

- The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Pottawatomie Wabaunsee Regional Library was held on Tuesday, August 24, 2021 at the PWRL Eskridge Branch Library.
- CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Pam Bales called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Peggy Adams was Secretary. Others present were Board members: Sandie Jensen, Paulette Simecka, Alicia Matson; and Judith Cremer, Director.
- ADOPTION OF THE MEETING AGENDA: Pam Bales moved that the agenda be approved as presented. Peggy Adams seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
- APPROVAL OR CORRECTIONS OF MINUTES OF THE July 28, 2021 MEETING: Pam Bales moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Alicia Matson seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
- CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATION: None
- REPORT OF TREASURER: None
- Judith reported that the \$25,000 PWRL received from the ARPA Grant administered by the Kansas State Library using funds received from the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS) has been deposited in PWRL's State Aid Account at the St. Marys State Bank. The receipt of the funds was not confirmed until after the monthly financial packet had already been prepared and sent to the Board.
- The August Financial Report shows monthly income for Previous FY E-Rate in the Capital Improvement fund in the amount of \$5,958.43. This is the amount requested and approved to reimburse the Library for 70% of the amounts paid for PWRL Internet services during the period from July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.
- APPROVAL OF BILLS: After discussion, Pam Bales moved that the Board approve and pay the bills as presented. Sandie Jensen seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
- NCKL REP. REPORT: The NCKL Annual meeting has been rescheduled to for Thursday, August 26, 2021. The Revenue Neutral Hearing required by changes in the Kansas budget laws will convene at 10:00 a.m. The NCKL Budget Hearing is scheduled for 10:20 a.m., followed immediately by the annual NCKL System Board Meeting and the regular NCKL Executive Committee Board Meeting.
- The NCKL System Board will take action to adopt the NCKL 2022 Budget and System Plan, approve Board Member terms for two open positions on the NCKL Executive Committee Board, and take a vote on the recommended changes to the NCKL Bylaws which are needed to accommodate the Budget calendar now required by new state legislation.
- PWRL Director, Judith Cremer, is will be on the ballot to serve an additional term on the NCKL Executive Committee Board. If NCKL System Board approves a new term on the NCKL Executive Committee Board, she will continue in her current role as Chair for that Board.
- DIRECTORS REPORT:
  - The PWRL Board / Staff received a thank you card from Sallie Force, previous Onaga Branch Librarian, following her retirement party at Onaga on August 11<sup>th</sup>. She liked the 60's replica telephone that was purchased using money from the PWRL Flower Fund. The Flower fund contains funds donated by the PWRL Board and Staff for such occasions.
  - The Wabaunsee County Signal Enterprise printed an article with pictures this month that covered the going away party held for Lorelei Wilson at PWRL's Alma Branch Library.

- Mini Librarian / Route Driver, Jo Nehring, has worked out a proposed deal with Pep Club Locker Screen Printing in Alma. The business is willing to print a single color ink t-shirt with PWRL's Logo for each PWRL Board and Staff Member at no cost. They will attach their small circular logo on one sleeve to show their sponsorship.
- If the Board/Staff are satisfied with the quality of the sample products Pep Club Locker is willing to produce more Library branded merchandise moving forward. Five items of clothing, including a regular t-shirt, ¾ sleeve baseball shirt, long sleeve t-shirt, crew neck sweatshirt, and hoodie with drawstring, were selected to be offered for future sale. PWRL will be allowed to select or design any artwork that is printed on the selected shirts. Once a design is submitted Pep Club Locker will open a custom online store to sell the merchandise to interested PWRL Board / Staff member. Pep Club Locker also mentioned the possibility of opening the online store to the general public. In that case the business would be willing to donate a portion of the sales to the Library as a fundraising project.
- The PWRL Board, after discussion, agreed by consensus that Library Staff could work with Pep Club Locker on the proposed Library T-Shirt project, and allow the business to display their Pep Club Locker sponsorship logo on the items that they produce for the Library.
- There were some additional problems with the new Internet and telephone services at Alta Vista, Harveyville and Eskridge in August. The long distance access code used to set up long distance service at Alta Vista turned out to be incorrect. Once the correct code was provided the issue was quickly resolved.
- The transition to internet and phone service with Mercury Wireless at Eskridge and Harveyville continues to be rocky. Phone outages reported at both locations were eventually fixed, but there continues to be residual static on both lines. Internet speeds at Harveyville seem to be stable, and run close to the advertised 30 mb x 6 mb. Internet speeds at Eskridge are still very slow, ranging from 1.5 mb to 6 mb download speed on average. The speed at this location is billed at 30 mb x 6 mb, so this is a disappointing situation. Staff at Eskridge has been instructed to keep a log sheet that records their Internet speeds over a period of time. We will continue to follow up with Mercury Wireless so that they can address this problem.
- A PWRL Staff meeting was held on Friday, August 13th. A number of new staff members attended, and there was a lot of information to share.
- Update on staffing. There is currently an opening for an Assistant Branch Librarian at the PWRL Alma Branch Librarian. The salary range for this position is \$9.81-\$10.01. The job is scheduled to work on Tue 9-12:15, Wed 4-7, and Fri 9-5. The person who fills the position might also be asked to work at other times when the Branch Librarian is not able to be at the location, or during special events or program that require additional help.
- Substitutes are needed at all PWRL locations. This is a particularly hard position to fill because staff may not be regularly scheduled to work. It is very difficult for those in this situation to successfully retain all the procedural information needed to do a good job in providing Library services to the public.
- Judith interviewed and hired Rochelle Chaney to fill the full time Assistant Branch Librarian Position open at the PWRL St. Marys Headquarters Library. Rochelle started today, August 29th, and will be scheduled for 30 hours a week going forward.
- Judith told the Board she recently had the opportunity to interview a candidate for the PWRL Assistant Director Position that has been open for some time. The absence of Health Insurance for Library Staff was a potential impediment for filling any full time position at the Library.
- After a good interview, and having received positive feedback from references, Judith told the Board that she has offered the PWRL Assistant Directors Position to Rain Schultz-Pruner. Rain taught English

