

WiLS Board Meeting
June 19, 2020
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Via Zoom

Board Members, in attendance:

Martha Berninger, DPI
Peg Billing, Lakeland Union High School
Barbara Brattin, Kenosha Public Library/Library System
Jennifer Chamberlain, WiLS (ex-officio)
Joe Davies, Burlington Public Library
Nathan Dowd, Edgewood College

Kris McCoy, Mineral Point School District
Steve Platteter, Arrowhead Library System
Jane Roisum, Fox Valley Technical College
Tasha Saecker, Appleton Public Library
Paul Waelchli, UW-Whitewater

Board Members, absent:

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

Finance committee members, in attendance:

Lesleigh Luttrell, Sharon Nellis,

Finance committee members, absent:

Ryan Ackerman, Dan Reed,

WiLS Staff, in attendance:

Sarah Birkholz, Melody Clark, Andi Coffin, Sara Gold, Kim Kiesewetter, Tom Klement, Melissa McLimans, Emily Pfothenauer, Rebecca Rosenstiel, Vicki Tobias

Call to order; Changes/additions to the agenda

Chair T. Saecker called the joint meeting to order at 10:01 am. There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

Introductions

The group did roll call introductions.

Treasurer's report/Finance – T. Klement

T. Klement shared a report on the year-to-date financials.

Discussion:

T. Saecker thanked Tom for his attention to detail.

B. Brattin – mentioned that their library uses a credit card rebate program, asked if WiLS uses/qualifies for those types of programs.

T. Klement – clarified that that is what the "CapOne" program he had referred to is. WiLS makes a very decent return on running Coop bills through the card.

Discussion and action: 2020/21 budget – S. Morrill

S. Morrill provided a brief overview of the FY20/21 budget. S. Platteter moved to approve the budget; J. Davies seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion:

P. Waelchli – we're always in a projected loss, and always come in fine. What mechanisms are in place if projections are wrong?

S. Morrill – the biggest mechanism is our reserve. We don't really have many expenses that CAN be adjusted down, other than staff. And we aren't really in a position where we would need to adjust staff down.

B. Brattin – I know we'll take about IMLS grant later; just wondering, is THAT a cushion? If IMLS comes in, will that pay for some staffing and other costs that are in this budget?

S. Morrill – absolutely! It is an uncertainty, which is why we aren't including it/relying on it, but it would change things a lot

J. Chamberlain – additionally, the budget doesn't yet account for additional projects that may stem from bringing a data analyst on board and grants like the IMLS one, because we just don't fully know what those will look like.

S. Morrill – we have structured this organization to be flexible and creative enough that we don't NEED to panic about a projected loss, because we KNOW things will change.

T. Klement – and we are quite conservative with our credit card cash back returns, because we don't want to RELY on it, in case a big vendor decides not to accept credit card payment anymore.

S. Morrill – there's also the upcoming cooperative purchasing restructure. And if Academics DO start running more subscriptions through us, we'll be paying more and bigger bills through that card, so that revenue will go up even more

L. Luttrell – I agree. We've gone through uncertain times before, and that's WHY we set up reserve funds and have them. And we made it through. And we will continue to make it through.

Discussion and possible action: Increasing the close of business fund – T. Klement

T. Klement shared his recommendation to increase the balance in the close of business fund to cover 3-6 months of payroll expenses. Suggested range is \$250,000 - \$500,000. P. Billing moved to transfer funds in the amount of \$200,000 from the fund balance account to the COB fund; B. Brattin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- No specific amount has been recommended, leaving it up to the board

P. Billing – fund balance; can we get some history?

T. Klement – fund balance is growth over time. It's the accumulated loss/gain of the business over time. We have had some years where we experienced loss, but most years there was an increase.

J. Chamberlain – so is it fair to say that it's more liquid?

T. Klement – not really, it's all fairly liquid. But this section is board designated for "close of business" or other (less catastrophic) transition expenses

P. Billing – then I'd like to start discussion by saying we should be closer to the 500K mark. But I also want to be cautious about the current climate. Let's move 200K now, to be a bit conservative in light of the pandemic, and then hope to move 100K next year.

