

**State Library of Kansas Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
December 09, 2022 – 10:00 a.m. Zoom (unapproved)**

PRESENT: Randy Roberts, Leslie Weishaar, Rhoda MacLaughin-Ramirez, Susan Moyer, Gloria Creed-Dikeogu, Steven Waugh, Bill Brady, Richard Brookman, Kim Beets, and Ray Walling.

ABSENT: Tom Taylor and Anne Adrian.

GUESTS: Mary Boller-NWKLS, Michael McDonald-NEKLS, Eric Norris-NCKLS, Anna Foote NEKLS, Gail Santi CKLS, Judith Cremer - Pottawatomie Wabaunsee Regional Library, Katherine Williams SCKLS, and Kathy Anthony Norcatur Public Library.

SLK STAFF: Cindy Roupe, Jeff Hixon, Jennifer Ragsdale, Andy Schafer, Michael Lang, and Bill Sowers

Call to Order

Chair Randy Roberts called to order the quarterly meeting of the State Library of Kansas Board, held via Zoom, at 9:06 am.

Agenda Approval

The meeting agenda was presented for review and approval. Steven Waugh made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Leslie Weishaar. By voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

Introduction of Board Members

Board members made self-introductions.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Judith Cremer provided an update regarding the Pottawatomie Wabaunsee Regional Library situation. She noted that the city council did vote unanimously to renew the current lease.

Approval of Minutes

The September 23, 2022 meeting minutes were presented for approval. Steve Waugh made a motion to approve the minutes for September 23, seconded by Gloria Creed-Dikeogu. By voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Board Member Reports

There were no board member reports.

Regional Library System Report

Northwest Kansas Library System- Mary Boller reported that the board of NWKLS has convened a hiring committee and they are in the process of hiring for the director's position. They hope to have someone to present before the State Board by the next meeting.

Southwest Kansas Library System- Richard Brookman reported that the two communities that did have some challenges have quieted down, for one community especially. Hamilton County will be able to expand and remodel their library after a successful ballot measure in the recent election. Dodge City Public Library lost their director and are looking to post a job announcement in February.

North Central Kansas Library System- Eric Norris reported that he spoke to two librarians from Kansas State University's Hale Library and a professor in the entrepreneurial and leadership studies department that they have applied for an IMLS grant to provide training to public libraries to advance entrepreneurial ecosystem efforts. They submitted the application before the deadline and won't know if they make it to the second round of the grant application process until sometime in March. Hopefully by the March State Library Board meeting he will have more information to report.

Kansas Library Express Courier Report

Michael McDonald reported that participation in the courier is at 357 libraries. There was an uptick in shipping delays in mid-September through mid-October. The delays were centered on a portion of the Central Kansas Library System, north of I-70 and NEKLS libraries serviced out of the Henry Industries Kansas City hub. As part of the effort to better understand the details associated with delays, they deployed a GPS tracking unit and routed it to predetermined stops through the courier. Nothing significant came from this tracking. Due to battery failure, they only had ten days' worth

of live data. They are looking to upgrade to an extended life battery unit that they can send out for longer stretches of time.

The twelve-month average, November 2021 through October 2022, saw shipping totals exceed 840,000 and Kansas Library Express accounted for 832,000 of that total. Blue Sky Connection and the Trans Amigos Express connection account for the remainder. Michael wanted to note that the rates are going to be increasing in 2023.

State Librarian Report

Ray Walling reported that the State Library hired Wulf James as the new Communications Coordinator. Wulf will be starting Monday. Jeff Hixon and Bill Sowers will be retiring and today will be their last day. Brett Rurode will become a Librarian III and will be taking over Bill's responsibilities. Brett's current position will be utilized for other purposes and we're going to take some of Brett's responsibilities and have other staff members take them over. Ray Walling is going to oversee the Statewide Services Division temporarily. The new director of Statewide Services will be announced soon. SLK has heard back from the Division of Budget that they have concurred with the SLK request for the 2023-2024 budget. Next, the governor will make her recommendation, which will be considered by the legislature.

Ray discussed his field visits to CKLS libraries, NWKLS libraries, Andover Public Library, Wichita Public Library, Dugan Library at Newman University, and Peabody Township Library. Ray reported on the COSLA Fall Convocation and KLA Annual Conference. Thirteen authors of the 2022 Kansas Notable Books were recognized at the Kansas Book Festival in September. The state library awarded over \$27,000 to libraries to purchase these books. November was the Kansas Reads to Preschoolers month overseen by Nikki Hansen. This year's book was *Not a Box*. Ray has also been focused on addressing statutes and regulations on home rule, state aid, and special library districts.

Statewide Services implemented the Palace Project that brings together our current content from multiple platforms into one app. Talking Books has developed a Braille awareness kit to raise awareness among children about vision impairments and other print disabilities. The division also produced four books that appeared on the most downloaded books nationally. The division has been focused on returning cartridges that are no longer used in favor of downloaded content onto blank cartridges to send to patrons. The agency will look to renegotiate a contract with ESU as its space needs have changed. Ray reminded attendees that the public library survey will be open from January through early February.

Kim Beets asked if the agency was planning to hire to fill positions vacant from retirement. Ray responded they are and that the agency was not losing head count. Ray also noted the agency has extra FTE available; however, these positions aren't funded.

Bill Sowers and Jeff Hixon Retirement

Cindy Roupe recognized Bill Sowers and Andy Schafer recognized Jeff Hixon for their contributions to the library community during their careers. The remarks are included at the end of the minutes.

Strategic Plan Background

Ray Walling provided an overview of the Division of Budget's strategic plan structure and the steps the agency is taking to implement a new three-year plan. Ray shared that the agency will focus on the goals, objectives, and outcome measures between October and February (Phase 1) and the strategies and output measures between March and May (Phase 2). Each phase will involve stakeholder input, including an initial draft by agency administrators, an opportunity for staff feedback, and an opportunity for board feedback. The administrative team will review the provided feedback as it finalizes the plan components.

Business Items

Statewide Database Contract Extension Recommendation

Back in 2018 the State Library went through a rigorous process of requesting and evaluating the proposals for statewide databases. This ultimately resulted in a five-year contract with EBSCO, Britannica, Infobase, and ProQuest. The contracts began on July 1st of 2019, and they will expire on July 1st, 2024. Each contract includes a two-year extension option. Following a presentation on usage and survey feedback, Andy Schafer shared a letter that the agency is asking the board to endorse. A motion to endorse the letter was made by Bill Brady and seconded by Gloria Creed-Dikeogu. The motion passed.

Norcatour Free Public Library Petition to Withdraw from NWKLS

Ray provided an overview of the process to withdraw from a regional system of cooperating libraries. He shared that the agency received a petition for withdrawal from Norcatour Library. During the October 12th meeting of the Northwest Kansas Library System executive board, a motion was approved to accept the withdrawal request effective in 2024 with the condition that all computers and devices purchased in the last ten years be returned to the system. Ray scheduled the hearing required under regulation to occur during this meeting and notified the parties involved. Ray elaborated on the transfer of property regulation and noted that the computer system, computer software, printer and a receipt printer have been returned to the system. He noted that the outstanding invoice of \$56.15 has been resolved. He mentioned that the system requested that other materials and property purchased with state or system funds be returned, particularly books that could be redistributed to other libraries.

Mary Boller elaborated that the system would like to redistribute the books Norcatur purchased with system funds to other libraries in the system. She offered system support for this process.

Kathy Anthony, on behalf of the library, indicated that she will be attending another city council meeting to make sure they understand what is happening and the plan for the library books. She will then get with the system to take care of this process.

Rhoda MacLaughlin-Ramirez moved to accept the petition to withdraw effective January 1, 2024 and Susan Moyer seconded the motion. The motion passed.

2023 Kansas Statewide Summer Library Program Project Proposal

Anna Foote thanked CKLS for their role in administering the funds for the summer library program for the past several years and shared that NEKLS will be taking over this responsibility. Anna provided an overview of the summer reading program and a grant proposal for the 2023 program which included a request of \$21,793.

Kim Beets moved to approve the request, which was seconded by Gloria Creed-Dikeogu. The motion was approved.

Regional Library System grant plan and budget form

Ray Walling shared that the agency will bring regional system of cooperating library grant requests to the board for consideration in the future. To facilitate this process, he has been working with the administrative team and stakeholders to develop standardized forms for future requests.

Richard Brookman and Mary Boller raised concerns regarding their ability to continue participating in the Talking Books Outreach Program if expectations will be enforced given the limits of their current staffing situations and limited opportunities to provide this type of outreach.

Michael Lang indicated that he and Ray will take another look at the requirements for the Talking Books Outreach Grant. Ray added that they would reach out to Richard and Mary on this topic.

Ray turned the discussion back to board feedback regarding standardization of the process and the types of information the board needs for considering these requests. Steven Waugh expressed his support for the standardization and the opportunity today's discussion provided for identifying real issues that need to be addressed. Bill Brady concurred with Steven's comments.

2023 Meeting Dates

Ray presented four dates for board meetings in 2023, including: March 10, June 9,

September 29, and December 8. He noted that the September date was pushed back due to the state budget process deadline of September 15. He is proposing the March and December meetings be virtual; while the June and September meetings be in person/hybrid.

Susan Moyer moved and Kim Beets seconded the motion to approve the recommended dates. The motion was approved.

Adjournment

Rhoda MacLaughlin-Ramirez moved to adjourn the meeting and Steve Waugh seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Today we recognize Bill Sowers' 39 years of service to the State Library of Kansas. Recently, Donna Casement interviewed Bill as part of her efforts to record the history of the agency. Bill was asked about his accomplishments over his career and responded as follows:

"Soon after I started at the State Library in December 1983, I realized that very few of the State Library's federal documents were in the library's catalog. I applied for a grant and got \$2,000 dollars to start copy cataloging federal documents. I started with the Dept of Agriculture and went through document-by-document adding holdings on OCLC and downloading records into our catalog and the statewide catalog. It was not "pretty" cataloging, but it provided access to our great fed docs collection at the State Library. The response was immediate, and the State Library became a net lender. In the end I cataloged thousands of fed docs as well as ASI and SRI microfiche.

"Sometime in the 1990s I started doing original cataloging of articles from the journal issued by the Kansas State Historical Society. The ILL response was high as people discovered the articles from this great resource via OCLC and the Kansas statewide catalog. So, I branched out and started doing original analytic cataloging of articles from other journals related to Kansas and chapters/sections of books on Kansas government, history, and biography. Again, the ILL response was high. Through all of this I had the help of amazing coworkers, Rita Troxel and Vicky Wolf. Together we have added thousands of analytic records to OCLC/statewide catalog/SLK catalog.

"In 2014 Jo Budler got funds together to enable the State Library to start up an online library of digitized Kansas state government publications, the Kansas Government Information (KGI) Online Library, housed at OCLC. Within the past eight years Vicky Wolf, Rita Troxel, Jason Ackermann, Brett Rurode, Trista Philippi, Tim Volpert, and I have built up and maintained this amazing online collection of thousands of Kansas state government publications, often having to overcome and adapt to sudden changes in the structure of KGI brought about by OCLC and other Internet service providers. I think this experience helped me increase the strength of my spinal column... calling OCLC and yelling at them over the phone or sending nasty emails to them about their unannounced changes which threw us under the bus. It was amazing to learn that this demi-god had feet of clay like everybody else."

When asked about their experience working with Bill over the years, his coworkers remarked how helpful Bill was in supporting their work. Tracey Boswell noted that "Bill patiently answered my cataloging questions and when a box of books would come for me to catalog, he would stand at the mezzanine balcony and call 'Oh Tracey' in singsong voice." Vicky Wolf noted that Bill would tell her "There's no such thing as a stupid question" despite her own admission that "I asked a lot of them!".

Bill's colleagues also emphasized his ingenuity when it came to new ideas or ways to improve existing services. Cindy Roupe remembered Bill's enthusiasm for a new project or a better way of doing something was usually preceded by: "oh, Oh, OH! I just had an idea!" One of those ideas was Legislators Past and Present. This was Bill's vision and became a model for many other states. Bill was always thinking of a better way to do something. His original cataloging generated credits that allowed us to pay for many OCLC products.

Bill also has a great sense of humor, as recounted by Donna Casement. “Bill and I are similar in age, and we grew up seeing the same commercials as a kid, eating the same cereal, and going on the same types of vacations. One day we were talking about all the squabbling that went on in the back seat of the car between siblings during vacations. Bill told me he had two brothers and sometimes he felt outnumbered. I told him that surely he had figured out a way defend [him]self and he got a glint in his eye and said, ‘I just bring out my evil twin named Philbert and that tended to level the playing field.’”

Acting State Librarian, Ray Walling, praised Bill’s work, noting “as someone that started their career in government documents librarianship, I truly appreciate Bill’s work to make government information accessible in our collection, through the state documents depository program, and through the Kansas Government Information Online Library. I also value his efforts to promote government documents through blog posts, emails to the list-servs, and presentations over the years (including to KLA GODORT). Bill’s work has improved the visibility of government information to the state employees, the library community, and our fellow Kansans.”

Former State Librarian, Jo Budler, reflected on how wonderful it was to work with Bill, noting “I remember fondly how much [he] enjoyed [his] job and what a joy it was to be around someone as positive as [Bill]! [He] certainly made my tenure as State Librarian a pleasant experience. I am glad I had the opportunity to work alongside [him]. I wish [Bill] all wonderful things in [his] retirement.”

In honor of Bill Sowers 39 years of service to the State Library of Kansas and the Kansas Library Community, I request these remarks be added to the minutes of this meeting.

