

- The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Pottawatomie Wabaunsee Regional Library was held on Wednesday, January 26, 2022, at the PWRL St. Marys Headquarters Library.
- CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Pam Bales called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m. Peggy Adams was Secretary. Others present were Board members: Paulette Simecka and Alicia Matson; Board member Sandie Jensen was present via telephone; Judith Cremer, Director and Rain Schultz-Pruner, Assistant Director.
- ADOPTION OF THE MEETING AGENDA: Pam Bales moved that the agenda be approved as presented. Paulette Simecka seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
- APPROVAL OR CORRECTIONS OF MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 23, 2021 MEETING: Pam Bales moved that the minutes be approved as corrected. Sandie Jensen seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
- CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATION: A thank you card from an Alma Patron was shared with the Board. A card from Deborah Eiche, PWRL Processing Consultant, thanking the Board for a pay increase, was read by Board Members.
- REPORT OF TREASURER: Paulette Simecka, Board Treasurer, reported the Library received ad valorem funds from Wabaunsee County in the amount of \$75,265.04. Of that amount, \$67,331.07 was allocated to the General Fund and \$7,933.97 was allocated to the Employee Benefits Fund.
- The Library received ad valorem funds from Pottawatomie County in the amount of \$259,000.00. Of that amount, \$234,000.00 was allocated to the General Fund and \$25,000.00 was allocated to the Employee Benefits Fund.
- APPROVAL OF BILLS: A revised check register was distributed to the Board. After discussion, Peggy Adams moved that the Board approve and pay the bills as presented. Alicia Matson seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
- NCKL REP. REPORT: The first NCKL Executive Committee Meeting for 2022 is scheduled for tomorrow, January 27, 2022. Judith will conduct the meeting via Zoom.
- Judith was again appointed at the December 9, 2021 NCKL Executive Committee meeting to serve as the NCKL Executive Committee President for 2022.
- As the NCKL Executive Committee President, Judith was asked to write a letter to the State Library asking that the MPL/NCKL Director be certified as qualified for his new position. This letter was completed and sent out yesterday. The new MPL/NCKL Director, Eric Norris, will be introduced to the NCKL Executive Committee Board at the meeting tomorrow.
- The annual NCKL Summer Reading Workshops have begun. Several sessions are planned, and all will be held online via Zoom.

- DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Judith was unable to take any vacation time at the end of the year due to the pressing nature of a number of the new initiatives being pursued by the Library. The 144 hours of unused annual leave time were lost at year end. Judith reported that she worked a total of 4,177.5 hours in 2021, a little over double the 2080 hours scheduled for a full time 40 hour a week position. As an exempt employee this extra time is uncompensated.
- PWRL continues to struggle with staffing shortages. Several positions are still unfilled, and Covid quarantines imposed on a number of Library Staff and their family members have created more gaps.
- Copies of the revised PWRL Emergency Policy, including the Pandemic Action Plan; the Internet Access and Computer Safety Policy; and the PWRL Board of Trustees List, as of January 31, 2022 were distributed to the Board.
- The new pandemic action plan approved by the Board at the November 23, 2021 meeting went into effect on January 1, 2022. Under this policy employees are required to use leave time to cover Covid absences. If they don't have leave time or don't want to use it for this purpose, they may request to work an alternate schedule during the current pay period to make up for the lost time.
- During January 2022 the St. Marys Branch Librarian and both St. Marys Assistant Branch Librarians were out on Covid related absences.
- Jan Brown, the Eskridge Branch Librarian, retired at the end of 2021. Patty Knudson, the Eskridge Substitute Librarian, has been hired to fill the opening at this location. Jan was working a part time schedule at Eskridge, but the job will now return to the regular 30 hours per week budgeted for Branch Librarian positions at Alma, Eskridge, and Onaga.
- A good candidate has submitted an application for the open Substitute position at Eskridge. Judith will be scheduling an interview with the applicant next week.
- The Assistant Branch Librarian position at Alma, a Substitute position at Onaga, and the PWRL Mini Librarian / Route Driver Position remain unfilled.
- The PWRL Alma Branch Library sponsored a bookmark contest in December. The USD 329 Art Instructor partnered with the Library and helped boost participation in the contest. Pictures of the winners were published in the Wabaunsee County Signal Enterprise.
- A letter was received from a PWRL Eskridge Branch Library patron in January. In the letter she praised the Eskridge Staff, but stated she would like to see all of the R-Rated movies in the DVD Collection at that location be removed from circulation. Staff were instructed to share the PWRL Policy that prohibits R-Rated movies to be checked out by patrons under 17 years old, unless approved by a parent or legal guardian. This restriction mirrors the Motion Picture Association Rating System. In talking with Eskridge staff it was also decided that the DVD Collection would be split, with children's DVD's shelved separately. These measures seemed to satisfy the patron's concerns.
- Judith reported that she received a call from Jared Barnes, the Pottawatomie County Fire Supervisor, inquiring about the Electrical connection used at the Olsburg Mini Library. At this location members of the community built the building housing the Mini Library. They, either at that time, or sometime later, ran electricity from the Olsburg Fire House which is located next door to the library building.

Pottawatomie County has since invested in a new Fire House for the Olsburg Community. They would like to turn off the Electricity at the old Fire House. This would leave the PWRL Olsburg Mini Library without power.

- Originally the Olsburg quilting group made a quilt each year which they raffled off to pay for the propane to heat the Library. Several years ago the Olsburg City Clerk was able to arrange the installation of a combination heating and air unit for the library. This replaced the old heater and air conditioner that were at the end of their useful lives. It also relieved the local group from the responsibility of regular utility payments.
- Under PWRL's Mini Library Policy it is the responsibility of the Community to provide the building, maintenance, insurance on the building, and utilities. PWRL provides trained staff who maintain a regular library service schedule, a comprehensive materials collection, and access to other important library services and programs. It is difficult when the organization that was originally charged with providing the local support is lost due to local changes over time. Judith said she would keep the Board updated as the Olsburg Community addressed this situation.
- A PWRL Staff Meeting was held on Friday, January 21, 2022. The Branch Librarians and Administrative Staff were introduced to the new Internet Connected Equipment Public Outreach Program. The 200 Chromebooks and 100 Internet Hotspots have been assigned to each PWRL Location. 28 Kids+ Amazon Fire Tablets and a dozen Roku Streaming Media Sticks have also been purchased and added to the equipment that will be made available for circulation. The equipment has been processed, packaged, and cataloged.
- Staff discussed rolling out the new Equipment Loan program in February. Some aspects of the program will need to be approached as a work in progress. Procedures, Instruction Guide, Promotion and Marketing will have to evolve as we go along. There are simply not enough hours in the day to do it any other way at this point.
- It was decided that the soft rollout of the Equipment Loan Program will be incorporated as part of a February Love Your Library Promotion. Heart Shaped entry blanks will be available at each location for patrons to share why they Love their Library. Lori Beth Terrell, the Alma Branch Librarian, created custom made mugs using the Cricut and a new infusible ink mug press. These will be used as a drawing prize for patrons who submit an entry.
- Staff also discussed the upcoming Summer Reading Program. The theme for 2022 is Oceans of Possibilities. PWRL used memorial funds from Alma to again purchase access to the Page Turner Virtual Summer Library Program which will be used as a part of the Summer Reading Programming lineup. The addition of a snow cone machine, a popcorn machine, and a cotton candy machine will also be contributed to our SRP programming opportunities.
- UNFINISHED BUSINESS
- ARPA & OTHER GRANT OPPORTUNITIES: PWRL received a funding commitment from the Emergency Connectivity Fund in the amount of \$57,012. These funds were allocated for the purchase of the 100

Chromebooks and 100 Internet hotspots that were approved in PWRL's funding application. ECF funding guidelines allow for applicants to purchase approved equipment and then pay the provider after the ECF has dispersed the approved funding. In practice the ECF has not followed through on this guideline in its dealings with the Library.

- Two providers were approved through PWRL's ECF application. When the application for reimbursement was submitted the ECF refused to disperse funding until delivery of equipment was confirmed. Mobile Citizen, the first provider, refused to deliver the equipment until they were paid. PWRL was forced to prepay \$20,495 in local funds to get the equipment delivered.
- Network Computer Solutions, the second provider, delivered the chromebooks on November 17th. A request was immediately filed for reimbursement. The ECF asked for proof of the delivery date, and for a copy of the required eligible use policy that would be used with patrons who borrowed the equipment. PWRL responded to these and all subsequent requests and supplied the required information. Communication with the ECF reviewers through the online portal has been attempted, but no answers have been given as to when PWRL's reimbursement applications will be processed and the promised funds disbursed. Calls to the Universal Service Administrative Company, which is overseeing the program, have also produced no answers.
- Network Computer Solutions have been contacting the Library on a weekly basis inquiring as to when the payment for the Chromebooks will be made. They have been waiting now for three months. PWRL is in the process of deploying the machines. The Library has little choice but to pay the provider with local funds. It was for this reason that there was a check for \$37,011.60 to Computer Network Solutions with the January bills.
- Judith told the Board that she would continue to pursue reimbursement from the ECF. She will be contacting the State Library to see if they can offer any assistance in resolving this situation and securing the promised funding.
- As mentioned in the Director's Report mailed with the January Board Packet, PWRL received approval in late December from Wabaunsee County for an ARPA sub grant for \$11,150.00. These funds will be used to reimburse PWRL for the majority of the cost paid for the Copernicus locking recharging boxes. Four Copernicus carts with six cubes have been ordered for the Branches, and four trolleys with three cubes were ordered for the Mini locations. They will provide some added security, in addition to safely recharging chromebooks and other devices. One UV sanitizing cube will also come as part of each set. The carts for the Branches have been received and assembled. They were sent out to the Branch locations this week. The trolleys for the Mini Locations are scheduled to ship on Friday, January 28th.
- PWRL received a grant of \$5,000 through a KLA Health and Wellness Grant. These funds will go toward furnishing a pocket park area at the St. Marys Headquarters Library. PWRL has received an outdoor table and bench as well as a set of planters. Wamego Telco has installed the additional outdoor security cameras that were also part of this grant application. Judith has talked with a representative from the City of St. Marys about what the city could do about concrete work to secure the furnishings. A confirmation and installation schedule has not yet been received from the city.

- Development of the property located on the hill directly adjacent to the parking lot of the St. Marys Headquarters Library has begun. Four duplex units are planned for this parcel. After inquiring with the City of St. Marys it appears that according to their Plat Map the neighboring property has an easement that appears to go right through the center of the Library parking lot. Concern has been expressed that this activity may have an impact on the annual Summer Reading / Summer Food Program. Particularly since the grab and go meals and crafts distribution directly intersects at exactly this point.
- Reports on the grants that PWRL received in 2021 will be due soon. Considerable time has been spent on tracking this income and expense. PWRL was approved to receive \$110,159.09 of grant funding last year. PWRL also received \$68,292.94 in additional funding from Memorials and Donations; Miscellaneous Revenue, Interest on Accounts, and Previous FY Capital Improvement Fund Transfers. \$111,317.36 was spent on approved grant projects. This leaves a net gain of \$18,074.27 left on the balance sheet for 2021. Some of this funding, including the ECF disbursement and the Wabaunsee County ARPA allocation, have not yet been received by the Library. Once they arrive these amounts will either roll into the Capital Improvement Fund, or reimburse the 2022 equipment budget.
- HEALTH INSURANCE FOR LIBRARY EMPLOYEES: Sandie reported on communications she had over the holidays with Pottawatomie County Commissioner Pat Weixelman about the possibility of adding Health Insurance for PWRL Employees. It was stated that Library Employees could not be added to the Pottawatomie County Employee Health Plan. Judith said she would follow up with Pat and investigate other options in the coming month. The lack of a health insurance benefit is a hardship for current PWRL Employees. It is also an ongoing barrier to attracting and retaining qualified new workers willing to join the Library Staff.
- NEW BUSINESS
- NEW DATABASE CONTENT – HOOPLA & FLIPSTER: The portion of the State Library ARPA funds earmarked for equipment was shifted at the end of the year to fund the purchase of 196 digital magazine titles for PWRL's Flipster Subscription. All current titles, and a tremendous number of back issues for each subscription, are now available for patrons to download, once they have logged into the system with their PWRL Library Card. Patrons accessing PWRL's Hoopla Subscription, also purchased with ARPA Grant funding, were treated to a new borrowing model called a binge pass late last year. Patrons can use a binge pass to borrow whole collections for a full seven days of access. The starter binge pass offering include the new Hoopla magazines collection, the Great Courses Video Library Collection, and the Curiosity Stream Video Documentary Collection.
- INTERNET CONNECTED EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM: The new program is rolling out soon, as per the previous discussion. Judith asked the Board about ways to increase community engagement with the Library and bring their ideas along to future board meetings.

- **CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE FORM:** The civil right compliance form is part of the 2021 Kansas Public Library Report. Judith presented the form for signature, as per a Board motion at the Nov. 23, 2021 meeting. Pam Bales, Chairman, signed the Civil Rights Compliance form.
- **E-RATE APPLICATIONS:** The 470 E-Rate application signaling PWRL’s intention to participate in the federal E-Rate Internet reimbursement program for the period of July 2022 – June 2023 needs to be filed soon. Judith will investigate the current options for Internet service, particularly in Wabaunsee County. The E-Rate 470 application submitted by the Library must be posted for 28 days on the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) website. After 28 days have passed, the Library can complete a list of selected vendors and file the E-Rate 471 requesting the allowed reimbursements for the services to be provided by those vendors.
- **PUBLIC LIBRARY REPORT:** Completion of the annual Kansas Public Library Survey Report is now required for public libraries to retain eligibility to receive State Aid Funding. In 2022 the deadline for the completion of the Public Library Report is on Sunday, Friday, Feb. 6th. This is thankfully a little later than the 2020 report. There are again some last-minute changes in the report which makes it challenging because numbers for things that were not specifically counted are required. A number of questions have been asked about the correct way to count program attendance. The increased use of virtual programming that occurred while Libraries were working during the pandemic has made this count a lot more difficult.
- **EVALUATION OF THE DIRECTOR:** Copies of the Director’s annual evaluation form were distributed. Board Members will complete individual evaluation forms that will then be combined and presented to the Director at the February Board Meeting.
- **BOARD MEETING DATES FOR 2022:** The next Library Board Meeting will take place Wednesday, February 23, 2022, at 5:30 at the St Marys Headquarters Library.
- **ADJOURNMENT:** Pam Bales moved that the meeting be adjourned. Paulette Simecka seconded the motion and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.



Chairman



Secretary