

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING II, JUNE 25, 2017

PRESENT: Hallie Pritchett (chair), Simon Healey, Bill Sudduth, Kate Tallman, Frank Lester, , Marie Concannon (recorder), Stephen Woods, Sandra MacAninch, Richard Yarnell, Bernadine Abbott Hoduski, Steven Carfan, Samantha Hagar, Kay Cassell, Sinai Wood, Brian Fuller.

Agenda: to go over the results of the survey conducted prior to ALA Annual.

Announcements:

Threat to close USGS libraries, defunding. MAGIRT will be writing a letter of support for USGS libraries and GODORT Legislative could sign on as well. This is moving very quickly.

Gavin Baker is the new contact at the ALA Washington Office, replacing Jessica McGilvray. Yesterday's COL-GIS session ran long and he didn't get to discuss advocacy, but our committee will support a webinar for him to do so in early Fall.

Bill Sudduth says there was given a presentation by the ALA Washington Office called "Federal Library Advocacy: Current Challenges and Resources". Hallie asks him to scan and send it to us.

Hallie says that the committee has been discussing its five year plan, and spoke about John Shuler's aspirational document. We have used it as a launch pad to consider the future of the committee. We sent our survey to GOVDOC-L and to REGIONAL-L for responses. Hallie passed out the results; there were 99 respondents. Hallie asked participants in today's meeting to identify common themes in the responses.

QUESTION #2: WHAT ROLE SHOULD GODORT PLAY WITH REGARD TO ADVOCACY FOR GOVERNMENT INFORMATION?

Common themes: access, advocacy, partnering with Washington Office. People think the committee is anemic with regard to advocacy, to inform members of advocacy and provide a collective voice. Respondents are looking to this committee to provide leadership with advocacy. Yet, with leaders you need followers, you need people to actually do the work, like to send a letter to every member of Congress. GODORT committees besides our own could do a lot more education and advocacy. Are our audience librarians, or do we want to provide advocacy leadership for the generalists (general public?) We all agree - GODORT LEG should be the primary unit that advocates for government information. Bernadine suggests at least monthly communications with Gavin at ALA Washington Office to tell him our priorities. In return, he can tell us about things that suddenly come up that may need someone to do something; for example, to testify before a committee. Bernadine suggests that we can tell

ALA Washington Office that we want to be on hand to provide testimony at congressional hearings.

QUESTION #3: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE GODORT LEGISLATION COMMITTEE DOES? WHAT DO YOU THINK THE COMMITTEE SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT BE DOING?

Common themes: monitor accessibility and other information policies. Freedom to Read foundation monitors issues, GODORT could do something similar. We might send GODORT people to other units to find out what legislation is important to them. Bill Sudduth reports that the current ALA Councilor is very interested in government information. GODORT already has liaisons to other groups. One person said it may be more important to have a representative on ALA's main legislative committee, though our Chair is automatically a member of COL-GIS. Bill says there is nothing stopping people from volunteering to be on other committees. The Committee on Committees makes the assignments. Bernadine suggests that having a GODORT person on the big ALA Leg committee would help, and to ask the ALA president usually works.

Hallie reads out the "dormant" comment. What is the best way to get the word out to people who might want to follow what we do? ALA Connect? GOVDOC-L? How about if GODORT as a whole just uses GOVDOC-L instead of ALA Connect? Maybe we can look at the publicity options and see what makes most sense. Should this committee get its own notification listserv? ACTION ITEM: HALLIE WILL BRING THIS UP TO STEERING COMMITTEE regarding requirements where we are supposed to report.

Another comment: Preaching to the choir.

Another comment: we must get ready for an "onslaught." Now we need a lot more people to monitor proposed regulations, bills, etc. We need volunteers to read the Federal Register because the ALA Washington Office does not do that. Maybe we should actually ask ALA Washington Office what they are doing with the FR. If they truly are not, then maybe we should do that in this committee. The ALA Intellectual Freedom office and the Freedom to Read foundation make a list of legislation to watch. Bernadine recommends telling Washington Office that is what we want them to do.

QUESTION #4: WHAT TYPES OF ADVOCACY OR ISSUES DO YOU THINK THE GODORT LEGISLATION COMMITTEE SHOULD BE LOOKING AT?

Common themes: preservation and access issues, losing the online version of government

information, danger to funding the publication of government information (a budget issue), making government information in formats that are easy for the public to use, GPO funding, free access. Write letter of support from ALA president to the appropriations committee to support funding for GPO and LC. Four or five library associations would go in together on the letter. Hallie says we can bring this up to Gavin.

QUESTION #5: WHAT TYPES OF ADVOCACY HAVE YOU SEEN WORK FOR OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS AT LOCAL, STATE, REGIONAL OR NATIONAL COMMUNITIES OR ORGANIZATIONS?

Common themes: Social media. Some people look at twitter to see what people are saying. Have a group of GODORT people at the ready in case something comes up on Congress and it's in a certain committee. Twitter is a great way for the ALA Washington office to contact the president directly. Have some sort of alert service. Have one place where all the government documents legislative issues are listed. Hallie says there doesn't seem to be a place where we can just post news. Not sure if the Wiki is the best place for that, but she will bring it up to Steering. How about how ALA handles its lobbyist situation? ALA hired Republican lobbyists. Our lobbyists paid other lobbyists to talk to ALA. Data Rescue events. Do we want to have an online event possibly in conjunction with DLC meeting? It's possible to advertise it to a wider audience that way.

Final thoughts?

See how the League of Women Voters does it. ALA could use local librarians who live close to Washington to take the train in. Those who show up frequently are the ones who get the attention. The squeaky wheel gets the attention.

Email from Sarah Erekson about how ALA will reduce the size of the Annual meeting next year, and each round table will have fewer programs. There has been talk of eliminating the Midwinter meeting. One free program, one free discussion group, and then the rest will be proposals that go to a jury, only the best will be chosen.

Next steps: Investigate how to take action on some of the topics raised in the survey. Hallie and Kate are rotating off the committee.