

Minutes  
Oklahoma Department of Libraries  
ODL Board of Directors  
Special Meeting: June 2, 2021  
10:00 a.m.  
Via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/96807599177>  
Meeting ID: 968 0759 9177

Chair Cynthia Vogel called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. and asked for roll call. Board members present: Robert Dace, Lee Denney, Vice Chair Annabeth Robin, Chair Cynthia Vogel, and Melody Kellogg, Secretary. Board members absent: Steve Gray, James Robison, and Mary Shannon.

Guests and staff members present: Joe Ashbaker from the Office of Attorney General, Christine Chen, Natalie Currie, Jan Davis, Holly Hasenfratz, Jolene Poore, incoming board member Ronda Smith, Judy Tirey, Cathy Van Hoy, and Bill Young.

In conformity with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, advance notice of the June 2, 2021 Meeting for Public notice of this meeting, together with the agenda, was posted May 31, 2021 on the Oklahoma Department of Libraries website and in prominent public view on the glass exterior walls of the Allen Wright Memorial Library Building, 200 N.E. 18 Street, Oklahoma City.

There were no public comments.

**Consider Approval of Distribution Plan for American Rescue Plan Funds allotted to Oklahoma Department of Libraries from the Institute of Museum and Library Services**

Board Chair Cynthia Vogel recognized ODL Deputy Director Natalie Currie to discuss the Distribution Plan. Currie said these funds have spending priorities similar to the CARES Act funds, but there is more emphasis on digital inclusion assistance in support of education, health, and workforce development.

She provided additional information on the Online High School project. ODL will be working with the state's Workforce Development Board which plans to use \$275,000 of their federal funds to help purchase the online instruction platform and student "seats". Participants who successfully complete this Online High School will receive High School Diplomas, not GEDs. Cathy Van Hoy noted that ODL originally began working on this idea as part of the Oklahomans Virtually Everywhere initiative prior to the pandemic.

Currie said the state would go out on bid to secure the online high school platform. She said the agency believes all eight library systems and approximately 17 municipal libraries would be able to participate. Criteria for participation will include library capacity to run the program and the number of potential students in a library's service area. In addition to the \$275,000 in funding, Workforce Development will work with local workforce boards to help with intake and provide assistance to students who go through the program.

Annabeth Robin asked what ages could participate, and why ODL and not the Department of Education [SDE], was pursuing this. Currie said the project would target Oklahomans 25 and over since SDE is focused on younger groups and pursuit of the GED. Kellogg said this project would not compete with any SDE programs. She said most states have elected to begin eligibility at age 25 to make sure the person is

ready to engage in the learning process. Targeting this as the beginning age also prevents any overlap with SDE programs.

Vogel asked if the Online High School project was a four-year project. Currie said participants can complete the process in 18 months. She said the libraries will not be doing the educating but will provide the space and technology to connect participants to the platform and to connect to workforce development counseling and resources.

Currie said the Digital Navigator project is based on successful programs being conducted in other states. ODL's role would be to assemble a network of organizations and individuals to provide phone support to help Oklahomans with technical issues. This will probably involve establishment of a 1-800 number, an intake process, and then connecting individuals with specific support.

Currie said the additional statewide subscriptions would bring additional online resources in health, education, and workforce development to all of the state's libraries. The examples given, BrainFuse and Job & Career Accelerator, could be implemented quickly. BrainFuse, for example, has homework help and job coaching available and can connect users with experts quickly. The agency would need to go out on bid for these additional subscriptions.

The targeted formula grants for libraries, tribes, and museums would be weighted on certain criteria: poverty, the unemployment rate, educational attainment, etc. The population served and geographical areas will also be considered. ODL is providing a menu of ideas to help grantees meet the spending principles.

Vogel asked when the ARPA funds need to be spent. Currie said the funds must be spent by September 2022. The formula grant process was designed to get the funds out more quickly. Vogel asked why a lower priority was given to tribes and museums than for public libraries. Kellogg noted that the top three of the four priorities from IMLS focuses on libraries.

Vogel asked for a motion to approve the Distribution Plan for American Rescue Plan Funds. Robert Dace moved and Robin seconded. The votes were: Vogel, yes; Robin, yes; Dace, yes; Denney, yes; Gray, absent; Robison, absent; Shannon, absent. The motion carried.

Vogel thanked all who made the time to attend this special meeting and adjourned the meeting. The next scheduled meeting of the ODL Board is July 9.