Jeff Hixon began his library career as the Director of Carnegie Library in Clay Center, KS in 1979 and then became the coordinator for the North Central Kansas Library System in 1984. It was the State Library's good fortune when State Librarian Duane Johnson asked Jeff in 1998 to be the Director of Library Information Technology for the State Library of Kansas. In 2005, Jeff became the Director of Statewide Resource Sharing at the State Library.

Jeff has been a big part of numerous projects during his years of service, the most notable of these being Blue Skyways, Boeing Loaned Executive, CAN, K-PLACE, Library Assistant Associates Degree, and KICNET ILL.

- Blue Skyways was a partnership with KU Med Center which was a free web-hosting platform available for use by any Kansas city, library, school, museum, historical society, or community.
- Boeing Loaned Executive was a program in which executive staff from Boeing were assigned to work on public good projects, such as training, site development, design and photography for communities and libraries statewide.
- Community Access Network (CAN) was a collaborative project where libraries could contribute to a statewide community resource directory. It was unique in that it didn't exclude for-profit businesses – especially small services that usually couldn't afford to advertise (handypersons, babysitters, gutter cleaners, appliance repairs and so on).
- K-PLACE was a continuing education effort offered to Kansas librarians. Developed around 1989 by the state library and the systems, it was initially intended for public library directors who didn't have library degrees. It became more open as time went on. Students spent a week at SLIM each summer over the course of 3 years to become K-PLACE certified.
- The Library Assistant Associates Degree was a 2-year degree program for library staff not interested in or ready to pursue an MLS. Jeff was part of the group of 10 to 15 librarians from all backgrounds that worked with Flint Hills Technical College to develop this program.
- KICNET ILL has been the name of the statewide interlibrary loan system that's been in use since the 1970s, but in 1999, Jeff took part in transforming it into a completely web-based component of the Kansas Library Catalog. KICNET continues to this day.

According to his coworkers and friends, Jeff is someone who is willing to do what is needed to get the job done, sprinkling in wry and dry humor to make the work more fun. As Dakota Heard stated "Jeff's emails always have some witty comments or jokes intertwined with helpful information". Tracey Boswell added that "Jeff always has a cute saying like 'Oh well, someone's got to kick the beehive.' And other quirky things in email exchanges. [He] [h]elped me access and use Civic engage to create blog posts."

Amanda Diggs was able work with Jeff during the pandemic when he took over for the IT department temporarily. "He was always patient, helpful, and kind whenever I contacted him for assistance. He also has a great sense of humor. In one email, he told me, 'I'm always happy to pretend to help and then take too much of the credit.'"

Rhonda Machlan reflected on traveling around the state with Jeff, noting “Jeff and I would hone our Kansas geography skills by trying to recall Kansas towns which were NOT in the same county whose name they shared, Kansas towns with the name of a foreign capital, and probably others I’ve forgotten. And I’m hopeful that Jeff taught me the proper use of the word ‘hopefully!’”

Jeff started a tradition that Vicky Wolf loves. “The King Cake, which we had every ‘Fat Tuesday’ (the day before Ash Wednesday), and his announcement of it with ‘Laissez les bon temps rouler!’ Whoever got the baby had to help pay for the next year’s cake.”

In addition to the many moments of levity that Jeff brought his colleagues, they also recognize the important consulting and mentoring role he played for many librarians. In my case, Jeff took me under his wing pretty much as soon as I came on board at the library. Even though I was just fresh out of library school, from the jump he treated me as a colleague, not just a subordinate; someone whose opinion he sought and considered. I’ve learned so much from him over the years. These lessons included: how to handle overzealous salespeople; the importance of deciding which things are truly worth worrying over; and learning when to stop staring at a problem, take a break, and look at it with fresh eyes a little later.

Cindy Roupe wrote that “Jeff is a trusted confidant. His common sense, wisdom and sense of humor are traits that will be missed by many Kansas librarians and truly missed by his coworkers. Every project was made easier and more fun if Jeff was on your team.”

Acting State Librarian Ray Walling expressed his appreciation for Jeff’s work, noting “the work of his division is instrumental to the operation of libraries around the state and the resources he manages form a foundation for their collections. Jeff’s leadership and dedication have made a significant difference to the services our libraries can provide and the resources our fellow Kansans can access.”

Former State Librarian Jo Budler, wrote “I cannot put into words what a pleasure it was to work alongside [Jeff] when I was State Librarian. I always knew that any job I turned over to [him] would be done well. [His] sense of humor was a treat and so often made the difficult work easier! I wish [him] only the best in retirement.”

In honor of Jeff Hixon’s service to the State Library of Kansas and the Kansas library community, I request these remarks be added to the minutes of this meeting.