B. Brattin – thank you for articulating so well, I agree.

Joint meeting with the finance committee was adjourned at 11:00 am. Meeting re-convened board only by Chair T. Saecker at 11:00 am.

Approval of meeting minutes

There were no edits to the January 2020 and April 2020 meeting minutes. S. Platteter moved approval of the minutes; P. Waelchli seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and possible action: Employee handbook – S. Morrill

There were no edits to the employee handbook as presented. J. Davies moved approval of the handbook, S. Platteter seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Reports were provided in print and staff were available for questions and follow up. Reports were for:

Director's Report

J. Chamberlain recognized the significance of this day as Juneteenth, an important day in the African American community marking the date when the Emancipation Proclamation was read in Texas, the last un-emancipated state in 1865. The day has come to represent the ways in which freedom for the black community has been delayed. One of the largest Juneteenth celebrations is held each year in Milwaukee.

Question: Should August board meeting be held in person as traditionally scheduled?

S. Platteter – commented that social distancing + masks are extremely challenging for folks who are hard of hearing

M. Berninger – very hesitant to commit to an in person experience, due to familial health concerns

K. McCoy – agreed. Superintendent just emailed about discussions with docs about fall school year. Would be very hesitant to meet with folks in person so close to beginning of school year

P. Billing – for everyone's safety, a virtual experience would really be the smartest move

Board decided to hold August board meeting/retreat via Zoom.

CooPAC (written report from J. Brunner, verbal report from A. Coffin)

The chair of several years stepped away from the committee this spring. J. Brunner is currently confirming who all want to be on the committee for the next season, and then will recruit a new chair.

Ideas to Action – M. Clark

The Ideas to Action application period closed on June 1. We received 21 proposals, a significant increase over last year's 12 submissions. The Ideas to Action Committee will meet on July 6 to review all proposals and make recommendations for funded projects. Awards will be announced in August and distributed beginning in September.

This year's Ideas to Action recipients continue to make great progress on their projects. For instance, this spring, the Lodi Public Library launched their podcast "Duck Town," featuring interviews with local residents about their experiences during the pandemic, and Cardinal Stritch University field-tested four research and information literacy lessons in two high school courses. Last fall, the Sauk Prairie School District connected middle school students in social studies, history, art, science, and classes to virtual field trips using a Google Education VR and AR kit.

Communication initiative update – A. Coffin

A. Coffin and M. McLimans have been working together to make the communications updates recommended by Andy Stilp and agreed to by WiLS. Largely this work is about owning and emphasizing our values. This includes working with existing messaging to infuse the new language, and creating new messaging when needed, such as membership renewals, Ideas to Action, and the announcement regarding the academic coop model changes.

We're not only updating messaging but also allowing staff to see the process of what infusing our words with the branding looks like. The purpose of this is to internalize it, so it's not just in the written communications, but also in how we talk to members.

Our next steps include continuing to infuse the updated language with the staff, and to update the WiLS website design along with a full content update.

Learning Opportunities update – V. Tobias

V. Tobias and A. Coffin have recently attended a few webinars geared towards making virtual meetings more engaging. Over the next few weeks, they will be trying some of the ideas learned from these webinars in WiLS staff and team meetings. Ideas that seemed to be successful in these "test runs" will then be brought back and presented to the larger

community.

Update on WiLSWorld and Peer Council: Given what we know about our members' needs and the inaccessibility and declining utility of larger in person conferences, and given that revenue generated by these events has been both unreliable and has continued to not cover the cost of these events, we concluded that neither WiLSWorld nor Peer Council will be held for the foreseeable future. This recommendation has been approved of by the WiLS strategy group. It's important to note that this recommendation was made prior to COVID-19 but the decision seems prudent given our current circumstances.

Business Model update – A. Coffin

The first phase of the update has been implemented, with changes taking affect at the beginning of the 20-21 fiscal year. Phase one focuses only on the academic coop purchasing members, which will allow us to assess how effective this change will be, making sure the new model works well financially for both WiLS and for the members before opening this up to the wider group. With the new business model for academics, renewal subscriptions will hold the 5% fee flat from the 19-20 FY. New subscription for the 2020-21 FY will not have a service fee. The \$199 membership fee still active. The purpose of the business model update was to disentangle the revenue we make from providing the service from what vendors charge for the products. It's important to WiLS that members do not pay any more with this model than they did with previous models- We want to be able to have a pricing service model that matches our values, which is meeting our members' needs.

