the way we have worked in the past and that we need to make the connections for our ILF members, as they may not initially understand without context. Kristi raised the idea that perhaps we should be teaching our ILF members about our federal advocacy focus on relationship-development as they are getting bombarded with calls to action from ALA. Jos asked if that kind of communication could also be coordinated with ILF members and other ALA members from Indiana who are active on ALA committees. Jos observed that if we increase the number of folks who can advocate effectively on the state level, we will also likely increase the number of folks who can advocate on the federal level. Both will increase our chance of success.

4) Jos also observed that there are changes in both ALA positions, which may have residual effects on advocacy.

v) Lucinda further shared what we heard about the **budgeting process** from staff, that we are likely to see flat funding through continued resolutions until about the third year of President Trump’s term. She will continue follow up with staff and continue outreach to sustain momentum past September. Lucinda was also asked to present an ALA Advocacy webinar later this month.

c) **Legislative Fall Forum** – Committee discussed desire to discuss two key questions related to the Fall Forum. 1) **What is the purpose?** It is educational about the advocacy process? Or is it to develop the
policy agenda for the next year? How does this fit in our Strategic Visioning? 2) **Who is the intended audience?** Members and non-members? If the purpose is to shape the policy agenda process, then should non-members be included? Lucinda reiterated what we heard from Districts, in that there is a strong appetite for advocacy training and more engagement in the advocacy process.

i) Committee members offered a **range of observations** about purpose, participants, changes in library directorships, levels of understanding in library issues, desire for outside speakers who have different perspectives, desire to teach how to develop relationships, etc. Several offered specific comments *for and against* making the policy development process *members only*. Proponents cited the importance of membership for engagement. Others saw opportunity for recruiting new ILF members and engaging new directors in the process by including them.

ii) Jos asked about the **fluidity of the Fall Forum**, that it seemed that each Fall Forum stood on its own and reflecting the issues and needs at that moment in time. However, the primary focus has always been for librarians in the state to gather for meaningful discussion about trends and issues. Kristi asked whether it was the difference between a conference and a working meeting, suggestions that perhaps we mirror the 2-year budget cycle, focusing on education one year and policy development on the second. Nick asked if it would be possible to create a personal advocacy program during the day that one would implement in their own library. Lucinda shared that we could offer a series of webinars to lead up to the Fall Forum, and include a little of all.

iii) Reflecting back on the committee’s comments, Lucinda suggested the following **rough outline**, which she will email out for e-mail comment and continuation at the next meeting. She envisions a structured day with facilitated conversations, with some opportunity for free-form input.

1) **Webinars** in advance for those new to Indiana or to advocacy

2) **Update from ILF** - Start the day with what we have heard to date and where we are, as well as what the office has been doing to support local grassroots efforts.

3) **Facilitated conversations at tables**, where we start broadly and then asking what else they want to see and discuss best practices in engagement. Lucinda shared that between the visioning session, feedback session and list developed with ISL, there are a number of **legislative objectives**. We would use the facilitated discussion to **help prioritize and strategize for initial years**, also helping participants understand that each legislative success can build public will toward the more challenging issues.

4) Then, we focus time on each table facilitator helping each member at their table develop their own “**take-home advocacy plan**” for the year. This would be the educational and practical activity.

5) We would communicate clearly who the **target audience is and expectations for the day**.

d) **Strategic Visioning** – Lucinda explained that Jake and Monica are on the Strategic Visioning Steering Committee. The Board has approved vision statements, goals and objectives. Lucinda explained how participants in district conferences find the first two and last two vision statements resonate the most. Feedback to date has affirmed goals around statewide messaging and proactive advocacy. Lucinda asked for committee member comments on the vision, goals and objectives to date, as this key committee will largely be tasked to carry out some of the work.

i) Nick observed that while many members may state that they want ILF to be the **voice for Indiana’s libraries and to be more proactive**, he suggested that as soon as we stick our neck out, some of our own members may find fault. There are **risks to leading**. Jos gave the analogy of how not all ALA members want ALA speaking for their library.
ii) Some committee members expressed concern about the library service for all, but especially about the metrics listed for it. Lucinda shared that we have to be clear that library service for all and universal service/one-card=access to all are very long-term strategies that require difficult conversations and resolutions within our own conflicting values (i.e. service for all vs. home rule). Kelly offered that the metric might be better stated as “increasing # of townships with service” rather than people or counties. Monica described fears of consolidations by smaller libraries, which initiated an extended discussion of mergers, consolidations, and alternative strategies to achieve the same goals while protecting local presence and identity.

iii) Committee members would want the Strategic Visioning Steering Committee to be careful with the metrics, and perhaps revisit some of these, including what is counted, who is the source and the target date for achievement. Jos asked if information from metrics will come from libraries directly, through ILF survey or other source. Committee asked if sources need to be listed in the plan.

iv) David observed that goals and objectives are applicable across types of libraries and will benefit larger library community.

e) Lobby Firm contract – Per the discussion at the prior meeting, the committee discussed the history of the contract with Bose Public Affairs, the ILF budget reality, efforts over the years, different legislative advocates involved over the years, etc. The contract ends 12/31/17, and May would be the month to start an RFP process for next year. Committee discussed the following main ideas:

i) Role of committee – Committee members will provide guidance in this discussion and will be involved through selected member participation in ad hoc committee with board, but that the responsibility of contracting rests with the Board and the Office.

ii) Transition of role for Legislative Advocates – Committee discussed the history of the role of advocates relative to role needed with new leadership and strategic direction. While Bose has done a good job, especially in playing defense with issues and serving as de facto staff for ILF, ILF has new leadership and a new direction. Lucinda described her view of the role of a firm to provide access to decision-makers, to provide a constant presence with decision-makers at events that we would not necessarily attend, to provide ILF inside information for better strategy and to work collaboratively as a team, in addition to direct lobbying. Ideally, the lobbyists should do what they do best (lobbying and behind-the-scenes communications), and ILF office and Legis Cmte will work on increasing awareness and grassroots advocacy. This is a shift from how we and they have worked in the past. The lobby firm may not need to provide certain types of reports or attend every meeting but is critical to elevating ILF’s issues to decision makers.

iii) Scope of Work - Lucinda reminded the committee that she, ILF Presidents, Legislative Committee co-chairs and Carolyn, Matt and one Partner from Bose met in late December for a sort of “re-set” and development of a detailed scope of work and deliverables on the contract for 2017. The prior contract included little specificity except for payments. Since the new scope of work was developed, we have worked better together, where Bose staff lobby and communicate needs to ILF, which generates talking points, tips and outreach for grassroots advocacy with members.

iv) Cost – The current contract is about $56K/year with additional costs reimbursed. This is a significant part of the ILF budget. In Lucinda’s prior work, contracts with lobby firms ranged from $15K - $40K per year, with similar expectations. ILF is paying for certain items through Bose, which it could obtain on its own (i.e. subscription for bill list service and reports). While ILF may maintain the same amount in the budget for lobby firm contract, some felt it is due diligence to consider cost given the budget deficit and other efforts to cut costs.
v) **RFP, RFI or Negotiation** – Committee members discussed their individual preferences on the pros and cons of offering a Request for Proposal to other firms or a Renegotiation with Bose. Below are some of the ideas mentioned, without attribution:

1. **Pros of Staying with Bose** – Because the firm has a long-standing relationship, they remember things that individual ILF members do not. They have been a good representative of libraries. Some individual committee members and library directors have established strong relationships with them. Staying with them is easier than running an RFP or changing firms. Some members may not want ILF to change firms. Bose advocates may be offended if we try to re-negotiate or issue an RFP.

2. **Pros of Renegotiation with Bose** – We are all changing. The meeting in December that generated a detailed scope of work was productive for ILF. If things have improved since that meeting, then perhaps renegotiating both scope and price may be an effective way to maintain the continuity with the same firm but also provide us the skills we need for the strategic direction.

3. **Pros of Request For Proposal** – An full RFP process keeps us all honest. We have an obligation to make sure that we are being fiscally responsible with members’ funds. Issuing an RFP is a part of due diligence and may generate additional interest and expertise; there are other qualified firms. With their history, Bose would be offered a preference, other things being equal. If there were ever for ILF to make a change or open it up, now is the time with the new leadership and strategic visioning process. Some question whether Bose has been effective for school libraries over the course of their contract.

4. **Request for Information** – While not discussed thoroughly, the committee discussed a couple options that could happen simultaneously, including discussion with Bose about a new proposal from them with a possible Request For Information from other firms asking who might be interested and not be conflicted out of working with ILF.

5. **Next Steps** – Jos reiterated that this is a board decision and confirmed that Dr. Peter and board members Edra and Kelly had enough information to make a decision on staying, renegotiation, RFP or something else with Bose. The Legislative Committee will meet again very soon; if needed, email thread may be continued.

f) **Other Business** – Dr. Peter announced that MacKenzie Ledley was affirmed by the board as the appointed co-chair for the Legislative Committee. Members congratulated her.

**Next Meeting Dates:** June 6, 10:30amET at ILF office

Adjournment at 1:40pmET
Updates from the ILF Office sent prior to 5/16/17 meeting

Statehouse Wrap-up
- See prior reports, Legislative Updates and Bose Reports.
- Planning thank you letters and outreach to illustrate internet connectivity

Federal Advocacy
- ALA’s National Library Legislative Day was held May 1-2
  - Robin Crumrin and Terry Rheinheimer attended both days.
  - Edra Waterman, Monica Casanova, Jake Speer and Lucinda Nord attended Hill Day on May 2
  - ILF prepared and delivered packets to all 11 Congressional offices, including letters from Indiana’s libraries, staff and supporters in all districts (ranging from 1 to 7 in a single district)
- Team met with all 11 offices, including...
  - legislative assistants for Reps. Banks and Sen. Young.
  - Drop-in with Visclosky’s staff, as we had to miss our official time with them and just dropped in later when he was not available.
- Each Congressional member shared their support for libraries and their perspectives about how budget will shake out after Sept. Most expressed Congressional lack of support for the President’s proposed budget. We discussed specific issues relevant to their committee membership or passions, as well as ways they may visit libraries in the districts.

Grassroots Advocacy
- Legislative Updates – will evolve this newsletter to Legislative/Policy/Advocacy Update. Welcome new name or suggestions from Committee members.
  - ILF Privacy Policy was approved by board on 4/13 as a part of a package of other policies.
- ALA has updated website to include Engage tools, replacing the CapWiz system. This will be important in federal advocacy this spring and in the future.

Feedback from District Conferences and role for advocacy
- ILF completed 5 District Conferences on D6 on 4/7 (pilot half-day; ILF recruited speakers) – Greensburg – 99 registered; D3 on 4/20 – Kendallville – 116 registered; D5-7 on 4/27 – Evansville (pilot w EVPL Staff Day) – 155 in attendance in AM; 52 in PM; D2 on 5/5 – Peru – 79 registered; D1 on 5/9 – South Bend – 88 registered
- Discussion themes and notes forthcoming soon. Key themes included:
  - Participants may not understand ILF key services, membership, role of ILF in advocacy and difference with ISL.
  - Participants very pleased about ILF openness and transparency, research and analysis, vision, inclusion in important dialogue about future, role in advocacy, opportunities to engage.
  - Participants agree with vision statements and prioritize similarly on communications, cross-sector work and advocacy.
  - Participants express strong desire to maintain affordable, quality conference opportunity within short drive. Some requested advocacy training.