

NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

May 14, 2021

MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met May 14, 2021. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

Commission members present: Debby Bloom, Arun Pondicherry, Lois Todd-Meyer, Julia Tye, and Kristin Wiebe; via GoToMeeting remote connection: Vernon Davis. Staff present: Rod Wagner, Jennifer Wrampe; via GoToMeeting: Christa Porter, Tessa Terry. Public: Tom Rolfes. Debby Bloom 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: Debby Bloom – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristen Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes: (March 12, 2021) a motion was made by Julia Tye and seconded by Kristin Wiebe to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried on roll call vote: Debby Bloom – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristin Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

Chair's Report and Commissioner's Comments

Debby Bloom – reported that Gretna Public Library will re-opens May 17. Late fees will be waived until August 31. The library has a “Creative Bug Online” program. The program includes thousands of arts and crafts videos. Omaha Public library has eliminated overdue fines. Papillion Public Library offers Fontanelle Forest passes for check out. The library hopes to have Lauritzen Garden passes available for check out soon.

Vernon Davis – no report.

Kristin Wiebe – reported the Scottsbluff public library has eliminated late fees resulting in hundreds of returned books. The Scottsbluff library started a seed library this spring. The library also offers a board game, puzzle and playground equipment check out service. The Western Library System newsletter has been full with articles regarding libraries, library events and activities in the Western Library System region. Kristin said that more western Nebraska libraries have re-opened and others are planning for re-opening.

Julia Tye – reported Kearney Public Library has taken steps toward re-opening for full in-library services. The library continues to offer some virtual programs. The Summer Reading Program will start May 24 in a remote format. The library has an ongoing project to digitize the *Kearney Hub* newspaper.

Lois Todd-Meyer – reported the Nebraska Literary Heritage Association annual meeting was held in April. In the last year, the NLHA curator has received several thousand requests from people around the country doing research or wanting information about Nebraska authors.

Arun Pondicherry- no report.

Director's Report

Personnel – Rod Wagner reported that David Eckmann retired March 12. Four applicants were interviewed to fill the position vacancy. Jeri Clapper, Western Library System administrative assistant, is retiring May 27.

Library Innovation Studios Project Status – Wagner reported that the Institute of Museum and Library Services approved a six-month extension of the project to December 31, 2021. The extension will provide needed time to complete project evaluation and the final project report. The extension also allows the last four project libraries to have the same amount of time that other libraries have had to host makerspace equipment. A makerspace conference is being planned for early November at the Nebraska Innovation Campus to bring together representatives of the project libraries. The event will also be open to representatives of other libraries and the public.

State Legislative Session – Wagner reported that the legislative session might end earlier than expected. LB75 will not advance this session. The bill creates a process for making decisions about continuance of library services in counties that discontinue township organization. The bill has no apparent opposition but was not included on the legislature's consent calendar. The bill will carry over to the 2022 legislative session.

Emergency Connectivity Fund – Christa Porter reported the Emergency Connectivity Fund is a new federal program enacted as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. The program for schools and public libraries is separate from the E-rate program but will use E-rate systems for administration, applications, and funds distribution. A total of \$7.1 billion was appropriated for this program for schools and libraries to provide devices and internet services off campus. The purpose of the program is to help close the homework gap. The application window will open in June.

Nebraska Center for the Book – Tessa Terry reported the Nebraska Center for the Book hosted a virtual Letters About Literature awards ceremony on May 12. A video of the ceremony will be posted soon. Nominations are currently being accepted for the NCB Book Awards. The due date is June 30. The Celebration of Nebraska Books event will be held October 23. James Kimble, One Book One Nebraska 2021 book author, is available via remote connection to any Nebraska library that wants to book him as a speaker. Nominations are due June 15 for 2022 One Book One Nebraska selection consideration.

Financial Report

April Budget and Financial Report – Wagner reported that expenditures are on track for the fiscal year. Due to COVID-19, travel expenses are significantly under budget. State Aid to public Libraries payments will be distributed soon.

2021-2023 Biennium Budget – Wagner reported the Commission received most of the funds requested for the 2021-2023 biennium budget. This includes requests for NebraskaAccess licensing fee increases, Nebraska eReads request for the OverDrive libraries consortium and the Omaha, Ralston, and Lincoln public libraries. The appropriation also includes the increased funding requested for the four regional library systems.

Build Americas Libraries Act – Wagner reported there is legislation in both the House and Senate for the Build Americas Libraries Act. If enacted, the legislation would provide funds to state library agencies to support public library construction and renovation. Each state would receive a minimum of \$10 million to be expended within three years.

New Business

Regional Library Systems Funding- Wagner presented regional library system funding allocation recommendations for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. The proposed allocations are based on a 2.75% funding increase over current fiscal year amounts.

A motion was made by Julia Tye and seconded by Lois Todd-Meyer to approve the regional library system payments for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Motion carried on roll call vote: Debby Bloom – aye; Vernon Davis – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristen Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – Allocation Plan – Wagner presented American Rescue plan Act funding allocations.

A motion was made by Kristin Wiebe and seconded by Arun Pondicherry to approve the ARPA funding allocations. Motion carried on roll call vote: Debby Bloom – aye; Vernon Davis – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristen Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

Election of Commission Chair – Debby Bloom nominated Arun Pondicherry to serve as Commission Chair, seconded by Julia Tye. Motion carried on roll call vote: Debby Bloom – aye; Vernon Davis – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristen Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

Election of Commission Vice Chair – Julia Tye nominated Lois Todd-Meyer to serve as Commission Vice-Chair, seconded by Kristin Wiebe. Motion carried on roll call vote: Debby Bloom – aye; Vernon Davis – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristen Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

Next Meeting Dates –July 9, September 10.

Adjournment

Debby Bloom adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe