

Sagebrush Federation Minutes - October 4, 2024

The meeting was opened at 8:40am.

In attendance were the following people:

Teal Whitaker – via Zoom

Jenne Sapp - State Library, Sarah Peterson – MCPL, Andrew Alber (trustee) – MCPL, Savannah Sill – State Library, Tracy Cook – State Library, Beth Meggers – Fallon County Library, Barb Mitchell – Henry A Malley Mem. Library, Mary James – George McCone Mem. County Library, Carrie Murnion – Garfield County Library, Torey Spring – Ekalaka Public Library, Rolane Christofferson – Prairie County Library, Nancy Wilson (trustee) – MCPL

Roll Call was taken and some housekeeping was discussed with suggestions for lunch and addressing trustees to ensure they were comfortable with the flow of the meeting.

Minutes from the last meeting were presented. It was motioned by Rolane to accept them with out correction. The motion was seconded by Dawn and passed unanimously.

It was decided that a poll would be sent out with both Friday and Saturday dates for the spring federation meeting.

Sarah gave a presentation on the Montana Library Association and their affiliated groups.

- In summary the MLA is a professional organization that functions in conjunction with the American Library Association. It provides continuing education support, scholarships, although one of their main purposes is legislative advocacy.
- Membership costs \$40 for trustees, \$60 for individuals, and \$120 for organizations (Sarah thinks, but wasn't sure on this last part,)
- Members receive access to Wired, grant opportunities for travel and professional development, continuing education and extra content.
- Trustees can join the Trustee Interest Group. They are seeking a president.
- Feedback was solicited from the group and some of the following suggestions were offered:
- A tier based membership system that offered memberships to everyone in your organization through the cost of a flat fee that was proportionate to the size of your organization,
- It was requested that we share positive stories with Sarah for inclusion in this month's reporting. Sarah provided a QR code and also presented the link to the web based submission form.

There was a brief discussion of Partners and the courier system, A map was provided showing the large gaps in coverage area. There was a discussion of cost (there is a flat fee of \$25 for 5 crates and then a \$3 per crate fee for any crate over 5)

- Rolane stated that 30-40% of their checkouts come from Partners and that they could not survive without it. There was a discussion of some libraries piggybacking off of current partners members to increase access until the courier issue could be solved.

Teal Whitaker – the outreach coordinator for MT provided some statistics for DPIL. The number of children covered has increased from about 9500 to over 25000 which covers about 42 % of the eligible children in the state. Several libraries were singled out and thanked for their successful efforts, although I did not catch all of them, so they are omitted from this report.

The State Library Report was given. It featured some changes to the Library Development Roadmap and was soliciting feedback from the directors that were present. This road map is voluntary and is a means for libraries to stretch beyond the mandatory standards. This roadmap is organized by area and contains extra standards

to challenge libraries and grow their skillsets. This is intended to not be a burden or more work for us, but to be a tool that is optional. When it is completed it will be posted on the MSL website.

Some of the feedback that was provided:

- Make it extra clear that it is entirely voluntary.
- Label each category/organizational grouping for clarity

Tracy Cook asked for feedback about YALSA and teen/tween library attendance.

Most libraries struggled with teen/tween attendance, but a few libraries have seen an uptick in numbers. Some feedback was provided that could be driving those numbers.

- Cultivating relationships with local teachers.
- Some schools have school wide AR reading.
- Democracy Project
- Food/snacks
- Some county libraries are superior to school libraries.
- Some libraries have extras like STEM labs, Friday Clubs, and STEM Clubs
- Circle is looking into a Library Pass to allow kids to come to the library during school hours.
- Reading pens were discussed.
- Also normalizing audio books & graphic novels.

Savannah gave a brief presentation soliciting issues common to members of the federation. It was an almost universal concern for most libraries as very few local governments have county based IT support. IT support as a plan of service was discussed.

There was also discussion around how to drive board member attendance at federation meetings.

Some of the feedback is listed below:

- Having a Board member specific portion of the meeting so that attendance is shortened.
- Breakout session so that board members and directors could discuss topics specific to their positions.
- Some libraries are struggling to find board members or are losing board members to the current climate of incivility that is permeating many facets of daily life, including a fear of having to endure book challenges.
- In some federations (Tamarack and Golden), there is a loss of funding if no board member shows up to the federation meeting as the law states that only trustees have the vote.
- Library Mentorship programs were discussed, i.e. assigning an experienced library director to mentor a new incoming director to help their transition into their new role.

New highlights were shared:

- Richey opened its new library. It took almost 20 years, but was done without any increase in mills or levys. Dawn discussed this process briefly.
- Broadus described an increase in adult attendance at the library after a focus on curbing poor student behavior.
- It was discussed how old libraries specifically and infrastructure in general are in this part of the state.

The building date of the libraries are as follows:

- Richey - 2024
- McCone – 1928 with addition in 1975
- Dawson – 1965
- Ekalaka – 1940
- Terry – 1920's with remodel in 1984

- Fallon County – 1969
- Henry A Malley – 1974
- Sidney – 1966
- Jordan? – 1975
- Miles City - 1902 with addition in 1965

McCone briefly discussed the results from their relay including a rise in circulation numbers in fiction, nonfiction and young adult children's sections as well as an increase in active cards from 80 to 269.

The meeting was adjourned for lunch to be followed by the educational session on strategic planning.

Respectfully submitted

Mary James

McCone County Library