

NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

January 12, 2024

MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met on January 12, 2024. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

Commission members present: via GoToMeeting: Tiffany Carter, Diane Downer, Beth Kabes, Arun Pondicherry, and Lois Todd-Meyer. Staff present: Rod Wagner; via GoToMeeting: Christa Porter. Public: Ken Yoho, Assistant Attorney General, State of Nebraska.

Arun Pondicherry 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 Diane Downer to approve the agenda. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Beth Kabes - aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer - aye. Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes: (November 16, 2023) a motion was made by Beth Kabes and seconded by Tiffany Carter to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Beth Kabes - aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye. Motion approved.

Chair's Report and Commissioner's Comments

Arun Pondicherry – reported that Vernon J. has resigned his Commissioner position as a result of his move from Nebraska to Iowa. Arun's and Lois Todd-Meyer's terms end in June 2023, so there will be three positions to fill.

Beth Kabes –asked if there would be an opportunity for all the Commissioners to visit or attend the official opening of the Keene Memorial Library, Fremont. The grand opening will be held February 6.

Lois Todd-Meyer – no report

Diane Downer no report

Tiffany Carter – no report

Director's Report

Personnel – Rod Wagner reported Andrew “Sherm” Sherman was appointed to the Library Technology Support Specialist position that Holly Woldt vacated with her retirement. This will be a promotion for Andrew. He will continue to work with library technology issues with priority to

assisting libraries with broadband service upgrades. Recruitment to fill the position Andrew vacated will be held later.

Hollin Attendola was appointed to fill the TBBS Senior Readers Advisor position vacated by Kay Goehring following Kay's retirement. This is a promotion for Hollin. Recruitment to fill the vacant readers advisor position is underway following Holli's promotion.

Kayla Henzel resigned from her Office Specialist position to begin a position with Lancaster County. Recruitment is underway to fill this position.

State Legislative Session – Wagner noted the state legislative session began on January 3. Senators are scheduled to complete the session in mid-April. As of today, 315 new bills have been introduced. Bills from the 2023 session carry over to the current session.

Library Broadband Services Update – Christa Porter reported the E-rate special fiber construction program is still going strong. In November, Porter reported there had been a new progression order that extended indefinitely and covers 100% of the cost for libraries and schools to get fiber for the first time. Schools and libraries would have to apply for E-rate that would cover part of the cost and the Public Service Commission would cover the rest. Holly Woldt was originally working with libraries on this project. Since Holly's retirement, Andrew Sherman and Christa have been working with libraries that are candidates for fiber installation. The deadline to submit E-rate forms is the end of February. One requirement for receiving federal funding for anything related to providing internet services is that the library must have filtering software to protect from information "harmful to minors." However, some libraries either have struggled with or don't have time to install filtering software. This has been a barrier for some libraries in receiving E-rate and other federal funding. Last August, Andrew Sherman developed a program for the Library Commission to pay for any Nebraska public library to receive a Domain Name System or (DNS) filter. Andrew will assist libraries with installation. NLC will maintain and monitor the filtering software for these libraries. Libraries will have access to their accounts in order to disable the filter when needed. Andrew is currently working with twenty plus libraries for assistance with broadband service improvements.

Library Commission Grants – Porter said that Library Commission grant applications for 2024 closed on November 17. The grant application teams have been reviewing the applications. Holli Duggan, CE Coordinator, has received eight continuing education grant applications totaling over \$14,000. CE Grant applications run in 2 cycles – for the first half of the year and for the second half. Some of the CE grant applications received were meant to be submitted for the second half of the year. Holli had a budget of \$5,000 for the first round. Youth grant approvals are being sent to libraries now. There were 42 applications received for about \$41,000. There were 29 internship grant applications for \$27,000. There were 32 Library Improvement Grant applications received for \$75,000. All libraries should receive information by the end of March on the status of their application.

NCompass live and Big Talk From Small Libraries – NCompass Live is a weekly webinar series hosted by Porter every Wednesday morning at 10 a.m. central time. The show premiered in January 2009. There are over 730 recordings of the show. All recordings are on the Library Commission's YouTube channel.

Big Talk from Small Libraries is a conference Porter started in 2012. This is an online conference co-sponsored by the Association for Rural and Small Libraries. All of the presenters are from libraries with a population served of 10,000 or less. Big Talk from Small Libraries is an all-day conference held on the last Friday of February with attendees from across the country and often from beyond.

Library Advocacy Day – Wagner reported the Nebraska Library Association has scheduled March 20 for Nebraska Library Advocacy Day. As usual, Advocacy Day will include a luncheon with state senators at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel.

Nebraska Center for the Book – Wagner reported that Tessa Terry and he attended Governor Pillen’s signing of the proclamation for this year’s One Book One Nebraska selection – *Dancing with the Octopus* by Debora Harding.

Financial Report

December Financial Report – Wagner reported major expenses are just under budgeted amounts for the year for state funded operations. A number of bills come in for the whole year that are paid early in the fiscal year. That is one reason operating expenses are a bit above budget during the first quarter. Travel expenses are low as there has not been significant travel thus far. State Aid to Libraries payments are a significant part of the state aid budget. Those payments will go out in May or early June. The State Aid budget has increased with higher appropriation amounts. Sam Shaw will do calculations and present the formula for distribution of State Aid funds at the next meeting.

LSTA Appropriations Outlook – Wagner said federal operating funds are running below budgeted amounts. An issue related to federal funds is that Congress has adopted a continuing resolution that expires soon. Congress is working toward appropriations for the remainder of the federal fiscal year.

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 2024 and continuing until December 31, 2026.

New Appointment Recommendations – Three-Year Term

- **Shanna Crosby-Wilson** – Media Specialist, Boys Town Library Services (Boys Town)
- **Joanne Neemann** – Director, Beatrice Public Library (Beatrice)
- **Amber Sweetland** – Director, Kimball Public Library (Kimball)

Re-Appointment Recommendations – Three-Year Term

- **Cali Biaggi** – Online Learning Librarian, Doane University (Crete)
- **Michael Straatmann** – Associate Director of Collections, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (Lincoln)
- **Michael Burris** – Director, Holdrege Area Public Library (Holdrege)

A motion was made by Arun Pondicherry and seconded by Beth Kabes to approve the State Advisory Council on Libraries appointments and re-appointments. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Beth Kabes – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Motion approved.

Election of Commission Chair – Arun Pondicherry nominated Beth Kabes to serve as Commission Chair, seconded by Lois Todd-Meyer. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Beth Kabes – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Motion approved.

Election of Commission Vice Chair – Lois Todd-Meyer nominated Diane Downer to serve as Commission Vice-Chair, seconded by Arun Pondicherry. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Beth Kabes – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Motion approved.

Out of State Travel Request – Wagner requested approval to travel to Washington D.C. March 4-7 to attend the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies meeting, a legislative briefing day and visits to Nebraska’s congressional delegation offices.

A motion was made by Lois Todd-Meyer and seconded by Diane Downer to approve the Out of State Travel request. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Beth Kabes – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye;. Motion approved.

Next Meeting Date – March 20, 2024

Adjournment

Arun Pondicherry adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe