

# NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

November 4, 2022

## MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met on November 4, 2022. 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., Arun Pondicherry and Lois Todd-Meyer. Staff present: Rod Wagner, Jennifer Wrampe; via GoToMeeting: 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 Vernon J. and seconded by Lois Todd-Meyer to approve the agenda. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Vernon J. – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye. Motion approved.

**Approval of Minutes:** (September 9, 2022) a motion was made by Lois Todd-Meyer and seconded by Arun Pondicherry to approve the minutes. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Vernon J. – 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** – attended the Celebration of Nebraska Books and was honored to receive the Mildred Bennett Award.

**Tiffany Carter** – no report

**Diane Downer** – no report

### Director's Report

*Personnel* – Rod Wagner reported that there has not been any recent staff transitions.

Wagner highlighted some of the projects over the past year. The LSTA five-year state program evaluation was completed and report submitted by the end of March due date. A new five-year LSTA state program plan was submitted prior to the June 30 due date. Work is continuing with the various items budgeted and carried out with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The

multi-year Library Innovation Studios grant project was completed and final report submitted in June. The biennium budget request was prepared and submitted on September 15. The Celebration of Nebraska Books event was held October 22.

*Broadband Improvements and Funding for Libraries* – Christa Porter reported on the federal E-Rate program that provides discounts to schools and libraries for internet service and related equipment. For the 2022 funding year, all Nebraska libraries that applied for E-Rate received discounts. Kimball, Fairmont and Lodgepole public libraries received E-rate funding for fiber construction to their buildings. These libraries received state matching funds that made the cost minimal for the libraries. Porter said that we are in the third year of the E-Rate state matching fund program for special fiber construction to public libraries and schools. This is the Nebraska Public Service Commission’s program to incentivize new fiber construction by allocating one million dollars over four years to assist with fiber construction costs. The E-rate program will match the funding that the PSC provides to have fiber run to the library or school buildings. This has helped many libraries to get fiber at no cost or at minimal cost. Two workshops and a kickoff webinar have been held to provide information about the program. A third workshop will be held November 9.

Porter reported on the Kreutz Bennett Donor Advised fund – a fund administered by the Nebraska Community Foundation over the past eleven years. The fund was created by Shirley Kreutz Bennett to provide support for libraries in communities with populations of less than 3,000. The Library Commission has worked with the Nebraska Community Foundation in making decisions on which libraries receive funding. Applications are received from libraries in the fall with a meeting in February to decide which libraries will receive grant funding. This year is the final year for grant funding. The remaining funds will be distributed. Over \$700,000 in funding has been distributed over the last eleven years. There were three different types of grants: a facilities grant to help with construction/renovations, enhancement grants for library services, and planning grants to help libraries achieve accreditation through the Library Commission. Thirteen applications were received this year. Since there was not enough funding to cover all thirteen applications, \$50,000 in ARPA funds were allocated by the Library Commission to cover the remaining applications.

*Technology & Access Services* – Wagner commented that Devra Dragos was not available at this time to provide a report and will be included for a report on the January meeting agenda.

*Nebraska Center for the Book* – Wagner reported on the Celebration of Nebraska Books event that was held October 22 at the Nebraska History Museum. Lois Todd-Meyer was the recipient of the Mildred Bennett Award. The Nebraska Writers Collective received the Jane Geske Award. Nebraska Book Awards were presented to this year’s award winners. The 2023 One Book One Nebraska selection announced at the Celebration is *The Mystery of Hunting’s End* by Mignon Eberhart.

*Brownstone Book Fund* – Wagner reported that for the past 20 years Diane Brownstone has selected a state to work with for selection of 100 libraries to receive 100 children’s books. Brownstone contacted the Library Commission and invited the Commission to select libraries to receive books. Books are selected from a list of titles provided by Diane Brownstone. Additional

titles can be recommended by the Library Commission, and especially those that may have a connection to the state. All costs are covered by the Brownstone Foundation. Nebraska was selected for this year's program. The state's "neediest" libraries are intended for the program. The libraries were selected by the four regional library system directors. Libraries were informed about their selection and invited to participate. Brodart is the company that assists the Brownstone Book Fund with ordering and processing books for delivery to libraries. At this time, Brodart has purchased nearly half the books from publishers and expects to have the remainder of the books purchased in the next few weeks.

*Electronic Magnifiers Project for Public Libraries* – Wagner reported that the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired contacted the Library Commission to partner in a project to provide electronic magnifier display equipment to each Nebraska public library, and at no cost to the libraries. The NCBVI received grant funding for the project. The equipment displays a magnified image on a monitor, helpful for reading books, magazines, and other documents.

*State Advisory Council on Libraries* –The next council meeting will be held November 18.

## **Financial Report**

*October Financial Report* – Wagner reported the October financial report is not yet available due to the meeting being held early in the month. The September report is available, Personnel expenses were slightly under budget; office space lease cost is at the budgeted amount. Some expenses for the fiscal year are paid in full early in the fiscal year (accounting and auditing fees, insurance, organizational dues, etc.). Overall operating expenses are within budget. The federal fiscal year ended September 30 with all funds fully expended or encumbered.

*American Rescue Plan Act Budget and Expenditures* – Wagner credited Christa Porter, Sam Shaw, and Sally Snyder for their work administering the ARPA grant funds. Christa Porter reported on the ARPA funds budgeted for three different grants: formula grants (distributed to public libraries and state institutional libraries), Library Improvement Grants and Youth Services Grants. Sam Shaw manages the funds allocated to public and state institutional libraries on a formula basis and Christa administers the Library Improvement Grants. Sally Snyder manages the Youth Services Grants. The original deadline for ARPA funds was to have all purchasing and reporting completed by September 30. However, the Commission requested and received an extension to December 31. A report is due to IMLS by April 2023. The extension was requested due to delays in obtaining furniture and equipment deliveries.

*LSTA Funding FY 2023* – Wagner reported Congress passed a continuing resolution to extend funding for federal agencies and programs until December 16. The resolution provides funding at last fiscal year's levels. By December 16, Congress will either need to complete appropriations for the remainder of the fiscal year (September 30, 2023) or further extend temporary funding into the new calendar year.

**New Business**

*Next Meeting Dates* –January 13, March 10, May 12, July 14.

**Adjournment**

Arun Pondicherry adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe