

OHIO LIBRARY COUNCIL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Special Meeting Via Zoom
April 25, 2025
1:00 P.M.

PRESENT

Kathy Bach, Cincinnati
Monica Baughman, Worthington
Travis Bautz, Middletown
Julianne Bedel, Medina
Sarah Clevidence, Findlay
Kim DeNero-Ackroyd, Cleveland Heights
Mary Ellen Icaza, Canton
Elizabeth Muether, Celina
Bernie Rochford, Akron
Stacey Russell, Zanesville
William Rutger, Avon Lake

ABSENT

Sandra Hedlund Tunnell, Ashland
Robbie Jenkins, Gallipolis

STAFF

Michelle Francis, Executive Director
Jeanine D'Andrea, Director, Membership Services
Angie Jacobsen, Director, Communications
Jay Smith, Director of Government and Legal Services

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Icaza at 1:02 p.m.

FY 2026-2027
STATE BUDGET

Francis noted that not much has changed on the FY 2026-2027 State Budget within the past week as the legislature is still on recess. She thanked the Board for their support. Francis and Smith have had many meetings with various groups and directors across the state. The legislature will be back next week and OLC has started to reach out to certain directors from certain districts to schedule them for testimony in the Senate. There are many conversations with individual legislators that cannot be disclosed or discussed publicly.

Clevidence asked about an article in Gongwer about support from mayors and the Ohio Municipal League (OML). Francis mentioned continuous conversations over the past several weeks with other local government organizations. Some of the individual local mayors have reached out to their local libraries as well.

BOARD LETTER ON
UNIFICATION

Icaza asked for feedback on the draft letter for review. The intent is for the letter to show Board support for OLC's advocacy and a call for unity.

[Discussion]

Bautz shared concerns regarding intellectual freedom and the funding formula. Russell has had conversations with staff and libraries in her area. Librarians are concerned about Intellectual Freedom. They don't feel the time has passed to send the letter. With the Senate going back into session, it might be time to reinforce unification.

Rutger agreed with Russell's comments. Some of the directors expressing concern don't see the day-to-day process.

Bach asked for more clarification of the Intellectual Freedom concerns.

Bautz believes Intellectual Freedom and Funding should be included in the statement. However, he feels including language about a study dismisses some concerns.

Bedel asked about appropriate timing of a study during the state budget process.

Francis noted the last time there was a formal letter sent to the Board was in 2008 from the Franklin-Springboro Public Library. The Middletown Director shared concerns as well. An OLC study was done in 2009. There was some discussion following the great recession in 2009. In 2011, OLC created a taskforce to review local government services and shared services. This was in response to a larger study on consolidation at the state level. There is discussion in that report about the distribution model. Since that time, the distribution model has not come up formally until July 2024. There was nothing formal brought to the Board.

Rochford asked about members that are not happy with OLC's approach.

Clevidence thought Icaza did a great job on letter and appreciated the thoughtful discussion. The original purpose and intent of the letter was to hopefully take some of the burden off OLC staff. If the letter is sent now, would it increase the number of emails? DeNero asked about the letter and timing of distribution.

Bautz shared that concerns have been known since the early 2000's and this is not new. Questions have come from legislators, senators, what do you want instead? They're having some discussions on bringing ideas to the legislature.

Francis noted OLC is part of these discussions and there are lots of conversations taking place.

Clevidence stated she wasn't advocating for ignoring conversation around the formula. She is simply asking if sending any version of the letter would calm the number of emails staff are receiving.

Icaza noted that whatever is put in the letter, it's not going to make everyone happy. Are those concerns better to be held as personal conversations?

It was the sense of the Board to send the letter. Muether and Russell thought the letter was important if OLC staff are comfortable with the timing.

Francis noted if not everyone can get behind the letter as drafted, it would raise more questions.

BEDEL MOVED AND DeNERO-ACKROYD SECONDED TO SEND THE LETTER AS DRAFTED. THE MOTION FAILED WITH 5 YEA VOTES. No letter will be sent at this time. Icaza offered Francis assistance from the Board if needed.

NEXT MEETING

The Board is scheduled to meet in-person at the OLC Office on May 16, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:49 pm.