



NJLA Reference & Adult Services Section

February 22, 2024, 10:00 am.

Zoom – Meeting ID: 867 068 5021 Passcode: 270739

In Attendance: Deborah Blackwell, Katy White, Ashley Mitchell, Betty Velie, James Fahey, John Beekman, Joy Robinson, Karen Cerretta, Karen Vaias, Karin Finnegan, Kate Russo, M. D'Agostino, Ilene Lefkowitz, Patrick Sweeney, Muriel Odrick

1. Called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Deborah Blackwell, President
2. Welcome by the President, Deborah Blackwell.
3. Proposals approved for NJLA on May 29-31, 2024 Conference Breaking Barriers: Inclusive Collaboration by Reference and Adult Services Section
 - True Crime Session
 - Opening the Eye of Diversity Around Equity and Power
 - Coworkers on the Spectrum: Effective Communication and Support Strategies for Neurodiverse Employees
 - Co-sponsor World Language Collection and Development
4. Introduction of the new Director at the South River Public Library – Karin Finnegan – by Kate Russo
5. Membership sharing activities at their branch:
 - Kate Russo, South River Public Library – adult craft nights. Past project: tile coasters with tiles from Home Depot and designs from Cricut, painting wine bottle crafts start at 6:30 pm for an hour
 - Cerretta from Roxbury Public Library in Morris County – For Black History Month, weekly movies on Friday afternoon themed with either a Black History theme or with artists, viewing of the documentary Brother Outsider [The Life of Bayard Rusting], an early version of the Netflix film. Walter Naegel, Reston's partner who lives in the community, came to the event and participated in the discussion about Brother Outside.; New Jersey Mental Health Players group with a facilitator and two actors – the program title is How to Have an Uncomfortable Conversation about Racism and Mental Health. Closing out Black History Month on Sunday with a kids' Jazz ensemble from an organization out of Montclair



John Beekman, Jersey City Free Public Library – Black History Month activities systemwide. Black History Month Art Contest at the Pavonia Branch, stage play at the Cunningham Branch, Momma's Porch in partnership with Phoenix Art Ensemble. At the Miller Branch, a jazz performance for the Community Awareness series, a book display of a month featuring black history topics primarily related to New Jersey.

Karen Vaias, Bernards Township Library African mask-making program for children.

6. Update from Katy White, NJLA Executive Board Liaison:

- Starting a monthly overview about what the organization is doing.
- Preview of the monthly overview: hired a lobbying firm called Porzio [Governmental Affairs], started February 1 [their focus is on Freedom to Read, Per Capita State Aid, and construction funding].
- Brett [Bonfield] spent time with the governor's office and Treasury representative to discuss per capita state aid.
- Brett and Carina [Gonzalez] supported Martha Hickson twice – at the rally that was cancelled and then the event held the following week at the auditorium.
- Savings is moved from TD Bank to Community Foundation of New Jersey for better interest from the investments and their mission aligns with the core values of NJLA. Interest should be at least 5% or more.
- Three responses received from the 2026 MLA to 2028 NLA conference contract – Harrah's, Hard Rock Café and Tropicana. A tour of these facilities by the Conference Committee, Future Planning Committee, NJASL representatives, some current co-chairs, Brett and Katy.

Alicia [Gough], the tech specialist and office manager, has created a customer relations management system. This will allow tracking of interactions with all of us to find synergies and gaps to give us better membership experiences.

Strategic planning is continuing. Last Friday's email and the next few weeks have a survey link. Completing the survey will help greatly.

The Executive Board in Piscataway on February 27.

Focus groups in the coming weeks.

Executive Board Elections voting starts on March 1.

Financial policies were updated and approved at the Executive Board meeting this past Tuesday [February 20], and a statement supporting the freedom to read can be found on the website.



