

Legislative Committee Minutes - February 2004

Wyoming Library Association
Legislative Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 12, 2004
Laramie County Library

Call to Order: Welcome Vicki Overcast to the committee. Approved Nov. 14 minutes. No additions to agenda.

Present: *Cynthia Twing, Lucie Osborn, Dale Collum, Dail Barbour, Lynette Anderson, Bill Nelson, Cathy Butler, Frances Clymer, Vicki Overcast, Vicki Roth, members.*

Carey Hartmann, WLA President; Lesley Boughton, State Librarian; Tom Jones, Lobbyist; Katie Jones, Legislative Reception Committee Co-Chair.

OLD BUSINESS

Legislative Reception: Katie Jones reported the contract with the Plains is about \$600.00, including hors d'oeuvres. Will have display table for library brochures, flyers, etc. Using lots of volunteers. Tom will bring a microwave.

Discussion of where to park around the Plains for legislators and librarians.

Library Districting: In a January 8, 2004, letter to State Senator Kathryn Sessions, Attorney General Pat Crank said it was his opinion that the mineral industry cannot exempt itself from taxation because it **would create a special class**. Letter sent to ad hoc Education Committee of the Legislative Committee and will become part of the districting presentations to County Library Boards.

Discussion on Draft of Bill:

- The elected Board of Trustees would set the terms of members.
- Cannot establish a special election date - they are held in May, August, & November so "120 days" On page 2 may need to be changed.
- Phrase "approval of Board of Trustees" in appointment of library staff is micro-managing. "Competent librarian" will appoint and administer staff. Board will determine "compensation schedule".
- Each county needs to decide the benefit to their residents. Cathy said a spreadsheet showing the benefits is being developed.
- A provision in the bill is that the county commissioners can still make agreements with the trustees of the special library district to appropriate or contribute "available revenues" to the district. 18-7-209 (c).
- On the question of the number or % of registered voters (or landowners) on a petition to put the issues before the voters, there may be different criteria for getting it on the ballot.
- ***New enabling legislation setting new criteria - we might give it a try. May be an added difficulty in getting the bill passed.***
- With the districts, libraries may not be eligible for Capital Facilities and 1% money.
- Who handles the funds? Taxes are collected at the same time and in the same manner as state and county taxes - they will be dispersed to the Library District Board which manages the funds.
- Tom suggested rearranging page 8, line 9-12 & page 10 line 6 (18-7-211)
- Put back "municipalities" in the bill. We want all potential funds.
- Districts formed along County lines? YES! Should we take it out so a district can cross county lines? Down the road counties may find they run out of money. Possible "unintended consequences" where wealthy area will form and other will be without money.

- Data gathering - Cathy met with Jill Rourke - will do spreadsheet for each county. The value of one mil. What do you consider adequate funding? Jill ask Library Director's for all other information. LD's should be looking at all the same criteria when it comes to adequate funding.
- Dail - Teton County building is encumbered. Take all factors into account.

The draft of the bill will be brought up at Executive Board this afternoon so we'll get direction from them.

(February 1st "Library Journal" article making the case for consolidation - Lucie - covering the duplication of services, etc.)

Schedule for Presentations will be set with each county.

Resolution of support: We're looking for each county's library board of trustees to support the resolution.

- Education Committee will complete presentations to county boards in the next few months.
- Use the next 6 months to gauge support from Boards and take to WLA membership.
- The earliest the bill would go to Legislature is 12 months from now 2-05.

Tom Jones report:

- Two significant bills as far as State Library concerned:
 1. Budget bill - probably a done deal if no amendments so we will get the databases we requested & the shelving for State Library.
 2. Floyd Esquibel's joint resolution to modify the Patriot Act - it has not gone for introduction and may not because there are only a couple of days left. We have a statement on our web page - WLA's resolution.

Tom went through the bills that could affect taxes, public employees, revenue to local governments, workers compensation, and finally.... creation of Fossil County which would create a new county from a portion of Lincoln County.

Donation of Marathon Building in Park County - some discussion.

Lesley Boughton's Report:

- Federal budget passed including LSTA appropriation. \$138,000 is what we will get for the year ending Sept. 30 and for next year.
- May 3 & 4, 2004 is National Library Legislative Day in Wash., D.C. Lesley, Cynthia or Paul will attend.
- US Patriot Act: Senator Craig from Idaho - consistent with WLA's resolution. Probably won't hear from our delegation since it's an election year.

Someone to present Tom's report before reception tonight. Lucie will do it.

Chair Report: (Cynthia's report on the ad hoc Education Committee will be available at the June meeting.)

Speaker and subject for Legislative Luncheon @ 2004 WLA convention - discussion:

- Districting? No, it's too much of a public library issue.
- Panel of legislators - what helps them? Documentation?
- Financial planning & budgets - do we have a state plan? Buck McVeigh of CREG is responsible for projections.

- Lobbying workshop at WLA: Jamie Larue in Douglas County
- "Mary" with Colorado libraries
- Tom & Lucie - advocacy

Reports: Frances doesn't have anything to add to what Tom said. Marathon Building for use by many entities. What's the bigger issue? Donation of buildings by big corporations that wouldn't pay taxes on them, etc. Vicki Overcast represents education on the legislative committee - no report.

Discussion, comments: Lucie wrote a letter of thanks to Kathryn Sessions who asked question of Attorney General about mineral industry exemption for special district taxation. We all signed the card.

- Dail said Rep. Grant Larson is concerned about proliferation of districts in the state.
- Go ahead with what we're doing on establishing special library districts and tackle issues as they emerge.
- Concern expressed about increased taxation if districts pass. Since it is enabling legislation, it's up to each county's voters to determine if it's what they want.

Next meeting: June 3 & 4 in Buffalo.

Submitted by
Vicki Roth