

- The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Pottawatomie Wabaunsee Regional Library was held on Wednesday, January 31, 2024, at the PWRL St Marys Headquarters Library.
- CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Pam Bales called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Present were Board Members: Paulette Simecka, Alice Hinck, Alicia Matson, Peggy Adams, Judith Cremer, Director, Rain Schultz-Pruner, Assistant Director. Bill Flannigan was also present.
- PUBLIC COMMENT: None.
- APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA: Alice Hinck moved that the Board approve the consent agenda as presented, including the adoption of the meeting agenda, approval of minutes of the November 29, 2023 meeting, correspondence and communication, report of the treasurer, and approval of the financial reports and payment of bills. Paulette Simecka seconded the motion and the motion carried.
- REPORT OF TREASURER: Paulette Simecka reported that we are expecting to receive a check from Pottawatomie County for \$302,000. Of this amount, \$272,000 is for the general fund and \$30,000 is for the employee benefits fund. Paulette also reported that we received a check from Wabaunsee County in the amount of \$88,726.52. Of that amount, \$79,686.56 is for the general fund and \$9,039.96 is for the employee benefits fund.
- NCKL REP. REPORT: Judith reported that the NCKL Executive Committee met online via Zoom on Thursday, January 25. The Executive Committee elected new officers for the 2024 calendar year at this meeting. Judith also attended an NCKL Bylaw Review Committee Meeting that was held immediately following the regular Executive Committee Meeting.
- DIRECTOR'S REPORT:
 - Judith reviewed a series of minor adjustments made to the financial reports, and gave the Board a copy of the revised check register and financial report. PWRL voided a check for \$2879.04 written in November to Simplisafe for the security system emergency response monitoring service at all locations. The company representative agreed, after lengthy negotiations, that the Library account is paid through November 2024.
 - The renewal date for the data service needed to power the Internet hotspots that PWRL is currently able to circulate to patrons who have a need for the devices, as previously discussed, was December 1, 2023. Funding from the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) was supposed to pay for this expense, but there was a delay in the reimbursement process. PWRL has 100 hotspots and the data service cost \$120 per device for a total of \$12,000. PWRL finally received \$11,000 from the ECF in late December, and we got the final \$1,000 in early January. It was then necessary to void some checks that were previously prepared to cover that last \$1,000.

- PWRL became eligible to offer full time employees the option of contributing to a Roth retirement plan. This is in addition to the existing KPERS 457 retirement option. We were able to offer a Roth IRA investment option to employees through KPERS starting this year. A representative from Empower, the company that manages the additional KPERS retirement plans, is scheduled to attend the staff meeting on February 23 to explain the available retirement options to Library Staff members.
- Staff had to spend extra time this month for accounting setup activities. The new Roth retirement option was programmed into the Sage Accounting software, the 2023 financial year was closed and documents needed to be gathered for the 2023 Audit, W2's and vendor 1099's were electronically filed, and the 2024 budget and payroll were set up in Sage.
- There was considerable disruption to library service due to inclement weather toward the beginning of January. It was necessary to close many PWRL locations on multiple days due to the snow, cold, and dangerous driving conditions during the first few weeks of January.
- The annual library service calendar is a work in progress. Judith said she have sketched out the major service dates and sent them out to staff. Several other staff members are assisting with the process by adding the dates to PWRL's shared google calendar.
- The Library purchased several pieces of new equipment late last year with memorial money at Alma, including a printer and sublimation oven. This equipment is compatible with PWRL's existing Cricut cutting machines. The plan is to use this equipment to create customized prizes and incentives for the upcoming Summer Reading Program. Staff will gather for the April 4th Staff Meeting at Alma and work together to begin creating items for this purpose using the new tools.
- We have had some unfortunate news about staffing at our PWRL Harveyville Mini Library. Kim Davis who has worked as the Harveyville Assistant Mini Librarian at Harveyville for just over a year has submitted her two-week notice for that location. She will continue working as the Eskridge Assistant Branch Librarian though. Harveyville is currently open for limited hours each Tuesday and Saturday. Shelby Curry, the Mini Librarian / Route Driver covers the Tuesday service hours as part of her weekly route. A local Substitute generally covers the three hours each Saturday morning. It has been very difficult in the past to fill this local position. Judith covered the position for more than six month before she was finally able to hire Kim early last year. Local residents use the library heavily on Saturday and are concerned about losing this access. It is a problem.
- The problem with outstanding repair work has continued at the PWRL Eskridge Branch Library. The pipes, which froze and burst last year, froze again on Sunday, Jan. 21st. Luckily Patty Knutson, the Eskridge Branch Librarian, had positioned a new Amazon Echo camera to monitor the water left dripping in the bathroom at that location. When Patty remotely checked the camera and noticed the dripping has stopped, she immediately alerted William Whitaker, the building owner, about the situation. William did come and worked to thaw the pipes.
- Patty also reported the problem to Judith and sent photos of the back room. Both the water pipe and electric breaker box for the library are located in this area. The photos showed gaping holes in both the back door and in the roof directly over the electric box.

Additional photos showed extensive rust throughout the breaker box indicating a long-term exposure to water. Another picture showed snow literally piled on top of a live outlet directly adjacent to the breaker box. Judith prompted Patty to enquire when Mr. Whitaker planned to take steps to block the holes. When he failed to answer this question, Judith followed up with calls and texts to Mr. Whitaker. She made it clear that the expectation at this point is not that he complete actual roofing work, but to simply shield the electrical box from rain and snow. The holes in the back door were covered, but the breaker box is still directly in the path of the elements.

- UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
- ST. MARYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Judith reported that the Library continues to deliver a monthly information packet to the St. Marys City Commission. Paulette picked up and delivered this month’s packet on January 11. It contained the January New Book List, the new Flipster Brochure, and the Desktracker Stats report for December. Judith stated that her goal is to use suggestions and feedback from the committee to continue to improve the resources and services available at the Library.
- Bill Flannigan presented an update to the Board on the activities of the St. Marys Library Advisory Committee. The Committee met on Friday, January 19. The recent Baker & Taylor book order was discussed. One new book was identified as possibly containing content that may need review. Several committee members agreed to read and review the book.
- Bill, who also sits on the Senior Center Board, coordinated with the local meals on wheels volunteers to deliver copies of several library information brochures to current meals on wheels customers. Fifty-five copies of the January new book list, the updated Flipster brochure, and a new supersized service brochure were given to the volunteers to deliver.
- ECF/E-Rate Technology Projects: As mentioned in the Director’s Report, PWRL received a reimbursement payment from the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) for \$11,000 on Dec. 26, 2023. PWRL received our final ECF reimbursement payment of \$1,000 on Jan. 12, 2024. The Library will receive no additional funds from this source. The complete summery of PWRL’s ECF Funding over three years is as follows. The challenge going forward will be figuring out how to fund the ongoing expense, particularly for Internet Hotspot data renewal, now that this funding source has ended.

Amount Approved	Purpose	Date Delivered	Date Reimbursed
\$8000.00	(100) Internet Hotspots – Equipment for circulating to patrons with a need	12/6/2021	02/25/2022
\$12,000.00	(100) Internet Hotspot – Data for circulating to patrons with a need	12/6/2021	05/2022 - \$4,000.00 11/18/2022- \$7,000.00 04/28/2023- \$1,000.00

\$37,011.60	(100) Chromebooks – Equipment for circulating to patrons with a need	11/17/2021	02/16/2022
\$40,000.00	(100) Chromebooks – Equipment for circulating to patrons with a need	02/13/2023	Reimbursed directly to the vendor
\$12,000.00	(100) Internet Hotspot – Data for circulating to patrons with a need	12/01/2022	12/26/2023- \$11,000.00 01/12/2024- \$1,000.00
\$109,011.60	Total ECF Funding Rec'd by PWRL		

- Judith is working on the draft for PWRL’s 470 E-Rate application signaling the Library’s intention to participate in the Federal E-Rate Internet Reimbursement Program for the period of July 2024 – June 2025. Participants are required to wait 28 days after the 470 form is posted on the USAC (Universal Service Administrative Co.) website before they can select vendors and file the E-Rate 471 application, setting the amounts that will be charged and reimbursed through the E-Rate program. She would also like to submit a 470 application for category two E-Rate funding that will help fund the purchase of replacement of network equipment and cabling. She will be seeking more expert advice from the NCKL tech consultants to complete this application.
- LIBRARY AUDIT: Eric Kientz, PWRL’s auditor, delivered the final reports for the 2022 Library financial audit on Dec. 28, 2023. Judith scheduled a meeting with Eric on Jan. 4, 2024 to talk with her and Genevieve on ways to streamline the monthly accounting and navigate changes Genevieve has been introducing into the management of the Sage Accounting Software. Plans for completing the 2023 Library Audit were also discussed at that time. The goal is to submit all required documents for that audit by the end of February and have the 2023 audit completed by the end of March. This would put the Library back on a regular schedule for the audit.
- NEW BUSINESS:
- PUBLIC LIBRARY REPORT: The Kansas Public Library Survey Report covers all aspects of Library operation. Judith has gathered a majority of the information for this report and will be working steadily to complete the report by the February 5 deadline.
- STATE AID TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES: PWRL’s continuing eligibility to receive State Aid Funding is contingent on meeting that deadline and successfully submitting this report.
- Judith has studied the history of State Aid Funding received by the Library. In 2021, PWRL received a total of \$26,306 in State Aid funding. In 2023, the Library received \$7,864.95 in State Aid funds, representing a 57% decrease over that time. The majority of those funds are earmarked for paying the NCKL contract and the annual fee for the Sunflower eLibrary costs. Historically a good portion of state aid was used for the purchase of library materials, but in 2023 only \$465 remained for the purchase of books.

- The State Librarian has asked for feedback on what amount of State Aid local libraries need. Judith reported the Library would need to receive \$45,200 in State Aid Funding to regain the ground lost since 2001. She requested that amount for PWRL.
- The governor’s budget does currently include some additional funding for State Aid to Libraries. The proposed recommendation includes a \$3,000 base amount for each library, plus an additional \$1 per capita for their service area. PWRL’s legal service population is 28,411. PWRL would not reach the recommended funding level under this proposal, but it would mean a big increase to current levels and it would go some way to filling a number impending funding shortfalls. Judith encouraged Board Members to contact legislators and share how much this support would mean for our Library.
- GRANT REPORTS: Judith reported that the Library has received the \$5,000 award to PWRL for the Kansas State Historical Society Preservation Grant. These funds, combined with some local funding, is being used to pay for the digitization of the St. Mary’s College Records Collection owned by the Library. Judith submitted the required mid-grant report to the Kansas State Historical Society on January 17. At that point, Salina Blueprint had already scanned 74 volumes of the St. Mary’s College Bulletins, producing 5,071 images. Judith submitted these images, along with individual Meta data for each image, along with her report to the KSHS.
- Salina Blueprint sent notification yesterday that they have now completed scanning the Dial Annuals and St. Mary’s College Catalogue’s. They will be shipping a hard drive containing the images in the next week. Judith will submit these images to the KSHS once the required Metadata has been completed. The Dial Literary Magazines still need to be scanned, but a lot of work has been completed. Once all the images and descriptions have been submitted, the KSHS will work to get them posted on the KSHS Memory website where they will be available for use by the public.
- BOARD MEETING DATES FOR 2024:
- The February Library Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday February 28, at 5:30 p.m., at the PWRL St Marys Branch Library.
- ADJOURNMENT: Paulette Simecka moved that the Board Meeting be adjourned. Alicia Matson seconded the motion, and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.



Chairman



Secretary