

# NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

September 6, 2024

## MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met on September 6, 2024. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

Commission members present: Tiffany Carter, Tom Rolfes, Terri Cunningham-Swanson and Alan Wang, Diane Downer via Go To Meeting. Staff present: Rod Wagner, Christa Porter, Tessa Timperley, Sam Shaw and Jennifer Wrampe.

Diane Downer 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 Minutes:** (July 26, 2024) A motion was made by Diane Downer and seconded by Tiffany Carter to approve the minutes. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Terri Cunningham-Swanson – abstain; Diane Downer – aye; Tom Rolfes – abstain; Alan Wang – abstain.

### Chair's Report and Commissioners' Comments

**Diane Downer** –attended the Western Library System annual meeting on August 5.

**Alan Wang** – no report

**Tiffany Carter** – no report

**Tom Rolfes** – no report

**Terri Cunningham-Swanson** – no report

**Public Comment** – Public comment was given.

### Director's Report

*Personnel* – Rod Wagner reported the Talking Book and Braille Service Marketing/Outreach Coordinator position was re-opened for applications. The application deadline is September 27.

*Library Commission Grants for Libraries* – Christa Porter reported that the Library Commission offers four grants for accredited libraries. The application period opens on September 20 and closes on November 15. The available grants include:

1. **Continuing Education and Training Grants:** These funds support library staff and board members in attending educational meetings, workshops, conferences, and classes.

2. **Internship Grants:** These grants enable libraries to hire high school or college students for part-time, temporary roles, often focused on summer projects that provide various library work experiences.
3. **Library Improvement Grants:** These grants provide resources for libraries to undertake special projects, which may include acquiring new equipment, furniture, or expanding services.
4. **Youth Grants for Excellence:** Designed for projects in children's and youth services within libraries.

Grant awards will be announced by the end of December. The Continuing Education, Internship, and Youth Grants are funded by state funds, while Library Improvement Grants are supported by federal LSTA funds.

Another grant managed by the Library Commission is the Fern Heim Trustee Scholarships, which support library board members in attending conferences such as those held by the Nebraska Library Association or the Association of Rural and Small Libraries. These scholarships are funded by a private source through the Lincoln Community Foundation.

*E-Rate and E-Rate Task Force* – Christa Porter provided an update on the federal E-rate program, which offers discounts to schools and libraries for internet service and networking equipment. She explained the annual application process for securing E-rate funding. There is a new fiber special construction program available for schools and libraries that currently lack fiber connections. In addition to federal E-rate support, the Nebraska Public Service Commission offers matching funds for fiber installations. This year, 74 libraries applied for E-rate funding and collectively received \$303,436 in discounts. Hildreth and Exeter public libraries completed fiber installations. A list of libraries that received E-rate funding is available on the Commission's website. The application process for 2025 will begin on September 19.

Christa Porter has been appointed to the American Library Association's E-rate Task Force, which advises the ALA on E-rate policies and other programs from the Federal Communications Commission.

*Open Meetings Act Changes* – Christa Porter reported that the Nebraska legislature made changes to Nebraska's open meeting laws. The League of Nebraska Municipalities has printed posters outlining these laws and has provided copies to the Library Commission for public libraries. Additional posters can be purchased if needed. One of the changes this year is in regard to publishing meeting notices. A website is available for postings notices: [www.nepublicnotices.com](http://www.nepublicnotices.com) Another change requires public bodies to allow members of the public to speak at meetings with the exception of closed sessions.

*Library Trends Survey* – Sam Shaw reported on the annual public library survey, which collects data from libraries. The survey cycle runs from mid-November to mid-February, with results published in late spring or early summer. This survey is part of a national data collection initiative under the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. Shaw noted that there are 272 public libraries in Nebraska, and 245 of them were surveyed. The discrepancy is due to some libraries not being legally established or not yet verified as public libraries.

*Nebraska Center for the Book* – Tessa Timperley reported that her responsibilities include managing the NCB’s website and coordinating various NCB events and activities. One of her key roles is organizing and staffing the Nebraska exhibit at the National Book Festival, held annually in Washington D.C. This major event, hosted by the Library of Congress, attracts thousands of attendees. Tessa noted that over 1,000 book lists and One Book One Nebraska bookmarks were distributed during the festival.

Looking ahead, Tessa highlighted the upcoming Nebraska Celebration of Books on October 12. This event merges two previously separate annual gatherings: the Nebraska Book Festival and the Celebration of Nebraska Books. It will feature a panel with authors from the 20th anniversary of One Book One Nebraska, as well as a roundtable with the 2024 Nebraska Book Award winners, followed by an award ceremony. The 2025 OBON selection will be announced after the presentations. Additionally, there will be a vendor booth area for local businesses, organizations, and booksellers.

### **Financial Report**

*August Financial Report* – Wagner noted that the largest portion of the Commission’s operating budget is allocated to staffing (salaries and benefits). The second largest expense is the lease cost for office space. Some operating costs, such as accounting and auditing fees, insurance, and others, are billed and paid in full at the beginning of the state fiscal year.

Appropriations set limits on personnel expenditures, and any savings in personnel costs can be redirected to cover other operating expenses. The state aid program budget includes funding for public libraries, regional library systems, database licensing and subscriptions, lender compensation (interlibrary loan) as well as Nebraska eReads, which includes allocations for the OverDrive Libraries and the Lincoln, Omaha, and Ralston public libraries. The state aid program also includes the library development grants.

*LSTA FY 2025 Funding Update* – Wagner said that funding for the full fiscal year is unlikely to be finalized before the start of the federal fiscal year on October 1. It is expected that Congress will likely pass a continuing resolution to extend funding into or through December.

### **New Business**

*2025-2027 Biennium Budget* – Wagner distributed a document summarizing the Library Commission’s proposed 2025-2027 state biennium budget request. Discussion followed. The budget request is due by September 15.

A motion was made by Alan Wang and seconded by Tom Rolfes to approve the budget request with a change for the Nebraska eReads program funding with an increase of 15% above the current year budgeted amount. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Terri Cunningham-Swanson – nay; Diane Downer – aye; Tom Rolfes – aye; Alan Wang – aye.

*Out of State Travel Request* – Wagner reported that the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies will hold its annual conference in Huntsville, Alabama, October 20-23. Wagner requested approval to attend the conference.

A motion was made by Alan Wang and seconded by Tom Rolfes to approve the out-of-state travel request. Motion carried on roll call vote: Tiffany Carter – aye; Terri Cunningham-Swanson – aye; Diane Downer – aye; Tom Rolfes – aye; Alan Wang – aye.

*Next Meeting Dates* –November 1.

### **Adjournment**

Diane Downer adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe