

Montana State Library Commission
Minutes for January 7, 2003 Teleconference Call
Helena, MT

Attendees:

Commissioners

(Via phone):

Rosie Garvey, David Johnson, Bruce Morton, Al Randall, Linda McCulloch and Ralph Atchley (in person)

Commissioner

Absent:

Gail Staffanson

Staff:

Karen Strege, Jim Hill, Darlene Staffeldt, Barbara Duke, Christie Briggs, Suzy Holt and Allan Cox

Guests:

Debbie Schlesinger, Lois Fitzpatrick, Joe Roberts and Steve Yeakel

Introductions

Karen Strege introduced the people in attendance at the library. Vice Chairperson Al Randall called the meeting to order at 03:30 pm.

Additional Budget Cuts

Strege reported that one of the first actions the legislators took this session was to reduce base budgets to FY00 levels. This action reduces MSL's budget by \$297,796 for FY04 and \$41,943 for FY05. These cuts are in addition to those proposed in the Governor's budget. MSL's budget has now been reduced by 26% in the general fund and 50% in coal severance tax – a total of \$1 million for the biennium.

At the budget hearing on January 9 MSL is required to prioritize potential reductions. Strege said that everything seems to be in a state of chaos and disarray since this action. Strege and program managers met this morning and used the priority list previously adopted by the Commission to recommend further reductions. The recommended cuts include: a staff position in TBL, federation funding from the general fund, the vacant data coordinator position in LDD and a portion of the direct aid to public libraries. The elimination of the volunteer coordinator position in TBL was discussed at an earlier meeting, but Christie Briggs, supervisor of TBL, recommended that the issue needs to be studied before deciding which position to eliminate. The cut to Federation funding would be \$1,000 per library. The cut in direct aid to libraries is about 50% of that budget. Fixed costs would also be reduced accordingly since the four FTE will be laid off. For FY05, we will exceed our reduction goal because of the cuts in personnel. Executive action, when the committee will decide, is scheduled for January 10.

Randall remarked that once again it seems libraries are between a rock and a hard spot and he doesn't see that the Commission has any choices. Strege said she wished she could offer some different alternatives.

Several tax bills have been introduced this session. Any bills that pass that generate additional revenue for the state will probably change what cuts are necessary.

Debbie Schlesinger asked if federal money for maintenance efforts was jeopardized. Strege said that had not been looked at yet, but the maintenance effort claimed is so low that she believes that saving direct aid to public libraries and the funds in interlibrary loan will suffice.

Action Items

Morton moved to accept recommendations for cuts as presented by Strege. Johnson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with regrets.

Strege mentioned again that the Commissioners can help by contacting their local legislators or anyone else who will contact his or her legislator and telling them about the State Library and the services it provides.

Garvey asked about the status of the MOU between NRIS and ITSD. Strege said she had planned to have a conference call regarding that, but she'd like to wait and concentrate on the legislative and budget issues before calling a meeting.

Johnson asked whether the State Library is taking a larger cut than other state agencies. If so, legislators should be told we're ready to do our fair share, but our cuts shouldn't be disproportionate with other agencies. Strege replied that she understands the Art Council cuts to be 25-26%. She will ask Schmitz to work on the figures and try to get a specific number for the Commission.

McCulloch commented that OPI took a 23% cut in general fund in the 2001 regular session and additional cuts during the special session, but she does not know what the totals are at this point. Staffeldt mentioned that proprietary agencies and agencies that have funding sources other than general fund money are not hit as hard as those that rely on general fund.

Strege will keep the Commission updated.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.