

NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

January 8, 2021

MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met January 8, 2021. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

Commission members present: via GoToMeeting: Debby Bloom, Arun Pondicherry, Lois Todd-Meyer, and Kristin Wiebe. Staff present: Rod Wagner, Jennifer Wrampe; via GoToMeeting: Christa Porter, Tessa Terry. Debby Bloom called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. This meeting complies with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and Governor's Executive Order Limited Waiver for Public Meetings.

Approval of Agenda: A motion was made by Lois Todd-Meyer and seconded by Arun Pondicherry to approve the agenda. Motion carried on roll call vote: Debby Bloom – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Kristen Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes: (November 13, 2020) a motion was made by Arun Pondicherry and seconded by Kristin Wiebe to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried on roll call vote: Debby Bloom – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Kristin Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

Chair's Report and Commissioner's Comments

Debby Bloom – reported that the Golden Sower voting continues through April 15. The 2021 virtual summer reading program theme is *Tails and Tales*. Omaha Public Library held an online story time at Henry Doorly Zoo.

Julia Tye – was not in attendance but sent a report. Kearney Public Library has an active, ongoing program schedule for all ages. Activities are currently held online or in a grab and go format. For example, preregistered adults can pick up the necessary supplies from the circulation desk to complete a craft activity following along with the online class. A sampling of other offerings: Mango, learning a new language online or through an app; NoveList, customized recommendations for your next read; Chill out and Read Winter Reading Challenge for children and youth; Universal Class, with access to over 500 continuing education classes.

Arun Pondicherry – reported that Lincoln City Libraries is offering numerous programs and services to help keep families safe during the pandemic. One program is Help Now for Homework which provides free homework support and online tutoring. Another program is Jobs Now, which provides online help for employment assistance. LCL has grab and go book

bundles, which provides 3-5 pre-selected books for children available for pick up at any of the branch libraries. One Book One Lincoln nominations are due January 31.

Lois Todd-Meyer – reported that Seward Memorial Library remains closed, but has drive-thru window pick up that is offered daily. Fullerton Public Library has been an asset for technology for the town. Although the library is still closed, the library offers printing, faxing, and other services. The librarian has put together book selections for patrons to pick up. She has also provided take and make activities and early literacy kits for children. Franklin Public Library has compiled book selections for patrons and has offered technology services as much as possible with the library still being closed.

Kristin Wiebe – reported that Scottsbluff Public Library launched a story time website. The library is also offering other programs virtually, such as Lego Club. The Scottsbluff library is experiencing staff turnover due to retirements. Retirements and pandemic guidelines have affected the library's services and what they are able to do.

Director's Report

Personnel – Rod Wagner reported that former Library Commission member Chuck Peek has a new poetry book out, *Nebraska Conflicting Reports*. Wagner said that the majority of Commission staff continue to work from home with a small number of staff in the office most days.

Library Innovation Studios Project Status – Wagner reported that Cambridge, St. Paul and Superior libraries are currently hosting makerspace equipment. Installation and training are on hold for the LaVista, McCook, Bellevue, and Randolph libraries. Installations at the remaining four libraries will be scheduled according to local health safety restrictions.

E-Rate and Special Fiber Construction Program – Christa Porter reported that \$1 million is available in e-Rate support for public libraries to apply for new fiber construction. These funds will supplement federal e-Rate funding. Funds will cover construction costs related to installing fiber to the library. The Special Construction Program for Libraries and Schools is a four-year program created and administered by the Nebraska Public Service Commission.

Library Commission Grant Programs – Porter reported that the Commission is offering three grants – Youth Grants for Excellence, Library Internship Grants, and Continuing Education Grants. Youth grant applications were due in October. An amount of \$18,500 was budgeted for the Youth grants and 22 grants were awarded. The Internship Grants applications deadline was November 10. A total of \$22,000 was granted to 24 libraries. The deadline for Continuing Education grant applications was extended to January 15.

State Legislative Session – Wagner reported the legislature convened on January 6 with over 100 bills introduced on the first day. Senators have the first ten days of the session to introduce bills. Governor Ricketts will present his State of the State remarks on January 14. The legislature's appropriations committee will begin state agency budget hearings soon. The Library Commission is typically scheduled in March along with other education agencies. Senator Stinner continues as chair of the appropriations committee.

Nebraska Center for the Book – Tessa Terry reported the 2021 One Book One Nebraska program launched at the beginning of the year. This year’s selection is *Prairie Forge* by James Kimble. An NCompass Live webinar is scheduled to promote *Prairie Forge*. James Kimble will join the webinar to discuss his book and answer questions. The Letters about Literature competition opened November 1 with an online submission platform. The deadline for submitting letters was December 31. There were over 60 submissions.

Financial Report

December Budget and Financial Report – Wagner reported that personnel expenses (salaries and employee benefits) are slightly above budget on the state side and slightly below on the federal side. Some operating expenses are paid annually and early in the year, for example auditing expenses, accounting expenses and insurance. Overall, the operating budget is in line with budgeted amounts. State aid to libraries expenditures are also in line with budgeted amounts. State aid to libraries payments will be made in the coming months (late March or April).

LSTA Appropriation Status – Wagner reported that Congress appropriated funds for the remainder of the federal fiscal year. Appropriations included a \$2 million increase for the Library Services and Technology Act Grants to States program. The \$2 million increase will result in an increase in the base amount for each state, eventually expected to reach \$1 million to each state. In addition to the base amount, state allocations include an amount based on the state’s population. The increase for the Library Commission will amount to from \$35,000 to \$40,000. Earlier, legislation was introduced that would have provided additional funds to state library agencies to be used specifically for rural library broadband improvements. This proposal was later removed.

New Business

State Advisory Council on Libraries Appointments - Rod Wagner presented recommendations for appointments (first term) and re-appointments (second term) to the State Advisory Council on Libraries for three-year terms beginning in January 2021 and continuing until December 31, 2023.

New Appointment Recommendations – Three-Year Term

- Cali Biaggi (Crete) – Online Learning & Student Services Librarian, Doane University
- Michael Burris (Holdrege) – Director, Holdrege Area Public Library
- Dixie Codner (Grand Island) – Director of Learning Resources (CCC – Grand Island campus)
- Stephanie O’Connor (Alliance) – Director, Alliance Public Library
- Michael Straatmann (Lincoln) – Coordinator of Access Services, University Libraries, University of Nebraska-Lincoln & Past-President, Nebraska Library Association

Re-Appointment Recommendations – Three-Year Term

- Jessica Chamberlain (Norfolk) – Director, Norfolk Public Library.
- Pat Gross (Bayard) – Retired school librarian and former Nebraska Library Commission member

A motion was made by Lois Todd-Meyer and seconded by Arun Pondicherry to approve the State Advisory Council on Libraries appointments and re-appointments. Motion carried on roll call vote: Debby Bloom – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Kristen Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

Next Meeting Dates –March 12, May 14, July 9.

Adjournment

Debby Bloom adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe