

NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, Nebraska
January 14, 2011

MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met on January 14, 2011, at the Library Commission office, 1200 N Street, Lincoln. The meeting notice was posted on the State Public Meeting Calendar and the Commission Web site.

Members present: Steve Batty, Diane Boyd, Sherry Crow, John Dale, and Pat Gross (via phone). Staff present: Rod Wagner, Maria Medrano-Nehls, Mary Jo Ryan, JoAnn McManus, Holly Woldt, and Audrey York. Guests: Brenda Ealey and Barbara Hegr.

Chair John Dale called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. This meeting is in compliance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

Approval of Agenda: A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. Motion carried on roll call vote: Steve Batty – aye; Diane Boyd – aye; John Dale – aye; and Sherry Crow - aye. Motion approved

Approval of the Minutes (November 10, 2010): A motion was made to approve the September 10, 2010, meeting minutes. Motion carried on roll call vote: Diane Boyd – aye; John Dale – aye; Sherry Crow – aye, and Steve Batty - aye. Motion approved.

PUBLIC FORUM

Brenda Ealey observed that Pawnee City public library broke ground on a new library building. Brenda stated that she held a training session on personnel issues with some of the new library directors in her area. The Plattsmouth Public Library board voted to change from a governing board to an advisory board. Syracuse Public Library has cleared space for a new library building. Ealey said that the Nebraska Library Association will hold the annual Library Legislative Day on February 25, 2011. The NLA is monitoring library related legislation introduced in the 2011 legislative session.

CHAIR'S REPORT AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Chair John Dale stated that he viewed the Governor's state of the state speech.

Diane Boyd stated that the South Sioux City Library applied for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Broadband grant project and received 12 new computers. The library was able to pay off its matching funds requirement in three months due to assistance from the city and local businesses. The South Sioux City Optimist Club sold Christmas wreaths at the library and made \$3,000. The Club donated one-third to the library to be used for the children's section.

Sherry Crow stated that the Valentine Public Library has completed a remodeling project. Rock County Library in Bassett is working on a remodeling plan. Ainsworth Public Library is nearing completion of fund-raising for a building addition. Kearney Public Library is currently involved in an addition and renovation. Calvin T. Ryan Library at UNK has designed and includes a learning commons. Kearney will hold a storytelling festival this weekend.

Steve Batty said that he attended a Republican Valley Library System board meeting in Franklin. Steve stated that the McCook Public Library will be installing a new elevator at an estimated cost of \$150,000. The library will undertake a remodeling project after the elevator is installed. Steve wrote a grant for a mobile green screen studio. He recently worked with some local middle school students on a green screen project – a “*The Night Before Christmas*” program. Partners for the mobile green screen project are the McCook Public Library, McCook Public Jr/Sr High Schools, Catholic Church/School, Storytelling Festival Committee, home schooled children and parents, and the Bartley Public Library.

Pat Gross stated that the Panhandle Library System is continuing recruitment for a regional system administrator. Pat said that the author visit that is usually scheduled in the spring has been moved to October this year. The visiting author this year is [Diane deGroat](#). The Scottsbluff Public Library is still under construction but they hope to be moved into the new addition by late February.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Personnel

Rod Wagner reported that John Felton, NLC Data Coordinator, recently received the *John G. Lorenz Award* for timely and accurate reporting of public library statistics. The award stems from the national library statistics program administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and involving all state library agencies. The award is indicative of John’s exceptional work.

Library Broadband Technology Program

JoAnn McManus, the Library Commission’s Broadband Project Manager, provided a project update. JoAnn introduced the full-time project staff members including, in addition to herself, Holly Woldt and Audrey York. They have been working hard on moving forward with the project as well as learning and following all the state purchasing regulations and grant requirements.

The participant libraries are excited about the broadband project. JoAnn, Holly and Audrey have been in contact with the libraries and have gone over the list of technology and furniture items libraries will receive. The project staff has also been working with the staff of the State Chief Information Officer and State Purchasing Office on policies and procedures for purchasing computers, peripherals, software and broadband services. McManus stated that the CIO’s staff will assist with the bid process for computers, scanners, printers and other requested items. JoAnn stated that Mary Jo Ryan will be working with the team and the libraries on marketing the library technology improvements and programs. Mary Jo distributed a copy of a press packet that she is working on for the libraries to use.

Audrey York, grant compliance officer, will compile and record project information collected from libraries. Audrey organized and held two webinars to cover library reporting procedures. JoAnn McManus stated that 40 of the libraries are designated for broadband service upgrades. As a result of contacts with each of the libraries an additional 6 have requested support for broadband service upgrades.

JoAnn stated that the project staff meets regularly with the larger BTOP team to go over project status and planning for future activities.

Past Year Reflections and New Year Outlook

Rod Wagner stated that 2010 was a good year as the Commission was awarded two major federal grants – the BTOP grant and an Institute of Museum and Library Services Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian grant. The Commission began 2010 with budget cuts enacted during the November 2009 special legislative session. The budget cut resulted in curtailment or downsizing of some services and activities. Further cuts came with the start of the new state fiscal year in July. Federal funds were at least stable (level funded) and the Commission submitted the annual LSTA state program report by the due date on December 30, 2010. The grant projects involved thousands of hours of staff time, but many other activities were carried out as well.

Commission staff has continued work with the 64 libraries participating in the OverDrive program for downloadable audio-books and e-books. Staff worked with Nebraska Library Association representatives to award internship grants to libraries. Talking Book and Braille Services staff continued distribution of the new digital talking book players and cartridges and helping service users adapt to the new technologies. Commission staff had lead roles in a very a successful Nebraska Center for the Book annual meeting and “Celebration of the Book” event, Nebraska Book Awards competition, and 2010 One Book One Nebraska project. We continued work on the Nebraska Memories project and started a new program to help libraries create and manage library websites. Reference and interlibrary loan services have continued to grow and remain active throughout the year.

Wagner said that major activities during 2011 will include the broadband technology project, the Cultivating Rural Librarians grant project (involving scholarships, stipends and internships), support for the Pioneer Consortium, Nebraska Center for the Book projects, and budget actions dependent on appropriations made during the 2011 legislative session. The Commission’s budget hearing will be held on February 22. Rod stated that the Governor’s budget recommendation for the Nebraska Library Commission would result in a \$211, 054 state funds reduction next fiscal year, followed by a \$30,000 increase the second year of the biennium.

John Dale asked how the budget reduction would impact Commission personnel. Wagner said that staffing is a vulnerable area because other operating expenses have been reduced and a significant operating expense is office space lease. Lease costs are fixed by the multi-year lease agreement and include scheduled increases each year. The Commission is unfortunately in a serious position in which staff positions will most likely be cut if state funding is not increased from the Governor’s recommended funding level.

The Governor's request includes funding to cover the rent cost increase. John Dale stated that the last report from the State Revenue Forecasting Advisory Board is that state revenues have increased in the months of November and December.

NLC Grant Programs Status

Rod Wagner stated that the Children and Youth Services grants have been awarded. The Continuing Education grants have been reviewed and will be announced next week. The Library Improvement grants were due on January 7, and those grant awards will be announced on February 17. Library Improvement Grant requests were made for more than double the amount available.

New NLC Website

Rod Wagner stated that the NLC website team is working hard on programming, coding and conversion for the new Commission website. Wagner said that due to the programming involved and the thousands of web pages to code, he could not provide an estimated date for the new web site launch. Everyone is anxious to complete work and make the new website available.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Rod Wagner stated that the Commission's finances are, overall, in line with budget projections. There are a couple of areas where expenditures are higher than budgeted. One of those involves purchases of flash memory cartridges. This expense has been offset by lower expenditures in other budget categories. Rod stated that expenses for a part-time temporary position were higher than budgeted but this budget item is now being supplemented with grant funds.

Pat Gross commended the staff for their good work. Pat also stated that the regional library system administrators needed to be commended for the help they give to librarians. Pat said that it would be hard for public and school librarians to do their jobs without the help they receive from both NLC and regional system staff.

Rod Wagner stated that the Library Services and Technology Act was reauthorized in December as a result of Congressional action. The legislation was signed by the President. The legislation sets the base payment for states at \$680,000 while the prior law included base payments of from \$340,000 up to \$680,000 depending on the total program appropriation. The higher base level is of special interest to smaller populated states like Nebraska. The larger portion of the funding is distributed based on state population. The law also incorporated the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian program as part of the museum and library services legislation. The reauthorization legislation also designated the IMLS for responsibility in collecting library statistics. The legislation was also changed to affirm that state library programs and funding are aligned with the overall purposes of Library Services and Technology Act.

The make-up of the new Congress is such that efforts will be made to reduce the federal budget and this will likely affect LSTA appropriations. Early indications are that the current year budget could be reduced from 1-5%. Current funding allocations are provided through a Congressional continuing resolution that funds many federal programs until March 2011.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

21st Century Librarian Grant Scholarships, Internships & Stipends Policies

Mary Jo Ryan reported on the 21st Century Librarian Grant which began on November 1. She stated this is a continuation of an earlier project funded through an IMLS grant. Internships are one component of the new three-year grant project. Internships involve grants made to public libraries or a collaborative project with school libraries to provide internships for students. The project is in cooperation with the Nebraska Library. Sherry Crow asked about use of internship funds for schools. Schools and colleges/universities can be included in partnership with a public library.

