

## NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

May 17, 2024

### MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met on May 17, 2024. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

Commission members present: Tiffany Carter, Beth Kabes, Arun Pondicherry, and Lois Todd-Meyer. Staff present: Rod Wagner, Sam Shaw, Jennifer Wrampe, and Bailee Juroshek

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

**Approval of Minutes:** (March 20, 2024) 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; Beth Kabes - aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye. Motion approved.

### Chair's Report and Commissioner's Comments

**Arun Pondicherry** – Last meeting, thank you to Library Commission staff, Governor Pillen, and Senator Ricketts. Attended the mayor's Interfaith Breakfast. Reported that the Indian Consulate General visited Lincoln and met with both him and the UNL Chancellor, and offered a donation of books.

**Beth Kabes** – no report

**Lois Todd-Meyer** – Last meeting, thank you to Commission staff. On board of the Nebraska Literary Heritage Association. Shared students nominated by teachers to produce poetry.

**Tiffany Carter** – no report

### Director's Report

*Personnel* – Rod Wagner reported that a few weeks ago the governor issued an executive order to eliminate state jobs vacant for 90 days or more. This expresses the view that if the positions have been open that long they are not needed. The work is getting done. That might be true in some cases, but far from all. Job freezes are sometimes done when state tax revenues have declined. That's not the case at this time but it relates to the governor's intent to reduce state spending and reduce property taxes.

The date for eliminating un-filled positions is June 1. The NLC has four vacant positions that fall in this category: the IT position that Andrew Sherman left when he was promoted to following Holly Woldt's retirement. This position is posted for applications and there is one and possibly more good prospects.

Another is the cataloger position that has been under recruitment for several months without getting qualified applicants – really need to have cataloging experience. Have gone through a couple of rounds of applications. There have been recent interviews.

The TBBS studio assistant/circulation position has been vacant for several months. Applicants have either not been qualified or they've turned down the position due to the pay level. More applications have come in so there is a chance this position will be filled before the end of the month.

Another is the position that Annette Hall held – TBBS volunteer services coordinator. This is a .75 FTE position. The position became vacant with Annette's passing. The position is under review by the state personnel office for reclassification. The position is intended to be full-time and a significant portion of the position will be TBBS outreach to publicize TBBS, create more awareness of the service, and increase the number of borrowers.

*State Legislative Session* – The 2024 state legislative session ended with two library related bills not advancing. LB 441 (LB441 would repeal the exemption from prosecution for those in educational institutions, including public libraries, providing obscenity to minors in grades K-12). LB 635 would require vendors and providers of digital and on-line resources (databases) to school children in K-12 grades filter and block materials illegally obscene and harmful to minors. The bill would require vendors to verify to the schools or Nebraska Library Commission that they have done so and to cause the Nebraska Library Commission and the Nebraska Department of Education to submit an annual report.

*Public Library Accreditation* – The 2024 Public Library Accreditation process will open on July 1. Questions about computer security will be added to the application form this year, increasing the number of points libraries can earn.

Online workshops have been scheduled, and a shorter NCompass Live session was held on May 8 – the recording is linked on the Accreditation webpage.

Public Library Accreditation 2024 Workshops:

June 4 – 1-4pm

June 6 - 9:30am-12:30pm

June 11 – 9:30am-12:30pm

June 12 – 1-4pm

*E-rate and Library Broadband Improvements* – The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) released three Waves of Funding Commitment Decision Letters (FCDLs) for E-rate Funding Year 2024. The final count for Nebraska includes 74 libraries applying for a total of \$307,536. So far, 65 libraries have been funded for \$261,644.74. There are 2 Fiber Special Construction applications – Hildreth public library has been funded and Exeter public library is pending.

*Medica – Community Engagement Funds* – Wagner reported the Medica insurance company has donated \$63,500 to the Library Commission to be used for purchasing networking equipment for

rural libraries that are installing fiber connections for broadband service improvement. A portion of the funds will be for travel expenses to libraries for technology assessments and assistance with equipment installations. Andrew ‘Sherm’ Sherman is in charge of the funds and is contacting libraries based on the Public Library Survey data to conduct technology reviews to determine needs.

