

## NEBRASKA LIBRARY COMMISSION

Lincoln, NE

March 12, 2021

### MINUTES

The Nebraska Library Commission met March 12, 2021. The meeting notice was posted on the Commission website and the Nebraska.gov public meeting calendar.

Commission members present: Debby Bloom, Arun Pondicherry, and Lois Todd-Meyer: Via GoToMeeting remote connection: Julia Tye and Kristin Wiebe. Staff present: Rod Wagner, Jennifer Wrampe; via GoToMeeting: Christa Porter, Tessa Terry. 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 Julia Tye and seconded by Arun Pondicherry to approve the agenda. Motion carried on roll call vote: Debby Bloom – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristen Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

**Approval of Minutes:** (January 8, 2021) a motion was made by Lois Todd-Meyer and seconded by Kristin Wiebe to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried on roll call vote: Debby Bloom – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristin Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

#### Chair's Report and Commissioner's Comments

**Debby Bloom** – reported that University of Nebraska at Omaha has a project underway documenting COVID-19. The project involves collecting everyday stories from people in Omaha during the pandemic. Another UNO project, Catalog Discovery, provides a new resource for searching books, databases, and other resources. Les Valentine, UNO Archivist, recently retired after 37 years.

**Lois Todd-Meyer** – reported that she listened in on several Big Talk From Small Libraries conference sessions. Bennington Public Library started a program to put together STEAM boxes for preschoolers and then had Zoom sessions with the children.

**Arun Pondicherry**- no report.

**Julia Tye** – reported Central Plains Library System has a variety of programming going on. There is a “Reading for Resilience” Zoom workshop in March to help librarians and educators use literacy in children's books to support young children's coping skills. Ravenna Public Library received an American Library Association grant to participate in Libraries Transforming Communities: Focus on Small and Rural Libraries. The library received \$3,000 that will help the

library address community food insecurity and create a community garden. The Kearney Public Library is preparing for its annual book club festival in April. Author Jonis Agee will be the speaker.

**Kristin Wiebe** – no report.

### **Director's Report**

*Personnel* – Rod Wagner reported that David Eckmann is retiring effective March 12. Dave has worked with the Talking Book and Braille Circulation/Studio Support and in reference/information for over twenty years. Recruitment is underway to re-fill this position.

*Library Innovation Studios Project Status* – Wagner reported that installation and training have started at the LaVista public library. Installation and training at the Bellevue public library will follow in April. Staff is working with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to arrange for an extension beyond the current project end date. The current end date is June 30, 2021. The primary factor is the project schedule disruption due to pandemic health-safety restrictions. The extension would allow the remaining libraries to have the full five-month use of the makerspace equipment, and allow time for closeout of the project.

*State Legislative Session* – Wagner reported that LB75, concerning township libraries, creates a process for making decisions about continuance of library services in counties that discontinue township organization. The bill advanced from committee and is on general file. A committee amendment requires the county board to notify the Library Commission and regional library system of any public hearing regarding continuance of library services if the county proceeds with elimination of township organization.

LB 282 would remove protections for schools and public libraries from prosecution for providing access to obscene materials. There has been no action as of yet by the judiciary committee.

The Library Commission's budget hearing was held on February 23 before the legislature's appropriations committee. The committee's preliminary budget matches the governor's recommendation for the commission's state aid to libraries funding. The governor recommended funding the commission's full request for the regional library systems, which would provide a 2.75% state general fund increase for each year of the biennium. The appropriations committee will present its recommendations to the full legislature by the end of April. The Nebraska Economic Forecasting Advisory Board met in February and increased state tax revenue estimates by \$462 million over the next two years.

*Nebraska Center for the Book* – Wagner reported the board will meet on March 20. Plans will be discussed for the Celebration of Nebraska Books event to be held in October or November. One Book One Nebraska 2021 is underway with book club copies being sent out. Christa Porter and Tessa Terry planned and hosted a recent webinar for OBON 2021 with author James Kimble among the presenters. Nominations for OBON 2022 are due June 15. Nebraska Book Awards entries are due by June 30.

*Big Talk from Small Libraries Conference* – Christa Porter said that this year’s conference was the tenth. The conference had a record 989 registrations. Recordings of all conference sessions are available. The Association for Rural and Small Libraries is a conference co-sponsor.

## **Financial Report**

*February Budget and Financial Report* – Wagner reported that expenditures are on track for the fiscal year.

*LSTA Appropriation Status* – Wagner reported that \$200 million was appropriated to the Institute of Museum and Library Services as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. Of that amount, there is \$178 million to be allocated to state library agencies with a minimum allocation of \$2 million. Each state receives an additional amount based on state population. Nebraska’s allocation will be \$2.42 million. Along with the LSTA appropriation, there is also an enhancement for the E-Rate program with \$7 billion to be available through an expanded E-Rate program for the nation’s schools and public libraries. Funds will be used for educational connections and devices.

*Build Americas Libraries Act* – Wagner reported there is legislation in both the House and Senate for the Build Americas Libraries Act. If enacted, the legislation would provide for funds to states to support public library construction and renovation work. Each state would receive a minimum of \$10 million to be expended within three years.

## **New Business**

*State Aid to Public Libraries Payments* - Sam Shaw, Planning and Data Services Coordinator, prepared a state aid to public libraries proposal comparable to payments distributed last year. The aid payment formula includes a base amount and an amount based on the library’s service area population. There is also an incentive payment for libraries that receive county funding. Libraries that are not accredited, but submit a statistical report, are to receive a \$200 payment. The proposed payments total \$379,000 compared to \$366,838 last year.

A motion was made by Lois Todd-Meyer and seconded by Julia Tye to approve the state aid to public libraries payments. Motion carried on roll call vote: Debby Bloom – aye; Arun Pondicherry – aye; Lois Todd-Meyer – aye; Julia Tye – aye; Kristin Wiebe - aye. Motion approved.

*Next Meeting Dates* –May 14, July 9, September 10.

## **Adjournment**

Debby Bloom adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer Wrampe