A motion was made and seconded that the wording “priority will be given to partnership projects between public libraries and school/media center or academic/college libraries” be added to the internship grant policy. Motion carried on roll call vote: John Dale – aye; Sherry Crow – aye; Steve Batty – aye; and Diane Boyd – aye. Motion approved.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the internship policies as presented and amended. Motion carried on roll call vote: Sherry Crow – aye; Steve Batty – aye; Diane Boyd – aye; and John Dale – aye. Motion approved.

Mary Jo Ryan stated that the scholarship policy has a few changes from the prior grant program. The new program includes three levels of awards.

The pre-professional scholarship includes students enrolled in a community college certificate program, a community college associates program, or a library and information science bachelors program.

The professional scholarship students must be enrolled in a library science master’s degree program, a master of education program with a library science major, or a master’s degree program with a library science endorsement.

Mary Jo stated that stipends are included in the grant project. Inclusion of stipends was the result of students asking about them. The stipends are between \$500 and \$2,000 and a student must apply for them. Stipends can be used for a laptop computer and travel to a conference or workshop with an emphasis in library science topics.

A change was suggested for item VII(a) to state that: “After obtaining a degree or certificate maintain or seek employment in a Nebraska public, school, institution, tribal, or special library in a library position and if hired or currently employed in a library setting work for at least 12 months.”

A motion was made and seconded to accept scholarship policies with the suggested clarification. Motion carried on roll call vote: Steve Batty – aye; Diane Boyd – aye; John Dale – aye; and Sherry Crow – aye. Motion approved.

Legislative Proposal re Public Library Employee Policies (League of Municipalities)

Rod Wagner stated there is a legislative proposal that has sought to change the current public library laws to require public libraries to have employee personnel policies approved by city councils or village boards. There is no current requirement for libraries to have any of their policies approved except for those libraries that have advisory boards (restricted to first class cities). The League of Municipalities has sought the Commission's and Nebraska Library Association's support for this change. The League representatives contend that the legislative proposal is based on a concern for potential liability due to violation of state or federal employment laws, and that employment policies be aligned among municipal entities. The League representatives have said that it is not their intention to promote legislation that goes beyond employment policies. The NLA board voted to support the proposal provided there be no changes made to broaden the requirements to other library policies. The NLA legislative committee has apparently asked for re-consideration of the board's position. Wagner stated that the Commission could support the proposal, oppose it, or take a neutral position. By taking a neutral position the Commission could point to the pros and cons of the legislative proposal.

A motion was made and seconded that the Commission take a neutral position on the League of Nebraska Municipalities' legislative proposal. Motion carried on roll call vote: John Dale – aye; Sherry Crow – aye; Steve Batty; and Diane Boyd – aye. Motion approved.

State Advisory Council on Libraries Appointments

Rod Wagner presented recommendations for appointments to the State Advisory Council on Libraries. Wagner recommended re-appointment of Debra Carlson, Scottsbluff Public Library, to a second-term; and first-term appointments to Francine Canfield, Baright Public Library (Ralston); Beth Falla, Lied Imperial Public Library; Vickie Retzlaff, Grant County Library; Janet Stoeger Wilke, University of Nebraska at Kearney; and Kara Welch, Ainsworth Community Schools.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the State Advisory Council on Libraries re-appointment and appointment recommendations. Motion carried on roll call vote: Sherry Crow – aye; Steve Batty; Diane Boyd – aye; and John Dale – aye. Motion approved.

2011 Commission Meeting Schedule

Next meeting Date – Rod Wagner stated that the next meeting date is scheduled for March 11, 2011, in Kearney. This will be a joint meeting of the Commission and the State Advisory Council on Libraries. Wagner recommended that the Commission meeting will be held from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. followed by the State Advisory Council on Libraries meeting beginning at 10:00 a.m. and ending by 2:00 p.m.

Future 2011 Commission meeting dates are May 13, July 8, September 9, and November 10 (Thursday due to Veterans Day on Friday).

Director’s Annual Performance Review

A motion was made at 12:10 p.m. to go into executive session to perform the director’s annual performance review. The meeting was resumed at 12:50 p.m. at which time Chair Dale informed Rod Wagner that he would contact him to discuss the evaluation.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair John Dale at 12:55 p.m.

Maria Medrano-Nehls, Secretary