

## Nebraska State Advisory Council on Libraries

GoTo Webinar

Thursday, July 17, 2020 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

### MINUTES

State Advisory Council members present via GoTo Webinar: Sky Seery (chair), Jessica Chamberlain (vice-chair), Scott Childers, Pat Gross, Joy Harvey, Gail Irwin, Lori Long, Dana Morgan, Tom Pfeifer, Julie Pinnell, Charlene Rasmussen, Michael Straatmann, and Matthew Williams. Commission staff present: Rod Wagner, Christa Porter.

#### Welcome and Introductions

Sky Seery welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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

Approval of Minutes of March 5, 2020 Meeting: Pat Gross requested correction to the LEAP program in her report. It stands for Learn, Explore, Achieve, Play. Lori Long attended the meeting, but she is missing from the attendance list. A motion was made and seconded to approve the March 5, 2020 minutes with the changes made. Motion approved.

#### Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

#### Reports

##### Nebraska Library Association

##### **Michael Straatmann**

Michael reported that the College and University Section and the Technical Services Round Table virtual spring meetings were held May 15. There was a large attendance with 13 breakout sessions. The keynote speaker was Claire Stewart, UNL Dean of Libraries. The NLA member engagement survey indicated that members are focusing on conference and future endeavors, anticipating reduced funding, and emphasizing elimination of “legacy” work to focus on user needs. The 2020 NLA/NSLA Annual Conference scheduled to be held in Kearney this year was cancelled. NLA celebrates its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and will begin with conference programming events throughout the season.

##### Nebraska School Libraries Association

##### **Joy Harvey**

Joy reported School Librarians Day virtual event was held on April 4 with keynote speakers Coby Sharp and Ashley Cooksey. Beginning this year, School Librarians Day will be moved to fall as a virtual event on October 17. There will be a registration fee, with a discount for members. All session proposals must be submitted by midnight August 15.

##### Nebraska Library Commission

##### **Rod Wagner**

Rod thanked Michael Straatmann and Joy Harvey for their work in their organizations during this challenging COVID-19 pandemic time.

The legislature re-convenes on July 7. State tax revenues came in at just above projections through the end of June. The Nebraska Economic Forecasting Advisory Board met in April and won't meet again until October. The board's tax revenue projections for the current fiscal year are slightly above this year's revenues but the pandemic makes that all highly speculative. State agency budget requests are due September 15 for the 2021-2023 biennium.

There are several federal funding actions. Congress needs to act soon to enact appropriations before the beginning of the federal fiscal year on October 1. There are a couple of library funding proposals. On July 2, Senator Jack Reed, D-R.I., and Congressman Andy Levin, D-Mich., introduced the Library Stabilization Fund Act. The legislation would provide \$2 billion in emergency funding to support libraries during the economic crisis. High-speed internet access, digital literacy training, and resources for remote learning are among the eligible library services that the bill would fund. On July 8, Senators Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and Susan Collins, R-Maine, announced plans to introduce the Hotspots and Online Technology and Services Procurement for our Tribes and States (HOTSPOTS) Act. The bill would create a 2-year, \$160 million hotspot pilot program to allow states, Tribes, and territories to purchase and distribute broadband-connected devices to libraries in low-income and rural areas.

Rod reported that the National Book Festival is held yearly on Labor Day weekend. However, this year the festival will be held as a virtual event due to the pandemic.

**Question:** Charlene Rasmussen asked if when the legislature or Congress introduces legislation, does this group send out information to others concerning the details and ask for support.

**Answer:** Rod responded that the American Library Association sends alerts to members. The Library Commission can also pass those on to SACL members and does. Michael Straatmann said that NLA also passes those relevant emails to members.

### **Christa Porter**

Christa reported the Library Innovations Studio project originally planned to include 40 libraries but activities were disrupted with the COVID-19 pandemic. Joann McManus, LIS project manager, contacted IMLS about project changes. The IMLS agreed to the Commission's request for fewer libraries. The LIS project team recorded training presentations for libraries. The presentations are available from the Library Commission's Niche Academy account.

Christa reported that the NCompass Blog is available with posts about the COVID-19 pandemic and resources for libraries. The posts include a listing of libraries and their service status.

The Library Commission received \$175,000 in CARES Act funding through IMLS. The funds will be used for public library sub-grant projects. Applications were solicited and received. Seventy-three applications were received with total requests of \$280,000. Staff are reviewing the applications for funding decisions. Libraries will be notified of application decisions by the end of July. About \$10,000 of the CARES Act funds will be used to pay for Reader Zone, a summer reading program service. The Reader Zone subscription was initiated by the regional library systems with Denise Harders, Central Plains Library System Director, as the coordinator.

