

MMLL Director's Report
November 18, 2010

State Aid, FY2010-2011 (Current Year)

The Governor signed State Aid to Libraries bill at the reduced level of \$5,750,000 for the state. However, the legislative Joint Conference Committee included a \$1,500,000 in additional State Aid funds in a supplemental funding bill for education. This bill was enacted into law and signed by the Governor. These additional funds will raise total state aid to \$7,250,000. This is about a 21% increase over the previous year's funding. A new budget has been prepared and will be presented today reflecting the increase. The extra state aid is tied to the amount we received last year and is not directly tied to per capita rates, etc.

Library of Michigan Loses Law Suit, State Aid processing stalled

This issue is explained more fully by the documents in your packet, but briefly here is the outline. Herrick District Library of Holland, Michigan sued the Library of Michigan because a rule(s) promulgated in the new state aid rules effective in October 2009. Under the district library law, district libraries may contract to provide library services. The rules state that contracts for service must be for full service—you cannot have different levels of service for different areas. Holland had such contracts with nearby townships that did not want to pay the full cost of full service.

Herrick filed suit to overturn the rules bases on 3 factors—A. the Library of Michigan lacked authority to write the rules. B. The rules are contrary to law, and C. the rules are unconstitutionally vague.

The judge ruled that the Library of Michigan did in fact lack authority to write rules. It did not consider the other two issues. The State of Michigan is appealing the ruling and has asked for stay of the order pending result of the appeal.

In the mean time, Nancy Robertson said in an email (copy in your file) that they cannot process applications for state aid until a ruling is made by the court of appeals.

Yesterday, the coop directors held a conference call to discuss the matter, since a delay in the 1st 50% of state aid for any prolonged time would be devastating.

Signature page of the Annual Report Causes Stir

The signature page of the Annual Report to the Library of Michigan for State Aid form causes a stir. The signature page asks that by signing the form that you complied with one of the purposes and one of the priorities of the LSTA. While easy to comply with, state aid is not tied to LSTA funds and can be spent in any way by the libraries. Library of Michigan said that these are being collected so they can make the federal auditors happy and written broadly enough that every library in the state can comply.

Library of Michigan Service Area Information Completed

As I mentioned at the last Board meeting in August, the Library of Michigan is requested that we survey all of our members for a list of any changes to the service areas served – new contracts, townships that are pulling out or moving to another library. I completed the survey and have submitted the data to the Library of Michigan. I have not heard anything back.

BTOP Stimulus Grants Approved for Public Computing Centers (Libraries)

An online webinar was hosted for BTOP recipients November 4 (?) and will be available online for some time. It appears that recipients will choose to either get a check or they can have MSU buy whatever they want and ship it to them. More details should follow soon. MMLL has 26 libraries set to receive 178 computers valued at \$178,000.00.

The Annual Audit was completed.

Baird Cotter and Bishop conducted the annual audit and will be presenting the results today.

Michigan Library Association Conference held in Acme, Michigan

The Grand Traverse Resort hosted the MLA conference November 9 – 12. It was well attended by Librarians from all across the state. The resort did their usual great job with the event. The sessions were much better and more interesting, in my opinion than they have been for the past several years.

Most interesting for me was the presentation by the House Fiscal Agent which was at the Summit session on Tuesday, November 9, on the outlook for the Michigan budget and the challenges facing the incoming legislature and governor. The state is facing a \$1.5 billion hole and if Governor Snyder enacts his 6% business income tax to replace the Michigan Business Tax it will result in another 1.5 billion dollar shortfall. So something will have to be done on both the revenue side and the expenditure side.

Performer's Showcase Date & Place Set and Planning is Under way.

MMLL has contracted with Joel Tacy to coordinate and plan the performer's showcase. The Showcase will be held January 13, at the Fox Hill Event Center, Cadillac, MI. This is the same place we had it last year. The morning session will be performers geared to younger children with the afternoon session geared to somewhat older children and youth.

MMLL has Applied for Health Insurance from Priority Health

As provided for in the MMLL manual, MMLL contracted with Priority Health for health insurance for one employee. The employee was set to lose coverage as of December 1, 2010 and will now be covered. We are still looking for dental insurance for the same employee. We may be too small to get group dental insurance, but we are still checking.

Other matters & Miscellaneous

1. Mel Databases Workshop was held on October 21, 2010 at MMLL headquarters.
2. Sheila Goode has been retained to update the webpage and will begin right away to update the webpage. Ms Goode designed the current webpage.

Respectfully submitted by

James W. Lawrence, Director,
Mid-Michigan Library League+++