

# WiLS Board Meeting - Notes

## May 30, 2024 10 am – 3pm



Nathaniel Dean House  
4718 Monona Drive  
Monona, WI

### Board Members (o indicates absent)

- Barbara Brattin (Kenosha Public Library)
- Michelle Byholm (Chequamegon School District)
- 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)
- Paula Norman (Rhineland School District)
- Steve Platteter (Prairie Lakes Library System)
- Tasha Saecker (Appleton Public Library)
- Kim Olson-Kopp (Viterbo University)
- Adrienne Thunder (Ho-Chunk Nation Language Division)
- Micki Uppena (Mineral Point School District)
- Heather Winter (Milwaukee Art Museum)

**Staff attendees:** Erin Hughes, Kim Kiesewetter, Rebecca Rosenstiel

#### 1. Board photo

The Board stepped outside and had a group photo taken.

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

T. Saecker called the meeting to order at 10:02am and asked for any changes to the agenda. No changes were suggested.

#### 3. Welcome & Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves and shared what they each thought the original owners of the Nathaniel Dean House (1856) would be most surprised by or least surprised by in 2024. Answers included modern technology/technological advancements; automobiles; that their home is now a historic site and being used to host a hybrid in-person/virtual meeting; how many women leaders there are today; the divisions in our country (least surprised); seeing neighbors directly across the street; a golf course in their backyard; the amount of traffic out their front door; fashionable eyewear; and the global population.

#### 4. Approval of meeting minutes - [April 19, 2024](#)

M. Uppena moved to approve the March 2024 minutes, M. Byholm seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 5. Informational: Reports

##### a. April 2024 Financials

T. Klement provided an overview of the actuals shared that everything is looking strong overall: WiLS Memberships are over what they were at this point last year; Consulting projects are on track to exceed what was budgeted; Consortial Management is strong; and Digital Projects has some outstanding billing items that will be receiving reimbursements for work already done. Investments are strong; money has been moved

into a sweep account to maximize idle cash, the excess is swept in to a money market account with Edward Jones, which has earned \$24,000 so far. T. Klement is also currently speaking with a representative at Corpay, a competitor to Capital One, who is offering a higher rebate percentage than Capital One is offering. T. Klement has taken this information back to Capital One as well, and will know within the next two weeks if they are willing to match Corpay's offer. Expenses are on-track, and the only items to note is Consulting is higher than expected, however this is likely due to coding errors and will be cleaned up before the end of the fiscal year; and Recollection Wisconsin's negative balance isn't a loss, but is down to timing. J. Chamberlain reminded the Board that Ideas to Action is funded through current-year revenues; and also even with new projects, WiLS has been able to cover everything from revenue, and has not needed to use funds from the New Initiatives Fund.

b. Director's Report

J. Chamberlain noted that there is no written report this month, but provided a quick verbal update on staffing. Rebecca Rosenstiel will be moving into a Project Coordinator position which is a newly created position blending Rebecca's expert assistance on various projects, as well as moving her into a project management role for two projects: Horticulture consortium and the new WPLC delivery workgroup. This is the result of work done by Jen and the strategy group on cultivating talent and career progression within WiLS and it moves Rebecca along a pathway to project management role as organizational needs change.

The Board wants to remind WiLS staff they the Board is available for staff members to talk to if they need a sounding board; and that WiLS staff should always feel comfortable and empowered to speak out if they are feeling overworked. The Board does not want any WiLS staff to feel work burnout.

J. Chamberlain also reminded the Board that elections are closing on Friday. Thankfully we received interest from a K12 school librarian so we have a full slate! Thanks to everyone who helped encourage interest among our K12 members.

J. Chamberlain shared a document summarizing WiLS' [Strategic Planning Implementation progress in 2024](#). Key highlights include:

- So much work is being done by staff across WiLS in relation to the strategic plan. This document has really become our guiding light.
- Using survey and focus group data to drive new services – we have implemented several new services and partnerships in direct response to what we learned in our strategic planning process.
- We continue to be extremely busy, however we are making strides in addressing staff capacity and avoiding burnout. We are exploring how we can utilize staff expertise in new ways to help ease and distribute the responsibilities across more staff.

The Board appreciates the format of this document, which is available to share internally or otherwise. M. Byholm asked if the intent is for these goals to continue beyond the 5 year planning cycle? J. Chamberlain noted that this is something we're excited to see: In 2027, objectives and actions may adjust, but the work doesn't truly

end. WiLS staff will be reflecting on the strategic plan at the annual staff retreat in September; possibly through the lens of a specific theme.

There is a WiLSWorld Shorts scheduled for Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup> (*Cultural Considerations When Working with Native Nations*) that WiLS has received a question from a WiLS member as to why there aren't Native voices included. This was intentional when scheduling this WiLSWorld Short: Native partners have suggested WiLS work in educating allies. We are happy for the dialogue that has come from this question, and that WiLS members feel comfortable to be able to ask questions like this.

c. Nomination committee update

S. Miller shared a brief update that the nominations committee comprised of Mindy King, Sarah Miller, and Tasha Saecker. The work is done, and will be announced later. The 2024-25 Board will vote on new officers at the meeting in August.

**6. Action: FY25 Budget approval**

[FY25 Draft Budget](#)

J. Chamberlain shared the FY25 budget draft and pointed out the following items:

- Jump in consortial management revenue is due to Recollection Wisconsin increased year 2 state funding. Biggest addition is additional project management to oversee a digitization internship program.
- Digital project grants – revenue & expense are relational and dependent on approved grant funds known at the time we draft the budget. The current 3-year NEH grant for the Mukurtu fellowship program is coming to a close in FY24. For FY25, we have two smaller grant projects secured (Mellon Foundation/WSU and OCLC project), and we are in the process of submitting 3 grants to funders including a large NEH grant. Erin will be sharing more on this later in her presentation on Culture Keepers after lunch.
- Staff expenses: 3% COLA to most employees, range between 2% (leadership) to 6% COLA for admin positions, and one salary adjustment for changing roles and responsibilities. Averages out to 5% increase in salary line. Lisa Marten will also be moving back to Wisconsin from Washington, so there will be some savings there regarding out-of-state taxes.
- Consultant fees – we are hiring a DEI consultant to lead us in an audit of our existing DEI efforts to identify actionable improvements we can make as an organization. Fees include bringing Dr. Kawanna Bright to the fall staff retreat for a hands-on workshop.
- Communications budget – renaming the conference exhibits/publicity account to better reflect and support a more comprehensive communications plan. Includes 1/5 of the expected cost of website redesign so we can begin to budget for this long-term.

Discussion:

B. Brattin asked if WiLS was being conservative with the interest/rebate line? J. Chamberlain explained that we are unsure how our rebates will look next year due to some impending changes to vendors taking credit cards for payments.

A. Thunder moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget, B. Brattin seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

**7. Action:** [Investment Policy](#) approval

The finance committee reviewed the investment policy per their annual tasks, and they made two minor updates to the policy. They are seeking the board's approval.

- Clarifying language was added in the Investment Objectives section to more clearly state the performance is measured by an average return over a period of 10 years.
- Additionally, they added in language that recognizes the need for an annual meeting with the investment manager.

B. Brattin moved to approve the Investment Policy as presented, M. King seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

**8. Discussion and possible action: Increasing Close of Business Fund**

J. Chamberlain shared a recommendation from the investment committee and Tom Klement to increase the WiLS close of business fund. In accordance with best practice, WiLS has a restricted close of business (COB) fund designed to handle expenditures in the event of an unexpected closure. Rule of thumb is to set aside an amount to cover between 3-6 months of operational expenses, which given current expenses should be between \$354,000-\$708,000. Current fund is at \$400,000.

The investment committee recommends the board address the COB fund balance incrementally over the next several fiscal years, moving \$100,000 annually from our general fund balance in FY25, FY26, and FY27.

B. Brattin noted that the Board could approve to move money out of this account should the need arise. J. Chamberlain confirmed.

S. Miller moved to approve moving \$100,000 annually, through Fiscal Year 2027, from the general fund balance to the restricted close of business fund, M. Byholm seconded. Upon further discussion, the Board determined that the COB fund should be reviewed annually instead of every three years. T. Klement clarified that investment gains are pooled together in one line. S. Miller offered a friendly amendment to approve a single year, fiscal year 2025, \$100,000 to a restricted Close of Business fund. The motion carried unanimously.

**9. Action: Appointing a Tech College representative**

A. McHose shared that she will be stepping down from her role at Lakeshores Technical College, and will no longer be able to serve on the WiLS Board. She thanked the Board for her time, and will miss being a part of this group.

The WiLS Board can appoint a Technical College representative to serve a 1-year term until the 2025 Board Election. J. Chamberlain will craft messaging as a call for volunteers, and A. McHose has offered to send the messaging to Wisconsin Technical College partners via the WTCS listserv and to WISPALS members. Once there are volunteers, the Board will be asked to appoint one person for a 1-year term via email.

**10. Discussion and possible action:** [Vendor Relations Policy](#)

J. Chamberlain shared that WiLS staff recently decided to terminate our relationship with

Basecamp, a project management and communication platform we use heavily with various consortia and groups we manage. The board should be familiar with Basecamp as that is what we use to share board meeting materials and financial information. WiLS has a small workgroup tasked with finding an alternative. This decision prompted us to draft a policy to help guide decisions like this going forward. For now, we see this policy only guiding vendor relationships when WiLS is the vendor customer, not when we are the vendor partner (such as cooperative purchasing) We are asking the board to review the policy and if comfortable, to approve this as a WiLS organizational policy.

Discussion:

M. Byholm asked if language should be added to include the Board's support/backing of this policy? S. Miller added that WiLS staff should feel comfortable asking Board Members to respond to "reconsideration" discussions; either the full Board or individual Board Members who may be from a relevant organization/library type. J. Chamberlain believes that having the Board's approval of this policy shows the Board's support and backing of the policy. The Board agreed.

B. Brattin asked if there was also a process for Cooperative Purchasing vendor relations. J. Chamberlain, R. Rosenstiel, and A. McHose shared that the Cooperative Purchasing service has its own separate policy and guidelines in place, which were recently reviewed, updated, and approved by CoopAC earlier this month. Cooperative Purchasing vendor partner licenses are reviewed every three years to make sure policies are still in alignment with CoopAC's guidelines.

M. King moved to approve the Vendor Relations policy as presented, K. Olson-Kopp seconded. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **11. Informational: WiLS Service Satisfaction & Perception Data snapshot**

K. Kiesewetter shared a brief presentation on the data collected this past year on WiLS service and our member satisfaction. (link to presentation)

- Member survey deployed in spring 2024
  - 92% of people who've worked with WiLS indicated satisfied or highly satisfied. No one indicated any level of dissatisfaction.
  - Between 2022 and 2024, service awareness increased for all services except I2A and digital project support. Areas of lower awareness are opportunities for additional marketing.
  - Cooperative purchasing remains most used service.
  - Increased engagement on all perception statements since 2022. Very positive perception of WiLS as an organization. Members view us as approachable, important members of the library and cultural ecosystem, and people who can help members get things done.
- Cooperative purchasing survey deployed in early spring 2024
  - Coop email lists are most used service, Elsevier tokens the least.
  - Statistically significant increase in use of: coop emails, product trials, Taco Tuesday, and Bill Pay which is great b/c we have promoted these more heavily.

- Increased agreement with coop staff being available for questions in a timely manner – this is solid level of positive perception.
- Customers find a high level of both cost and time savings from working with WiLS Coop team.
- Recollection Wisconsin – project management survey
  - RW developed a Digital Readiness Toolkit as a resource. Of folks who have utilized it with their digital collection, 100% found it extremely or somewhat helpful.
- WSDLC – project management survey
  - Very satisfied with WiLS’ project management services and find staff very approachable
- WISPALS – project management survey
  - Board and steering committee members are very satisfied with WiLS’ project management services. All services had 100% of respondents indicating they were either somewhat or completely satisfied with WiLS-managed services related to the consortium.

## 12. Discussion: Member needs and WiLS service response

Reflecting upon what Kim shared in terms of what we are hearing from our membership, where do you see your organizational needs represented (or not) in the data?

S. Miller wants to make sure WiLS staff shares this information with membership; it speaks to WiLS’ work without WiLS saying it.

B. Brattin shared that staff development and support is the number one priority of the City Library Collective, which aligns well with our strategic plan and what we are hearing in the member survey. She sees all three areas (staff development, advocacy, and data for storytelling) as key public library needs. She would be curious to know more granular information on what kinds of staff development needs folks have. K. Kiesewetter can follow up with a more targeted survey to find out more.

M. King noted that staff development budgets are really dwindling among academic institutions and she’s also hearing from staff that they are primarily interested in virtual opportunities.

M. Byholm suggested we make it easier for members to know about and share our staff development opportunities.

A. McHose asked about WiLS’ operational capacity to do more in this area – do we have time and capacity to do this work? S. Miller and J. Chamberlain both suggested that we explore more partnerships with other organizations to put on this work. Along the lines of the new iSchool partnership. Perhaps some opportunities with WiscNet?

M. Byholm posed the question “what are *not* asking that has lead to such positive results?” K. Kiesewetter agreed that this is on her radar as well, and is intentional with wording to not post leading questions (eg “are you happy with...” types of questions). Kim also reminded the group that she has only shared the results of the satisfaction-related questions.

**13. BREAK FOR LUNCH - 12:30 pm – 1:15 pm**

During lunch, Recognition of Service

J. Chamberlain thanked the four outgoing board members for their service, as well as ALL WiLS board members for their time, expertise, encouragement, and support of WiLS and our mission. We could not do this work without you!

**14. Informational: Culture Keepers Collective – Erin Hughes, WiLS**

J. Chamberlain introduced Erin to the board. Hughes is the Digital and Community Outreach Archivist for WiLS and tasked with managing our collaborations with Indigenous partners in Mukurtu Midwest as well as the new Culture Keepers Collective.

E. Hughes shared a brief update on the Collective history and work-to-date. Remember that in spring 2023, this board voted to continue supporting WiLS work with Native Nations and digital archives. Out of that commitment, the Culture Keepers Collective was born. It is a native-led collective administered by WiLS that serves the needs of cultural workers to advance their communities' work within tribal libraries, archives, and museums. The main components in this work are: education, collaboration, sustainability, and advocacy. In April, WiLS coordinated a reconvening of Culture Keepers. In partnership with the Ho-Chunk Nation, Northern Waters Library Service, Nicolet Federated Library System, and UW Madison's iSchool/TLAM program, 60 participants were brought together.

Long term sustainability – our work now is working to build additional funding support for this program. Washington State University received a Mellon grant and named WiLS as a key partner in this grant. \$76,000 over three years. This funding will provide Mukurtu support services, training, workshops, and other outreach events Native Nations and help maintain the Mukurtu Midwest Hub site, which is used for training purposes, community engagement, and for Indigenous cultural workers to use for community curation.

In addition, we have submitted an application to the National Endowment for the Arts Cultural and Community Resiliency Grant and have plans to apply to the Green Bay Packers Foundation and the Henry Luce Foundation. We are partnering with former WiLSian Emily Pfothenauer to put these grants together.

Discussion:

B. Brattin asked how many years' worth of work can be envisioned? E. Hughes cannot say for sure, but there is much to do and much that can be done; it's not just doing the work, but also having localized opportunities for training. A. Thunder shared how important this work has been in particular for the Ho-Chunk Nation: having the opportunity for learners to pick up the language from authentic first-language speakers is invaluable. This is also an opportunity for the public to access accurate and authentic information. Teachers are also able to access information regarding Wisconsin Act 31. M. Byholm asked how that information can be accessed, so that she can share with teachers? E. Hughes shared that there is content available on each Native Nation's website; and Mukurtu will have a lot of information from many tribal communities as well, though not everything hosted in Mukurtu is available publicly- some resources are only available to certain communities and protocol.

**15. Preview of meeting schedule for 2024/2025:**

J. Chamberlain is proposing reducing the WiLS board and finance committee meetings each by one in the coming year:

- 4 board meetings (Aug, Dec, April, June)
- 3 finance committee meetings (September – Finance only, April – Joint with Board, May – Finance only)

The Board is in support of trialing reduced meetings. S. Miller noted that typically it feels like six meetings in a year are too many, while four feels like too few, and requests an assessment at the end of next year.

**16. House Tour**

**17. Adjournment-** Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Next meeting – Watch for a meeting poll in June to set the 24/25 meetings