Ohio Library Council
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ITEM NO.: 5.F.1  MEETING DATE: March 11, 2022
SUBJECT: Government and Legal Services Report  SUBMITTED BY: Jay Smith

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

PLF Update
The Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT) posted the February 2022 Public Library Fund (PLF) distribution of $44,713,322 – which is $4.15 million (+ 10.24%) above ODT’s original estimate that was issued in July 2021; and $4 million (+ 10.08%) more than ODT’s updated estimate issued in December 2021.

State revenues continue their trend of exceeding projections. According to the Office of Budget and Management (OBM), overall state tax receipts for the month of January came in almost $236 million above estimates. So far, State Fiscal Year 2022 tax collections are up $816.4 million (+ 5.5%) above estimates.

A look at the PLF distribution for the past three years and a link to an Excel spreadsheet listing each county’s distribution total for February 2022 can be found on the OLC website at https://olc.org/funding/. An update on the March PLF distribution will be provided at the Board meeting.

HB 327 – Divisive Concepts
House Bill (HB) 327 is legislation currently being discussed in the House State and Local Government Committee that seeks to prohibit schools, universities, political subdivisions, and state agencies from teaching, promoting, and offering instruction or training on certain topics. The Ohio House State and Local Government Committee met in February and accepted a substitute version of the bill for consideration.

Since being introduced, the bill has gone through multiple revisions. The current version impacts Ohio’s public libraries because it specifically includes local political subdivisions. This means it would impact townships, municipalities, and counties as well.

The bill states that no state agency or political subdivision shall offer teaching, instruction, or training on certain concepts to any employees, contractors, staff, individuals, or groups or require them to adopt or believe in these concepts.

The bill prohibits state employees and political subdivision employees from required training on the concepts and prohibits political subdivisions from accepting federal grants or private funding for developing training programs or materials on the specified concepts. More information about this bill will be discussed during the Board Meeting.

HB 51 – Open Meetings
In February, the legislature amended and passed legislation providing temporary open meetings flexibility. HB 51 permits public bodies to have virtual meetings, with members attending virtually. In this temporary context, members are not required to be physically present to be counted toward a quorum or to vote on matters being considered. This means that hybrid meetings are possible as well.

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The temporary change in law authorizes a virtual meeting to be conducted using some electronic technology that allows member participation and public access. Teleconferences and video conferences are mentioned as acceptable means of member participation, with live streaming through the internet; local radio, TV, local cable, or public-access channels; or teleconference call-ins are deemed as acceptable means for providing public access to the proceedings. In both cases, similar electronic means are also acceptable. Any actions taken during a properly conducted virtual meeting have the same effect as those taken during an in-person meeting. As a reminder, this flexibility is temporary and will expire July 1, 2022.

**Senate Bill (SB) 15 – Fiscal Officer Liability**

On March 2, the House State and Local Government Committee passed SB 15. The legislation, supported by OLC, serves to clarify when a library fiscal officer, and other local government treasurers or fiscal officers, may be held responsible for the loss of public funds resulting from the officer’s negligence or other wrongful act. In addition, the bill serves to protect these officers from liability for the loss of public funds when the officer has performed their official duties with reasonable care. The bill is now awaiting further consideration by the House.

**OLC Legislative Day**

The OLC Government Relations Committee and the Legislative Network are busy planning the OLC Legislative Day at the Statehouse on Wed., April 6. Click on the following link to get registered for Legislative Day: [https://myolc.olc.org/ebusiness/Index.aspx](https://myolc.olc.org/ebusiness/Index.aspx)

More information on this event will be shared at the Board Meeting.

**OLC Legislative Day Prep Webinar**

On March 21, OLC will be hosting a free legislative day preparation webinar from 1:00 pm -2:00 pm. During this webinar, we'll outline the key steps to take before Legislative Day, including making appointments with legislators and using advocacy tools on the OLC website. Click on the following link to register for this webinar: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_nDk4A87HQoGqyG5Fr7WbWq](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_nDk4A87HQoGqyG5Fr7WbWq)

**Ohio State of the State**

Gov. Mike DeWine announced that he will deliver his 2022 “State of the State” address on Wed., March 23. It will begin at noon in the Ohio House Chamber. The annual address highlights the goals and accomplishments of the state and is held as a joint session of the Ohio General Assembly in the House Chambers of the Ohio Statehouse. The address can be viewed live on the Ohio Channel [https://ohiochannel.org/](https://ohiochannel.org/).