

Network Advisory Council (NAC)

Tuesday, August 6, 2019

Montana Wild, Helena, MT

Attendees:

Council Members: Chair Jennie Stapp, Cody Allen, Colet Bartow, Pamela Benjamin, Teressa Keenan for Barry Brown, Sarah McClain, Susie McIntyre, Stacey Moore, Bruce Newell, Kate Peterson, Belinda Potter, Nancy Schmidt, Jodi Smiley.

MSL Staff: Jemma Hazen, Tracy Cook, Suzanne Reymer, Cara Orban, Rebekah Kamp, Amy Marchwick, Keiley McGregor, John Kilgour, Joann Flick, Amelea Kim, Jennifer Birnel.

Chair Stapp called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

Chair Stapp began the meeting by explaining the organizational changes recently implemented by the Montana State Library (MSL). Tracy Cook recently moved into a new position from Library Development Director, which is not being filled due to MSL's reorganization. She has also stepped aside as chair of the NAC; State Librarian Stapp will now serve as chair of the NAC with staff support from Tracy Cook and Cara Orban. Chair Stapp now chairs both the NAC and the Montana Land Information Advisory Council (MLIAC). It makes sense for the State Librarian to chair both councils, as they both advise the State Library Commission (Commission).

The NAC members and staff then introduced themselves.

Chair Stapp explained the goal of the day's retreat, which was primarily to discuss work plans for the coming year. She explained that NAC members will be asked to give their time to help complete certain projects. The State Library and the State Library Commission rely on the NAC and its advice, and there will be a need for NAC members to contribute to certain projects. There will also be an effort to conduct more face-to-face meetings, instead of online meetings, to encourage connection and engagement among NAC members and staff.

Member Newell added that the two advisory councils—MLIAC and NAC—really drive the work of the State Library. He would like to see a sense of urgency on the part of the NAC in its recommendations to the Commission. He would like the NAC to identify a couple of priorities for the State Library to focus on. The Fair Library Access Resolution sharpens the focus of the State Library, and there is a need to understand how that resolution will impact day-to-day operations of libraries and their patrons.

Approval of the Minutes:

No changes were made to the May 8, 2019, meeting minutes. A motion was made by Member Moore and seconded by Member Benjamin to approve the May 8, 2019, minutes, and the motion passed.

Library Development Year in Review:

Tracy Cook led a discussion of the Library Development Division's (LDD) work for the past year and summarized the "Library Development Year in Review" document. She explained that most of the LDD budget was funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). One of the requirements of LSTA funding is to create a five-year plan, and Cook highlighted parts of that plan in the document. She included some end-user comments in the document as a means of measuring what LDD has achieved. The report also included items that were not successful. Cook noted that if certain initiatives fail, it is a sign of innovation. After presenting the report, Cook fielded questions from members of the NAC. Member Allen asked how circulation statistics in the report compare to previous years, and Cara Orban replied that Montana Library2Go has grown about 10% annually. In the last six years, participation in it has approximately doubled. Growth in the Montana Shared Catalog is a little harder to measure. Cook offered to provide some more detailed numbers on changes in circulation. Member Newell asked if the report has been circulated over Wired-MT. It hasn't been, but Chair Stapp and Cook said they certainly can do that.

Chair Stapp then invited MSL staff to share work updates. Jennifer Birnel reported that she has had success recruiting ambassadors for the Montana Memory Project. One of the ambassadors was recently interviewed on a local TV station in Billings. Rebekah Kamp provided an update on the Montana Shared Catalog, which recently onboarded the Lewis and Clark Library in Helena. Jo Flick reported that she has recently completed a pilot project to develop a new pathway for librarian certification and wants to implement it statewide. Amelea Kim updated the NAC on her Supercharged Storytime initiative and other online learning cohorts that she is exploring. Suzanne Reymer informed the group of recent activity with Gigabit Toolkit. She is creating an online survey to see how libraries are using it. She is also working to figure out where there are broadband connectivity issues for libraries and how they can be addressed.

Effectiveness of the NAC:

Tracy Cook then presented a summary of the NAC's work over the past year. Member Newell asked about broadband access in the state and if any legislative interim committees were looking into this issue. Chair Stapp responded that there is some peripheral work being done, but she is unaware of any interim studies dedicated to broadband. Member Newell suggested having a discussion about it with the Commission.

Chair Stapp directed the discussion to the NAC work plan. One main task for the NAC is to prioritize LDD funding, which comes mainly from federal sources (LSTA funds) and the state coal severance tax. The LDD budget is one of the biggest areas where the Commission looks to NAC for guidance. Chair Stapp explained some changes with the LDD budgeting process. MSL wants to back up the timeline for budget planning to allow more time to consider the next fiscal year's budget. The timeline would be similar to the budgeting process for the MLIA Council. The goal would be to have an outline of the next fiscal year's budget by November, refine it as the next fiscal year approaches, and then make budget recommendations to the Commission in May. The goal for today's meeting is to think about work plan priorities and then focus on the budgeting process at November's meeting. As MSL restructures itself, it will also be looking at its budget more holistically. The goal will be to think about how MSL serves all of its stakeholders and communities. NAC will have the ability to offer input into the larger work of the Library. With respect to budgeting, the current fiscal year has seen a slight increase in the coal

severance tax fund, and MSL ended the fiscal year with a slight cash balance. The NAC has continued to focus on interlibrary collaboration. The fair library access resolution is on the agenda for discussion later today. The NAC gave very beneficial input into the resolution, which was valued by the Commission.

Chair Stapp then directed the discussion to the work of the NAC, specifically what has worked well for the NAC, what could be done differently, what lessons have been learned, and so on. There was a lot of feedback and suggestions from the NAC members, summarized as follows:

- Member McIntyre mentioned that she prefers in-person to online meetings.
- Member McIntyre expressed disappointment that a needs assessment for Montana Library2Go was not accomplished last August. It would have been helpful to have that data going into the upcoming RFP process.
- Member Newell posed two questions to the group: Who is missing from the NAC? What hasn't been discussed by the NAC but should have been? Some responses from the group included:
 - Tribal representation would be good to have.
 - Ability for NAC members to send alternates would be helpful.
 - Representation from museums or the MSU Extension might be helpful.
 - Engagement with other state agencies could be helpful.
 - Representation from Departments of Labor and Industry, Commerce, or Transportation might be useful.
 - Chair Stapp mentioned that a challenge to including those other agencies would be to make sure that the work of the NAC is relevant to them. She suggested that a NAC member could potentially serve as a liaison to some of those other entities.
- Member Newell posed the question, "What didn't we do last year that we should have?" He encouraged the NAC to push the Commission with some strong recommendations.
- There was some discussion among the group about ways to raise engagement among the NAC members and clarify their role. Chair Stapp stated that MSL staff have been remiss in taking on work that should be the responsibility of the NAC. NAC members should be closely involved in the work of the State Library. There were concerns among the group about improving the onboarding and mentorship process for new members of the NAC. There was some discussion of how making funding decisions, defining projects, determining library priorities with limited resources, and so forth could heighten engagement among the NAC.
- Economic development is an important topic for libraries to address.
- Some members expressed concerns about not having enough staff time and resources for new projects.
- There is a need to understand how MSL programs are impacting communities and end-users. There is a need for feedback from librarians on the ground.
- Meetings could be made more meaningful by giving members more pointed assignments before the meetings. MSL could consult with special libraries more.
- There is potential for involving the legal community more in library activities.
- At each meeting, there could be an update from each type of library, e.g., large public libraries, school libraries, etc. There needs to be a good method to reach out to the representative groups. More could be done to raise awareness of the NAC so libraries know who is representing them.
- The group discussed communication between the State Library and the NAC and what the Library should be reporting to the NAC, the level of detail reported, etc.

- The NAC used to be very influential and pushed the Commission to implement a lot of big projects. Improving the onboarding process for NAC members would help educate them about the NAC's history.
- It is important to determine the core functions of libraries and maintain them.
- The group discussed centralized resources such as centralized cataloging and how all libraries could benefit from it. There could be a statewide contract for cataloging services. One challenge is that some libraries and librarians may see it as threatening their autonomy.
- The NAC should work on an app for all Montana libraries.

Next Year's Library Development Work Plan:

Chair Stapp directed the discussion to Library Development goals for the next year:

- Montana Shared Catalog (MSC) – MSL staff clarified some of the goals and explained some of the IT products they are exploring. Web accessibility is a major concern when considering these products; Sirsi Dynix has been reevaluating its web accessibility. Cara Orban added that the MSC executive board has been grappling with defining its role and setting a vision. Finally, the group had a thorough discussion of the MSC and Montana Library2Go cost-share structure and the challenges of developing a fair cost-sharing formula.
- Montana Memory Project (MMP) – Jennifer Birnel provided an update on recent MMP projects and the various successes and challenges she has encountered. There is uneven contribution to the MMP from counties across the state, and the seasonal nature of many museums can make outreach difficult. Birnel noted that MMP ambassadors and personal visits to museums have helped the program a lot. Birnel responded to questions from the NAC members about various aspects of MMP.
- E-content – Cara Orban provided an update on the Digital Public Library of America e-book pilot project. A major concern expressed about e-content is ensuring that libraries are getting fair treatment from publishers. There was discussion of the State Library drafting a letter to Macmillan, and Member Newell stated that it should be co-signed by the NAC and the State Library Commission. Orban has been coordinating with other state libraries to ensure consistent terms from publishers.
- Statewide Consulting and Training – Jo Flick provided an update on the Director's Institute scheduled for June 2020 in Great Falls.
- Early Literacy/Lifelong Learning – Amelea Kim provided updates on several programs and projects such as Supercharged Storytime, Ready to Read Rendezvous, etc. She also addressed some of the challenges she's encountered with lending kits and how to best manage the program.
- 2020 Census – Jo Flick explained outreach and training efforts related to the 2020 Census.
- Statewide Consulting and Training – Tracy Cook provided an update on statewide consulting and training initiatives. One goal is to research how libraries are connected to other community organizations and build a network of advocates for libraries across the state. Another main priority is to update the public library standards, particularly to reflect the goals of the Fair Library Access Resolution.
- Internet Access – Suzanne Reymer provided an update on internet access and broadband. She explained a possible mobile hotspot pilot project, and there seemed to be a lot of interest in this among the group.

- Adequate Support – Tracy Cook addressed topics related to statewide consulting and training, including the regional RIPL being hosted by the State Library in the fall, the obstacles to creating library districts, and building relationships with MACo and the League of Cities and Towns.

Lunch Break From 12:37 to 1:20 p.m.

Small Group Work Within the NAC:

Chair Stapp reconvened the meeting and explained that the State Library will be asking for volunteers from the NAC to step in and contribute to the following initiatives:

Civil Discourse/Civic Engagement/Other Related Programming

The NAC had a robust discussion of whether and how libraries should implement some form of civil discourse or civic engagement programming. Some libraries, such as Billings, are already doing this type of programming. Amelea Kim has reached out to Humanities Montana about this type of programming; that organization, and some others, offer training on how to facilitate these types of conversations. Tracy Cook explained that the State Library is seeking direction from the NAC on this topic and is looking for volunteers to help develop an approach. The State Library wants guidance on who the audience for this type of programming would be and what type of change they want to effect. The group discussed the differences between civil discourse and civic engagement, as well as several specific programs, challenges that libraries around the state are facing, and possible ways of addressing these topics. Civic engagement is a traditional topic for libraries to engage with, but civil discourse would be something new. There could be an opportunity to involve the legal community in this type of training, and there was considerable discussion and interest in this among the NAC members. The courts and bar association already offer civics programming. With respect to civics education, OPI is currently revising its social studies standards, and one central theme they are exploring is civics education. Chair Stapp requested volunteers from the NAC to work on this topic, and Member Smiley and Member McClain offered to help.

Economic Development

Chair Stapp introduced the topic and explained that the State Library has budgeted \$10,000 to contract with the economic development community to explore economic development opportunities at libraries. The results of the research will help MSL shape a successful economic development program. Work on this initiative would involve drafting a solicitation for a contractor, reviewing the responses, selecting a contract, evaluating the results from the contractor, and so forth. Volunteers would need to invest their time over the next couple of months and contribute to periodic engagement over the next year. There was some discussion among the NAC members of how this type of research could be used and what its benefits might be. Member Benjamin volunteered to work on this topic.

OCLC and OverDrive RFPs

Cara Orban gave the NAC an overview of the RFI/RFP process. The State Library will be looking to release the RFIs for both the OCLC and OverDrive contracts at the end of August. The new contracts would begin in FY2021. This work group will need to look at library workflows and needs to evaluate these contracts, as well as look at other vendors that may provide similar services. NAC input will be needed to assist with the RFI/RFP processes. Chair Stapp noted that input from all types of libraries will be important; it impacts everyone because of the nature of the shared resources. Chair Stapp asked for volunteers to

help with this project. Member McClain said that someone from the Law Library might be interested. Orban will send out details about the RFI/RFP process so that NAC members can make a more informed decision about volunteering to help. Member Benjamin mentioned that she will get someone from TRAILS to help. The library community will need to be notified that this RFI/RFP process is happening.

Fair Library Access Resolution:

Chair Stapp stated that the Fair Library Access Resolution reflects a vision of service for libraries. Part of the NAC's work needs to address gaps and barriers preventing its achievement. Addressing those issues then becomes the work of the State Library. Some of the issues are very concrete, while others are more philosophical.

The NAC engaged in a discussion of the resolution and how its vision can be achieved. Member Bartow observed that the ideas expressed in the resolution are very powerful. She saw a need to publicize it outside of the library community and see how the wider community responds to it. If the document is going to have life, it needs to be shared outside the library community. Member Newell saw the two big aspects of the resolution as being who is served by libraries and how do we measure how well they are being impacted. Chair Stapp stated that part of the resolution's impact will be in the revision to the public library standards; the resolution will inform the revision of the standards. In that manner, the State Library can effect positive change. It is the role of the State Library to approach a library that is not adhering to the standards. Member Newell expressed a need to get everyone access to shared resources like MSC and address unequal distribution of library services. Chair Stapp observed that the resolution is a measure of how the State Library will evaluate its work.

Member McIntyre addressed the challenge of defining what is a "need" that libraries should be meeting and how the needs of some patrons can conflict with the needs of others. The group had a thorough discussion of how to define and prioritize needs. Chair Stapp stated that the goal is for every library in the state to have access to the content and services they need. Each library has to make individual policy decisions; the State Library needs to provide the resources to help them do that. The goal is to create a level playing field among libraries. After discussion of library needs and how to prioritize them, there was still a question of how to define core library services. Member Newell stated that the goal of the resolution isn't to be prescriptive; it is to make sure that libraries have the resources they need for their patrons to get what they need. The NAC members continued to grapple with the definition of need, how to ensure fair access to resources, and so forth. The language of the resolution is grounded in passages from the Montana Constitution as well as statutes governing libraries. Member Bartow observed that the public library standards, which the Commission has the authority to revise, are now out of alignment with these other sources. There is a lot of value in redefining the public library standards. Member McIntyre inquired about whether the State Library has gathered feedback on the resolution from MACo, the League of Cities and Towns, etc. The State Library did not receive any feedback from these groups in the public comment period.

The NAC members continued to discuss how libraries' needs should be defined and prioritized. Chair Stapp decided to keep this topic on the NAC's agenda for further discussion.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Other Business and Announcements:

Chair Stapp explained that a public library standards task force will be evaluating and rewriting the public library standards. The goal is to present draft standards to the State Library Commission at its February meeting. The standards would be effective for libraries in 2022.

Chair Stapp announced that the next NAC meeting is on November 14, 2019.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 3:27 p.m.

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