

Nebraska State Advisory Council on Libraries

Friday, August 19, 2022, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM (CST)

MINUTES

State Advisory Council members present: Jessica Chamberlain (Chair), Rachel Steiner, Michael Burris, Michael Straatmann, Joy Harvey. Via GoToWebinar: Allison Reisig, Gail Irwin, Pat Gross, Sky Seery, Scott Childers. Commission Staff members present Rod Wagner, Devra Dragos, Jennifer Wrampe, Christa Porter (via GoToWebinar).

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Jessica Chamberlain welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of the Agenda: A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. No additional agenda items were added. Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was then made and seconded to approve the March 18, 2022 minutes. Motion approved.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Reports

Nebraska School Librarians Association

Joy Harvey

The Board held a retreat in July, the first time the board had met in-person in a long time Courtney Pentland, who has served on the NSLA board in many capacities, is now president-elect of the American Association of School Librarians. NSLA has School Librarians Day coming up on October 15. Carolyn Foote will be the keynote speaker. The membership committee is working hard to recruit members and retain members. NSLA is offering free membership for any new librarian. The NSLA also has scholarships and awards.

Nebraska Library Association

Emily Nimsakont

The state legislative session ended and LB1213, which NLA opposed, did not come up for debate before the session ended. NLA leaders are in contact with the advocacy organization EveryLibrary for advocacy support. NLA has continued to offer online the Third Thursday Chats continuing education sessions. The NLA annual conference will be held in Kearney October 5 & 6. October 5 will be the pre-conference day, registration is now open, and the schedule will be finalized soon.

Emily reported on actions related to the Golden Sower Award. The NLA has been involved in a lawsuit regarding the award. A settlement agreement has been signed and NLA will retain ownership of the Golden Sower Award as it has since 1985. Sara Churchill has agreed to serve as the Golden Sower Committee Chair. The NLA board is looking forward to the revitalization of the committee. NLA's monthly Chat session will be held on Thursday, August 24, and will present information about the Golden Sower Award actions.

Nebraska Library Commission

Rod Wagner

LB 1213, the database bill, did not advance from general file before the end of the legislative session. Senator Albrecht, the bill sponsor, is expected to re-introduce a bill in the 2023 session. With a new governor in 2023, there will be a number of executive branch appointments with the new administration. In addition, there will be a new attorney general. Mike Hilgers is running unopposed for that office. Mike Foley is completing his term as Lieutenant Governor and is running for state auditor, the office he has previously held. The 2023 legislature will have a number of new state senators as a result of term-limited senators leaving office at the end of 2022. The 2023 session is the long session (90 days) and includes action on the 2023-2025 state biennium budget.

The Nebraska Center for the Book will hold its annual membership meeting and the annual Celebration of Nebraska Books on October 22 at the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln. The event will include a keynote presentation by Jonis Agee, author of *The Bones of Paradise* – this year's One Book One Nebraska selection. The event will include presentation of Nebraska Book Awards. The National Book Festival is coming up on September 3. Many of the presentations are online. Library of Congress Center for the Book state affiliates participate in the festival. This year, Laurie Yocom, Cozad library director and Nebraska Center for the Book board member, will join Devra Dragos and Tessa Terry from the Library Commission as Nebraska representatives.

The Library Commission's Five-Year LSTA Plan was submitted in June. The five-year evaluation report, submitted to the Institute of Museum and Library Services in March, was a basis for the plan,

Christa Porter

Formula grant payments from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were budgeted for distribution to all Nebraska public libraries and state institutional libraries. Other grants were offered from ARPA funds including Library Improvement Grants, Youth Grants for Excellence, and to supplement the Kreutz Bennett Donor Advised Fund grants awarded from the Nebraska Community Foundation. For the formula grants, 147 have been finalized (62% of the grants awarded). There were 79 Library Improvement Grants awarded and all but 4 have been finalized. For the Kreutz Bennett grants, their deadline is September 1. The youth grants are not due until September 14.

Christa said that the Public Library Accreditation process was re-started this year after a pause the last two years due to the pandemic. With the re-start, there are 35 libraries up for

reaccreditation and 46 unaccredited libraries eligible to apply. Libraries are invited to apply if they have not been accredited before and have submitted the Public Library Survey. One of the most significant changes made to accreditation is changing the renewal period from 3 years to 5 years. Many library directors have said things haven't changed much over 3 years and more time is needed to develop new plans, and that demographics have not changed much either. The two-year pause also contributed to the change to a five year accreditation schedule. All public libraries received an extension. The schedule change led to rearranging library groups. The accreditation website has been updated and accredited libraries have been issued new certificates. Christa said that the first two libraries to receive renewed accreditation are the Wilson Public Library (Cozad) and Keene Memorial Library (Fremont). The deadline for submitting accreditation applications is October 1, 2022.

E-rate – For the 2022 funding year, all Nebraska public libraries that applied have received approval. Sixty-four libraries received E-rate discounts totaling \$376,629. Three fiber special construction libraries will use matching funds from the Public Service Commission to help pay for fiber construction expenses.

Christa said that she presented an NCompass Live program earlier this week, an “E-rate 101: Just the Basics.” Additional E-rate training will be provided later this fall. Christa said that fiber special construction workshops will also be presented. The Public Service Commission has budgeted a million dollars to help libraries, for the first time, get fiber to libraries. For 2023, funding for E-rate will be the third year that money is available. Christa, Holly Woldt, and Tom Rolfes (Nebraska Office of the CIO) presented training and will again in September or October.

The NCompass Live schedule can be viewed on the Commission's website. The session on retirement had to be rescheduled to September 7. Robin Newell, Emporia KS public library director, will be the presenter. Another up-coming session is the Nebraska Center for the Book program, Letters about Literature. Christa reminded that, as always, there will be no NCompass Live presented during the NLA conference week.

Devra Dragos

Devra reported regarding the NebraskAccess website. Included are links that the Commission's reference team has selected as sources for good information generally on Nebraska topics. There are links to databases that are available to Nebraskans from the website. Because there have been concerns stated regarding the resources that are available and how to access them, a decision was made to add two new databases. AS Complete, which is a high school package, and Elementary and Middle School Plus. NebraskAccess will continue to include Databases for Nebraskans, Websites Selected by Librarians, and related resources from the Library Commission. All available databases are listed. Libraries may point to this page, or they may choose different database links to place on their own page. Schools that have single sign-up options may link us directly as some colleges do. With the new site, students will have an option to use a password and be directed to one of three pages – All NebraskAccess Database, High School Database or Elementary/Middle School Databases

The Librarians Toolbox will have information about linking options and promotional materials and customizable business cards.

The Nebraska Overdrive libraries, because of concerns over challenges, needs a policy and request for reconsideration process. The OverDrive Libraries Group has a collection development committee working on policies. The next meeting is on August 25. We will finalize a request for reconsideration form to send out for voting. Devra emphasized that the OverDrive libraries serve a diverse statewide audience. Libraries try to address the needs of Nebraska's residents and that we use professional selection tools. However, if someone has concerns, we ask that they speak with their local library director. If they still have concerns and wish to follow through about challenging that material, a form will be available on the Library Commission site. When requests are received, a determination will be made whether it is a challenge against an item that is only held by an individual library and if that patron is from that library's service area. If so, the request will be turned over to that library and it will be considered on the basis of that library's policies. If not, a committee will be assigned consisting of the director of the library, where the patrons resides and at least one or two other directors and Library Commission staff and one of the selectors of materials to discuss what action should be taken. Requirements will include that the person submitting the challenge must be a Nebraska resident, and must verify that they are a patron of a library that is participating in the consortium. Once a decision is made, the same book will not be considered again for at least a twelve-month period, so there is not a repeated and continuing challenge for any individual book.

Jessica Chamberlain said that having a policy for Overdrive challenges is timely and necessary, especially with state legislation likely in the coming session, legislation that won't just target databases, but also books. Rod Wagner said that legislation might be similar to legislation in other states that is developed and promoted by national organizations that targets schools and libraries restricting access to certain subjects – race, sex and gender.

Michael Burris mentioned a group that was objecting to OverDrive. He explained to them that he isn't going to tell anyone what to do or what they can access or read. Libraries are an expansion of abilities, not a restriction. It is not the place of the library to put restrictions on people's access to any kind of information.

Devra Dragos commented that there was one public library that was in the consortium that had chosen in the beginning to restrict checkouts by children only using their parent's barcode, so parents could keep track of what the children were reading. They changed that policy later because a parent complained she didn't want her children to see what she was reading.

Sky Seery said that North Platte schools created a new library collection development policy with a reconsideration process but hasn't received any further information from the media specialists at the high school or middle school level. For the North Platte public library, there have been more consideration requests in the past year than in previous.

Joy Harvey said that for Lincoln schools parents can contact the librarian and request specific titles be restricted for their child. They cannot restrict a theme, just a specific title.

Scott Childers said that he has several libraries in the southeast regional area that have tightened up their policies. Many are using a form that includes standard questions for response, making

clear that challenges are from a person, challenging a singular work. Someone making a challenge needs to write and explain why they are challenging a book.

Michael Straatmann commented about high school students taking college courses. Michael said that UNL libraries will not provide a list of materials checked out to any other party, except if they don't return them at the end of the semester. Then UNL libraries will provide information to the school media specialist who sponsored them and try to get books returned. Once returned, any information about loans is purged after 35 days.

Rachel Steiner said that the Omaha Public Library recently announced the Omaha Reads selection. Library staff members have been asked why are we grooming children. Rachel said that the program is for adults, not children.

Christa Porter mentioned that the Library Commission's website has an intellectual freedom and censorship information page - <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/legal/freedom/intelinfo.aspx>.

Jessica Chamberlain asked if a formal statement from the State Advisory Council would be helpful for presentation to policy makers.

Rod Wagner said that it would be a good to have a statement or affirmation from the council..

Allison Reisig said that having the option for parents to receive an email regarding their children's checkouts (school libraries) was a good compromise. It is an administrative burden on the librarian, but puts the responsibility on the parents.

Jessica Chamberlain said that with the Norfolk Public Library's circulation system, parents can see which books their children have checked out and any that are overdue. Jessica asked the council about having an action item for the meeting in November about a recommendation or resolution on intellectual freedom and censorship.

2023-2025 State Biennium Budget discussion: Rod Wagner commented that state agency budget requests will be taken up by the governor and legislature during 2023 legislative session. Some major items in the budget request include:

Regional Library Systems – the budget request will include a percentage amount to support staff pay and benefit increases as well as other operating expense increases.

NebraskaAccess Database Licensing Fees – the request will include additional funding to cover vendor licensing fee increases.

State Aid to Public Libraries – an increase in state aid funds to public libraries will be requested.

Nebraska eReads – There has been good support from the legislature for state funding to supplement library funding for ebooks and digital audiobooks. Additional funds will be requested based on continued growth in use and publisher pricing policies. Funds are allocated

among the OverDrive Libraries Group (190 libraries) and the Lincoln, Omaha, and Ralston libraries that are not part of the OveDrive consortium.

Lender Compensation – it’s completely inadequate in providing payments to libraries for their lending activity because it’s significant to know what it actually costs. This is a consideration also.

Regional Library System funding comes from both state and LSTA, and also for the database licensing fees. Lender Compensation is mostly federal. Now that also leaves open things that we currently aren’t funding at all, these ideas are helpful.

Wagner asked the board for any thoughts and encourage any efforts to increase or emphasis –

Jessica asked if any guidance is given for budget requests. Rod commented that budget preparation instructions include information for state employee pay and benefits, and various fees that are set and charged to agencies (accounting services, insurance, auditing, worker’s compensation, etc.). Funding requests that are above the agency’s current budgeted amounts must be documented and justified.

Michael Straatmann asked what data we have to support budget increases. Rod commented that the Commission collects data on many service activities – database usage, interlibrary loan, Talking Book and Braille Service lending, OverDrive libraries’ transactions, etc. Devra Dragos commented that comments from service users are also collected and used as testimonials for service benefits.

Rachel Steiner asked what the success rate is for budget request increases. Rod said that, for the current biennium, the Commission came out fairly well and received amounts requested for several state aid items (database licensing fees, regional library system funding, eReads (ebooks and audiobook purchasing). State tax revenues have exceeded projections over a number of months. Agencies are asked to prioritize their funding requests. The result may be no increase in funding, a portion of the amount requested funded, or the full amount approved.