All libraries up for renewing their library accreditation this year have been extended for one year. There will be no accreditation process this year. The library accreditation process was updated in 2013. That process included evaluation of the library through accumulation of points and a comparison to peer

libraries. Most public libraries have been through the current accreditation process twice. Christa invited volunteers for a committee to review the process. Cecelia Lawrence, Scott Childers, and Jessica Chamberlain indicated interest. Gail Irwin suggested that representation from each regional system area be included in this group. Also, all librarians and library boards due for certification this year (through December 31) have been offered a one-year extension.

Basic Skills classes have resumed. Some courses will be re-scheduled due to the temporary break.

Christa also reported that NCompass Live registrations have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic

### **Library Services During COVID-19 Pandemic – Council Discussion**

**Lisa Olivigni** (not able to attend but submitted written comments) – Lisa reported that Lincoln City Libraries were closed to the public March 20 – June 21, 2020. Curbside pickup of resources was provided during that time. When the library opened, Eiseley Branch had a capacity of 100 patrons per hour. With the change from yellow to orange on the COVID-19 dial, capacity was changed to 50 patrons per hour. Masks are required for patrons. Staff and patrons miss summer reading in-person programming. The staff continues to try to provide quality customer service despite COVID-19.

**Scott Childers** – Scott reported that libraries in the Southeast Library System region are reopening with different approaches. His biggest issue is the involvement of city governments with libraries during this time. It brings to light the relationship between libraries and city leadership. Some of the components involved with libraries during the COVID-19 pandemic are service appointments, public computer usage, restroom closings, and warning signs.

**Pat Gross** – Pat reported that many libraries in her area were closed for two weeks. Curbside service and appointments worked well during the library closings. Pat believes that government entities have realized that libraries are quite important during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people used library hotspot services, and school libraries accommodated students with virtual learning.

**Joy Harvey** – Joy reported that Lincoln Public Schools is working on how they will manage library instruction and checkouts. When school reopens, librarians will go to the classroom for those services. Joy's department has set up satellite libraries in the hallways for each grade level. Secondary students will be able to use the library by wearing masks and following health safety procedures.

**Gail Irwin** – Gail reported that staff worked in the library during the three months the library was closed. Patrons utilized curbside service, OverDrive service, and WiFi outside the library building. The library re-opened a month ago with ten people at a time for thirty-minute visits. A challenge has been helping patrons with their electronic devices. Staff use plastic gloves when helping patrons. Local patrons do not understand the continued COVID-19 rules at the library. There have been no COVID-19 cases in her county, and patrons think business should go on as usual.

**Dana Morgan** – Dana reported that when school dismissed in March, the school utilized online learning. Many book vendors offered free online resources. Dana's rural area had connectivity issues for students due to lack of adequate broadband services. Dana's school provided a drive-through drop off for supplies, books, and checkouts.

**Tom Pfeifer** – The Nebraska State Penitentiary law library is continuing its operations with a reduced maximum occupancy and social distancing. Demand for legal services is very high, and there are extended wait times to access the law library. The circulation library remains closed, but materials and services are available by request. Inmates and library employees are expected to wear protective gear. The library is moving towards re-opening the circulation library.

**Julie Pinnell** – Julie reported that Cochrane-Woods Library at Nebraska Wesleyan University was closed from the end of March to June 15. Staff worked remotely, and the library provided curbside delivery by appointments. When Wesleyan reopened, they opened for faculty and students only. Staff wear masks unless they are in their office with the door closed. Masks are offered to patrons arriving without one. The computer lab is half capacity due to social distancing. Julie said NWU administration has been very supportive to the college community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Charlene Rasmussen** – Charlene reported that the Wayne Public Library reopened for adults only. During the closed time, the staff did inventory, painting, deep cleaning, and restroom renovation. The staff applied for grants and attended virtual conferences. The school library has not made a decision concerning reopening.

**Sky Seery** – Sky reported that North Platte Public Schools closed from March 15 to mid-May. Sky had no access to the building during that time. The school principals had access, and she worked closely with them to provide books to students. The books were dispensed without being checked out, but her concern is about the students and not getting the books back. Sky utilized Zoom and created videos for students during the time that the library was closed. She also reported that teachers are moving to Google Classroom.

**Michael Straatmann** – Michael reported that supporting students at UNL digitally has been his biggest challenge. UNL stopped all access to print collections and shifted to electronic access only when UNL closed in early March. A complete shift was made to HathiTrust's Emergency Temporary Access Service, and everything was processed through interlibrary loan. The library plans to keep the HathiTrust electronic content in place. A big challenge has been the international populations, as they were trying to get home. UNL is using the REALM Project to guide them through the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**Matthew Williams** – Matthew reported that Kearney Public Library closed in March, provided curbside services for a couple of weeks, closed completely, and reopened with normal hours on June 15. All summer programming has been online, and all programming will be available online through December. Meeting rooms were opened recently for groups of ten or less. The city administration has been supportive of the library during this time. The bookmobile will resume this fall without children entering the bus.

**Jessica Chamberlain** – Jessica reported that Norfolk Public Library closed in March and reopened June 15. The library started with a thirty-minute visit time limit. Most services closed except checkouts and the computer lab. The time limit was removed because so few patrons visited the library. Most of the physical library services are now open at 50% capacity limits. All programming is online and the kids play area is closed. Jessica's biggest challenge is the weight of responsibility for the health and emotional wellbeing of staff and patrons.

### **Council Round Table – Success and Challenges**

**Lori Long** – Lori reports that her biggest challenge has been the transition to online learning and using library resources to enhance lessons during the fourth quarter. Another challenge has been collecting resources for students. She collected 100% of circulated items from her graduating seniors, but only 25% from the other students. Lori is challenged on how to collect and quarantine when school resumes.

**Jessica Chamberlain** – Jessica reported that Norfolk Public Library received an LSTA grant to add equipment for their makerspace. Patrons are excited to use the new equipment. Jessica reported that during the time the library was closed, library staff learned a lot about social media marketing.

**Susan Franklin** (not able to attend but submitted a brief report) – Susan reported a major change at Perkins Library, Hasting College. The library director position was eliminated and replaced by a staff position. The library is now under the auspices of the college's information technology director, whose title was changed to chief information officer. The tenure line in the library has been discontinued, and it is not expected that the cataloguer or instructional librarian positions will exist in the future. Susan's tenure has been transferred to the college's English department as an appeal outcome. Susan will be teaching in the classroom full-time.

**Pat Gross** – Pat reported that many of the public librarians in her area are presenting summer reading programs virtually. Gering Public Library held a successful book discussion in an area park using social distancing. Lied Scottsbluff Public Library was successful with a curbside distribution of materials for their summer reading program. Many area libraries are using Facebook and their websites to conduct services. Pat commended school, public and special libraries for the variety of services they have offered during COVID-19 pandemic.

**Joy Harvey** – Joy reported that the biggest success for Lincoln Public Schools was conducting school remotely. Joy's department started a daily learning challenge site with themed activities for students and family participation. NBC's "Today Show" presented a segment on Betsy Thomas, a Lincoln Public Schools librarian (Kooser Elementary) featuring Betsy's daily Read Alouds.

**Dana Morgan** – Dana reported that a success for her was to see adults coming together to form a cohesive unit to do what was best for the students.

**Tom Pfeifer** - The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services libraries have switched to Follett. Follett has improved cataloging, reporting, and inter-library loan procedures. The old system did not have internet connectivity or the ability to share records between libraries. They continue to transition. Delivery of materials has been difficult for staff to accommodate everyone who wants to use library services during the pandemic. It has been a challenge to balance providing everyone enough time in the law library to suit their needs with safety and social distancing procedures.

**Julie Pinnell** – Julie reported that she participated in the Virtual ALA Conference this summer. She said NLA's spring meetings were well attended. Wesleyan's Cochrane-Woods Library started a virtual teaching development roundtable with good attendance and presentations.

**Charlene Rasmussen** – Charlene said that Wayne Public Library's adult summer reading program has had more attendance than in past years. The children's summer reading program incorporated outdoor

activities such as storybook walks and story hours in the park. The Wayne Public Library staff worked during the library closing.

**Sky Seery** – Sky reported that her success was receiving a grant to add to their makerspace at North Platte High School library. Her challenge is that the library has been closed and will continue to be closed for a while.

**Michael Straatmann** – Michael reported that a success for NLA is the feedback from the membership survey. Many good comments were received. Michael's biggest success is the sharing of electronic resources among the University of Nebraska system libraries. Social distancing will be a challenge concerning spacing of library furniture.

**Matthew Williams** – Matthew reported that staff at the Kearney Public Library are doing a fantastic job and keeping up their spirits during this challenging time. His biggest challenge is what is going to happen in the future with the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Gail Irwin** – Gail reported that it has been difficult for patrons not having access to the library's computers. The local developmental office made appointments for patrons to use their computers, helping hundreds of patrons in the community. Returns for overdue materials at Ainsworth Public Library have been very successful. Gail expressed thanks to the regional library systems for the Reader Zone service.

#### **New Business**

##### Recommendations and Resolutions

Rod Wagner thanked the State Advisory Council on Libraries members for sharing their information about what is happening in their libraries and communities. He commended them on their resiliency and continued efforts under the difficult times they are experiencing.

##### Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting date will be held on November 20 (Lincoln).

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.