

NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

November 13, 2020

MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met November 13, 2020. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

Commission members present: via GoToMeeting: Debby Bloom, Vernon Davis, Arun Pondicherry, Lois Todd-Meyer, Julia Tye, Kristin Wiebe. Staff present: Rod Wagner, Jennifer Wrampe, JoAnn McManus; via GoToMeeting: Christa Porter. 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 Vernon Davis and seconded by Lois Todd-Meyer to approve the agenda. 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.

Approval of Minutes: (August 28, 2020) a motion was made by Arun Pondicherry and seconded by Julia Tye to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried on roll call vote: Debby Bloom – aye; Vernon Davis – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristin Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

Chair's Report and Commissioner's Comments

Vernon Davis – reported Lincoln City Libraries has been holding returned library items for 72 hours before returning to shelves (per COVID-19 health safety guidelines). Library staff are also bagging books for patrons to pick up.

Lois Todd-Meyer – reported Fullerton Public Library has moved to a front lobby pickup. Seward Public Library has a drive up window pickup. Lois commented that the Nebraska Center for the Book Celebration of Nebraska Books presentations were very well done. Lois also commented that Becky Faber gave a very good presentation for the outgoing 2020 One Book One Nebraska selection – Donald Stratton's *All the Gallant Men*.

Arun Pondicherry – no report

Julia Tye – no report

Kristin Wiebe – reported that libraries are adjusting but not to the degree they had early on in the lockdown. They are trying to keep services open as much as possible. Virtual story time has been popular.

Debby Bloom – reported Omaha Public Library branches have gone to 25% capacity as of November 11. Returned items are being quarantined for six days and branches are being

professionally cleaned daily. The libraries are using boosted Wi-Fi in parking lots and in-person programming has been suspended. Library staff are making appointments for patrons to pick up materials. Papillion Public Library has takeaway craft bags for preschoolers. The Omaha World Herald is available digitally with a library card. The library has a Zoom Kids book club and toddler story time. Ralston Public Library has postponed its annual book sale. The library provides free streaming British TV and films and is also offering 500 online classes. Bennington Public Library had a class on November 4, "Easing Anxiety for Kids." Gretna Public Library was operating out of two buildings with not enough staff to keep both open. They are now able to have both buildings open simultaneously.

Director's Report

Personnel – Rod Wagner reported Cynthia Nigh recently retired. Wagner said that the majority of Commission staff continue to work from home. Tessa Terry is finishing work on the Commission's biennial report.

Library Innovation Studios Project Status – JoAnn McManus reported the project started in July 2017 and will end June 2021. In total, the project has received \$715,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Originally, 39 to 40 communities were planned to participate. However, due to COVID-19 that number has been reduced to 35 or 36. To make up for reducing the number of libraries, a decision was made to produce training videos for the equipment and to subscribe to Niche Academy (a service and resource for creating online training). Installation at the last four libraries (Randolph, LaVista, Bellevue and McCook) will begin in January 2021.

E-Rate and Special Fiber Construction Program – Christa Porter reported that \$1,000,000 is available in e-Rate support for public libraries to apply for new fiber construction. These funds would supplement federal e-Rate funding. The funds will cover construction costs related to installing fiber to the library. The Special Construction Program for Libraries and Schools is a four-year program created and administered by the Nebraska Public Service Commission.

Library Commission Grant Programs – Porter reported that the Commission is offering three grants – Youth Grants for Excellence, Library Internship Grants, and Continuing Education Grants. The Youth grant applications were due in October. An amount of \$18,500 was budgeted for the Youth grants. Sally Snyder and team made decisions on the 35 applications received amounting to over \$54,000. The Internship Grants deadline was November 10. Porter received 26 applications at \$1,000 each. The amount available for grants is \$18,500. Continuing Education grant applications are due by December 29.

Regional Library Systems – Wagner reported that he and Christa Porter met online with the regional system directors on November 12. Meetings with the regional directors are held quarterly.

State Advisory Council on Libraries – Wagner reported the next advisory council meeting will be held online on November 20. This will be the last meeting for four members that are completing their second term.

Nebraska Center for the Book – Wagner reported that the Celebration of Nebraska Books was held as a virtual awards presentation done over several days. Matt Mason, Nebraska State Poet, served as the awards presenter. Most award winners were able to make remarks about their books. Tessa Terry developed the video presentation program, worked with Matt Mason in arranging the presentations,

and with authors and other award winners to record their remarks. Wagner reported the 2021 One Book One Nebraska selection is *Prairie Forge* by James Kimble.

Wagner reported that the Letters About Literature (LAL) contest has been administered in Nebraska for a number of years. LAL was a national program through the Library of Congress Center for the Book. Many state affiliates, including Nebraska, have participated. The Library of Congress Center for the Book no longer sponsors the program. The Nebraska Center for the Book and a number of other state centers chose to continue the LAL program in their states without the support of the Library of Congress.

NCompass Live – Christa Porter reported that the weekly webinar that started in 2009 has had a significant increase in viewers this year due to COVID-19. She has arranged for presenters from around the country since many in person conferences have been cancelled. The 10th annual Big Talk From Small Libraries online conference is scheduled for the last Friday in February 2021. Porter opened up a call for speakers in October.

Financial Report

October Budget and Financial Report – Wagner reported that personnel expenses on the state side are slightly above budget but will decline in coming months due to staff vacancies. Salaries and benefits paid out of federal funds are slightly below budget. Operating expenses are in line with budgeted amounts at this time in the fiscal year.

LSTA Appropriation Status – Wagner reported that federal funds are currently appropriated through a Congressional continuing resolution that will expire December 11. The continuing resolution extends funding for federal agencies and programs based on last fiscal year's appropriation levels. Congress will need to either appropriate funds for the remainder of the fiscal year or extend funding into the next congressional session that begins in January.

Sam Shaw, LSTA program coordinator, is preparing the annual state program report for federal funds received through the Library Services and Technology Act Grants to States program. The report is due the end of December. Jerry Breazile, business manager, prepares the financial portion of the report.

New Business

Next Meeting Dates (2021) – January 8, March TBD and May 14.

Adjournment

Debby Bloom adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe