

NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

September 8, 2023

MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met on September 8, 2023. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

Commission members present: Diane Downer, Vernon J., Beth Kabes, and Lois Todd-Meyer; via GoToMeeting: Tiffany Carter (logged on at 10:00 a.m.) and Arun Pondicherry (logged on at 10:00 a.m.). Staff present: Rod Wagner, Kayla Henzel, and Holly Woldt; via GoToMeeting: Christa Porter.

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

Approval of Minutes: (July 14, 2023) A motion was made by Vernon J. and seconded by Beth Kabes to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried on roll call vote: Diane Downer – aye; Vernon J. – aye; Beth Kabes – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye. Motion approved.

Chair's Report and Commissioners' Comments

Lois Todd-Meyer – No comments

Vernon J. – No comments

Beth Kabes – reported that she spent time at Crete Public Library and was given a tour of the building from library director Joy Stevenson. Kabes also reported that she did some work at the library in Leigh due to the librarian being out for medical leave around a month ago. Even though not very many patrons came through, it served as a good experience.

Diane Downer – reported that she attended the Western Library System annual meeting in Bayard on August 1.

Tiffany Carter – No comments

Arun Pondicherry – No comments

Director's Report

Personnel - Wagner reported that Jerry Breazile and Tessa Terry will be recognized as honorees for Nebraska's Excellence in Leadership program. This annual event gives state agencies the opportunity to select staff members for recognition. The event will take place on October 24 at the Governor's residence.

Open Meetings Act Posters – Christa Porter reported that there have been updates to the Open Meetings Act over the years and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. New Open Meetings Act posters were purchased and are to be mailed to every public library in Nebraska, the four system offices, and to each library branch in Omaha and Lincoln. Porter also reported that she delivered approximately 44 posters to the libraries that attended the recent Youth Services Retreat in Ashland. The remaining posters will be mailed out once the proper mailing labels come in.

E-rate Library Broadband Initiatives – Christa Porter reported that 2024 marks the fourth year of the NUSF-117 program. This particular program has not received as much response as anticipated. A hearing was held on August 21st and the Public Service Commission (PSC) put out a new order to expand and extend the program. Porter said that there are approximately 100 libraries in the state that are without fiber connections. Some libraries are unable to afford bringing fiber to their library even with the E-rate discount. One of the suggestions for the future of the program is for the PSC to provide funding for recurring monthly internet service charges as well. Holly Woldt reported that the Public Service Commission will make a decision at the end of the month or the beginning of October.

Holly Woldt reported that the Library Commission has some projects that would complement the decision of the PSC. Some libraries are unable to install fiber due to outdated equipment or lack of cybersecurity. The NLC has purchased software for libraries to utilize. Woldt also reported that the NLC is working toward offering a software solution for privacy and security of public library computers.

Digital Equity Planning Grant – Holly Woldt reported that the State Digital Equity Planning Grant has allocated \$600,000 of federal funds for Nebraska to plan and provide digital equity throughout the state. The digital equity planning project is being managed through the state's economic development districts, with partnership from the Nebraska Library Commission. The focus of the plan is to allow everyone to participate in the digital economy. Libraries play an important role in the development of the plan.

Nebraska Center for the Book – Wagner reported that the Celebration of Nebraska Books is scheduled for Saturday, October 14th at the UNL City Campus Union. The event will be preceded by the annual Nebraska Center for the Book membership meeting. The Celebration program is scheduled to begin at 2:30 pm and will include presentations of the Mildred Bennett Award, Jane Geske Award, and the Nebraska Book Awards. The event will also include the announcement of the 2024 One Book One Nebraska selection. A reception with book signings is still being organized.

Financial Report

August Financial Report – Wagner reported that September 30 is the end of the first quarter of the state fiscal year. Some operating expenses, such as subscriptions, insurance, and accounting/auditing fees, are paid in full at the start of the fiscal year. Some expenditure items have exceeded initial budgeted amounts but the overall operating budget remains on track. The federal fiscal year ends on September 30 and expenditures remain within budget. Wagner said that Congress has a few weeks to appropriate funds before the start of the federal fiscal year on October 1. Given the status of the appropriations process, Congress will need to enact a continuing resolution to extend funding temporarily or there will be a federal government shut down until appropriations are made.

New Business

Out-of-State Travel Request – Wagner reported that the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies has its annual fall conference scheduled for October 29 through November 1 in Newport, Rhode Island. This meeting marks the 50th anniversary of COSLA and will cover various issues of state library agencies across the country. Wagner requested approval to attend the meeting.

A motion was made by Beth Kabes and seconded by Vernon J. to approve the out of state travel request. 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.

Next Meeting Dates – November 16, January 12

Adjournment

Lois Todd-Meyer adjourned the meeting.

Kayla Henzel