

Email Message to: TPL Board
From: Meyer Brownstone
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2004 4:21 PM
Subject: Ontario Library Boards' Association (OLBA) Council Meeting

8(a).

Report on the OLBA Council meeting of February 2, 2004

Note: I do not have the draft minutes of the meeting as yet, but here are some items of interest:

1. There have been a number of changes on the membership of the council, although there is substantial continuity as well – some members like myself are as yet not re-appointed to their respective Boards which makes things a bit uncertain.
2. A major item was the continuing saga of the strategic plan for OLBA for the next three years. One of several drafts was debated in detail and the upshot was the decision to have a small committee (of the chair, past chair and past-past chair) to try to pick up the many comments on objectives and actions. As it now stands, the draft contains too many action items in terms of OLBA capacity to implement and a considerable degree of duplication and overlap. But there is hope that a tighter, more acceptable version will be produced fairly soon for wider release and consideration.
3. One of the most important and obvious questions which arose was the proposed Ontario Federation of Libraries (OFL) itself and its relationship to OLBA. The latest version of the OFL proposal has not been circulated to all Council members and so could not really be discussed in any detail. However, it is clear from reading it in draft form, and reading the OLBA mandate and draft strategic plan that the two overlap substantially. One major difference is that the OFL has a more operational servicing function and perhaps significantly, is planned with a staff and significant budget; two items not currently available to the OLBA. In general the OLBA appears ready to continue to expand tasks that also appear in the OFL future agenda and that these essential tasks may or may not be shifted to the OFL if it is ultimately organized. For example, there are tasks of great urgency mostly about provincial financing which need to be undertaken which the OLBA intends to pursue. At the same time, the OFL draft will receive further detailed consideration and at some stage will need to be considered by individual Boards such as the TPL Board. There will be issues of mandate, governance, representation, membership and fees to be considered in this process as well as some of the conceptual underpinnings.
4. Progress seems to have been made on the proposed provincial digital system. As in other provinces, there remains some possibility that access may go beyond public libraries to other government facilities, but I am not certain if this possibility has been raised as part of the planning/negotiating process.

5. As your representative, since my position on the TPL Board remains to be determined, I did not volunteer to take up specific OLBA tasks. In fact, the meeting ran out of time and no so-called "portfolios" were established. (May I add that I am fast approaching a situation where, in any case, I must reduce my range of responsibilities perhaps within the library area and in other organizations I am involved in.)
6. Overall the OLBA has been making progress on a number of fronts. Elements in the draft strategic plan will take it further along the road as an important vehicle within its basic mission and its view of public libraries as both providing traditional and new information services and as a growing factor in community development implying a broader agenda – some of which we have visualized in our own strategic planning process.

If I have missed anything of importance to the TPL, I will add to this report after I see the OLBA Council minutes.