

WiLS Board Meeting

August 12, 2019

Board Members, in attendance:

Barbara Brattin, Kenosha Public Library/Library System
Peg Billing, Tomahawk School District
Joe Davies, Burlington Public Library
Nathan Dowd, Edgewood College
Kris McCoy, Mineral Point School District

Stef Morrill, WiLS (ex officio)
Steve Platteter, Arrowhead Library System
Jane Roisum, Fox Valley Technical College
Tasha Saecker, Appleton Public Library
Paul Waelchli, UW-Whitewater

Board Members, absent:

Martha Berninger, DPI
Kristin Vogel, St Norbert College
Teresa Voss, Verona Area School District
Heather Winter, Milwaukee Art Museum

WiLS Staff, in attendance:

Sarah Birkholz, Jeff Brunner, Melody Clark, Andi Coffin, Sara Gold, Erin Hughes, Emily Pfothenauer, Vicki Tobias, Shawn Vesely

Agenda:

Call to order; Changes/additions to the agenda

Chair S. Platteter called the meeting to order at 10:05.

Andy Stilp will join the meeting at 11:00 for agenda item 8(a). Because we will not be to agenda item 8(a) by then, we will adjust the agenda accordingly. There were no other changes to the agenda.

Introductions and welcoming new board members

The board and staff introduced themselves. New board members B. Brattin and J. Davies were welcomed. The group did a "get to know you" activity.

Approval of meeting minutes: June 2019

T. Saecker moved approval of the June meeting minutes; P. Waelchli seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Action: Election of officers

N. Dowd, as chair of the Nominations Committee and chair-elect, presented the slate of officers. He is slated to be chair as he is currently chair-elect. T. Saecker has agreed to be nominated for chair-elect; J. Roisum has agreed to be nominated for treasurer. S. Platteter asked for any nominations from the floor. There were none. As a motion from the Nominations Committee, the slate of officers does not require a motion. P. Billing seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's report/Finance Report

T. Klement was unable to attend the meeting, so S. Morrill read his report and shared very preliminary fiscal year end financials. The balance sheet ratios continue to be very strong and it is likely that we will finish the year in the black. We expect most revenue categories to meet or exceed the budgeted numbers. Interest and American Express is over budget but behind last year due to a decline in the value of our investments compared to last year at this time. All expenses are closely in line or under budget, with the exception of some project expenses where we would have received corresponding revenue. Ideas to Action does not have a budget amount because it was covered through reserve funds.

Director's report

S. Morrill shared information from the report, which was about staffing changes related to Recollection Wisconsin, and asked the Board to review after the meeting and share any questions.

Ideas to Action:

M. Clark and E. Pfothauer provided this report.

The Ideas to Action Committee, which includes two WiLS Board members, one WiLS Finance Committee member, and two WiLS Staff members, met on June 24, 2019 and reviewed all submitted proposals. There was a total of 12 submissions. The group reviewed based on several different factors, including the overall project design, project impact, its scope, innovation and collaboration. We had a total of \$30,000 to award and the group recommended that seven of the applications be awarded. These were then reviewed and confirmed by the strategy group. At the end of last week, all applicants were notified if their project was accepted or declined. The next step is for WiLS staff who were identified for each project to contact the recipient and assist as needed. Even if the project didn't request WiLS staff time, a staff member will be assigned to them to make sure the project stays on task and is completed.

The 2019 awardees include:

- **Beloit Public Library** – Memory Care Kits
Provide a collection of materials designed to trigger memories and encourage interaction, oriented for caregivers to use with family members/patients dealing with dementia or memory loss.
- **Cardinal Stritch University Library** – Back to High School: A college and high school collaboration for teaching information literacy
Collaboration of college and high school faculty and librarians to develop information literacy curriculum for high school students.
- **Door County Library** – Door County Speaks: A Library Oral History Initiative
Provide kits of essential oral history equipment and supplementary materials to the satellite branches of the Door County Library as well as the Door County Archives, for use by both patrons and library staff.
- **Fox Valley Technical College Library** – General Studies OER Un-Textbook Create Fest
A one-day event to bring Wisconsin technical colleges together to create a general studies OER un-textbook -- this could include video, learning objects, PowerPoints, articles, chapters, student renewable homework, quizzes, and many other sources.

- **Lodi Woman’s Club Public Library** – Intro to Podcast Production
Working with groups of teens to teach them about podcast production and helping them create their own original podcasts.
- **Mill Pond Public Library** – Savvy Senior Space
Turn the library reading room into a space where older adults can meet, see presentations, and have fun.
- **Sauk Prairie High School Library** – Making Global Connections with Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality at Sauk Prairie High School
Students attending this rural Wisconsin high school will participate in and design immersive experiences using Virtual and Augmented Reality equipment through the classroom and Library.

