

WiLS Board Meeting

November 19, 2015

Present:

Mark Arend, Winnefox Library System
Peg Billing, Tomahawk School District
Jeff Brunner, WiLS
Andrea Coffin, WiLS
Sylvia Contreras, Edgewood College
Sara Gold, WiLS
Lee Konrad, UW-Madison
Lisa Marten, WiLS

Melissa Matz, Elmbrook School District
Melissa McLimans, WiLS
Stef Morrill, WiLS
Steve Platteter, Arrowhead Library System
Tasha Saecker, Appleton Public Library
Andrea Schmitz, Verona School District
Kristin Vogel, St Norbert College
Heather Winter, Milwaukee Art Museum

Phone:

Tom Klement, WiLS
Catherine Lavallée-Welch, UW-La Crosse

Absent:

Martha Berninger, Resources for Libraries and Lifelong Learning
Scott Vrieze, Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College

Guests:

Bill Wilson, Milton Public Library Board

Call to Order: Changes/Additions to the Agenda

T. Saecker called the meeting to order at 10:07am. S. Morrill added Finance Committee report to the agenda.

Introductions and welcome

Bill Wilson from the MPL board joined us to talk about the MPL next chapter campaign for renovations.

Approval of July 2015 meeting notes

A. Schmitz moved to approve. S. Platteter seconded. Approved unanimously.

2014/15 end of year financial report

T. Klement gave the report. The balance sheet is very strong. Ratio of assets to liability is really good. The biggest revenue highlight is cooperative purchasing – \$1.5 million over last year's budget. Net revenue was \$322,000, which was \$62,000 over budgeted amount. We made 3.93%! American Express interest, consulting projects, and events also came in over budgeted amount. Coop expense went up, since revenue went up, which is expected. Everything else came in within range of budget or under. There were some project expenses that were not included on the original budget. As we discussed during our budget meeting for 2015/16, because it is difficult to project expenses for projects, our income figures in the 2015/16 budget are net figures.

Report of Committees

Cooperative purchasing

CooPAC will meet 11/23/15. Some items for discussion at that meeting are:

- **Trials process:** The committee and staff decided to do a by-month trials process last year, but with different market types that can be difficult. We will review that process at the meeting.
- **Regional meetings:** We will review the results of the meetings. One outcome from the meetings is that the “Product Spotlight” in the Cooperative Purchasing Newsletter will be re-evaluated and improved so others can use it in their own newsletters/websites.
- **SERU:** The Shared Electronic Resources Understanding is a short, light weight license replacement for publisher/licensors and purchasers/libraries. Instead of negotiating a heavy-duty license, libraries use a 4-page easy to understand agreement that can be used as a contract. It looks like academics are primarily using it right now, but should be possible for other service providers and library types to use.

We currently have a new vendor survey out for members to take, and we’ve had over 70 responses so far. This survey will determine what new vendors to add that weren’t added by CooPAC or by expressed interest from members. We are starting to look into products outside of electronic resources. For example, we are working with Dropbox for Business. Send us other suggestions if you have some!

Experts Connection

Recommendations from the workgroup are covered later in the agenda.

Events Workgroup

Recommendations from the workgroup are covered later in the agenda.

Finance Committee

H. Winter thanked WiLS for a fantastic year and for T. Klement for his work on the financials. The Finance Committee reviewed an MOU for T. Klement and we are on track to renew the agreement each year. The Finance Committee made some minor revisions (see committee notes for exact wording). S. Morrill mentioned her desire to have the Finance Committee more involved with the organization and would appreciate any suggestions from the Board on how to do so.

New events and education plan

A. Coffin presented the new draft plan for events and education created by WiLS staff and the Events Workgroup.

The plan suggested some changes to current events:

- **ILL Meeting:** The meeting has typically been held in March/April in partnership with RL&LL. Because we no longer provide ILL services, we have decided not to continue this event. However, we will start working closely with Great Lakes and Midwest resource sharing events and have an ILL track at WiLSWorld.
- **Peer Council:** This event has been held in June. Because it’s hard to have a single track for multiple market types and levels, we would like to experiment with an unconference or another model for the conference.
- **Upper Midwest Digital Collection Conference:** We partner with Minitex to host this event. We will continue the event, as there is interest in this topic, and expand with partnerships with surrounding states.

- *WILSWorld*: Last year, we made significant changes to this event, reducing it to a single day conference with a second day of targeted workshops. Feedback was very positive and we will move forward with this structure for 2016.
- *Regional Community Meetings*: We do 6 of these meetings each year. This year, we aligned the meetings with our cooperative purchasing services and provided some educational content around that topic. We'll continue to align the meetings with our different services each year.

We would also like to expand on partnerships as well, allowing us to have larger presence where our members already are. This could include a WILSWorld track or other WILS events at WEMTA, WAAL, WAPL, etc.

In addition, we want to experiment with new models for continuing education. The plan discusses a cohort model that leads teams through processes, grows skills together, and allows members to network. The plan also includes a Think Tank model where a smaller group of people would get together to discuss a bigger topic and help provide ideas on how to move forward with the issue. We will also continue to work and look for vendors that provide educational resources to the community like Gale Courses.

It is important for us to emphasize partnerships and collaboration with the community in our events.

The group then discussed ideas for educational events that align with WILS services and values:

- Team members who lead without the authority, leadership
- Advocacy:
 - Knowing what other people are doing for their own advocacy purposes (particularly K12, but potentially all types): Sharing this information virtually may not be the best method.
 - Making a case for yourself
 - Help get the libraries into decision-making processes for things beyond books (technology, etc.) and be an active partner, instead of a recipient of decisions
 - Rebranding and improved follow-up to existing messages: We've changed, but decisions-makers don't know about it;
 - Justifying product purchases and influencing others to bring value to those (promotion, display, etc.).
 - Identifying who can help, from within / beyond organization, in addition to what to convey to stakeholders.
 - Administration (and mayor / county board for publics) buy-in and understanding. How do you convince administration when they aren't library users, and think that all you need is on your smart phone? And how do you do this without sounding self-serving?
 - Learning the lingo of business and finance and politics to communicate with appropriate people in their "language."
 - This topic could have a potential fit into WEMTA and Principals' Conference (SLATE). It could also bring together different library types to help them work in tandem as potential cohort / geographic groups.

- Fundraising:
 - Using the language of fundraising and growing a stronger voice in legislative lobbying / approaching donors
 - Presentation of stats and data visually
- User Experience: customer service view point, design thinking integration
- Project Management - Lean thinking, Design thinking - testing / evaluation
- Building experts:
 - Identifying your own expertise
 - Building the skill set to be a consultant
- Facilitating connection between DPI and libraries: helping DPI understand the practical experience of libraries and share concerns from the community and help reconnect and build the relationship.
- School ebook project think tank (which is already happening): explore access for academic institutions w/ teacher education programs

The board did not feel it was necessary to take action on the new plan. WiLS staff will continue to update the board as progress is made on the plan.

Experts Connection Workgroup recommendation

The Experts Connection Workgroup met two times and, at the last meeting, supported a recommendation to fold Experts Connection into our consulting services and not market it as a separate service. As we prepared to restructure WiLS, we talked with members and discovered that there was a lot of need for expertise. We wanted to meet that need, but knew that we could never do that with our staff, even if we had 100 people! The library staff in the community are the ones that do this work every day and have expertise we cannot duplicate. We developed the concept of Experts Connection at that time. We have been implementing the service in an informal way so that we could customize it as needed. With the workgroup, the intent was to formalize the structure. As part of that discussion, it became evident that there was significant overlap between how we work with consulting requests and how we work with Experts Connection requests. When we conceived of Experts Connection, we didn't have a robust consulting service. Now that we do, it makes sense to make it a part of our consulting services. We would continue to seek out connections and experts, but as a sub-service of consulting. The group discussed the concept, and felt favorable about rolling the two services in together. The group suggested that we continue to use the phrase Experts Connection when we can.

The group also discussed how to get more experts. We have to start helping people recognize their own expertise and how to use it. We could ask board members and others who they use for a certain service inside their company and who they go to for outside expertise. We could collaborate with systems for sub-contracting.

M. Arend moved to endorse the workgroup's recommendations and authorize WiLS to move ahead with rolling the Experts Connection service into consulting services. S. Platteter seconded. Approved unanimously.

New approach to organizing services and possible related workgroups With Experts Connection rolling into the consulting services, our services can be organized into four categories:

1. *Consortium management*: This service entails the coordination of governing boards, facilitating communication with partners and stakeholders, managing projects, communication and general coordination, and sometimes acting as fiscal agent. We currently oversee WPLC, Recollection Wisconsin, Horticulture Library Consortium, and WISPALS.

2. *Consulting:* Our consulting services is a growth area. We have been doing a lot of consulting with public library members on strategic planning and we are interested in expanding to academic libraries and others. Every time we work on a strategic plan, we use the information we've gained to continue to build a model and improve the services. We leave members not just with a plan but also with the knowledge and tools to continue to plan without us. We also use anything we create with a member for other members' benefit. We are also working on public library system service redesign with individual systems and through the statewide process.
3. *Cooperative purchasing and projects:* Cooperative purchasing is our largest service. We have many groups that save time and money for both the vendors and the libraries with database life cycle management (working with the vendor to get prices/licenses negotiated, consolidate POs/invoices into one, pay vendor bills upfront, etc.). Other cooperative/collaborative projects are where potential partners might need help getting a project off the ground. It's important to back up our expertise with continuing education and development. We need to consider that budget cuts mean cutting products with low usage. How do we help libraries improve usage and justify the purchases? Our regional meetings provided community development of ideas on this topic. We're also trying to help by working with the vendors to lower their yearly increases.
4. *Events and Education:* See above for information about current events. As we talk about aligning educational events, it is important to note that the realignment needs to be done in order to support interest in other services.

The group discussed if we need more committees or workgroups for the service areas. We currently have CoopAC for cooperative purchasing and we typically have a workgroup for each event. We don't really need governance for the consortium management, as they have their own governing bodies. Should we have a workgroup/committee for consulting and an overarching one for events?

After discussion, the group decided that the board can provide the bigger picture discussions and feedback about events as a whole and they, in combination with the Finance Committee, can provide direction for consulting services. We can add members to the Finance Committee if we want specific people or talents in the group.

Staffing plan

Since our last board meeting, WiLS has received two major contracts and we are adding staff as a result. The group discussed what a hiring process should look like for WiLS. The group felt that WiLS should always have an open process. The length of time for the process and how candidates are interviewed can be up to the director, but having an open process provides more credibility to the person hired, gives WiLS the opportunity to learn from candidates, and adds transparency, an important value to WiLS.

Our planning process

Last year, we sent a very large survey to members that included both information about services they use and would potentially use. It was trying to measure both satisfaction with WiLS and also potential service directions. We don't want to do that again. We'd like to separate "How's WiLS doing?" from "What services do you want?" and develop new methodologies for each.

To learn more about potential services in a more face-to-face way, we could utilize the spring conferences (WEMTA, WAAL, and WAPL). The group felt that it would be feasible to have some sense of the needs that are out in the community and that we could make some determinations of areas of interest for further discussion at the spring conferences.

The timeline for the planning process will shift as a result. We will now discuss and approve strategic directions separate from the budget. The group felt that would not be an issue.

Between now and the February board meeting, the staff and board will gather service ideas for board meeting discussion.

Because WiLSWorld is a now one full day, it's hard to have the board meeting happen at the same time. If we move the meeting to August, it would fall in the normal quarterly schedule. The group agreed to move the meeting to August. The strategic directions will come to this August meeting.

The membership meeting is another thing that needs to move due to the change in WiLSWorld. We are also missing most K12s when we meet in July. The group discussed the issue and felt that having a separate virtual meeting during the school year would be beneficial. We could have a speaker and a conversation around a specific topic. We could also share what we've done in the past year with our annual report. The group thought that having the meeting after the holidays and before the February board meeting would be good. Having a speaker would add value to the meeting as well. If there are any thoughts on speakers, please let WiLS know! We could have a speaker about future trends outside of libraries, like Rebecca Ryan, and some sort of panel of each market type. We could also bring her in to WiLSWorld in person as a follow up!

The timing of the staff retreat will need to shift, too.

We would also like to evaluate how WiLS is doing during the course of the year. We'd like to know about service standards that are or aren't being met or other concerns or compliments the members may have.

The group discussed some ideas for more ongoing feedback, including:

- For events and consulting, asking if we've solved their problems, fulfilled their needs, etc.
- For cooperative purchasing, ask about the service WiLS provided – did we handle the renewal in a timely/professional way, did we answer all questions, etc. We may do this through informal conversations or other mechanisms.
- Personal/informal feedback when we are together with members at group events or meetings can provide opportunities for more and honest feedback. Meetings like WAICU and SRLAAW are great opportunities for these moments. If you know of any opportunities, let us know!
- It seems like informal feedback is a good idea so we can gather/share. We will need to think about the infrastructures around it and how we bring it back to the board and the members.

Bylaw revisions

It's also time for us to start our annual bylaw review. In 2013, because so much had changed during the transition, we decided to review the bylaws every year. The board expressed that it seems redundant to review so often. It was proposed to have a formal review every 3 years. S. Morrill will look over the existing bylaws and share anything that might need revisions/additions to accommodate this new schedule. One thing that came up after last year's review was how we fill vacancies on the board. S. Morrill will come up with some language for this. We also need to update the annual performance review for the director.

Director's report

There was no discussion.

Next meeting: February 26th, Madison (location TBD, probably at Wegner CPAs)

P. Billing motioned to adjourn the meeting. A. Schmitz seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.