

Nebraska State Advisory Council on Libraries

Kearney Public Library
Friday, March 11, 2011

MINUTES

State Advisory Council members present: Merrillene Wood, Deb Carlson, Vickie Retzlaff, Kate Borchman Hassebrook, Francine Canfield, Cindy Gitt, Trine McBride, Janet Stoeger Wilke, Ellen Weed, Beth Falla, Steve Fosselman, Frank Zimmerman, Glenda Willnerd, Pat Leach, Ceri Daniels, and Pam Bohmfalk. Guests: Matt Williams, Denise Harders, Christine Walsh, Nancy Escamilla, Jeri Brandson, Jean Lovach. Commission Members: Sherry Crow, Pat Gross, John Dale, Steve Batty. Commission Staff: Richard Miller, Rod Wagner.

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Merrillene Wood opened the meeting with a welcome and introductions of those present. Merrillene thanked the Kearney Public Library for hosting the meeting.

Approval of the Agenda: A motion was made by Frank Zimmerman and seconded by Kate Borchman Hassebrook to approve the agenda. Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes (November 19, 2010): A motion was made by Ceri Daniels and seconded by Deb Carlson to approve the minutes. Motion approved.

Nebraska Library Commission Reports/Discussion

Federal Library Program Update – Rod Wagner commented on the history of the Nebraska State Advisory Council on Libraries. The council was created as a requirement of the Library Services and Construction Act (as amended in 1972). The LSCA prescribed council membership requirements. The advisory council requirement was later dropped. However, the Library Commission has continued to have an advisory council. The council provides library and public representation, advice and information on library trends and issues. Even though advisory councils are no longer required by the federal library program, the Commission seeks the advice of the council on the federal library program. Wagner reported that Congress reauthorized the LSTA prior to adjournment last December. The reauthorization resolved some issues related to allowable expenses under the state programs portion of the LSTA. Wagner said that Congress has not completed appropriations for the full federal fiscal year. Funding is being allocated under a Congressional continuing resolution. Under the continuing resolution the Library Commission is receiving funding equal to last year's LSTA appropriation level. The continuing resolution will soon expire and Congress must act to appropriate funds for the remainder of the federal fiscal year ending September 30.

State Budget and Legislative Outlook – Wagner reported that Governor Heineman's state budget recommendations reflected the significant gap between projected state expenditures and revenues. His recommendation for the Library Commission is a 10% state funds reduction in the Commission's operating budget and level funding for the Commission's state aid to libraries program. The governor recommended 10% reductions for a number of state agencies and less for

others with priority for education and health care programs. The Legislature's appropriations committee included a 10% state funds reduction in the Commission's operating and state aid to libraries programs. Following completion of agency budget hearings the appropriations committee will develop its final recommendations to present to the full legislature toward the end of April. The committee's budget recommendation for the Commission could restore some of the cut. Wagner said that library supporters need to contact appropriations committee members concerning the Library Commission's budget. State fund reductions in the state aid to libraries program reduce funds available to libraries and regional library systems. A question was asked about prior budget cuts. Wagner said that there were significant state budget cuts during the 2001 – 2004 time period. He estimated that several rounds of budget cuts during that time reduced the Commission's state funds by over 20%. Even though the economy improved state funds remained relatively flat over the next few years. Budget cuts are intended to be permanent. In addition to state aid program funding reductions the Commission's operating budget was reduced resulting in the loss of some staff positions. Budget cuts the past two years have reduced the Library Commission's state funds an additional 9.5%. However, compared to many other states Nebraska's budget situation is not as severe.

Broadband Technology Opportunity Program Grant Update – Rod Wagner reported that the BTOP grant project includes 140 public libraries and 147 library buildings. Purchase orders were recently issued for over \$300,000 worth of equipment. Project staff is scheduling delivery of technology and furniture. Program activities will come later. Some things have not happened as soon as expected but the staff is working hard to move the project forward.

IMLS 21st Century Librarian Grant – Cultivating Rural Librarians' Technology Skills – Richard Miller reported on the Commission's scholarship, internships, and stipends project grant. The grant provides over \$700,000 in funding over a three year period. Miller said that scholarships are available for six different degree programs for library science education. Richard mentioned the Commission's website and information available there concerning the program and application process details. Stipends are an element of this grant that was not included in the Commission's previous scholarship grant program. The new grant program includes internships for high school and college students working in public libraries. Richard said that the internship program is in partnership with the Nebraska Library Association. NLA representation is included on the committee that reviewed internship applications.

NLC Grant Programs – Richard Miller highlighted the Commission's three grant programs. Two are state funded and one is funded through LSTA monies. The Youth Grants for Excellence has \$25,000 for project grants. For the most recent grants fourteen of fifteen project applications were funded. The Commission has \$25,000 budgeted for Continuing Education and Training Grants. Miller gave examples of the education/training projects including a workshop on branding, word of mouth marketing, the eastern and southeast systems' spring colloquium, and consumer digital media education. Miller said that the Commission's Library Improvement Grant program is funded from Nebraska's federal LSTA state program allocation. Miller said that there are far more funds requested than available. This year less than \$80,000 was available for grants. A significant portion of the grants have gone toward support of the Pioneer Consortium open source automation project. Grants for automation projects also went to a multi-library Panhandle Library System project and for individual library projects. Richard noted some

of the other projects that received grants. Information about all of these grant programs including grant recipients, grant amounts, and brief project descriptions can be found on the Commission's website.

Nebraska Library Association – Pam Bohmfalk reported on behalf of the NLA. Pam mentioned some of the projects that the NLA has supported including One Book – One Nebraska, the systems' spring colloquium, and the internship project with the Commission. Pam reported that the NLA's annual Library Legislative Day, held in February, was well attended. She noted the volunteer recognition that is part of the legislative day luncheon activities and that involves senators in presenting recognition certificates to volunteers. Pam said that the NLA is working toward publishing an e-journal to replace the Nebraska Library Association Quarterly (NLAQ). The NLAQ has ceased publication. An editor will be sought for the e-journal. Pam said that the NLA is reviewing its committee structure. She said that a better process is needed to manage committees for information, recruitment, and appointments. One of the purposes is to make the process easier for member participation. Virtual meetings make it easier for participation. Pam reported on the NLA's membership educational activities including sectional spring meetings and the joint conference with NEMA to be held in October. Pam said that the 2012 conference will be a tri-conference including the Mountain Plains Library Association. That conference will be held in LaVista.

Nebraska Educational Media Association – Glenda Willnerd reported for NEMA. Glenda said that planning and arrangements are proceeding for the NLA-NEMA conference. Glenda said that keynote speakers will be Sandra Barnett and Jamie LaRue. Glenda noted Lincoln High School's selection as one of the best school libraries in the country. Nancy Everhart, American Association of School Librarians' president, will visit Lincoln High on April 27th as part of her Vision tour. Glenda reported on NEMA's workshops with regional library systems. NEMA is offering a new scholarship for continuing education and school librarianship. The scholarship is named for Karla Wendelin, not funded by Karla, but someone is funding it in her name and in recognition of her work in school librarianship. Karen Buckley will take over the NEMA president's office in July following Betty Meyer's presidency this year. School librarians are looking forward to the AASL Conference and Exhibition in Minneapolis (October 27-30).

Program Prioritization, Budgeting and a New Normal for Libraries: Survey Results and Discussion – Merrillene Wood introduced the discussion topic. Merrillene asked if the Commission wanted the survey done again this year. Rod Wagner said that it would be useful to re-issue the survey to observe the year to year trends. Steve said that he would like the survey to include comments from responders about how they are responding to budget cuts. Steve said that there were far fewer libraries that made staffing cuts and reduced service hours than got cut. Where's the money coming from? Is it in programs, partially, is it in efficiency? Steve said that next year may be the more difficult year. Steve said that 68% of public libraries that responded said that they were guessing that next year is going to be worse, 29% of all the responders guessed that.

Fosselman said that at some time there will be an actual reckoning for public libraries when they must decide where the hard cuts will be made because staffing is 65% -70% or more of a typical library budget. There will be critical decisions that will be coming for the library community.

Steve said that the council may have a role in helping people through these circumstances. Steve asked about the threshold for funding and whether there is a new paradigm for funding in regard to staffing and service hours for accreditation. Steve said that there is an assumption that is based on what's normal for a library and maybe we're getting into an area that's not normal for that sort of accreditation. Richard Miller responded that funding patterns are accounted for in the accreditation process due to annual statistical filings, calculations and comparisons. Funding increases or declines among libraries change the per capita guidelines. The number of service hours, though, is fixed and does not change. Steve Fosselman referred to a long term measure comparing a library's expenditures for staffing costs with the library's overall budget. He said that it is interesting to see how that number changes over time. Long term, public libraries have generally been funded by annual incremental budget increases. That pattern is changing.

Merrillene Wood called attention to the American Library Association's website that includes budget information from among the states and articles published in *Library Journal* on budget topics. Merrillene noted the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its change in policy to include libraries as essential community services. This change allows libraries to receive FEMA assistance in areas that have experienced natural disasters and emergencies. Merrillene said that it would be beneficial to continue the survey and asked if there were council members, in addition to Steve Fosselman and Kate Borchman Hassebrook, willing to help with the survey. Merrillene said that she would contact the NLA-NEMA conference organizers about a conference session based on the new normal topic and survey results.

LSTA Five-Year Program Evaluation and 2013-2018 State Long Range Plan – Rod Wagner reported that state library agencies must prepare a five-year state program evaluation report for LSTA funding. State libraries must also submit five-year plans. Both the report and long range plan are due in 2012 – the evaluation report by March 30 and the five-year plan by the end of June. Wagner said that the council has a role in these two activities. He said that Richard Miller will be attending a meeting in Washington next week hosted by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The program evaluation and long range plan are major topics to be covered at that meeting. Merrillene Wood noted that council members have copies of the Nebraska long range plan in their folders. Rod said that when the current plan was developed the Commission held meetings in several locations across the state for public input. A set of questions was posed to guide the discussion. Public input and information from the evaluation report were used in preparing the five-year plan.

Pioneer Consortium Update – Steve Fosselman reported that four libraries (Grand Island, Holdrege, Lincoln and St. Paul) were heavily involved in technical work in preparation for software installation. Steve said that an inter-local agreement has been developed for use with consortium libraries (a joint entity agreement). Lincoln City Libraries serves as the consortium's business agent. Steve said the first libraries will go live in May. In addition to offering libraries a local integrated library system, a goal is to have a statewide open source union catalog. Steve said that these actions are in line with the Library Commission's current LSTA five-year plan. Steve referred to the news release issued concerning the project and to the project blog. The project will be adding libraries, ones that have received library improvement grants to join the consortium. Within the next year the consortium expects to be in a position to demonstrate to the library community that it can meet local needs. Steve said that Pioneer is moving along very

well. The consortium is not in a position at this time to include non-public libraries but expects to begin including non-public libraries in 2012. Steve noted local library cooperatives including public and school libraries that would benefit from the consortium. The union catalog will provide a different means for interlibrary loan. This is a longer term goal.

Council Roundtable – Merrillene welcomed new council members – Francine Canfield, Debra Carlson, Beth Falla, Vickie Retzlaff, Kara Welch, and Janet Wilke. Merrillene said that for the roundtable members are asked to comment on a local library or community challenge and success. Merrillene said that the Sidney campus of Western Nebraska Community College will undertake an inventory this May, the first done in many years. The budget is the challenge. Valetta Schneider is retiring as WNCC's library director.

Deb Carlson commented on the Scottsbluff Public Library's building project involving renovation and expansion. The project has undergone phases of shifting and moving to keep the library open and operating while work is performed to expand and renovate. The project has taken longer than expected but is getting much closer to completion. Deb credited the Leo A. Daly firm for their architectural work and management. Deb said that the architects were responsive to what they heard from library representatives and the community. The architects, for example, sought ideas from children and teens. One boy said he'd like a tree house. When he saw the result he said he got exactly what he wanted. Deb said that library attendance has been amazing. The community has been patient and positive.

Vickie Retzlaff reported that the Grant County Library serves about 700 people throughout the county and others beyond. The library's challenge is an expansion to accommodate the additional computers that the library will receive through the BTOP grant. The expansion requires fundraising and work with the board and county officials. Another fundraising drive was successful and allowed the purchase of a Canon microfilm reader/scanner.

Francine Canfield described Ralston's activities involving community facilities and financing. The library has facility renovation needs and this project is among others in Ralston. The Ralston public library is involved in a shared online library system with the Omaha Public Library and Metropolitan Community College. The libraries are in the implementation stage of system installation (Innovative Interfaces – Millennium ILS).

Cindy Gitt reported on the Holdrege public library's children services activities. A water leak problem damaged equipment, furnishings and library materials. On the bright side kids have taken to the Follett backpacks and one remarked that he "double loves them."

Trine McBride reported that she is no longer at the Ord public library following about six months of trips back and forth from Wayne and Ord. Trine trained the new library director. These changes have been a significant challenge. After leaving the Ord library Trine said that she is now finishing a master's degree in public administration.

Janet Wilke discussed several activities at the University of Nebraska at Kearney involving work with students and faculty. She noted partnering with academic divisions, the library commons, writing center, and funding to renovate nearly a third of the library's top floor.

Pat Gross (Commissioner) described changes in her relationship with library services over the past year. Pat retired from her school librarian position at Gering High School in May 2010 and soon after was appointed to a term on the Nebraska Library Commission. Pat said that she served two terms on the State Advisory Council on Libraries, six years in all. She noted the importance of the council to the Commission, to libraries and to the state. She observed that the council brings together representatives from libraries to share information and ideas about library issues and trends. Pat emphasized the importance of involvement to promote funding needs of libraries. She mentioned activities going on in the Panhandle region including a \$25,000 Library Improvement Grant project from the Library Commission for a regional automation project. The project will help a number of libraries – public, school and special – to automate and share resources.

Ellen Weed said that her challenge and success at the Norfolk Regional Center is the Health and Human Services consortium and their experience with Follett library automation software. Their IT staff encouraged the libraries to remain with Follett. Ellen said that there has been more cooperation and communication among staff on policies and programs for patients. All of the institutional libraries have challenges – especially staffing and funding. All are trying to do more with less.

Steve Batty (Commissioner) mentioned activities at the McCook public library including the Green Tree Project. He said that McCook library director Jody Crocker is presenting four Make-n-Take workshops. Break-ins at the library have resulted in installation of surveillance equipment.

Sherry Crow (Commissioner) talked about her work with the University of Nebraska at Kearney's school library program. She teaches and coordinates the school library endorsement program. Part of her work involves student recruitment. She has students from all over the world. She said that there is a niche for librarians in American schools around the world. There are students in the program from such countries as China, India, and Italy. And, of course, there are many Nebraska students in the program. Sherry said that a goal is achieving national recognition of UNK's library program. Sherry's work as a school library program evaluator helps in assessing UNK's program.

Beth Falla said that a challenge for the Imperial public library is educating the community that the library is more than a place for getting a novel. The library has much more to offer in terms of programs, services and resources. The Imperial public library is also experiencing funding problems.

John Dale (Commissioner) shared a story about the Crete public library and the experience of finding bed bugs in returned library materials. The library staff contacted the county extension office and public health officials for information on bed bug solutions. The information they gathered was shared with the public. The high heat treatment was not a solution for books but placing books in plastic bags and freezing them was. John observed that a difficult challenge had a successful outcome.

Steve Fosselman said that Grand Island has participated in the library e-rate funding program from the beginning. He said that a success is expected later in the month with a change in the way the library obtains internet service. The library's internet connection will be provided through a fiber connection between the library and College Park. Grand Island will be the first public library to join Network Nebraska. Steve said the library's internet connection will significantly upgrade its broadband service and will improve opportunities for community education, business education and more. Even better news is that the change will result in reduced expenses. For a challenge, the Grand Island public library is working with a committee to assist in long range planning. Census information and a city survey will contribute to the library's planning and validation of the library's value as part of city services. Steve noted the importance of broad based citizen involvement. The library is actively engaged and involved in planning and in the city's budget process. These proactive actions have helped the library in maintaining city support.

Frank Zimmerman described the Auburn public library's challenges with funding. Library staff changes were made in response to reduced funding. Library service hours have also been reduced. Frank said that the library building is fifteen years old but is in need of expansion. Fundraising continues.

Glenda Willnerd remarked that the Lincoln school libraries have activities in place as they approach the end of the school year. These activities include preparation for summer programs. Glenda said that Title 1 schools will be offering a month long summer school this year. School libraries have been asked to create curriculum for the program. Glenda said that another challenge is instituting use of e-readers and determining how students can best use them. iPads, Nooks and Kindles were purchased for the Title 1 schools. Glenda said that these activities and experiences will be documented. Lincoln has 60 some schools and about 8 renovations are going on all the time. A success is partnerships. Glenda said that Michael Sullivan will visit three Lincoln schools this spring as part of his travels across Nebraska. Lincoln also partners in the fall with the Plum Creek Festival.

Pat Leach reported that the Lincoln City Libraries purchases e-books and uses the Overdrive service. She said LCL has over 1,600 available at this time and circulation last month was over 1,900. Pat said that staff can't keep up with the demand. It is a success that clearly people are checking out and reading e-books and a challenge is determining how to find funds to buy e-books in response to the interest in this service. Pat said that another challenge is educating the public as to how the library purchases books in different formats (hard cover, large print, CD audio, and downloadable audio) and makes them available to the public. People seem to understand that the library's resources are stretched thin in order to provide books in multiple formats. Pat observed that e-books are inter-generational. People in their 20s and 30s (and all age groups) are reading on their mobile devices and people are saying that some older adults have started reading again because they can handle an e-Reader where previously, for some, holding a book was difficult. Pat said that one of her goals is to get to the point that the Lincoln City Libraries has enough books for e-Readers to begin to make up for what the libraries are losing in print circulation. Finding funding to supply the increasing demand for e-books is a significant challenge.

Ceri Daniels described changes and challenges within her law library work relationships. Different work styles present challenges. Changes in work relationships require adaptation.

Pam Bohmfalk described a challenge that led to a success. Pam said that the library board challenged the staff, through the library's strategic plan, to increase the amount of library programming. The staff has responded and met the challenge. She said the library has added over 150 additional programs this year. The added programming requires changes in staff work assignments and responsibilities. Staff are expected to be able to assist in more ways – story time, teaching computer classes, hosting movies, hosting gardening classes, book discussions, etc. some embrace the change and for others it is more difficult to accept and adapt to these changes. The intent is for staff to be more people focused. Pam said that the library will undergo a renovation. Fundraising is underway. The library's plan is to move out of the building, gut the building, and renovate all three floors at the same time.

By-laws Questions and Comments – Merrillene Wood commented that in reviewing council documents she noticed that the by-laws had not been changed since 1990. That led to her request that the council review the by-laws to determine any changes that may be appropriate. Merrillene asked council members to review the by-laws before the next meeting for changes. She noted needed updates such as changing the federal program name from Library Services and Construction Act to Library Services and Technology Act. Rod Wagner said that when the by-laws were created the federal library program (LSCA) required states to have advisory councils. Councils are no longer required but Nebraska, like some other states, has continued to have an advisory council. Its purpose still includes advice on the state's long range plan and LSTA state program. But the council is asked to advise on a broader range of issues in addition to the state's LSTA program.

Election of Council Vice-Chair – Merrillene Wood said that the council needs to elect a council vice-chair. Merrillene requested nominations. Pat Leach was nominated. With no additional nominations Pat Leach was elected vice-chair by unanimous vote.

Recommendations and Resolutions – Richard Miller said that Rod Wagner asked that he prepare a resolution recognizing the USDA Rural Development for support of public libraries and the number of grants provided for library facilities. Tom Vilsack, current U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and former Iowa Governor, has made libraries an emphasis of USDA funding for both grants and loans. Richard said that during 2010 and 2011 there are 9 projects receiving \$345,710 in grant funding and \$172,000 in loan funds for a total of \$517,710. Most of these projects are for construction, but funds also cover expenses for computers, and energy efficiency improvements. Richard said that there are a couple of large projects still pending.

A motion was made by Pat Leach and seconded by Ceri Daniels to approve the resolution to express appreciation to the USDA for its support of rural libraries. The motion was approved.

Library Survey regarding library budget conditions – A motion was made by Steve Fosselman and seconded by Deb Carlson that the Council survey libraries to assess their budget conditions and report at the Nebraska Library Association annual conference and through the Nebraska Library Commission's website. The motion was approved.

Restrictions on eBook Digital Rights – Steve Fosselman proposed that the Council resist efforts of any publisher seeking or implementing restrictions on eBook digital rights. Steve said that restrictions on access to digital books are crucial and a statement that the library community can react to.

Steve Fosselman moved and Ellen Weed seconded that the State Advisory Council on Libraries supports Nebraska libraries resisting efforts of any publishers seeking or implementing restrictions to eBook digital rights.

Discussion – It was emphasized that librarians need to have a place at the table when access issues are discussed; publishing policies that restrict access can be resisted but what about content and software providers? This motion addresses one aspect of access and one that involves HarperCollins’s policy placing limits on the number of times a book can be accessed. A broader issue is assurance that access to e-books and fair use are addressed. The policy (HarperCollins) has implications for sixty Nebraska libraries, currently, so that is of immediate concern. The broader issue can be taken up later.

The motion was approved with 9 in favor and 6 opposed.

2011 Meeting Dates – July 15 and November 18 were proposed for the next two council meetings. It was agreed that the council will schedule meetings on those dates. The July meeting may be held via video-conference. The November meeting will be planned for an on-site meeting at a location to be decided later.

Merrillene expressed appreciation to Steve Fosselman for serving as council chair during 2010. Merrillene also expressed appreciation to Matt Williams and Christine Walsh for hosting the council meeting at the Kearney Public Library.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.