Request members to complete the Strategic Planning member survey

7. Guest Speaker – Patrick Sweeney, an author, library subject specialist, and former library administrator. His topic – *Doing Better Messaging to the Community*

- EveryLibrary
 - Is a different organization within the library environment, a 501c4. Most library organizations within the library environment are 501c3. As a 501c4, EveryLibrary can spend 100% of its money on building political power and influence for libraries across the county. EveryLibrary provides:
 - Provides pro bono support to libraries who are going to the voters.
 - Has a national voter file that they give libraries access to with information about who supports your library in your community.
 - Will Walk you through how to run your campaign from the ballot to what happens after Election Day and everything in between.
 - Has given small grants to libraries who are going to the voters to the ballot committee.
 - Help leverage local, state, and national level on legislative issues.
 - All above is pro bono.
- Awareness of Fund – recommend we read the two awareness funding studies.
- 90% of library funding is from taxes.
- 3 to 5% comes from the state.
- 3 to 5% comes from the federal government.
- 98% of library funding is political in nature and dependent upon the will of the voters to wither for libraries or legislators who care about libraries. This data is important.
- Library use [by patrons] has no impact on the outcomes of elections.
- Leverage does not matter when it comes to support for libraries. Understand that using a library is different kind of commitment and just simply support it [the library].
- First we must think about how messaging actually works.
- Everything talked about in the presentation comes out of the political universe.
- To leverage funding is political in nature and it is around support.
- You are not convincing someone to change their mind about something, you are convincing somebody to attach their already held preconceived notions or beliefs or values, which you are trying to get them to attach their values to your issue or campaign.
- Messaging is filtered through issues.
- Before messaging can work, before you start messaging, is a little more difficult is understanding.



- To conserve money and make sure that you are spending your resources effectively and efficiently – put the right message in front of the right person at the right time – understand your audiences.
- Messaging in libraries – target five different groups:
 - Parents.
 - Teens.
 - Children.
 - Adults.
 - Seniors.
- Know your communities through doing public opinion polling, data collection, testing.
- There is no one right methodology from messaging; there is not one message that fits all.
- Think about the way you target – think about homeowners, people's wealth, class, race gender workplace, schools, civic centers – all the things that make up the person which will help you understand what people believe in.
- Developing your targeting:
 - Who are you talking to?
 - What are you talking to them about?
 - What is really important here?
- Timing matters when you are putting out messaging into the community.
- Engagement curve – most people engage with an issue early on, the longer the time goes on the more they lose interest.
- The Five Cs of messaging:
 - Contrasting – if you are saying the same thing as the other side why should they choose you?
 - Convincing- do not say things that are highly unrealistic.
 - Consistent – in your messaging.
 - Concise – too long to convince somebody you will lose their interest fast.
 - Clear – do not use insider language or acronyms.
- Talk about the what and the why
- Solution model messaging – state a problem, you agitate it, and then provide a solution. To your problem your solution is your CTA or call to action. State the problem very clear, concise, short and easy to read. The agitation is how that problem impacts the readers. How does it impact the person reading this? A positive spin on a negative zone.
- Messaging can be interesting, funny, make it positive will stand out because we are in a negative messaging environment.
- Book assignments:



- *The Political Mind* by George Lakoff
- *Words that work: it's not what you say, it's what people hear* by Dr. Frank Luntz
- *The three languages of politics: talking across the political divides* by Arnold Kling

Speaker contact email information:

Patrick.sweeney@everylibrary.org

Comments by attendees:

- Listening to the speaker is how this is information literacy. Happy to hear that we can do a lot of good with positive messaging.
- Thank you for closing on a positive note. It's a rare emotion to feel and talking about these topics today Thank you for closing on such a positive note
- I needed to hear what you said in the beginning too.
- It was really nice that you ended on a hopeful note. I appreciate that.
- Great job.
- Thank you.

8. Section charge from the President, Deborah Blackwell.

9. Website information shared in the chat:

<https://www.njla.org/njla-statement-in-support-of-the-freedom-to-read#:~:text=NJLA%20Statement%20in%20Support%20of%20the%20Freedom%20to%20Read&text=The%20New%20Jersey%20Library%20Association,Jersey%20Freedom%20to%20Read%20bill>

<https://www.saveschoollibrarians.org/hunterdon>

8. Next meeting date: March 28, 2024, 10:00 am on Zoom.

9. Meeting adjourned: 10:56 am. Second by Kate Russo