

# NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

November 16, 2023

## MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met on November 16, 2023. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

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

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

**Approval of Minutes:** (September 8, 2023) a motion was made by Lois Todd-Meyer and seconded by Diane Downer to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Vernon J. – aye; Beth Kabes - aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye. Motion approved.

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

**Arun Pondicherry** – no report

**Vernon J.** – no report

**Lois Todd-Meyer** – no report

**Diane Downer** – reported Deb Carlson, Children's/Public Service Librarian at Scottsbluff Public Library, has retired.

**Beth Kabes** – no report

**Tiffany Carter** – no report

### Public Comment

Public comment was given in regards to NebraskaAccess online databases, library book challenges, issues, and actions.

## **Director's Report**

*Personnel* – Rod Wagner reported Kay Goehring, Talking Book and Braille Service Senior Readers Advisor, will retire on December 1. Holly Woldt, Library Technology Support Specialist, will also retire on December 1. Shoshana Patocka, Cataloging Librarian, will be leaving the Commission staff December 1 to begin a position with the Oregon State University Library.

*NebraskAccess Online Resources/OverDrive Libraries Consortium* – Devra Dragos reported that the databases offered through NebraskAccess contain collections of reference materials. The only advertisements within the databases are advertisements that are part of an original article. Database vendors do not work with other companies to provide advertising. Individual articles may contain links to other resources that are outside of the database and vendors have no control over what content is in those outside links. Whether a person can get to that link or not depends on the filtering system that is available on the internet access that device is attached to. Prior to August 2022, all resources were available on one page and under one password. There are now three separate web pages with three separate passwords for access: Elementary/Middle School, High School, and All Databases. When using any password on the Elementary/Middle School page you will see the search results that a child would see using elementary/middle school password. The databases on this page have been narrowed down through EBSCO's curation process. If any article contains a specific term that has been deemed inappropriate for children the article will not come up. If on the All Databases page you will get more results because the databases are not curated on that page. EBSCO is responsive in removing individual articles within 48 hours if requested. During the July 2022 – June 2023 fiscal year there were over 14 million searches on NebraskAccess. That includes all academic institutions, public, school and special libraries.

Dragos reported that she and Susan Knisely coordinate the Nebraska OverDrive Consortium's technical details, finances and communications. They work with OverDrive to set up new accounts when libraries join, handle technical issues that may come up, collect annual fees and pay OverDrive invoices. They also work with libraries to keep policies up to date and post that information to the Commission's website. Currently, there are 193 public libraries in the consortium. That represents nearly 690,000 Nebraskans within the service area of the consortium libraries. The largest library in the consortium is Bellevue which serves a population of 53,270. The smallest library is Byron serving a population of 78. Omaha and Lincoln established their own OverDrive accounts before the consortium started. Because of publishers' policies, OverDrive chose not to include the two largest cities in the statewide group. Those cities have their own separate collections. Ralston chose to partner with Omaha. In the past fiscal year, circulation increased by 13%. Audiobook downloads represented 53% of the loans. The consortium collection also contains e-books and magazines. Approximately 80% of the circulations were adult titles and 20% were juvenile titles. A benefit of being part of the consortium is that any of the member libraries can have an Advantage account, which allows libraries to purchase their own copies of items. Patrons of those libraries have priority for loans. There are currently 46 libraries that have Advantage accounts. Materials in the consortium collection are chosen mostly by volunteer selectors.

*E-Rate Library Broadband Initiatives* – Christa Porter reported the Federal E-Rate program provides discounts to schools and public libraries for internet service or any equipment or construction they

need to get service. E-Rate has an additional program if a state provides matching funds to a library, E-Rate will match those funds. In 2020, the Nebraska Public Service Commission was allotted a \$1 million matching fund for fiber construction for schools and libraries with funds available over a four year period, with only \$20,000 being used so far. In 2023 the PSC held hearings and put out a new Progression Order on NUSF-117 to extend the program and fund 100% of what is needed to get fiber run to buildings. This is an ongoing program that will last until the money has been expended or everyone has fiber. There are approximately 100 libraries that still do not have fiber.

*Creative Aging Arts Program* – Wagner reported the Library Commission was asked by the Nebraska Arts Council to partner on an application for funding to support training in libraries for creative aging activities. The project was approved. As a result, libraries will host an artist to provide instruction in creative arts. Older adults are the program’s target group. The program allows for inclusion of 25 libraries. All of those openings were filled. Three training sessions were held in October for library representatives. Training introduced participants to the program, its purposes, and details for program management.

*Nebraska Center for the Book* – Wagner reported the Celebration of Nebraska Books was held October 14 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln City Campus Union. Professor Rick Cypert, Nebraska Wesleyan University, gave a presentation on Mignon Eberhart, author of the 2023 OBON selection, *The Mystery of Hunting’s End*. The Mildred Bennet and Jane Geske awards were presented. Book awards were presented for each of the book award categories. Following the awards, the 2024 OBON selection was announced, *Dancing with the Octopus* by Debora Harding.

## **Financial Report**

*October Financial Report* – Wagner reported that expenditures through October were in line with the operating budget. The personnel category is the major operating expense and currently those expenditures are under the budgeted amount. Some expenses are paid during the first quarter for the full year and those expenses are a bit above budgeted amounts. The largest expenses from the state aid program are the quarterly payments to the regional library systems, database licensing fees and the OverDrive Libraries consortium budget. The allocations from the state appropriation for OverDrive are divided among the Omaha, Ralston, and Lincoln libraries and the consortium based on library service area populations.

*LSTA Appropriations Outlook* – Wagner said Congress has extended appropriations to January 2024 under a congressional continuing resolution. The current funding that is available to the Commission this fiscal year is based on the funding level from last fiscal year.

## **New Business**

*Next Meeting Date* – January 12, 2024

## **Adjournment**

Arun Pondicherry adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe