

# NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

March 11, 2022

## MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met on March 11, 2022. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

Commission members present: Vernon Davis, Arun Pondicherry, Lois Todd-Meyer, Julia Tye and Kristin Wiebe; via GoToMeeting: Beth Kabes. Staff present: Rod Wagner, Jennifer Wrampe, Sam Shaw, Devra Dragos; via GoToMeeting: Christa Porter. Public: Sally Reed; Via GoToMeeting: Christine Walsh. 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 Julia Tye and seconded by Lois Todd-Meyer to approve the agenda. Motion carried on roll call vote: Vernon Davis – aye; Beth Kabes – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristin Wiebe – aye. Motion approved.

**Approval of Minutes:** (January 14, 2022) a motion was made by Kristin Wiebe and seconded by Julia Tye to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried on roll call vote: Vernon Davis – aye; Beth Kabes – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristin Wiebe – aye. Motion approved.

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

**Arun Pondicherry** – No report.

**Lois Todd-Meyer** – tuned in to the Big Talk From Small Libraries Conference and commented that Christa Porter did a good job putting it together.

**Vernon Davis** – No report.

**Julia Tye** – reported that Ravenna Public Library and Hastings Public Library each received a \$10,000 American Rescue Plan Act Humanities grant. Cecelia Lawrence, North Platte Public Library Director, is retiring after 27 years. Kearney Public Library has gone fine free and the change has been very well accepted. April will be the 10-year anniversary of the Kearney Public Library's renovation and expansion project.

**Kristin Wiebe** – commented she continues to be impressed with the Western Library System's newsletter. Nebraska Public Media is in a partnership with the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum in promotion of the film "My Garden of a Thousand Bees." Many libraries in the WLS region are participating by providing educational guides on pollenating gardens. Library patrons are able to order seed packets. The film will be shown at the Historic Theater in Scottsbluff in

Spring/Summer 2022. Both Scottsbluff Public Library and Gering Public Library are without library directors. A search is underway for new directors.

**Beth Kabes** – received information about Three Rivers Library System activities from director Tammi Thiem. Beth said that Tammi received a thank you from Marty Magee, Central Community College, on her “Ethics in the Library” programs available on YouTube. Tammi is prolific in her Facebook posts for the system. Tammi is engaging others with daily posts as well as library highlights from around the region. Beth attended the March TRLS board meeting via Zoom.

## **Director’s Report**

*Personnel* – Rod Wagner reported that Mary Geibel has moved to the Library Development Team to fill the position that Linda Babcock vacated when Linda retired. Mary is moving from the Commission’s Information Services Unit. Recruitment is now underway to fill that vacancy. Applications are due March 18.

*2022 Legislative Session and Legislative Bills Status* – Wagner reported LB75 is a bill involving township libraries that carried over from last year’s legislative session. The number of township libraries in Nebraska is declining as a result of counties moving away from township organization. The bill provides a process for determining the fate of township libraries – close, come under governance of a village, city, or county. The bill has advanced to select file.

LB1213 involves the online resources provided by the Library Commission and schools for K-12 educational purposes. The contention is that it is possible students can access obscene material from these resources. The primary target are the databases provided through EBSCO, which provides educational resources to thousands of libraries nationally and internationally. The Library Commission licenses databases provided by EBSCO for statewide access. Many schools offer databases that are not provided through the Library Commission’s licenses. Commission staff have submitted requests and recommendations for changes to the bill. The bill hearing was held in January. The legislature’s judiciary committee has not taken action on the bill.

LB1256 is a bill that would change the Omaha Public Library board from an appointed board to an elected board. Board members would be elected by district, similar to city council elections. The bill was referred to the legislature’s general affairs committee. The committee has taken no action on the bill.

*Library Innovation Studios Project* – Wagner reported the LIS grant project officially ended December 31. JoAnn McManus has distributed most of the project equipment and supplies to libraries. JoAnn is working on the project’s final report. An NCompass Live session is scheduled for March 23 to provide project highlights and results. JoAnn will provide a report at a future Commission meeting.

*Big Talk From Small Libraries Conference* – Christa Porter reported the conference was held February 25. There were 636 pre-registrations, with 371 individual logins throughout the day. The conference included registrations from beyond Nebraska – most states and also Canadian

provinces. Christa is editing the conference recording to separate into individual sessions. The sessions will then be accessible for viewing. The next Big Talk From Small Libraries conference will be held February 24, 2023.

*Nebraska Center for the Book* – Christy Walsh, NCB Board President, reported the next board meeting will be held in early April. Letters About Literature winners have been selected and an awards celebration and proclamation presentation by the governor is planned for April 4. Nominations for One Book One Nebraska are being accepted through June 15. There are three new board members – Steve Fosselman (Grand Island), Joan Birnie (Broken Bow), and Kathy Thomsen (Lexington). The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress Annual Idea Exchange for state affiliates will be held virtually May. The National Book Festival is planned for September 3 in Washington D.C. One project currently under discussion is transfer of the Literary Landmarks program from the American Library Association’s United for Libraries division to the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Christy said that regional groupings of state affiliates is under construction to encourage collaborative projects and programming throughout the year.

*LSTA Five-Year State Program Evaluation* – Wagner thanked Sally Reed for her work on the LSTA State Program Five-Year Evaluation report. Sally has sent out the draft report for review. The report is to be submitted to the Institute of Museum and Library Services by March 30.

## **Financial Report**

*February Financial Report* – Wagner reported that state general fund expenditures are within budget. The Commission’s major operating expense is personnel and expenditures thus far are below budget. Any savings from personnel can be used for other operating expenses. Major operating expenses, including travel and capital outlay are within budget. Federal funds are within budget. The Library Innovation Studios grant expenditures are reported as above budget. However, the April financial report doesn’t display revenue collected from libraries for supply sales.

*LSTA FY 2022 Appropriation Status* – Wagner reported that Congress has finalized the federal budget, approving appropriation bills through the end of September. Nebraska’s grant award amount through the LSTA Grants to States program should be available soon.

*American Rescue Plan Act Budget and Expenditures* – Wagner reported funds are within budget.

## **New Business**

*American Rescue Plan Act Allocations* – Wagner reported \$1,425,000 was budgeted for payments to public libraries on a formula basis. Not all libraries that were eligible applied for funds, leaving \$120,135 unobligated. It is proposed that the remaining funds be used to supplement the Kreutz Bennett Donor Advised Fund (administered by the Nebraska Community foundation), Library Improvement and Youth grants, and Library Commission Book Club Kits.

A motion was made by Kristin Wiebe and seconded by Lois Todd-Meyer to approve the allocation of ARPA funds to the Kreutz Bennett Donor Advised Fund, Library Improvement and Youth grants, and Book Club Kits. Motion carried on roll call vote: Vernon Davis – aye; Beth Kabes – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristin Wiebe – 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 payment for libraries that receive county funding. Libraries that are not accredited, but submit a statistical report, are to receive a \$200 payment. The total payment estimate this fiscal year is \$379,000.

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

*Next Meeting Dates* –May 13, July 8, September 9, November (TBD).

### **Adjournment**

Arun Pondicherry adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe