

NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Nebraska Library Commission, Lincoln, NE
September 10, 2010

Minutes

The Nebraska Library Commission met Friday, September 10, 2010, at the Nebraska Library Commission, Lincoln, Nebraska. The meeting notice was submitted to local newspapers ([Lincoln Journal Star](#), [Omaha World Herald](#)) and posted on the Nebraska Library Commission Web site.

Members present: Steve Batty (via phone), John Dale, Charles Gordon, Patricia (Pat) Gross and Sherry Crow. Staff present: Rod Wagner, Beth Goble, Allana Novotny, Sue Biltoft. Guests: Kathy Tooker, Brenda Ealey, Gayle Roberts and Yvonne Weers.

Vice-Chair John Dale called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. This meeting is in compliance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

Sherry Crow was introduced and congratulated on her recent appointment to the Commission. Sherry's first professional job was as a children's librarian in a public library. She has many years of experience as an elementary school librarian and is currently at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Introductions were made around the room.

Approval of Agenda: A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. Motion carried on roll call vote: John Dale – aye; Charles Gordon – aye; Pat Gross – aye; and Sherry Crow – aye.

Approval of the Minutes (July 9, 2010): Motion carried on roll call vote: Charles Gordon – aye; Pat Gross – aye, Sherry Crow – aye; and John Dale – aye. Motion approved.

PUBLIC FORUM

Brenda Ealey, Southeast Library System Administrator, introduced SELS Administrative Assistant, Yvonne Weers. Brenda reported on libraries in the SELS: Pawnee City recently held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new library, Auburn is working on an addition, the library director position is open at Plattsmouth and Bruning recently moved into a newly renovated building. Brenda will be attending the NAIL meeting in Norfolk and is looking forward to working with the institutional librarians.

Kathy Tooker, Eastern Library System Administrator, stated the Eastern and Southeast regional systems are jointly hosting their 16th Youth Services Retreat at Camp Carol Joy Holling the following week and have 40 registrants. She reported that libraries in the ELS are all experiencing budget cuts; Valley Public Library is moving into a redesigned bank building on main street and North Bend is raising funds for a new library.

Gayle Roberts, Blair Public Library director, spoke about increased services in their library and the excitement and support from the community.

Yvonne Weers, Administrative Assistant of SELS, reported on the re-designed Southeast Library System web site and the functionality of the site.

CHAIR'S REPORT AND COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Vice-Chair John Dale reported that Lincoln City Libraries is buying a new bookmobile and a main library study is being revisited on what might be involved in terms of a new main library in downtown Lincoln. The summer reading programs in Lincoln were a great success and Gere branch has created a gaming tower in the teen center at the library and part of the funding was through a grant from the Commission.

Charles Gordon reported that the Fremont public library is in limbo due to inaction on the city budget as city funds are needed to defend the city ordinance related to immigration.

Pat Gross reported that the Tech Workshop recently held in the Panhandle region was very successful and raised awareness of the Commission's training opportunities and other programs. The PLS Board meeting will be held September 14th. Duane Munson will be providing a book exhibit on September 21st and many schools and special libraries will be attending. On October 6, Craig Johnson, mystery author from Wyoming, will present at the Civic Center. This event is sponsored by the Scottsbluff Lied Public Library and Gering Public Library. On September 29th Pat will be involved in an eBook conference that will be conducted online. Margie Harrison, PLS Coordinator, has arranged for the program to be for librarians in the Panhandle region. Many libraries in the system are getting involved in the Nebraska Libraries on the Web project and several small libraries have made a presence on the web.

Steve Batty reported that the summer reading program in McCook was a great success with record attendance. Steve videotaped one of the sessions.

Sherry Crow stated that the summer reading program in Kearney was also a big success and the Kearney Public Library has started a building addition. The Calvin T. Ryan Library at UNK is building a learning commons – a combination of high tech services along with traditional library services. Jen Harvey, librarian at Calvin T. Ryan Library, is working with the daycare center on campus and providing story hour in the library for children of the center.

DIRECTORS REPORT

Library Commission Website Re-Design

Rod Wagner introduced Beth Goble and Allana Novotny who demonstrated the Library Commission's new website and explained the features and sources of information that will be provided. The staff involved in the project plan to have a live demonstration at the NLA/NEMA fall conference. The updated site demo was well received and staff complimented for their efforts.

Broadband Technology Opportunity Program Grant Award

Rod Wagner reported on the Broadband Opportunity Program (BTOP) grant awarded to the Nebraska Library Commission. The grant was announced a few weeks ago, but staff has been involved in the grant application planning process for the past year dating from contact from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation inviting a proposal for support in preparing a grant application. Along with the approval of the award from U.S. Department of Commerce, NTIA, approval must also be granted at the state level. This project is a matching fund grant award and all of the matching funds needed are being provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Nebraska Statutes provide that any private monies must be approved by the Governor. After receiving the Governor's approval, a news release was sent out announcing the grant.

Libraries involved in the BTOP project are invited to participate in one of four webinars that have been scheduled. The webinars are intended to introduce the grant and answer basic questions about the schedule of items and to also inform them of the project kick-off event which will be held November 9th & 10th, 2010 in Lincoln at The Embassy Suites hotel. Library directors of all the 140 libraries will be invited and their expenses for traveling and participating will be covered by the Gates Foundation. This information will be part of the webinars scheduled for September 10th, 13th, 15th and 21st.

Grant reporting requirements are governed by several federal regulations and will consume a large amount of staff time. Along with the participating libraries invited to attend the launch event, a number of project partner organizations will also be sent invitations to provide representation. Attendance is estimated to be about 200. Recognition will be given to a number of people and organizations that helped to make the grant possible including representatives from the Gates Foundation and some of the state elected officials. Along with covering the bill for this event, the Gates Foundation has provided the Commission with the help of an organization that is working behind the scenes in the event planning activity along with the team from the Commission. The URL address for the project is www.nlc.state.ne.us/lbbnc.

A major purpose of the library broadband project is economic stimulus and it is intended to help create jobs, including three full-time temporary positions at the Library Commission. The project staff positions include a Project Director, a Technology Specialist and a Grant Compliance Officer, funded fully by the grant. The Project Director and Grant Compliance Officer are funded for the full three years of the grant and the Technology Specialist position is funded for a year and a half. These positions have been approved through the state personnel process and have now been posted for applications.

Libraries began calling right away to find out what the grant will include for their libraries. The computer equipment, peripherals and other items must all be reconciled with the actual grant award. The request may not have included all of the actual equipment included in the information received from the libraries as this was used to create a profile for the detailed spreadsheet that shows exactly the kind of equipment each library will receive. These could be desktop computers, laptops, projectors, printers, software and ADA workstations and we want to make sure the information given to the libraries is accurate. Another question from the libraries is how soon they will receive the equipment. Since the grant funds are not all available

immediately the purchases, delivery and installations must be sequenced within the three year grant period.

IMLS Grant – Cultivation Rural Librarians’ Technology Skills

Wagner spoke about the IMLS grant that was announced in June. This project is also for three years and will begin on November 1, 2010. The project team that developed the proposal has regrouped and is working towards implementation. This grant involves largely the availability of scholarships, stipends and internships. Policies and procedures need to be developed and scheduling done to offer these grants. The policy recommendations will be presented to the Commissioners at the November, 2010 meeting for making decisions about the granting of the scholarships, stipends and internships. This grant will provide a significant amount of money to help with library science education and support recruitment efforts all the way down to the youth area to get kids involved in library services and give them the opportunity to work in libraries and pursue education at different levels.

Library Trustee Academy (ALA/Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations)

Rod introduced a message that had been received from the American Library Association ALTAFF division, who is on the verge of offering a trustee academy including several courses covering different areas of library services. A message will be sent to all Nebraska public libraries introducing this training. This is a great opportunity for Nebraska library trustees, and library directors, etc. These courses will be available for downloading rather than live classes, making them more accessible.

State Advisory Council on Libraries July 16 Meeting

Rod Wagner reported that the July State Advisory Council on Libraries meeting was held using the state’s video conferencing system, saving money from travel expenses. The Council had discussion of the Commission’s recently awarded 21st Century Librarian Grant. There was also time on the agenda for council members to share their experiences and observations about the “new normal” of declining library budgets. There was also discussion about the IMLS 21st Century skills initiative and how libraries are involved in helping people with finding information about and developing the skills necessary to be successful in this new age. The State Advisory Council on Libraries will again meet November 19th.

Nebraska OverDrive Libraries Program

Wagner reported that the Nebraska Library Commission assists a growing number of libraries across Nebraska in a shared collection of digital books. There are now 60 libraries that are a part of the project with 13 new libraries that have joined recently. Details can be found on the Commission’s web site on the cost involved with minimum participation fees needed to join the group and annual assessments that libraries contribute to help pay for the content. The Commission pays the groups’ annual maintenance fee. Pat Gross reported that she has experience using these digital books through the Gering and Scottsbluff libraries. This program can involve academic and K-12 school libraries as well as public.

NLA-NEMA Joint Conference (October 13-15)

Rod mentioned that several Library Commission staff is involved in the conference programs. The Commission will have a booth in the exhibit area. The regional library systems will be providing a pre-conference again and are involved in a number of program sessions as well.

Nebraska Center for the Book Events and Projects

Rod stated that November 6th is the Center for the Book’s annual meeting and awards program. The event will include presentation of the Nebraska book awards. The Jane Geske Award will also be presented at this event and the announcement of the 2011 One Book One Nebraska choice. This year there was an opportunity for people to contribute nominations for books and many were received. A committee will read and narrow the choices for a vote by board members for the 2011 book selection.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Wagner reported that the fiscal year is just getting started and reports for the first two months of the fiscal year and the expenditures are in line with the budget. He then spoke about the requirement for state employees covered by the NAPE/AFSCME labor contract to use two furlough days by the end of this calendar year. A policy and procedure had to be set up and approved and is now in effect for Library Commission staff.

The current federal fiscal year ends September 30 and there is no appropriation yet for the coming fiscal year. A continuing resolution appropriating funds on a temporary basis is expected that will allocate funds at the current federal fiscal year level. There is current legislation involved to re-authorize the LSTA funding. The administrative view point had changed to make the use of LSTA funds more restrictive and the new legislation would correct that.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None reported.

NEW BUSINESS

Rod presented the budget issues and modification summary for the 2011-2013 Biennium Budget and explained the expectation of state agencies that budgets are turned in at current funding level or less. The Commission is in a better position than some other state libraries. A survey is being conducted nationwide asking for reports on budget situation in state libraries. No decision will probably be made on the state’s budget until after elections are over and specific details may not be available until January when the Governor makes his recommendations.

Wagner reported on the practice of including Federal LSTA funds based on the current year funding level. Appropriations are made in two programs: Operations and Library Development. The operations portion covers staffing, facilities, travel, equipment purchases, supplies, etc. The Library Development includes grant programs and some contracting expenditures. Personnel costs were submitted this year without change, based on current funding, per instructions from the State Budget Division.

Proposals for consideration are first, the expense of the Commission’s office space. This rate was negotiated by the State Administrative Services Building Division and the fee increases each

year of the contract. Another proposed request for increase is for the Talking Book and Braille program for the purchase of flash memory cartridges that are used for books and magazines recorded at the Commission. The TBBS request also requires the purchase of additional plastic mailing containers used for the flash cartridges. Dave Oertli, Director of the TBBS, has calculated that next year we will need approximately \$20,000 to cover the cost of these supply items. That amount increases to \$31,707 the following year. Wagner recommended that the budget request include funds to cover these cost increases. Another item in the operations budget is a request that would allow the Commission to resume purchasing publications for the Commission's library science reference and professional collection. The acquisitions budget was reduced significantly this fiscal year and the loss of funds for purchasing professional publications has a negative effect on the ability to make these publications available for Nebraska library personnel, library science students, and Commission staff. The remainder of the operating budget request is at a sustaining level at current fiscal year budgeted amounts.

The State Aid portion of the budget includes four items proposed for the budget request:

- A 5% increase in funding for the grant payments made to accredited public libraries, State Aid to Public Libraries. This would be a maintenance funding level.
- An increase from \$69,000 to \$109,000 for FY12 for the Lender Compensation program and an additional amount for the following year. Many Nebraska libraries receive payments from this fund including public libraries, academic and special libraries. Rod referred to the statistics and payments spreadsheet created to show the lending activities over the past ten years. Over time there has been a steady increase in loans made partly due to a decrease in library budgets and reduced book purchases. The loan payments made to libraries are only a partial reimbursement of the transaction costs libraries incur in interlibrary lending. Nebraska benefits from libraries loaning to other libraries. Libraries will receive more than the \$69,000 this year due to remaining money in the NEBASE fund that became available when the state network closed last year. The fund will be depleted this year and then will need to come from state and federal funds. The request would be to increase the state funds portion.
- An increase in funding for the regional library systems for the coming two years with a 5% increase in state general funds. The overall increase is 2.6% due to a portion of the regional system funding payments made from LSTA funds. This is a maintenance funding level.
- The final state aid recommendation is a state funds increase for the NebraskAccess program. This is a 3.8% increase to cover subscription licensing fees. The companies the Commission contracts with for database subscription licenses held the line on fee increases this year. The subscription fee for Books in Print was substantially reduced this year.

Wagner reported that another part of the budget process is to submit modifications which would reduce funding. Budget instructions for the biennium require agencies to submit modifications based on a 10% state funds reduction. In the Operating budget, the personnel cost is the most significant expense and the facility lease expense is second. With limited ability to change the lease agreement and no funding for moving to another facility, personnel expenses become the basis for the operating budget modification. The proposed reduction would be implemented

through a combination of employee furloughs, position vacancies, and eliminating positions through a layoff plan that would need to follow personnel requirements and labor agreements.

Modification for the state aid program would include state aid to public libraries grants, regional system funding, and lender compensation payments.

Approval of the 2011-2013 Biennium Budget: A motion was made and seconded to approve the budget proposal as presented. Motion carried on roll call vote: Charles Gordon – aye; Pat Gross – aye; Sherry Crow – aye; John Dale – aye. Motion approved.

Next Meeting Date

The November meeting will be changed to November 10th afternoon after the Library Broadband Project Kick-off event program.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair John Dale at 11:20 a.m.

Sue Biloft, Secretary