**Minutes of the NJLA Public Policy Committee Meeting**

**– Monroe Public Library-August 5th, 2016**

**I.** Chair Eileen Palmer called the meeting to order at 10:06am at the Monroe Township Public Library

In attendance: Eileen Palmer - LMxAC; Pat Tumulty - NJLA; Chris Carbone - South Brunswick Public Library; Jeanne Marie Ryan –Roselle Public Library; Dave Cubie - West Orange Public Library; Susan Kaplan - Sayreville Public Library; Kathy Schalk-Greene - LibraryLinkNJ; James Lonergan – New Jersey State Library; Mary Chute - New Jersey State Library; Maryann Ralph - Plainsboro Public Library; Jennifer Podolsky - East Brunswick Public Library; Sarah Lester - Maplewood Memorial Library; Leah Wagner - Monroe Township Library; Michael Maziekien - Kenilworth Public Library; Marie Coughlin - BCCLS; Amy Babcock-Landry - Livingston Public Library; and Kristen Matteucci, NJLA Intern.

**II.** The minutes of the July 15th meeting were approved on motion by Amy Babcock-Landry and seconded by Dave Cubie. Two abstained.

**III. Executive Director’s Report/Legislative Update**:

**Johnson legislation:** Senator Weinberg will be sponsoring the Senate version of the Johnson (A1427) legislation. A1427 has been voted out of the Assembly’s State and Local Government committee by a (favorable) vote of 3 to 2, and could be voted on at any time by the full Assembly. Senator Van Drew chairs the Senate committee (Community and Urban Affairs) to which the bill will go on the Senate side.

Maryann Ralph moved to approve the statement on the *The Role of Effective School Library Programs in The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015: A Position Statement from New Jersey Association of School Librarians, New Jersey Association of School Librarians, New Jersey Library Association, and LibraryLinkNJ*. Seconded by Leah Wagner. Motion carried.

**IV. Old Business**

**Construction Bond Bill:** Jeanne Marie Ryan reported that the working group will meet after the committee meeting today. They will discuss implementing an action plan.

**Equitable Library Service:** The committee reviewed the policy on *Sustaining Equitable Public Library Service* (2009) to examine whether it still serves as a helpful guideline and whether modifications are necessary. The group specifically focused on the guidelines for establishing an inter-local services agreement. After discussion, the group decided to craft additional language to call for an open, public process to review inter-local services agreements and to recommend a transition time for libraries whose contracts are not going to be renewed. Eileen Palmer and Amy Babcock-Landry will work on revisions and bring suggested language back next month.

**Barriers to Access:** Eileen polled the leadership from NJLA’s committees and sections about their interest in working together to address this issue. About 20 people are interested in joining the discussion. A group will meet on the afternoon of Sept. 20th at South Brunswick Library (after the NJLA Board Meeting).

**V. New Business:**

**Legislative Platform:** This committee reviews the platform annually, makes changes as needed, and sends recommendations to the board. Eileen would like begin this review now and send information to the board by their October meeting.

Mary Chute spoke about the State Library’s priority to replace infrastructure for JerseyConnectand the importance of the Network line item in the budget. Although they were told that capital money cannot be used for replacing technological infrastructure, they were also told to try that route just in case, which they plan to do. Kathy Schalk-Greene also informed us that continued flat funding is eating away at LibraryLinkNJ’s ability to deliver services. Mary Chute offered to equip the committee with talking points in support of the State Library’s priorities.

The group then engaged in a broader discussion about the need to understand the State Library’s vision, goals, and technology plans for reaching those outcomes. The committee asked for information beyond talking points, as we need to understand and support what we’re “selling” first. The group expressed interest in seeing a statewide IT plan that benefits all public libraries, not just JerseyConnect users, so that everyone feels they are getting something out of the plan and can therefore back the plan. Members expressed that many have recently left JerseyConnect because it has fallen behind technologically and now costs more due to a more competitive market. Questions were raised regarding the need to spend money on upgrading the centralized infrastructure when many libraries find better broadband (gigabit) access for less money elsewhere.

Mary Chute will consider hosting focus groups on what it would take for everyone to get back on board with a state system. She mentioned two possible options - the State Library could either focus on serving those libraries that don’t have good access or that they create a plan that serves the whole state. However, with the latter option, she has concerns about libraries leaving again, which would diminish the strength of the “tide that lifts all boats.”

Everyone acknowledged the importance of this frank discussion and agreed that our response to these questions affects how we approach our legislators - without a united message, we all lose. The possibility of rolling the infrastructure plans/statewide IT plan into the Construction Bond was suggested. Pat Tumulty recommended that we first get information on the State Library’s vision.

A working group will meet to talk about additions, deletions, and priorities for the legislative platform. Chris Carbone, Jeanne Marie Ryan, Pat Tumulty, Susan Kaplan, Kathy Schalk-Greene, Leah Wagner, and Eileen Palmer volunteered to discuss this further.

**2017 NJLA Conference:** Chris Carbone reported that the Conference Committee has decided that proposals for conference programs will be due in November. Eileen asked for ideas for programs in addition to the typical public policy update. Promoting civic engagement and getting people more involved in the political process was suggested as a topic. Leah Wagner will talk to Monroe Council Vice-President Stephen Dalina, about possibly presenting. Kathy

Schalk-Greene will also get information about Every Library’s workshop on crafting an advocacy message.

Amy Babcock-Landry suggested partnering with other committees/sections to encourage advocacy from the ground up, for non-management staff. This program could also be used as a “road show model,” which would travel to various libraries around the state and touch a wider audience. Kathy Schalk-Greene will put Eileen Palmer in touch with the leadership at New Jersey Association of Library Assistants (NJALA), as we may want to partner with them for conference programing, both at the NJLA conference and the NJALA conference.

Understanding library law and library organization were also suggested, along with digital privacy. The State Library may already have some webinars that address the continuum of law, policy, and advocacy.

**Public Policy Forum:** Eileen stated that last year was the first year that we charged for the forum, but that attendance remained high. She asked members to think about the content and layout of the forum for next month’s agenda.

**VI. Intellectual Freedom:** Amy Babcock-Landry will have a new report next month, as the IF subcommittee is meeting later today.

**VII. State Library Update:** James Lonergan reported that only $4,390.81 was raised by the Gross Income Tax Voluntary Donation Checkoff Box which averages out to about $17 per library. The State Library plans to ask legislators if the money can be used as a lump sum to benefit the whole state rather than distribute such a small amount to various libraries. James Lonergan will report back.

**VIII. Other:**

The meeting adjourned at 11:58am on motion by Jeanne Marie Ryan and seconded by Amy Babcock-Landry. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Matteucci

Intern

Reviewed by Jeanne Marie Ryan