Scott Childers said the next legislative session might bring unprecedented changes in state law that could cause public and school libraries to redo policies and collections. The regional library systems are likely to be the main source for outreach to help rewrite these policies. Scott said that certification credit hours should be considered. It’s not recognized that those credit hours come from the regional library systems. The educational hours contributed by regional systems can be documented in support of state funding.

Rod Wagner said that federal LSTA funds this fiscal year are at the same level as last year. Nebraska’s allocation was up a bit due to re-allocations due to some states not meeting their state maintenance of effort levels. Congress, as it does year after year, fails to begin the federal fiscal year with a budget for the full year. That process often results in no funding increases.

Council Round Table:

Jessica Chamberlain read **Stephanie O'Connor's** report from Alliance Public Library. Stephanie was not able to attend the meeting but sent written comments. Stephanie said the library had many new opportunities this fall including development of a telehealth room inside the library, which will be used for anyone to come and meet their healthcare provider via Zoom. The room is completely private, with library staff being available to help the patron get into the meeting. This will be especially useful for veterans since the nearest VA hospital is two hours away. The library is looking to fulfill the role of Community Education this fall by offering a wide array of courses including crafts, guest healthcare speakers, community resources information and technology training. In addition, for fun, the library staff created a 7-foot Demogorgon from *Stranger Things* that has been responsible for several families getting new library cards. Many people come in to take a picture of the creature and end up taking home library materials.

The library's challenge is the City of Alliance has received one bid for the replacement of the library's HVAC system, which came in at \$1.4 million. In addition, library use statistics have remained consistent over the past year. The library staff would like to see an increase. I have challenged them to find new and innovative ways to serve our patrons to increase the library's community value. I am lucky to have a great staff that works as a team and thinks outside the box, and I am excited to see what they come up with.

Michael Burris – The Holdrege library eliminated fines and fees effective July 1. Michael said the library is getting things back, and the change is having an impact. On down side, the Holdrege library is not quite part of the city government and not quite part of the county government. The library receives funding from both. Neither the city nor the county wants to pay the library's insurance bills. The library is completely separate financially, which means the library has to have its own auditing service. A new auditor is being sought. Michael explained some problems with finding a new one. Michael said the Holdrege library was a member of the Pioneer Consortium and while Michael was treasurer, it was decided that it was not sustainable to work with that particular software. The library left the consortium and purchased the Apollo system.

Michael Straatmann – UNL libraries has a renovation project underway at the architectural library. The project started in January. The library will be open even with a reduced collection when school starts. UNL Libraries strategic organization began in the spring and is still underway. Internal position moves and assignments have been completed. External searches for positions have begun. A Collection Salvage and Disaster Response workshop will be presented at the NLA conference this fall and all proceeds will go to NLA.

Rachel Steiner – said the Omaha Public Library made it through a regular summer reading program and continues to offer programming online. OPL had about 75% total registrations. It was decided to reverse the SRP party and had a final Done Party this year. Jim Hill came and the Omaha Symphony played with Jim and it was an all hands on type party. OPL's biggest challenge right now is moving – the downtown library needs to be vacated by September 30 as demolition is scheduled to begin the week of October 1. The library will close to the public August 28. There is a lot of logistics right now and it is difficult to run a day-to-day system.

Joy Harvey – Lincoln Public Schools Media Services successes and challenges go hand-in-hand. At this time of year, it's been opening the two new schools. There are also renovations at several schools. New library objectives have been adopted for instructions librarians do in the classroom. Those can be found on the LPS library services website.

Jessica Chamberlin –The Norfolk Public Library's summer reading program bounced like similar to 2019 with great success. Library staff organization and hiring activities are current activities. The library is starting a community archive in partnership with our museum. The archive is intended to create an online resource not just for newspapers, but also adding high school yearbooks. The library is developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the museum. Next will come digitizing and uploading documents. The library will break ground on a Story Walk this fall. Jessica said the library's biggest success is its unique support community opportunity; a local brewery is going to make a special library beer. With every draft of that beer, the brewery will give a portion of the proceeds to the library.

Emily Nimsakont – one of Emily's biggest successes was learning a new skill – cataloging in a non-library environment. A challenge is rebranding. In October, the company is going to change its name, a new experience for Emily. The Golden Sower experience has been a challenge for NLA and we are coming out of it stronger. NLA has a strategic planning imitative starting and many new faces in the organization. Conference planning this year has been delayed with many things like new registration and fees, people have really been mindful of social justice and making things equitable.

Scott Childers – said the Southeast Library System had a fabulous workshop with Stewart Chitin on Design Thinking. Scott recommend him as a presenter or a staff trainer. Scott said SELS is rebuilding its training processes, looking at more hybrid training out of the SELS office. It's been a learning experience, not on the tech side, but the etiquette so that everyone feels the level of involvement the presenter wants and attendees expect to have. The region has had a couple retirements. Pat Leach, Lincoln City Libraries director, retired after many years and will be missed by many in the Nebraska library community. Our biggest challenges for libraries is keeping up with legislation. The open meeting law has been tweaked in the past three years. There is effort needed to make sure our small libraries are compliant with the open meeting law.

Laura England-Biggs – a success is that today is the Keene Memorial Library's last packing day before the move on Monday. The challenge is today is our last packing day before the move on Monday. Fundraising efforts continue. The City has given the go-a-head. The project bid package was approved by the city council and the movers are ready to proceed. The only other current challenge is getting through the next three weeks – moving to the auditorium next week, take a week off to settle in, moving stuff to storage the following week, and opening up on September 19.

Sky Seery – the North Platte library's success is finally getting a new roof and to be paid for by the City. Maintenance and repair issues include the library's elevator. Another challenge is a an Office of Civil Rights data request based on an allegation that the North Platte Public Library discriminates against individuals with disabilities since we don't have a working elevator. Sky

said that some changes will happen with the library collection and what is housed in the library. An RFP is out to fix the elevator, which is more of a supply chain issue. Sky said that fundraising has been underway for a new elevator. The City may use ARPA funds.

Pat Gross – Pat said that as a school librarian and a public librarian before retirement that in her 24 years as a school librarian, she had one challenged book. That happened in the '80s. There were many challenges at that time in Nebraska. It seems like the same things are being said today and they can be hard, but we should all persist. Pat shared an experience about a parent not happy about a book her son was reading. The parent hadn't read the book. Successes - being retired. Pat said she volunteers and mentioned assisting with the Scottsbluff library's summer reading program. On registration day, there were 1,408 children and teens registered. The program ended up having 1,907 children. In the children's section there were 86,008 books checked out and read. The library doesn't limit their services to the Scottsbluff residents and that accounts, in part, for the high numbers. The teen program had 197 teens participate. Pat said the library's adult reading program begins in September.

Lisa Irwin – A success is the ARPA grant which was used to replace some furnishing for our meeting space to function well for classes, professional development and staff meetings. A projector screen was replaced, and new Bluetooth speakers and beanbag chairs were purchased. Another positive is receiving a school counselor endorsement. Lisa said that when the school counselor left she was asked to fill that role. For a time, Lisa served as both counselor and librarian. This arrangement left the library neglected at times and until a new counselor was hired. Lisa is now back to full-time as librarian. A challenge this year is weeding and re-designing the non-fiction section. Lisa said another challenge is that the facility administrator would like a law library contained within our law section of the library.

Gail Irwin – For successes, library users are enjoying all the new items purchased with the three ARPA grants. Gail said that all the final reports are done and submitted. As for challenges, Gail said that she is the only full-time employee. Another full-time or part-time staff position is needed. Gail said that the summer reading program is not a time to be short of staff. The request for additional staff has not been successful. The library is still waiting for fiber internet to be installed. The underground work was done in June but no connections have yet been made inside the library. No one in the area of the library has fiber – not the courthouse, sheriff's office, or jail.

Allison Reisig – said that a success for the college is remodeling the classrooms with the first section recently completed. Allie said that she is excited for the great opportunities for students. A challenge is that one of the major requests from students is to expand service hours into the weekends. A part-time staff member was hired for weekend hours. However, facilities staff is pushing back on the weekend hours because of security concerns.

New Business

Recommendations and Resolutions

There were no recommendations or resolutions brought before the Council.

Jessica Chamberlain said that the November meeting will include consideration of a policy statement about censorship and book challenges.

Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting date will be Friday, November 18 (location TBD).

Adjournment at 1:11 p.m.