

# WiLS Board Meeting - Minutes

## August 30, 2024 – 9:30 am – 2:00 pm



WiscNet offices, 605 Science Drive, Madison, WI 53711\*

### Board Members (o indicates absent)

- o Michelle Byholm (Chequamegon School District)
- Jennifer Chamberlain (WiLS, ex-officio)
- Jennifer Follett (Madison Metropolitan School District)
- o Gary Flynn (Gateway Technical College)
- Frank Foss (Milwaukee Art Museum)
- Jennifer Gurske (Madison Trust for Historic Preservation)
- o Mindy King (University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point)
- Kristina Gómez (Milwaukee Public Library)
- Sarah Miller (WiscNet)
- Steve Platteter (Prairie Lakes Library System)
- o Tasha Saecker (Appleton Public Library)
- Kim Olson-Kopp (Viterbo University)
- Andrew Prellwitz (Ripon College)
- o Adrienne Thunder (Ho-Chunk Nation Language Division)
- Micki Uppena (Mineral Point School District)

### Staff attendees: Andi Coffin

1. Call to Order; Changes/additions to the agenda  
S. Miller called the meeting to order at 9:30 am and asked for any changes to the agenda. J. Chamberlain requested we switch the order after the lunch break, so Andi Coffin can share the communications update before we discuss Ideas to Action. There were no objections to this change.
2. Welcome & logistics – Sarah Miller  
S. Miller welcomed everyone to WiscNet and shared facility logistics.
3. Welcoming New Board Members & Introductions – Sarah Miller  
Attendees introduced themselves and shared their favorite back-to-school memories.  
  
Highlights included trapper keepers and the fun of new school supplies, and seeing friends, and Jen had to stand in the corner with marker on her face, and BookIt, and bus rides!
4. Approval of [May 30 board minutes](#) – Sarah Miller  
K. Olson-Kopp moved to approve the May 30 minutes, M. Uppena seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried.
5. Action: Election of board officers – Sarah Miller  
S. Miller presented the officer slate on behalf of the nominations committee - Jennifer Gurske, chair-elect; Steve Platteter, Treasurer. No additional nominations were made from the floor. K. Olson-Kopp moved to accept the slate and elect the named officers. F. Foss seconded. The motion carried.
6. Annual Board Orientation/WiLS 101 – Jen Chamberlain  
J. Chamberlain reviewed the [Board member roles & expectations](#) and provided a brief overview of the WiLS service portfolio.

It was asked how WiLS decides what costs are for strategic planning. J. Chamberlain explained that it is a mix of an estimate of time a project will take weighed against risk and benefits of working on the project. While we have moved away from declaring hours in our contracts in favor of equating cost with outcomes, we still use hours to understand the staff costs of a project. It was noted that WiLS does a good job of being transparent about prices and keeping services affordable, such as implementing the Small Library Strategic Planning Cohort. It was also asked if WiLS does a market comparison of competitive organizations to understand what they charge for service. We have, on guidance from the Board, increased our fees and we do investigate competitive bids if they are available. But we have not formally done research like this. It was noted that a very low cost of service could be interpreted as poor quality. J. Chamberlain explained that we keep our primary customer in mind – libraries – when we price projects because it is important to us to remain affordable to them. It was asked if WiLS still does speaking engagements; we do! We will consider invitations, if there is an audience to reach or business to build, if staff can provide pro bono help, if there is capacity / availability, etc. We can also tap others in the member community to provide expertise and act as matchmakers.

**10 min break at 11:00 am**

**7. Overview of WiLS Finances**

- a. Board Oversight: Finance Committee, Treasurer, [policies](#) and audit – Jen Chamberlain  
J. Chamberlain reviewed the board’s role as WiLS fiscal stewards, including the involvement of a board treasurer and finance committee, investment policy, and the hiring of an external auditor. WiLS alternates between a full audit and a review process every other year.
- b. [Overview of 24-25 budget](#) - Jen Chamberlain  
J. Chamberlain reminded the board of the recently approved 24/25 budget, highlighting a few areas that we anticipate may fall over/under budget given our recent FY24 year end results.
- c. June 2024 draft financials – Tom Klement
  - i. [June 2024 Balance Sheet, June 2024 budget with actuals](#)  
T. Klement shared the June preliminary financials. Because this is year-end, Tom will conduct a full reconciliation that takes several weeks to complete. Things may shift a bit in that process, but overall our year-end balance is looking fantastic! We saw most revenue lines come in above budget, and we had strong investment performance and credit card rebates. Our expenses are well in line with what we budgeted.

It was noted that the increase in actual revenue from cooperative purchasing was due to a 25% increase in the Common School Fund, which allows K12 library media specialists to purchase content and technology for their libraries. The cooperative purchasing team provided 86% more quotes to members this year than in the previous year.

It was asked how WiLS creates our projected budget. J. Chamberlain explained that it depends on the line item. For example, our software budget is easy to estimate because we have a technology replacement cycle, etc. Many estimates draw on the previous year’s actuals. T. Klement reminded folks that if they have questions, he is available via email at [klement@wils.org](mailto:klement@wils.org).

8. [Director's report](#) – the latest & greatest happenings @ WiLS – Jen Chamberlain
  - a. Takeaways from Board satisfaction survey
    - i. J. Chamberlain shared results from the recent board survey and thanked everyone who participated. Overall the board feels engaged and informed, and the survey highlighted a few areas for improvement specifically around service overviews for consortia management and digital projects. Jen is planning on inviting staff in these areas to present to the board in future meetings.
  - b. New projects! J. Chamberlain encouraged the board to check out the list of new projects WiLS is working on this coming year. We are excited to broaden our strategic planning experience in adjacent organizations (WiscNet) and to work on a multi-year IMLS grant with DPI and the state of Washington on Gaming in Libraries.

***Buffet Lunch: 12:15 – 1:00 pm – meet a new board member!***

9. Action: Ideas to Action grant awards – Jennifer Gurske  
Jennifer Gurske presented the committee's recommended grantees for board approval including a recommended for a slight increase in the total grant awards amount. J. Chamberlain shared that last year we awarded just under the \$35,000 allotment, and this year's increased amount would still average out at less than \$35,000 for each year. We are experiencing a steady increase in grant need, and we may want to explore other options for expanding our grant fund pool. This year's selected grant projects represent our membership broadly and the grant projects are targeted at serving the needs of diverse communities. A big thank you to the committee members who worked on reviewing and selecting these projects. The next steps are to inform award recipients as well as those who were not selected this year, and assigning a WiLS staff member liaison to each project.

It was asked if sustainability was a consideration in selection. The committee does consider the project sustainability as well as the re-usability of the outputs of the projects proposed. It was also asked how WiLS communicates with folks who are not selected. Because the board hasn't yet approved the awardees, the messages to those selected and those who were not have not yet been sent. We do send some feedback to those who are not selected and encourage them to resubmit in subsequent years.

The gap between amount requested and amount we can award is growing and we may wish to establish partnerships to bridge that gap.

M. Uppena moved to increase the budgeted amount for funding Ideas to Action to \$37,740 to allow funding of all nine recommended projects. F. Foss seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed.

M. Uppena moved to approve the slate of projects as presented by the committee; J. Follett seconded. K. Gomez recused herself because Milwaukee Public Library is an awardee. With no objections or discussion, the motion passed.

It was suggested that individual awardees and outcomes could be better spotlighted on social media and other WiLS communications in order to elevate their visibility.

**10. Service Area Highlight: What We Talk About When We Talk About WiLS: The WiLS Communications Strategy – Andi Coffin**

Discussion prompts:

- Do you see opportunity for WiLS to communicate better with members?
- What are your organization's greatest communication challenges?
- What stands out to you as an excellent communication? What do you like (or dislike?) What catches your attention?
- Do you have any communication tricks or tips that have worked well for your organization?

It was asked why WiLSWorld stopped; the time commitment needed from staff was too much and the conference continued to lose money. Board members expressed that they had enjoyed the conference. There was general appreciation for the communications work.

**11. Wrap up and next meeting – Sarah Miller**

S. Miller led the group in a round robin to share in one word something you learned, something that struck your curiosity, or something that you're looking forward to.

Board members shared that they are: hopeful, grateful, feeling connected, vision, honored, happy to be learning, collaborating, welcomed, enjoying the variety & diversity of WiLS work, love using communication rather than marketing, excited to mine the Ideas to Action repository!

Meeting adjourned at 2:08 pm and the next meeting will be held via Zoom on December 9 from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm.