

# WiLS Board Meeting

March 8, 2024 | 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm



**Board attendees:** Jennifer Chamberlain, (WiLS, ex-officio), Jennifer Gurske (Madison Trust for Historic Preservation), Mindy King (University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point), Ashley McHose (Lakeshore Technical College), Sarah Miller (WiscNet), Kim Olson-Kopp (Viterbo University), Steve Platteter (Prairie Lakes Library System), Tasha Saecker (Appleton Public Library), Adrienne Thunder (Ho-Chunk Nation Language Division), Micki Uppena (Mineral Point School District)

**Staff attendees:** Andi Coffin, Kim Kiesewetter, Tom Klement

**Guests:** None

**Absent:** Barbara Brattin (Kenosha Public Library), Michelle Byholm (Chequamegon School District), Paula Norman (Rhineland School District), Heather Winter (Milwaukee Art Museum)

## Notes

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

T. Saecker called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm and asked for any changes to the agenda. J. Chamberlain noted a change to the March meeting that moves the joint board/finance committee meeting to April because there was a delay in the financial review. No other changes were suggested.

### 2. Welcome & introductions

T. Saecker welcomed the newest WiLS Board member, Kim Olson-Kopp from Viterbo University (WAICU representative) and members of the Board introduced themselves.

### 3. Approval of [December 2023 minutes](#)

M. King moved to approve the December 2023 minutes, S. Platteter seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

### 4. Presentation: City Library Collective Update – K. Kiesewetter, WiLS Data Analyst

K. Kiesewetter shared a brief overview of the happenings with the [City Library Collective](#) since it began about 3 years ago. This group originated out of a conference session with Tasha Saecker and WiLS staff who identified some unique findings in the data for libraries serving mid-size city communities across the state. The CLC engages in information sharing and incubating solutions to common issues for libraries with similar demographics. They successfully received an ARPA grant to support research and projects on building community resiliency and whole-person librarianship. Their current focus is on strengthening staff.

This year's work began with information gathering from staff as well as leadership and administration. 22 staff and 6 leaders / administrators participated in focus groups. The information gathered was aggregated and analyzed by the CLC members to determine next steps to improve strength of staff. A survey was developed and deployed and resulted in a strong sample size for planning. The results will be published soon on the CLC website but a key takeaway is that leadership staff need more support as they often tackle the issues in the libraries that a social worker or security staff might deal with, and those interactions were resulting in burnout and stress. Having a social worker or security person on staff resulted in less stress and burnout and increased the sense of safety and increased the opportunities for meaningful patron interactions. These data points are already helping libraries justify hiring security staff.

The next steps involve ideating and developing projects around the information suggested in the report.

[Link to Kim's presentation](#)

## [City Library Collective 2023 Annual Report](#)

T. Saecker shared her gratitude to WiLS for bringing together these libraries support one another and add data skills into the mix to help create meaningful impact. M. King noted that she's intrigued by the addition of social worker and security staff and thinks this work could help other libraries advocate for hiring to fill those roles. J. Chamberlain noted that this initiative was WiLS' first effort to form a collective and a new one will be discussed in April when we hear more about the Culture Keepers Collective.

### 5. Reports

a. Chair's report – Upcoming spring elections – T. Saecker

T. Saecker shared that WiLS is getting geared up to kickstart the upcoming spring election! Nominations will be open from April 8-26, with the general election happening May 6-24. Four seats will be open.

Please encourage your esteemed colleagues to run for a position:

- 1 representative for a Public Library seat (one year seat to finish out Barb Brattin's term due to her impending retirement)
- 1 representative for a K-12 Library seat (Paula Norman, not seeking reelection)
- 1 representative for a Special Libraries seat, (Heather Winter, not seeking reelection)
- 1 representative for an At-Large seat (Jennifer Gurske, seeking reelection)

b. Finance committee report – S. Miller

*Documents:* [Notes from Feb 27 meeting](#)

S. Miller shared that the finance committee reviewed the six-month FY24 financials and the investment policy. A few questions were asked about the policy language in how the growth strategy is described, specifically moderate growth (An average 5% annual growth over a 10 year period), and Jennifer will bring back clarification to the committee at their May meeting. It is likely the committee won't have anything substantive to change in the investment policy. The committee also discussed a few anticipated FY25 budget changes, and guidance on determining annual cost of living increases.

c. Financial report – T. Klement

T. Klement shared January financials. Balance sheet continues to be very strong for an organization like WiLS. January budget noteworthy items include continued robust sales for cooperative purchasing. Digital Projects is lagging behind a little because due to the timing of reimbursements and will catch up in the coming months. We are well ahead of last year at this time and have already exceeded our annual target.

d. [Director's report](#) – Jennifer Chamberlain

J. Chamberlain highlighted three things:

- Another round of thanks to everyone for a strong member meeting.
- Watch for more information on replacement product for Basecamp in terms of how we communicate as a board. S. Miller noted that WiscNet uses Confluence that WiLS may wish to investigate. WiLS is also developing a policy or statement to communicate the rationale behind the change and other similar issues that might arise.
- Data Dashboard project: The WPLC selected WiLS' data dashboard, built on Google's Looker Studio, to be used as a pilot this summer and fall rolled out to all the state's public libraries so they can understand how a data dashboard tool could be useful in their work. This particular tool might not be one chosen going forward; this is the proof of concept stage.

e. [2023 Annual report highlights](#) – J. Chamberlain & A. Coffin

J. Chamberlain and A. Coffin wanted to highlight just a few things on this year's annual report.

- Our 5-year strategic plan lenses make for a nice layout!
- Look at our community numbers – over 800 different organizations are associated with WiLS in some capacity! (Page 12)
- Consulting – if not a record year, close to it in terms of the number of projects and organizations we have worked with this past year. Also first out of state plan complete. (Page 13)
- Cooperative purchasing – high total sales for the calendar year. (Page 14)

- Ways we are working with our members. Proud consortia moments.
- Seeing real progress with Culture Keepers Collective. More to come on that at our April meeting. (Page 25)
- Data Landscape report – if you haven't taken a look at this report commissioned by DPI, you might want to! (Page 29)
- Ideas to Action (Page 30)
- Adding graphic design service. (Page 31)
- Working together internally on our collaboration support meet-up. Seeing this as a real staff development opportunity. (Page 38)

The Board shared that they felt the report was engaging and pretty and they were happy to hear an overview.

## 6. Discussion: Employee Handbook Revisions

*Background:* The WiLS employee handbook is reviewed biennially (even years) or as needed by the WiLS Staff Development team.

*During the meeting:* The board will discuss proposed revisions at this meeting with a vote at the April meeting to accept the new edition.

*Documents:* [Summary of changes](#), [Revised Handbook with Changes](#)

J. Chamberlain and the staff development team have taken a thorough look through the Employee Handbook, as they do every other year, and we have a few suggested changes. The most substantial change is in how we define full time work week, which is currently at a minimum of 40 hours a week. We would like to articulate that as a range, 35-45 hours a week. Standard work days and work weeks for the purposes of reporting PTO will still be 40 hours a week. We won't be taking a vote on changes at this meeting, but looking for feedback or suggestions before we bring a final copy to the board in April. Our HR folks at Tandem have reviewed and provided advice.

S. Miller and S. Platteter and M. Uppena suggested that "unpaid" be removed from the wording about nursing breaks as staff is trusted to regulate their workday and it's an unusual requirement as no other breaks are discussed as paid or unpaid. The board had no concerns or questions about the change to the definition of the full time work week.

## 7. Board member roundtable – How do you focus on strengthening or maintaining a strong staff/workplace culture?

T. Saecker led the board in a roundtable discussion on the topic of building strong workplace culture or other ways in which organizations help support staff.

T. Saecker hired a consultant ([Rogers Health](#)) to lead a compassion resilience workshop with staff at Appleton Public Library. It resulted in an action agreement created by staff, which hangs in the breakroom. Now, in a temporary location, the library staff still holds this as very important to staff culture. Honesty, permission for healthy boundary-setting and active listening are examples of what is in the action agreement. J. Gurske shared the challenges of this as a staff of one with 12 supervisors (the trustees!). They support as best they can but there aren't colleagues to brainstorm with or chat with or create a culture with. S. Platteter shared that, as a leader, he found it important and beneficial to staff culture to let them try new things and explore their ideas. K. Olson-Kopp shared that, while they have introverted and extroverted staff who don't want to always do the same things or do them together, they do work well together and much of that has to do with a supportive campus environment, including growth opportunities and professional development. A. McHose shared that her library staff members are focused on establishing a sense of [psychological safety](#) and knows they are doing well when they can talk openly with one another about their failures. WiscNet is experiencing a challenge in staff culture due to a recent reorg and with a new CEO coming in, there are many uncertainties. Staff members have stepped up to build staff culture and one thing that has had an impact is an occasional staff lunch, a chance for staff to connect informally and build relationships. It will be beneficial if the incoming CEO is motivated to focus

on culture. It was noted that efforts to acknowledge and honor the whole person that is an employee can go very far in building culture.

8. **May 30 board meeting location** – J. Gurske has arranged for us to hold our May 30<sup>th</sup> in person meeting in Monona, WI at the [Nathaniel Dean House](#). This is an all-day meeting, lunch will be provided and travel expenses reimbursed. There will be an opportunity for a house tour after the meeting, and we will need a headcount so they can arrange for enough docents. Watch for a meeting poll to gather lunch order and sign up for the tour. WiLS will pay for the tour.
9. **Meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.**

Next meeting – April 19, 2024 @ 10:00 am – 12:00 pm