

WiLS Board Meeting

February 1, 2023 – 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

JOINT meeting with Board and Finance Committee



Board Attendees: Hans Baierl (Moraine Park Technical College), Barbara Brattin (Kenosha Public Library), Jennifer Chamberlain, (WiLS, ex-officio), Jennifer Gurske (Madison Trust for Historic Preservation), Sarah Miller (WiscNet), Paula Norman (Tomahawk School District), Steve Platteter (Arrowhead Library System), Tasha Saecker (Appleton Public Library), Ellen Sayed (Medical College of Wisconsin), Adrienne Thunder (Ho-Chunk Nation Language Division), Micki Uppena (Mineral Point School District), Teresa Voss (Verona Area School District), Heather Winter (Milwaukee Art Museum)

Finance Committee Attendees: Ryan Ackerman, Plumer Lovelace, Steve Midthun, Sharon Nellis

Excused: Todd Roll (University of Wisconsin-Platteville)

Staff: Jeff Brunner, Erin Hughes, Tom Klement, Lisa Marten, Emily Pfothenauer, Rebecca Rosenstiel

Guests: Eric Engstrom (First Business Bank), Kevin Pomarnke (First Business Bank)

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order; Changes/additions to the agenda

B. Brattin called the meeting to order at 10:01am. No changes were made to the agenda.

2. Welcome & Introductions

Chair B. Brattin welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially members of the WiLS Finance Committee and our guests, Kevin Pomarnke and Eric Engstrom from First Business Bank. B. Brattin asked everyone to go around the Zoom room and share their name, position, and asked people to share what's on the top of their music playlist right now?

3. Approval of meeting minutes

S. Platteter moved to approve the December 2022 meeting minutes, T. Saecker seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Investments report

Kevin Pomarnke and Eric Engstrom of First Business Bank shared a brief presentation on 2022 investment performance and expectations for 2023 financial activity. K. Pomarnke covered items within the portfolio, pointing out that although last year's bond market values dropped quite a bit, they have been gradually climbing back up. He also noted that stocks/equities are weighted by 5% more than fixed income. E. Engstrom covered the WiLS' ESG, stating that cash has started to pay better returns, so allocations to cash are being kept slightly higher right now to get higher "risk free returns". He also noted that First Business Bank restructured their ESG Portfolios in June 2022, so half of WiLS' performance report is on the old portfolio; but the new portfolio is outperforming their indices both on fixed income and equity, which is really

encouraging. Overall, 2022 was a volatile year, and while unrealized gain/loss was down, market gains have increased, and this is a reason for optimism. Additionally, there is an error in the “since 2015” numbers: they switched systems in 2016, and some of the pre-2015 accounts, such as WiLS, had their totals grossed instead of annualized—this means that the reported 182% per year is not the actual return on this account.

The Board was asked if they had any questions?

T. Klement mentioned that the last time First Business Bank provided a report, they mentioned that a sharp increase usually follows midterm elections; did that happen this time? E. Engstrom reported that there were other events happening this year that the midterm elections themselves didn’t affect the market like it usually does.

5. Reports

a. Financial Report

T. Klement reviewed the WiLS financials at close of November 2022. Financials are all in good shape and everything is going well. Klement provided an explanation of the capital holdings as shown on the balance sheet specifically the New Initiatives Fund, the Close of Business Fund, and the Ideas to Action Fund.

J. Chamberlain also noted that late in the meeting there will be a discussion on a new initiative, which falls in to the “New Service Area” portion of the sheet. She also clarified that the “Ideas to Action Savings Account” that is set aside isn’t necessarily driving what the budget for that project would look like.

b. Director’s Report

J. Chamberlain answered any questions about her written report.

She shared that since this year is an audit review year, we will share the report with the board and finance committee via Basecamp, and address any questions in that platform. Jennifer could arrange a visit from the auditors at our April meeting if there are enough questions or concerns. Our auditor confirmed that it is customary for them to present findings to boards during full audit years, but not as typical for review years, so this would not be out of the ordinary to simply review via Basecamp. B. Brattin asked if the visit is recommended by the auditors, to which J. Chamberlain said No.

Jennifer shared that transition planning for Emily Pfothauer’s departure in April is underway.

c. Bylaws review committee

J. Gurske gave a brief update on the committee’s first meeting held last week. The committee is comprised of Adrienne Thunder, Jennifer Gurske, and Tasha Saecker. Jennifer and Andi Coffin from WiLS staff are assisting with the review. They have reviewed the bylaws and identified areas they want to explore a little further, including board size and seat allocation. They will meet again in mid-February.

6. Ideas to Action Update and setting budget for 23/24 – Emily Pfothauer

E. Pfothauer gave an overview of 2021 Ideas to Action final reports, as well as an update on how things are going with the 2022 grant projects. Since 2018, WiLS has provided a total of \$135,000 to support 38 innovative and collaborative member projects. In 2022, we received 33 applications totaling \$149,600 in funding requests and funded 8 projects (24% of applications funded). This was on par with 2021 (36 applications and 9 projects funded). Thank you to our board members who reviewed proposals in 2022 – Jennifer Gertzke, Paula Norman, Teresa Voss and Heather Winter.

The 2022 awards were distributed last fall, and projects are underway. At the same time, we're getting in updates and final reports from the 2021 cycle of awards.

Highlights:

Chilton Public Library – digital literacy events for seniors; 8 events over one year; registration full within first 10 days. Shared adaptable templates for handouts.

Racine Public Library – multisensory healing room “A sensory room is a relaxing space with furniture, toys, gadgets and more to meet people’s unique sensory needs. Sensory rooms can be an educational or development space for children or cognitively disabled people. They can soothe an autistic person experiencing a meltdown. Or they can be a secure place for a person with trauma to relieve a flashback.

These are only examples — the room is open to anyone who would find it supportive. No matter the need, the sensory room is a safe space for emotional regulation and sensory stimulation.”

Lakeland Union High School – STEAM Field Day (with former WiLS board member Peg Billing) – October 2022. Jen and Sara attended.

The 2023 Ideas to Action application period will open on April 3 and close on June 5. Kim Keisewetter and Jeff Brunner will be the WiLS staff coordinating Ideas to Action in the coming year. We'll also be looking to the Board for volunteers to review grant proposals in late summer/early fall (Aug/Sept). Keep that in mind for now and we'll ask for volunteers at the April board meeting.

This is also the time of year when the next year's budget is set. As a reminder, last year the Board approved ongoing support for Ideas to Action at a minimum of \$25,000 going forward. It is recommended that \$35,000 be allocated for Ideas to Action this year, the same amount as last year: \$25,000 as baseline, plus an additional \$10,000 at the board's discretion.

Discussion: B. Brattin noted their excitement that so many different library types were awarded Ideas to Action Grant funds. E. Pfothauer believes that having an ad in the WAAL program reached the Academic Library community, as there were more applicants from this library type than in previous years. J. Chamberlain asked the Board to let WiLS know if they can think of other marketing opportunities to help spread the word on the Ideas to Action grant.

P. Lovelace asked how many applicants there have been, and if any had to be turned down because the \$35,000 wasn't enough to cover them? Committee members from 2022's proposal review confirmed that around 25% of proposals were accepted, and those that weren't didn't necessarily fit the Ideas to Action program (for example, didn't have a timeline; were requesting funds for purchases instead of something innovative, engaging, new; etc). H. Winter asked if the number of applicants have been growing? E. Pfothauer said that applications grew in 2019-2021, but the number of applicants in 2022 were about the same as 2021. S. Nellis requested a historical overview that includes each year's funding amount, proposals received, proposals funded, and the estimated WiLS staff time for each funded project. The Board felt comfortable moving forward on this item without this information. J. Chamberlain will post this information on Basecamp once it is compiled.

S. Midthun moved to set the 23/24 budget at \$35,000, P. Norman seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Tribal Libraries, Archives & Museums proposal

E. Hughes, Mukurtu Hub Manager, shared a brief presentation on a proposal to build a new collective in support of digital archives and preservation needs for tribal communities. The presentation included a recap of the work to date WiLS has partnered with tribal archivists and memory keepers across the state.

J. Chamberlain asked the board the following questions:

- In April, we will share a detailed plan with a proposed budget and timeline. What other information would be helpful to include?
- What excites them most about the plan and proposed new Collective?
- What is the board's overall general support for WiLS utilizing monies from the New Initiatives Fund to support adding staff hours for a year to support the planning process?

Discussion: The Board voiced their excitement for this project. B. Brattin asked how this is related to language? A. Thunder responded that over the past five years, the Ho-Chunk Nation Language Division have been working with students from the UW Madison iSchool to catalog and digitize their collection of audio, video, and written archives of language that have been created over the last 30 years, and the goal of this project is to make this digital library available for all of their tribal members. Additionally, materials would be able to be shared with other school and libraries, allowing them access to accurate and authentic materials on Wisconsin Tribal Nations.

B. Brattin asked if there are any Wisconsin Tribal Nations missing from the project? E. Hughes said that they've had contact with most of Wisconsin's Tribal Nations, and that there are opportunities to work with contacts that haven't been made yet. E. Pfothauer added that a really important relationship with the Native American Tourism of Wisconsin was recently built, and have invited Erin and our partner at Stockbridge-Munsee to speak at their conference in June.

B. Brattin asked if we know if anyone else is doing this kind of work across the country? J. Chamberlain and E. Hughes noted that there are projects related to this happening at in places like the University of Oregon, and with the Native Northeast Research Collaborative, but nothing the same as this.

B. Brattin asked if there are currently any ideas for outside financial supporters or partnerships? J. Chamberlain answered that this will be a task in the project's first year: to identify potential partners and supporters who will be able to make this project sustainable long-term. J. Chamberlain added that if anyone has any questions or comments about this project, they can reach out any time.

8. Sharing time with board members

B. Brattin asked all of the board members to share an update on what is happening locally or top of mind in your library or organization.

T. Saecker shared an update on Appleton Public Library's building plans: They have received new rendering of the external part of the building, which can be viewed on their website at <https://apl.org/building/>. They are very optimistic that they haven't had to lose any functionality inside the structure, though they did lose some space, so it will be tighter and the shelves will be a little taller. They are hopeful to bid on it in late Spring, and ideally before June.

B. Brattin shared that Kenosha Public Library is opening their 5th location, which will also include affordable housing, so she is diving in to capital campaigns, which she's never done before and is frightening. They are also getting ready for their Go Big Read, and this year's title is *Homecoming*—they've been getting pushback from some members of the community and local officials.

T. Voss shared that Verona Area School District is about to launch their first ever District-wide Elementary Battle of the Books. They expected 60-80 kids to sign up, but they got 275! This is both exciting and adds more pressure to get a smooth process figured out.

S. Platteter shared that Prairie Lakes Library System is one month old! It's been a chaotic-but-fun month with all of the necessary paperwork that needed to be completed. But they have been approved by the IRS, and have an EIN. Now the tasks are to reestablish policies and procedures. Steve also extended his thanks to WiLS for their role in facilitating the merger.

9. Reminders

B. Brattin reminded the board to attend the annual meeting in February 24, 2023 at 10am on Zoom. Please register via the link in the director's report. Next meeting – April 13, 2023 at 10 am.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10pm