

Legislative Committee Minutes - November 2002

Legislative Committee Meeting
Conference Call
November 14, 2002

Present: Cynthia Twing, Chair; Frances Clymer, Lynette Anderson, Alice Hild Farris, Paul Holland, Dale Collum, Nicole Cormia, Vicki Roth, Jerry Krois and new state library employee Jill Rourke.

Minutes of the Sept. 19 meeting were approved with minor spelling corrections made.

Appointment: Cynthia, who had been Secretary and was now Chair, appointed Vicki to be Secretary.

Old Business: Cynthia reported that at the Director's Retreat, she asked how well the Director's understood the legislative process and if they contacted their legislators during the 2002 legislative session. (The initiative to fund more databases and connect more rural branches failed at the last session.)

The survey results on Grass Roots Lobbying at the Director's Retreat Oct., 2002, were "sad." The message was clear that we had missed the ball on keeping directors informed on what we needed to have them do. We need to use the WLA membership to its fullest to lobby on our issues. One director said she needed information on all aspects of lobbying.

Lynette observed that we "rally" when we have to for specific issues but regular contact with our legislators is necessary so that when a specific issue comes up, the lawmaker knows who we are. Ways to initiate contact include political forums such as in Sweetwater County, or a table in the lobby for candidates as in Campbell County. Develop ideas based on what your county can do.

Suggestions that Directors send a letter to legislators in your district or county both congratulating them on their election or re-election and sending information about WYLD, possibly including the WYLD mini-discs. When do new legislators leave the community to get trained? Soon.

Alice – directors are retiring and we're starting to see the effects of it. We need to initiate an education process for new directors about lobbying.

Suggestion to implement a timetable of steps for directors and the membership when we need a lobbying effort: "this is what you need to do and this is when you need to do it".

Frances – Shouldn't we be developing a checklist towards getting legislation passed with talking points. It needs to be year-round and systematic.

It was observed that this session will be fairly quiet for librarians since there's not much on our agenda from State Library. But it could be a good time to establish a presence with our membership. Jerry Krois cautioned us, however, that the legislative session is not over until it's over. Remember several years ago when a lawmaker proposed charging for library cards? We need to have "white papers" in place with parameters of issues important to us so we are ready to address them when they come up.

Cynthia – should we have an ad hoc committee meet to discuss our positions on issues? Jerry – we could consider a legislative committee retreat in the summer and have things together by October, 2003. For now, Cynthia wants a committee to meet in early December, 2002 before the session begins. Items to discuss: Intellectual Freedom – it's on the website, CIPA, filtering, USA Patriot Act. We need to lobby on & support so the legislators know that these are important to us.

The ad hoc committee members are Cynthia, Alice, Frances and Paul. They decided to e-mail ideas and have another conference call on Thurs., Dec. 5. We'll get together as a full committee when the ad hoc committee has something for us. It was suggested that Cynthia contact Susan Simpson about archives for Intellectual Freedom material to see how WLA has lobbied IF in the past.

Letter of Resignation: Cynthia read a letter from Carol Thomas resigning her position as chair of the Legislative Committee. Cynthia wanted us to know how she became Chair. When Cynthia told WLA President Kay Carlson that Carol resigned, Kay asked Cynthia to take on the position of Chair and Cynthia agreed.

Vice-Chair for Federal issues: Since Jenny Ingram is no longer on the committee, Cynthia asked for volunteers and Paul agreed.

Budget: WLA Executive Board Meeting is in Casper, Nov. 15 and Cynthia needs to submit our budget. Cynthia said there was a “dramatic change” from last year. We showed income from the 2002 reception but also expenses because we had to pay the Hitching Post for food. Since our reception will be at the Plains Hotel and we can bring our own food, she did not budget for the reception this year. She said usually the donations and expenses are a “wash”. The committee agreed.

The National Legislative Day in 2002 - \$660 was spent. Cynthia put \$800 in for 2003.

Copies, mailings, etc. - \$200.

Lobbyist Tom Jones:

2001 – paid \$6,000 – regular session

2002 – paid \$4,800 – budget session

After discussion, Lynette moved to approve an annual contract for Tom Jones for 2003 of \$6,300.

Motion approved.

Cynthia will forward e-mail information to Paul about state chapters of ALA that deal with legislative issues.

Letter: It was suggested that Kay Carlson send a congratulatory letter to Governor-elect Freudenthal with wording about how vital libraries are to a democracy, etc. Does he know about WYLD? Send a packet of WYLD resources. It is preferable that lobbying for library issues comes from the outside, i.e. WLA rather than his staff, i.e. WSL.

Next meeting: We'll meet Jan. 28 in Cheyenne, the day before the reception at the Plains Hotel. We didn't set a meeting time or place. We discussed parking at the Plains. It's not good there but we're hoping for more spaces in the evening. There is a city lot ½ block away. Suggested that we send out maps. Visit the web site at <http://www.theplainshotel.com>

Conference call adjourned at about 3:00.

Submitted by,
Vicki Roth