



Library Development & Legislation (LD&L) Committee

Friday, July 24, 2020

10:00 AM

Virtual via Go-To-Meeting

MINUTES

Members present: (*all attending remotely*) Connie Meyer, Kathy Klager, Kris Adams Wendt, Mark Arend, Nick Dimassis, Jennifer Einwalter, Bruce Gay, Vicki Teal Lovely, Sherry Machones, Larry Oathout, Steve Ohs, Kathy Pletcher, Jim Ramsey, Nyama Reed, Steve Conway (Conway Consulting)

Members absent: Pete Loeffel, Heather Johnson, Paula Kiely, Plumer Lovelace (WLA Executive Director),

Guests: Kurt Kiefer (DPI), Martha Berninger (DPI), Shannon Schultz (DPI), Dena Wortzel (Wisconsin Humanities Council)

Co-chair Meyer called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. The roll was called, and a quorum declared present. Meyer introduced new member Jennifer Einwalter from Jack Russell Memorial Library (Hartford) and others on the call introduced themselves in turn.

The agenda order was approved by consensus with the flexibility to move item 8 so as to accommodate the arrival of Dena Wortzel.

Approval of minutes from the May 15, 2020 meeting. The minutes of the May 15, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously on a **motion from Pletcher seconded by Oathout.**

State budget request 2021-2023. Draft WLA budget request documents submitted to DPI included (1) public library system aids, (2) library service contracts, BadgerLink and Newsline for the Blind, and (3) Recollection Wisconsin, along with (4) a one page overview summary. Requested amounts for the contracts, BadgerLink and Newsline have not been confirmed by DPI. Conway provided an overview of variables during this unique budget producing cycle where the best case scenario is to promote a request for what we need and prepare to defend keeping what we have. Oathout mentioned that the pandemic is making people notice broadband connectivity inadequacies as never before. Meyer questioned whether competition for broadband expansion dollars (from TEACH or the Universal Service Fund) would be a factor for state library aid. Kiefer replied that broadband expansion should be seen as a long-term project with a long-term funding plan. Additional dollars don't have to come from TEACH; libraries are partners on broadband grants under the new Governor's Task Force to which Kiefer was appointed. (See [full press release HERE.](#)) Klager suggested it would be helpful if DPI could share with LD&L any data they have on which libraries were open/closed and services being offered. There was consensus that virtual meetings with legislators are preferred; some team members *might* be comfortable with indoor in person meetings, depending upon the location, with everyone masked. Meyer noted that she and Klager will be stepping back at the end of the year, and encouraged others to begin involving themselves in the budget process now. LD&L budget team was verified as Meyer, Klager, Conway, and Lovelace with interest from Dimassis, Machones, Pletcher, Wendt, Lovely, Ramsey and Einwalter. Meyer will

set up a virtual meeting for July 30 with Dee Pettack from DPI and available budget team members to discuss strategy.

Story gathering project. The theme of library value and relevance selected at the beginning of 2020 is still regarded as the best approach. Conway has fielded questions from legislators curious as to how libraries are functioning during the pandemic, some under false assumptions that public employees are being paid to stay home with little accomplished. There's a need to tap into local library stories that convey how librarians are supporting their communities with innovative programming, virtual services, Wifi access, curbside pickup, etc., as well as growing stronger and ready to serve when reopening beyond curbside occurs. Videos provided for Library Legislative Day are still in the WLA drop box, but the collection needs to be expanded to include pandemic response programs and services, adaptability and future directions for libraries. Dimassis volunteered to take point on this project. Lovely is willing to help. Pletcher will follow up with NFLS libraries. Videos are needed for upcoming meetings this fall and early winter.

County and Municipal funding workgroup. Klager reported that Michael Dennison from DPI/DLT has agreed to refresh the annual report data necessary to update the workgroup's old Act 420 spreadsheets and charts based on 2014 numbers. The workgroup should be ready to respond to potential challenges as counties grapple with pandemic related revenue losses and examine 2020 cross county circulations submitted in 2021 for 2022 payment. Lower circulation counts due to pandemic closure (unavailable until annual reports are filed in February 2021) will increase the cost per circulation element in the reimbursement formula. Potential fall 2020 meetings with Wisconsin Counties Association contacts to explore a uniform approach to the unique 2022 billing cycle were discussed. (Example: Repeat 2019 library cross county circulation requests throughout the entire state for 2020.) Counties and libraries fighting with each other benefits no one. Klager asked LD&L members to send her additional ideas. Conway noted that talks with librarians will need to begin soon in order to determine an approach in time to work with the Counties Association in advance of invoicing which can begin as early as March.

Wisconsin Humanities Council project (Resilient Communities Initiative). Wisconsin Humanities Council (WHC) Executive Director Dena Wortzel was welcomed to the meeting and introduced the Resilient Communities Initiative. The proposal is based on a prototype project funded by WHC grant funds between 2012-2019 during which UW-Milwaukee professor Dr. Arijit Sen brought a field school approach to 6 different neighborhoods in Milwaukee (Sherman Park) as well as Merrill, Wisconsin. Dr. Sen worked with residents to collect stories of place and heritage, of the potential and the aspirations of those who live there, including students, community volunteers and local history experts. They learned how community residents care about and maintain places that matter to them and examined the ways in which the activities of community organizations and social networks sustain human relationships, entrepreneurship and productive lifestyles. Public libraries were an important part of the earlier projects and are again central to the proposed Resilient Communities Initiative. The new 2 year initiative will serve 4 communities with a summer program and 4 communities with an 11-month program, following recruitment, selection, and training of 8 young people and their hometown librarians working as teams, for a total of 16 trainees. The preliminary budget estimate includes \$30,000 in stipends for 8 librarians (based on \$500/month for their period of service to the project plus all expenses paid for a 2-week field school training experience). Wortzel explained young applicants will be required to have letters of recommendation from their librarian partners, whose advisory role will include providing an

institutional base for community networking. The Resilient Communities initiative (version 09-08-20) is linked [here](#).

Following discussion, it was agreed that WLA was a logical partner to boost the legislative conversation in an assist to WHC's quest for sustainable funding in the next budget cycle, and the WHC Resilient Communities Initiative would nicely compliment [Wisconsin Libraries Transforming Communities](#). Wendt, who is a gubernatorial appointment to the WHC Board and member of its Government Relations Committee, volunteered to liaison between LD&L and the WHC Board, along with Conway who also serves as Government Relations Advisor to the WHC. **Gay/Arend motion that LD&L support the Wisconsin Humanities Council Resilient Communities Initiative proposal and forward it to the WLA Board for endorsement.**

Report on webinar: Positioning the library for a post-pandemic sustainable future. Klager reported on the WLA/LD&L sponsored webinar presented by herself, Meyer, Wendt, Arend, Loeffel, Ibach and Conway, and assisted by Joy Schwartz from Winnefox Library System who managed the technical aspects. There were 105 attendees for the live 90-minute session on June 5, with an additional 67 registrants who likely accessed the [YouTube video](#) (for which there were 164 views as of July 24). Loeffel's list of [Post-Pandemic Impacts on Municipal Revenue](#) was included with the LD&L meeting packet. The webinar is an example of WLA membership value that hopefully enhanced association visibility throughout the library community.

Federal Relations Coordinator update. Machones delivered the report linked [here](#).

DPI/DLT update. See DPI Update to LD&L 05-15-2020 report linked [here](#).

Announcements and other business. Discussion returned to organizing budget related conversations with legislators and the need to provide training opportunities for new members of the Budget Team. Einwalter expressed a willingness to observe and participate as needed. She also provided an update on Washington County library funding.

Remaining meeting dates for 2020. September 25, November 13

Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon on a **motion by Klager, seconded by Pletcher.**

Respectfully submitted,
Kris Adams Wendt, Recorder