The next phase is to have a single flat membership fee. (There will be no services fee added.) Looking at service fees paid last year, and membership fees this year, there isn't expected to be a financial loss. In order to make this work, we are encouraging members to move all their direct subscriptions to WiLS. These will be counted as new subscriptions, so would not have a service fee. WiLS would in turn be able to make these payments with our credit card, and would be able to capitalize on the credit card's rewards program.

J. Brunner held a Q&A with members in late May, which had about 25 attendees. At this meeting, feedback was neutral or positive- there was concern about what the fees might look like, but many were happy to hear WiLS is willing to be the decider on membership fees, moving away from fees based on what vendors decide to charge.

CARES/IMLS pandemic research & data project grant – M. McLimans

M. McLimans and K. Keiswetter submitted a grant request for just under \$300k to fund for a 2-year Pandemic and Research Data Project (PRDP). The purpose is to provide public libraries staff with timely, reliable data in a quickly shifting environment impacted by COVID-19. We would be partnering with DPI and building on a work of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) called Measures That Matter, which focuses on data collection, analysis, and sharing on a national level.

We envision this project using a collaborative research process to create a research incubator to allow multiple research questions to be answered in a dynamic fashion in a clearly defined research cycle. It's written to give priority to research projects that focus on poverty, unemployment, or internet access (or lack thereof). All outcomes of the PRDP will be freely and openly available to the library community through a repository (website) of library-specific research and data resources, including consistent data sets, accessible reports, and clear visualizations that can help libraries make decisions.

Structurally, we proposed there will be an advisory council made up of members from DPI, data experts from inside and/or outside of the state, and members of PLA.

We also envision a Data Cohort of about 30 members. This would be seated with members of an existing cohort at DPI, so would be comprised of public library professionals from both public libraries and library systems. This cohort will be used to determine prioritized research questions to preform or support research undertaken in their library/community, implement data informed decisions and track the success of those efforts, disseminate findings and share how they use that data, and act as a trainer-to-trainer to help extend the help of the grant beyond just the initial two years.

This is an opportunity to do meaningful data analysis and collection around COVID and its impact on libraries but also an opportunity to build a data community and resource for libraries that we'll keep adding to with more data products.

A short 5 minute break was taken.

Small group discussions: How COVID-19 could change specific service areas/initiatives – J. Chamberlain to introduce
Board and staff were divided up into breakout rooms via Zoom to discuss the following areas:

- a. Academic cooperative purchasing model change (Staff facilitator: Sara): Paul, Nathan, Kristin, Sarah, Jennifer
- b. Library data/planning/service development (Staff facilitator: Melissa): Tasha, Barb, Jane, Teresa, Joe, Kim
- c. Digital collections (Staff facilitators: Emily): Heather, Martha, Peg, Kris, Steve, Rebecca, Melody, Vicki

Spokespersons from each group shared highlights/themes from their discussions, and the board engaged in a larger group discussion about how the landscape changes may impact WiLS services. Common themes that arose in the discussion were:

- There are still so many unknowns regarding budgets and reopenings.
- An increase in discoverability and usage of online resources
- Disparities between computer/internet access and availability in communities

Discussion: Population of the Nominations Committee

According to the bylaws, the Nomination Committee consists of the Chairperson Elect and two other Board members. The Chairperson-Elect serves as chair of the Nominating Committee and shall appoint the other two members of the committee.

There are three officers:

1. Chair: This position is filled by the chair-elect. Paul Waelchli is our current chair-elect and will be the chair for 2020/21.
2. Chair-elect: The committee will bring forth a nomination for this position.
3. Treasurer: The committee will bring forth a nomination for this position.

B. Brattin and K. McCoy volunteered to be part of the Nominations Committee.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by J. Roisum and seconded by P. Billing. Motion approved unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 12:27 pm.