Eight libraries so far have received these funds, for a total of \$2,250. That averages \$280/library and under the estimated spending amount of \$400 per library. These have been small libraries so they are coming in lower than the estimate.

*Fern V. Heim Trustee Scholarships Fund* – Fern Heim is a former Library Commission staff member who retired a number of years ago. Fern was what was then called a network coordinator and worked with libraries in the northeast and metropolitan library networks (later changed to northern and eastern library systems). Fern passed away several years ago. Fern’s estate included funds to provide scholarships for public library trustees to attend the state library association conference or a national conference (current thought is to the Association for Rural and Small Libraries).

The funds were placed with the Lincoln Community Foundation. Fund earnings have reached the point that LCF will distribute \$3,200 in August to be paid to the Library Commission for scholarships. Scholarships are to be based on applications submitted to the Library Commission and Nebraska Library Association. Commission and Association representatives will make the scholarship selections. This year’s \$3,200 isn’t a large amount but will fund several scholarships if given for this October’s NLA conference.

The Heim scholarships intent is to provide financial support for trustees from smaller communities and with the view that larger libraries are better able to support conference attendance by trustees. That may not be. However, that’s the way the fund is set up with LCF. The intent was also to give scholarships to NLA Public Library and Trustees Section members. Given the decline in section memberships and that most of the memberships are library staff, members will receive preference but not exclude non-member trustee applicants.

*Nebraska Center for the Book* – The Letters About Literature winners and alternates were recognized at the governor’s April proclamation signing ceremony. The program has three categories: elementary, middle school, and high school. Following the ceremony at the Capitol brunch was served at the Bennett Martin library. The students read their letters followed by time at the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors at BMPL. Their letters were added to the Heritage Room authors’ items.

Nebraska Book Award entries have been coming in over the past several months. The deadline is May 31. The deadline for 2025 One Book One Nebraska nominations is May 31.

The Celebration of Nebraska Books and the Nebraska Book Festival are re-joining this year. The Nebraska Celebration of Books will be held on Saturday, October 12, at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln city campus union. The University of Nebraska Press is a co-sponsor. The UNP’s involvement means that we have free use of the city campus union second floor rooms including the auditorium. There will be Friday evening activities, presentations Saturday morning, exhibitors, book sales and signings, awards presentations in the afternoon, and announcement of the 2025 OBON, and ending with a reception.

Matt Mason will be leaving his appointment as Nebraska State Poet at the end of this year. The Nebraska Library Commission, Nebraska Arts Council, and Humanities Nebraska receive

nominations for the State Poet appointment and then provide a recommendation to Governor Pillen for approval. There are plans to soon publicize the nominations request.

## **Financial Report**

*April Financial Report* – Wagner reported that state funded operating expenses are a few percent under budget with two months remaining. This is the first year of the biennium so funds carry over to the second year. Federal (LSTA) operating funds are also under budget at the end of April.

*2025-2027 Biennium Budget* – Wagner said the budget request is due September 15.

## **New Business**

*State Aid to Public Libraries Payments* – Wagner requested approval for state aid payments to public libraries (proposed allocations included with meeting documents). Sam Shaw, Planning and Data Services Coordinated, explained the basis for the state aid calculations.

A motion was made by Lois Todd-Meyer and seconded by Tiffany Carter to approve the state aid to public libraries payments. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Beth Kabes – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Motion approved.

*Regional Library System Proposed Funding Allocations* – Wagner presented funding allocation recommendations for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. The proposed allocations include a 3.2% funding increase over current fiscal year amounts.

A motion was made by Arun Pondicherry and seconded by Lois Todd-Meyer to approve the regional library system payments for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Beth Kabes – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Motion approved.

*Out-of-State Travel Request* – Wagner requested approval to attend the Western Council of State Libraries annual meeting in San Diego, California from June 24-27.

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

*Special Recognition* – Lois and Arun (thank you) – Thank you to Lois and Arun for their six years of service on the Library Commission.

*Next Meeting Dates* – July 26, September 6

## **Adjournment**

Beth Kabes adjourned the meeting.

Bailee Juroshek