

NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

May 12, 2023

MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met on May 12, 2023. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

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

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

Approval of Minutes: (March 3, 2023) a motion was made by Beth Kabes and seconded by Arun Pondicherry to approve the minutes. Motion carried on roll call vote: Diane Downer – aye; Beth Kabes – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer - aye. Motion approved.

Chair's Report and Commissioner's Comments

Diane Downer – reported Scottsbluff Public Library has a new director, Richard Landreth. Diane said the Gering Public Library Foundation is back to square one in finding funding for a new library facility.

Lois Todd-Meyer – helped with Writers Write – a group of 43 eighth grade students from Lincoln Public Schools who were nominated by their teachers to attend. The students worked in groups with published authors on writings which will be archived in the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors at Lincoln's Bennett Martin Public Library.

Beth Kabes –recognized the Springfield Memorial Library on being selected as a finalist for the 2023 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The Institute of Museum and Library Services presents the National Medal annually.

Arun Pondicherry – no report

Director's Report

Personnel – Rod Wagner reported that Trey Porter will be starting on May 22. Trey will fill the position in the Talking Book and Braille Service providing studio support and book circulation. Trey recently graduated from Doane University majoring in media communications. Gabe Kramer, TBBS Director, and Matt Hier, TBBS Audio Production Studio Manager, attended the 2023 National

Library Service Western Regional Conference in Sacramento, CA. Gabe and Matt were on a panel presentation regarding studios and recording activity.

Library Broadband Initiatives and Funding – Wagner reported that Governor Pillen held a press conference at Clay Center Public Library to announce support for efforts to provide high-speed internet service for libraries and for all of Nebraska. There were brief remarks from Governor Pillen, Public Service Commission member Eric Kamler, Clay Center Library Director Cheryl Green and Wagner. There were several news stories following the press conference.

Christa Porter reported that in 2020 the Nebraska Broadband Task Force published a report that included a recommendation that the Public Service Commission (PSC) create a one million dollar matching fund for fiber connections in schools and libraries with funds to be available for projects over a four year period. As part of the Federal E-Rate program, discounts are available to schools and libraries for internet service or any equipment or construction they needed to get service. E-Rate has an additional program if a state provides matching funds to a library. E-Rate will match those funds. Nebraska is in the third year of providing funding with 2024 being the last year. Nine public libraries have received funding over the last three years. The PSC has put out an order seeking comments from the public on extending the program to go beyond four years and to have funds cover other costs than construction. The PSC is reaching out to libraries asking for input about libraries' challenges in installing fiber connections. The deadline for receiving comments is May 26 and PSC reply comments by June 16.

Public Library Accreditation – Porter reported Public Library Accreditation happens annually. Libraries need to meet certain criteria to become or remain accredited. The program has been in place since the late 1980s. In 2022, the program changed from a three-year accreditation period to five years. There are currently 183 accredited libraries. Each year 36 to 37 libraries come up for accreditation renewal. In July, Porter sends an email to libraries up for renewal and to libraries that are not accredited. Four workshops are scheduled to provide instruction on the accreditation process. Libraries must be accredited to apply for grants from the Library Commission or to receive state aid payments.

Librarian and Library Board Certification – Holli Duggan, NLC continuing education coordinator, said that library directors and boards must be certified for a library's accreditation. Boards, as a group, must earn 20 hours continuing education credit every three years to be certified. Any activities or events sponsored by the Library Commission or regional library systems are eligible for library boards to receive CE credit. The Library Commission has purchased a statewide membership to United for Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, for public libraries to use as an informational and educational resource.

Librarians must earn 45 hours of CE credit every three years for certification. There are three levels of certification. The certification level depends on education background. Certification does not require a library science degree. For those that do not possess a master's level library science degree, completion of Basic Skills courses provided by the Library Commission are required. The Basic Skills courses are provided online free of charge and offered throughout the year. Basic Skills courses also count toward CE credit.

State Legislation Status – Wagner reported the legislature is not in session today and will return on Tuesday, May 16, which will be day 78 of the 90-day session. LB635, relating to educational databases provided by the Commission and Nebraska schools, has not advanced from the

legislature's education committee. LB441, which would repeal the exemption from prosecution for those in educational institutions providing obscenity to minors in grades K-12, has not advanced from the judiciary committee and is expected to carry over to the 2024 legislative session. LB 298, introduced and sponsored by Senator Linehan, provides a requirement that schools annually report regarding students who have dyslexia to give attention and support to these students.

Nebraska Center for the Book – Wagner reported the Nebraska Book Festival will be held June 10 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Lincoln Community Foundation Garden and Bennett Martin Public Library. There are currently 37 entries in the Nebraska Book Awards competition. The entry deadline is June 30. Nominations for 2024 One Book One Nebraska are due on June 15. The Celebration of Nebraska Books will be held on October 14 at the Nebraska History Museum. The proclamation ceremony recognizing National Library Week and winners of the Letters About Literature contest was held April 3 at the Capitol. After the ceremony, a brunch was provided at Bennett Martin Public Library followed by a tour and presentation in the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors.

Financial Report

April Financial Report – Wagner reported that the operating budget has personnel savings and those funds can be applied toward other operating expenses. Major operating expenditure items are in line with the budget. Federal funds are also within budget for the federal fiscal year ending September 30.

Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds have been expended. Reports on use of those funds are being posted on the Library Commission website.

2023-2025 State Biennium Budget – Wagner reported the legislature's appropriations committee presented its recommendations to the legislature. For the Library Commission, the recommendations include a 4.4% state funds increase for FY24 and 3.2% state funds increase for FY25. The committee increased funding for database subscriptions, regional library systems, eReads program, and state aid to public libraries.

New Business

Regional Library System Allocations for FY 2024 – Wagner presented funding allocation recommendations for the 2024 fiscal year. The proposed allocations include a 5% funding increase over current fiscal year amounts.

A motion was made by Beth Kabes and seconded by Lois Todd-Meyer to approve funding allocations for the regional library systems for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023. Motion carried on roll call vote: Diane Downer – aye; Beth Kabes - aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer - aye. Motion approved.

Next Meeting Dates – July 14, September 8, November (TBD)

Adjournment

Arun Pondicherry adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe