

NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

March 3, 2023

MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met on March 3, 2023. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

Commission members present: Tiffany Carter, Diane Downer, Beth Kabes, Arun Pondicherry, and Lois Todd-Meyer. Staff present: Rod Wagner, Jennifer Wrampe; via GoToMeeting: Christa Porter.

Arun Pondicherry called the meeting to order at 10:15 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 Beth Kabes 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: (January 13, 2023) a motion was made by Tiffany Carter and seconded by Arun Pondicherry to approve the minutes. 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 – no report

Diane Downer – no report

Lois Todd-Meyer – said that a former colleague had written a letter to the editor of the *Columbus Telegram* about her experiences with libraries.

Tiffany Carter – reported she visited four libraries recently. Valley Public Library is enjoying the electronic magnifier received through the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired grant project. Fremont's Keene Memorial Public Library is in the middle of an expansion project. North Bend residents raised funds to pay for the new library building. There is no debt remaining. Tiffany also visited the Schuyler Public Library.

Beth Kabes – spoke with Tammy Thiem, Three Rivers Library System Director, about accreditation of libraries in the Three Rivers region. Out of 83 libraries, 86% are accredited. Tammi said the most significant issue that most libraries have in achieving accreditation is getting library board continuing education credits.

Director's Report

Personnel – Rod Wagner reported that interviews are underway for the Talking Book and Braille Service staff position. Andrew Sherman recently joined the Commission staff as an IT Infrastructure Support Analyst.

Big Talk From Small Libraries 2023 Online Conference – Christa Porter reported the online conference took place on February 24. In addition to the presenters from a number of states, was one speaker from Indonesia. There were 482 pre-registrations from 41 different states and 12 registrations from 5 Canadian provinces. On the day of the conference, there were 305 individual logins with a total of 314 attendees. Christa is working on editing the recording. The next conference will be held February 23, 2024.

Digital Equity Planning Grant – Wagner reported the federally funded grant project began last fall. Holly Woldt, Library Technology Support Specialist, is involved with the grant. Sam Shaw and Christa Porter attended a few meetings and brought Wagner up to date with the many components involved with this project and several other opportunities for broadband improvement. Wagner said that there is state legislation related to broadband policy and funding, including establishment of a State Broadband Office to be located in the Department of Transportation. Libraries have a great opportunity to get support and funding to improve broadband services.

Nebraska Center for the Book – Wagner reported the 2023 One Book One Nebraska program is underway. A recent NCompass live session featured the 2023 OBON – Mignon Eberhart's *The Mystery of Hunting's End*. The NCB Book Awards competition was publicized in March, with a few entries already received.

The Nebraska Book Festival has not been held the last few years. There are plans for the event to take place at the Foundation Garden, across from Lincoln's Bennet Martin Public Library. The festival is scheduled for Saturday, June 10. Authors are being invited to make presentations and there will be activities for both kids and adults. There is a request pending to close the street to allow for exhibits, vendor tables, and food trucks.

Tessa Terry requested a proclamation signing for the Letters About Literature contest. The ceremony will be held April 3. The proclamation also includes recognition of National Library Week, April 23-29. This year's theme is "There's More to the Story".

Brownstone Book Fund – Wagner reported that all of the books have been delivered to the 100 selected libraries. Diane Brownstone has asked that libraries respond to a questionnaire. A few comments have been received with libraries expressing appreciation for the books.

State Legislation – Wagner reported the NLC budget hearing was held February 14 before the legislature's appropriations committee. The governor's budget recommendations included NLC's requested funding amounts for the operating budget. The governor's recommendations for state aid items averaged about 3%. The appropriations committee's preliminary budget recommendations supported the Commission's requested funding for the budget increases for the operating program; for the state aid to libraries program the committee left funding at the current fiscal year funding amounts. Once agency budget hearings are completed, the committee will make decisions on their recommendations for presentation to the legislature.

Financial Report

January Financial Report – Wagner reported that expenditures at this point of the fiscal year are in line with budgeted amounts for major expenditure categories, if not individual line items. The personnel budget, which is the Commission’s major operating expense, is below budget. Personnel cost savings can be used for other operating expense items. The second major item is the building lease expense. The amount budgeted is based on the annual lease cost amount. Travel expenses are above budgeted amounts. State aid payments are in line with budgeted amounts.

New Business

State Advisory Council on Libraries Appointments - Rod Wagner presented a recommendation for re-appointment (second term) to the State Advisory Council on Libraries for a three-year term beginning January 2023 and continuing until December 31, 2025.

Re-Appointment Recommendation – Three-Year Term

- Gail Irwin – Director, Ainsworth Public Library

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

State Aid to Public Libraries Payments - Sam Shaw, Planning and Data Services Coordinator, presented a state aid to public libraries distribution proposal. The aid payment formula includes a base amount and an amount based on the library’s service area population. Payments also include an incentive for libraries that receive county funding. Libraries that are not accredited, but submit a statistical report, receive a \$200 payment. The total payments estimate this fiscal year is \$395,263.

A motion was made by Lois Todd-Meyer and seconded by Arun Pondicherry to approve the state aid to public libraries payments. 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 Dates –May 12, July 14, September 8.

Adjournment

Arun Pondicherry adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe