Meeting of the Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont
Topic: Programming Overview from VTLib, Staffing and Salary Survey Development with Consultant
Friday, December 16th, 2022, from 9 am to 12 pm
Meeting Minutes

Working Group members present: Maria Avery, Jeannette Bair, Catherine Delneo, Denise Hersey, Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup, Andy Kolovos, Kelly McCagg, Susan O'Connell, Wendy Sharkey, Karen McCalla

VTLIB staff members: April Shaw, Josh Muse, Janette Shaffer, Tom McMurdo, Lauren Kelley, Karen Gravlin, Joy Worland, Jonathan Clark, Tonya Ryals, Lily Talbert

Guests: Barbara Ball

I. Call to Order (9:04 am-9:09 am) [00:00:10]
Catherine Delneo welcomed everyone and called to order at 9:04 am.
Roll Call of Working Group Members.
As a reminder to the public and Working group members, the Working Group website can be found here: https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/projects/working_group/testimony_record
Testimony can be found at:
https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/projects/working_group/testimony_record

II. Public Comment (9:10 am-9:12 am) [00:06:20]
Catherine Delneo called for any public comment. Guest, Barbara Ball noted enthusiasm for the work of The Working Group.

III. Changes to the Agenda (9:12 am-9:13 am) [00:07:40]
Catherine Delneo went over the agenda and called for a change to the agenda to add an agenda item on report writing, if time allows, after the Programming Overview Presentation and before adjournment.

IV. Approval of Minutes (9:13 am-9:15 am) [00:09:09]
Catherine Delneo moved into the next business portion of the meeting, which was the approval of past meeting minutes.
Explanatory document: November 18, 2022 (Draft Minutes)
https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/InitiativesProjects/LibraryWorkingGroup/2022_11_18_WorkingGroupMinutes_Draft.pdf
Motion made by Wendy Sharkey to approve the minutes. Karen McCalla seconded.
Catherine Delneo called for any revisions or changes to the document.
The Working Group voted approval and with all in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

V. Staffing and Salaries Survey Development (9:15 am-11:00 am) [00:12:12]
Assistant State Librarians Thomas McMurdo and Janette Shaffer were welcomed to participate in this agenda item by the working group.

Catherine Delneo, with help of Lucie Fortier at the Vermont Department of Libraries (VTLib), has looked into the cost of salaries and staffing survey for public school, school, and academic libraries and concluded that it would exceed the Working Group's allocated funds ($12,000).

Catherine suggested two possible approaches to the survey in order to keep within the Working Group's allocated funds:
   A. Limit the scope of the staffing and salaries survey to focus solely on Public Libraries
   B. Seek additional funding from other groups or associations with an interest in this survey

Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup moved that the Working Group limit the scope of the staffing and salaries survey to focus solely on public libraries.
Andy Kolovos seconded the motion.
A vote by roll call was taken, 7 affirmative votes served as majority and the motion passed.

Working Group discussion of potential recommendations related to staffing and salaries survey and other surveys:
   • Recommendation that the professional groups (VLA, ASLA, Academics) conduct that the staffing and salaries survey so that school librarian and academic salaries and staffing levels could also be benchmarked. The Staffing and Salaries survey of the Working Group could be implemented by other organizations and the Working Group could include best practices in the recommendation (such as sharing the survey with all institutions regardless of whether the institution belongs to the professional organization.)
   • Recommendation that an annual survey of each private and public school in Vermont, similar to the Public Library Survey (PLS) administered by the Department of Libraries. Questions could include: circulation, resources, holdings, for private/public schools and high level overview of FTE and staffing budgets. Administration of this school library survey could be done by the Department of Libraries or the Agency of Education. Survey should be completed by School Media Specialist/Librarian with access to the relevant information.
   • Recommendation that surveys be regularized, both in format and frequency, by Department of Libraries, other governmental agencies, or organizations that oversee them and that timeframes be included in the wording of the recommendation.
   • Data from various surveys should be easily available to the public in one central location.

A challenge that emerged is the challenge of Working Group recommendations that falling within the purview of different agencies of state government and/or professional associations within the state.

The consensus of the group was that if the survey will be an advocacy tool, that should fall under the professional organizations' jurisdiction. Surveys that are benchmarking tools might more easily fall within the work of state government.

The Working Group then moved to review of a draft Salaries and Staffing Survey intended to benchmark the current staffing compliment and pay of library staff at public libraries in Vermont.

Supporting document:

The group determined that ideally, one survey would be filled out by the library director of each public library in the state. The group discussed the use of an access code to ensure that only one survey was submitted by each library.

The group is hoping for a completion rate similar to the completion rate of the Public Library Survey (PLS) which is administered by the Department of Libraries and has a return rate of roughly 80%.

The goal of the group is to collect factual data and the goal of developing questions that would yield subjective answers.

Jeannette Bair brought up the question of survey compliance, and asked what relationship completing the surveys of the Department of Libraries has with receiving funding from the Department. Tom McMurdo read the 1986 Library State Standards on the relationship of surveys and services. Supporting link: https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/public_libraries

Catherine Delneo confirmed that there is no state of Vermont requirement in the standards that the PLS or SLAA surveys be completed in order to receive funds and that there is no IMLS requirement that the PLS or SLAA survey be completed to receive LSTA Grants to States funds through the Department.

The Working Group discussed the differences in staff position names and language around requirements for positions in libraries as may appear in the survey.
Susan O'Connell suggested some kind of disclaimer that positions may not fit exactly for every library. Jeanette brought up the use of volunteers and the need to capture what roles are being filled in by volunteers (cataloging, website maintenance, technology assistance, recycling, grant writing, development, outreach, programming etc).

Catherine Delneo reiterated the Open Meeting Law compliance when it comes to collaborative documents and the need for individuals to send things directly to Catherine.

Catherine Delneo shared a comment from Adrienne Katz on how many holiday leave libraries get, and if they should break out the different type of leave staff receives. Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup brought up disability and family leave. Susan O'Connell brought up stipends in lieu of unemployment insurance.

VI. Five Minute Break (11:00 am – 11:06 am) [01:57:15]

VII. Future Meeting Topics and Dates (11:08 am-11:13 am) [02:02:22]

Revised Calendar of Future Meetings:
The Working Group discussed adding a special meeting in February or April on the topic of Intellectual Freedom to the Working Group's calendar.
February 17th will be added for a special meeting on Intellectual Freedom.

Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup will be the point person for organizing the agenda of this meeting and will work with the chair to identify speakers, schedule public comment, and build the February 17, 2023 meeting agenda.

- January 27, 2023 – Inclusive services and access, with presentation from Karen Gravlin from Department of Libraries.
- March 24, 2023 – Libraries & social services and Emergency Preparedness
- May 26, 2023 – Library Management, Structure, and Organization
- July 28, 2023 – Survey Findings with Consultant
- September 22, 2023 - Final Recommendations and Report Writing

November 1, 2023 – Report Due to House and Senate Committees on Education

VII. Programming Overview by Dept. of Libraries Staff (11:13 am-11:46 am) [02:09:10]
From the Vermont Department of Libraries: Jonathan Clark, Josh Muse, Janette Shaffer
Supporting presentation:
https://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/InitiativesProjects/LibraryWorkingGroup/ProgrammingPresentation_121622.pdf

The Working Group had the opportunity for questions and comments. Members of the working group thanked the presenters for their efforts in gathering and presenting the information.

Catherine Delneo noted the community building and learning that comes from programming.

VIII. Report Writing (11:46 am-12:17) [02:41:33]
Catherine Delneo brought up two options for sharing the task of report writing:
- Each Working Group member could each be assigned by the Working Group to write a portion of the report on a specific topic
- The Working Group could establish a Report Writing Subcommittee which would operate in compliance with Open Meeting Law (noticed meetings open to the public with agendas and minutes)

Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup liked the idea of a chapter being assigned to one person and suggested that the Working Group develop a consistent template. Christopher also suggested that an example report section be shared with the committee members to serve as a guide.

The idea of engaging a report writer, per the practice of VT Humanities and other bodies was suggested, however the Working Group does not currently have a budget to support engaging a report writer for this group.

Catherine Delneo suggested the following format for each topic:
- Topic overview based on the relevant presentation from the Vermont Department of Libraries (state overview, national context, including statistics),
- Key elements from public comment/testimony heard by the Working Group (including quotations to support the topic overview and recommendations,
- Recommendations of the Working Group

Group consensus was to develop a template and a sample report.

Given the scope of the Working Group's charge and the limited funds and time to support in-depth study, each topic of the report will provide an overview, and will likely not be a deep dive. Recommendations can include areas for further study.

Kelly McCagg asked if the subject of asking for more time has come up, which the group has not.

Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup inquired about how to best utilize the report to advocate for libraries and the recommendations suggested, and to get the correct governing bodies to use it.

Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup suggested that they look at other examples of reports, like from VCRD, (supporting Link: https://www.vtrural.org/reports) and use that a as template for February Working Group Meeting which received support from other members of the Working Group.

Catherine Delneo will ask Working Group members to rank their top three topics they would write about via a poll Catherine Delneo sends out. Responses will be collected and brought back to the Working Group's next meeting.

[End of Part 1 recording – [00:00:00] of part 2 begins here]

Wendy Sharkey suggested subdividing up the template, with different Working Group members doing different pieces of one topic.

Andy Kolovos also supported a manageable template approach.

Catherine Delneo suggested that an in-person meeting in the summertime will be helpful for refining the report once sections are created.

Special Meetings may need to be added to complete the writing given the scope of the study.

Catherine Delneo looped back to agenda item **V. Staffing and Salaries Survey Development**, to ask the group for help with writing the public library job descriptions for the Staffing and Salary Survey. Volunteers for this work are as follows:
- Wendy Sharkey will write the descriptions for the circulation positions and the custodial/facilities positions.
- Kelly McCagg will write the descriptions for the director, supervising librarian, and assistant director positions.
- Jeanette Bair will write the descriptions for the volunteer positions.
- Susan O'Connell will write the descriptions for the children's/youth librarian, adult librarian, and teen librarian positions.

Catherine asked people to share the descriptions back to her via email directly (not cc'ing the group) by January 16th, 2023.

IX. Adjournment (12:18 pm) [00:13:27]

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Kelley, Technical Services Librarian, Vermont Department of Libraries

Please note all time stamps are recorded as: Hours, Minutes and Seconds with annotation as [HH:MM:SS].
The recording can be found at: https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/projects/working_group