and Language Arts classes at the Rossville Jr. /Sr. High School during the 2018-2021 school years. He has a Bachelor's Degree in English from K-State, and has recently enrolled in the Masters of Library Science Program at Emporia State University. He has accepted the position and is scheduled to start on Monday, September 13, 2021.

- Judith told the Board that there has been increasing concern among existing full time Library Staff about the lack of Health Insurance benefits offered by the Library. Colette Goldade, the PWRL Collection Manager, has asked to speak with the Board about this issue at the October Library Board Meeting.
- PWRL Board Member Sandie Jensen contacted the Library this month to see if we could use any of the furniture remaining at the United Church of Eskridge. Arrangement were made to pick up some pieces during PWRL's regular Tuesday route to Eskridge.
- Sandie Jensen announced that the United Church of Eskridge has approved an additional \$4,550 from a trust fund that was being dissolved be given to the Library. This amount is in addition to the \$2,661.60 in Memorial Funds that were previously given. The total amount given by the United Church of Eskridge to support the PWRL Eskridge Branch Library was \$7,211.60. The funds will be used to purchase a computer and monitor, as well as a new Microfilm Reader Printer that will connect to the new computer. This new equipment will allow the PWRL Eskridge Branch Library to continue to provide access to the sizable microfilm collection held at that location which contains the complete run of historical newspapers published in the Eskridge community.
- UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
- 2020 LIBRARY AUDIT: The Library was notified that the Varney and Associates auditor assigned to the PWRL Audit has continued to have personal problems that have kept her from finishing the job. She was out previously due to her mother illness. Now she has taken time off to assist her husband following a heart attack. Varney's has all the paperwork for the Library Audit, and we are still on the schedule, but now we are waiting for them catch up following the above issues.
- 2022 LIBRARY BUDGET: Judith attended the Pottawatomie County Budget Neutral Hearing, as requested, on Monday, August 23rd. Board Member Paulette Simecka accompanied Judith to the meeting.
- TAILS & TALES 2021 SUMMER READING / SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM: Four reports were prepared and distributed to the Board presenting the statistics collected during the annual Summer Reading / Summer Food Program. The reports showed increases in most categories on the Daily Stats Report. Totals equaled, or exceeded, pre-COVID numbers in many areas, despite the limitations that came with relying on primarily outdoor programming.
- PWRL, with the help of excellent volunteers and the support of Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas, served a total of 20,414 meals to children (0-18) in Pottawatomie and Wabaunsee County during June and July 2021. That number, adjusted to five meals per child, still equals direct meal service to 4,083 children this summer. This number has only been surpassed once, in 2017, when PWRL served individual meals to 4,341 children in Pottawatomie and Wabaunsee Counties.
- ARPA & OTHER GRANT OPPORTUNITIES: As reported previously, PWRL has been awarded Federal IMLS Funding through an ARPA Grant administered by the Kansas State Library. \$25,000 in funding received through the ARPA Grant has been deposited in PWRL's State Aid Account. These funds are earmarked for the following items to facilitate increased access to digital content:

- \$6,000 to fund the purchase of digital content for patron use through a subscription to the Hoopla Digital Database.
  - \$5,000 for renewal and expansion of PWRL's subscriptions to Ebsco's Flipster Online Magazine Collection.
  - \$6,000 to purchase additional content, including eBooks and digital audiobooks, for Overdrive's Sunflower eLibrary,
  - \$8,000 to purchase computer kiosk type equipment for each PWRL location to be used to demonstrate and provide access to the digital resources available to all PWRL Patrons.
- EMERGENCY CONNECTIVITY FUND (ECF): PWRL submitted a request for funding through the Emergency Connectivity Fund using the portal provided by the Universal Service Administration Company (USAC). This is the same system that schools and libraries use to submit applications for E-rate reimbursement for the cost of Internet connections. PWRL's request asked for funding to support the purchase of 100 Internet Hotspots and 100 Chromebooks. If the application is funded this equipment can be purchased and loaned to PWRL patrons who certify that they have an unmet need for Internet service or Internet connected devices. The total funding requested to support this project amounted to \$57,011.60. The funding request was certified online prior to the August 13, 2021 deadline. PWRL's application is still pending review. Funding commitment letters were supposed to be processed for all funding requests within 60 days. Purchases approved under this funding request will need to be completed during the July 30, 2021 – June 30, 2022 fiscal year.
  - SHARP GRANT: PWRL also submitted an application for a Sharp Grant funded through the National Endowment for the Humanities. The application was submitted online prior to the August 16, 2021 deadline. The Sharp Humanities Grant was intended to support Kansas cultural organizations that provide humanities programming and are facing financial hardship due to the coronavirus. PWRL's application requested funding to reimburse staff salaries and rental costs at PWRL's four Branch Libraries. The total amount of this Grant request was \$20,000.
  - If PWRL's Sharp Grant proposal is approved, general fund amounts could be reallocated to support the unbudgeted cost connected to the digital expansion projects proposed in other grant applications. If PWRL receives approval for the ECF funding to purchase internet hotspots and Chromebooks for loan to the public, then the Library will need additional funding to purchase items necessary to support that program which are not allowed to be covered by ECF Funding. Necessary items include the purchase of equipment warranty and accidental damage coverage for purchased devices, locking mobile storage boxes with recharging capabilities, and cases and packaging to allow the equipment to be safely circulated to the public.
  - The Kansas Library Association (KLA) Health and Wellness Grant is the final grant opportunity still in process. This grant application must be submitted online by the Sept. 15th deadline. The purpose of the grant is to provide funding for libraries in Kansas to implement projects designed to address the health and wellness needs of their staff.
- NEW BUSINESS:
  - PROGRAMS AND PROMOTIONS: Kansas Reads to preschoolers one book one state program is scheduled to be held at PWRL during the first week of November. The book chosen to be used for the 2021 Kansas Reads Project is *Grumpy Bird* by Jeremy Tankard.
  - PWRL Staff are considering the possibility of conducting a Fall/Winter Reading Challenge. The Library has an annual subscription to the Beanstack online reading challenge software. A program could be developed incorporating Beanstack to help encourage year round reading.

- There is some hesitancy in starting the annual Fall Storytime sessions. Storytime generally picks back up at the Branch Libraries around the second week of September. Sessions are then held each Tuesday morning at 10 a.m., through the first or second week of December. This year the number of local Covid cases is very high, and the willingness to wear masks and social distance is limited. Staff will monitor the situation and try to determine when it will be safe to offer this type of programming to the public.
- PANDEMIC ACTION PLAN: In July the PWRL Board asked that Library staff begin monitoring their temperatures as a measure to detect potential Covid infections before they have a chance to spread. A procedure was developed, and a health screening form was shared with the staff. In mid-August a St. Marys staff member triggered the emergency protocol when she developed a fever and sore throat. At that time it was realized that there needed to be a procedure that spelled out the circumstances in which a staff member, who has been sent home due to the screening process, could safely return to work.
- Judith consulted with the Pottawatomie County Health Department on this issue. They recommended that any staff members who experienced any known Covid symptoms be asked to take a Covid test before they were allowed to return to work.
- PT. County Health Department staff identified 3 locations in Shawnee County, managed by the Shawnee County Health Department and the KSHE, which offer Covid-19 tests free of charge to any individual regardless of symptoms or age. The St. Marys staff member was directed to these testing sites, and following the return of a negative Covid test she was able to return to work at the Library.
- Judith subsequently revised the PWRL emergency policy, updating the pandemic action plan contained in that section to include new information from the CDC. She also revised the policy as a whole, making it consistent with other changes that the Board made to the policy to help control the spread of the Covid-19 virus at the Library over time. Copies of the revised PWRL Emergency Policy were given to the Board. Action to approve or amend the recommended policy update will be taken at the September 2021 Library Board Meeting.
- BOARD MEETING DATES FOR 2021: The September Library Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September, 29th, 2021 at the PWRL Harveyville Mini Library and is scheduled to start at 5:30 PM.
- ADJOURNMENT: Pam Bales moved to adjourn the meeting. Peggy Adams seconded the motion, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

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Chairman

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Secretary