Annual Board orientation

Because this was our first meeting of the year, the group reviewed some of the organizational documents/board reference documents together. After providing some overall context, S. Morrill reviewed the following documents with the group:

- Mission and values
- 2019 initiatives
- Board member expectations
- Calendar of meetings
- Conflict of interest

Discussion and possible action: Benefits for WiLS staff

WiLS does not currently offer access to any health or other insurance benefits. This is a concern for many staff members. As a recruiting and retention tool, we would like to begin providing access to a package of options and allowing staff to distribute the funds they currently receive as salary as they would like. S. Morrill reviewed a document about possible options for benefits. In one option, WiLS would contract with a company to manage benefits; in the other option, we would do that work ourselves. The group discussed. There were a few questions for S. Morrill to investigate:

- Would staff still be considered as working for a non-profit for the purposes of college loan forgiveness?
- Would we be able to back out of working with the proposed company?
- Is the 401(k) plan organizational or individual?
- How does the company make decision?

The group discussed other options, such as hiring a broker to do reviews on different plans and working with another consortium.

The intent would be to take the funds given to staff as salary right now and reallocate them as determined by the employee. If there are good years with a surplus, perhaps we could supplement what is being given to staff as one-time funds.

There is rationale for us to do this and pay for it as part of our values and how we want to be as an employer.

Strategic initiative update: Marketing and Communication

One of our initiatives for 2019 is related to how we communicate the value of WiLS. Andy Stilp, who has been working with us on this initiative, joined the meeting and presented the progress so far to the board.

The group discussed the purpose of the initiative. WiLS gets labeled as a vendor by some in the state. We want to distinguish ourselves as not being a vendor. While it may not seem like we have competition, there are some national consortia like us who have tried to encroach on our work in Wisconsin. We want to continue to do good work and communicate it clearly to have strong relationships with our members.

There was some concern that presenting ourselves one way would mean that we couldn't do other things. The initiative is about where we are putting our focus and how we are setting expectations. We won't discontinue things that don't fit that focus necessarily. We will continue to do them but perhaps talk about them a different way or talk about them less.

A. Stilp will continue his work and we will bring something back to the Board for their consideration in the future.

Business model workgroup: discussion of key questions

Earlier this year, the Board created a Business Model Workgroup to review the current business model of WiLS, discuss alternatives, and recommend a model to the Finance Committee and Board by December 2019. The group will have their second meeting in September.

At their first meeting, the group reviewed some information about the income from each of the WiLS service areas and discussed the strengths/challenges of the current business models. S. Morrill presented background about some of the key takeaways from the first meeting and the group discussed three areas:

1. Learning opportunities

The group broke into small groups to discuss learning opportunities and then shared out from those discussions. Time was identified as a significant barrier to attend learning opportunities. Other groups provide opportunities for some of our member types, such as ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) events for K12s. It is challenging to get relevant content for all member types (or at least the perception of this) in one event. It is easier to be more engaged and focused at in-person events, but it is tricky to balance this with time and relevant content.

Some possible opportunities for WiLS were identified:

- a. Bring national level events (such as those organized by Library Journal) to the state.
- b. Have more regional opportunities like we do with the Southwest Wisconsin Association of Libraries.
- c. Create shorter WiLSWorld shorts: maybe 30 minutes with 15 minute presentation, 15 minute questions.
- d. Create regional cohorts for education/consulting. Bring in national experts to educate and then develop plans with a regional group over a number of days.

2. Charging for consulting/consortium management/projects

The Board was asked if they were more comfortable with WiLS talking about projects in an “X hours per year and Y dollars per hour” way or a “Z dollars per year and we do these things” way. The board was much more comfortable with the latter. The behind-the-scene rate wasn’t as important. They would rather know the amount for the year and what would be delivered for that. They trust WiLS to be fair and know what is needed.

There is some risk on both sides with this model. The time needed may be more or less than was expected and so WiLS may have to absorb that or the customer may be paying more (if we think about it hourly) than was anticipated.

In this model, timelines and deliverables would need to be extremely clear so that WiLS does not end up having to do unanticipated work without additional revenue.

The group discussed having different rates where there would be a baseline rate with some experimental projects having a lower rate and some more difficult or longer term projects could have a higher rate. The group was comfortable with that as long as staff understood and could explain why a particular rate was charged for a project.

3. Cooperative purchasing model

The group broke into small groups and discussed a potential new model for cooperative purchasing fees. This new model would be more consortium-like, with joint decision making, a package of specific services, and would be less like a “buying club.” From the large-group debrief, it was clear that different member types have different needs and concerns related to cooperative purchasing and this model. The K12s are generally happy with the current model and don’t see a need to change. The academics had good questions about the equity of the current and potential model and wondered about fee caps as another option. Overall, there was not a lot of enthusiasm for this potential model. The Business Model Workgroup will continue the discussion about possible models for cooperative purchasing.

Board mixing

The board broke into small groups and had conversations about ideas generated in the morning “get to know you” activity

Adjournment

P. Billing moved adjournment; P Waelchli seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:59 pm.