

Waukesha County Library Planning Committee (Act 150 Committee)
Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 20, 2021

Committee members present: Dave DeAngelis, Joel Gaughan, Laura Gest, Adele Loria, Howard Pringle, Edell Schaefer, and Nancy Wilhelm. Via Zoom: Betsy Felix, Bruce Gay, Dale Noll, and Stephanie Ramirez

Committee members absent: Jim Batzko, Robyn Ludtke

Others present: Karol Kennedy (Bridges Library System Director), Mellanie Mercier (Bridges Library System Automation Coordinator/Assistant Director), Via Zoom: Alex Klosterman (Waukesha County Senior Budget Analyst), Alli Chase (Alice Baker Memorial Library Director)

Call to Order: Chairman DeAngelis called the meeting to order at Pewaukee Public Library at 4:02 p.m.

Comments from the public: none

Meeting Minutes: A Wilhelm/Schaefer motion to approve the minutes of the August 30, 2021 meeting with a correction to the date of the next meeting passed unanimously.

Finalize Key Strategic Issue #2: Type of Organization – Karol reviewed changes based on recommendations made at the August 30 committee meeting. A Schaefer/Loria motion to approve this section with the proposed changes passed unanimously.

Review Key Strategic Issue # 8: CAFÉ Shared Automation System – Some wording changes and the removal of the objective related to the Public Library System Redesign (PLSR) process were recommended. The recommendations were based on the completion of the PLSR project and the recognition of a more stable environment for library systems than was present during the development of the current plan. There was some discussion about ILS funding in other systems and the importance of having funds to replace the ILS should that be necessary. A Pringle/Noll motion to approve this section with the proposed changes passed unanimously.

Review Key Strategic Issue # 9: Library Efficiency Improvements – There was discussion about previous studies and requests to help fund local library capital costs. This has not been successful in the past and the will not be included in the new plan. There were questions about the history of encouraging the county to incentivize county libraries to fund efficiencies and reduce expenses on an ongoing basis. The example of green initiatives was given. This incentivizing has not been done during the life of this plan and creating efficiencies is more likely done at the individual libraries. The committee felt this strategic issue was not relevant to the plan at this time. A Pringle/Wilhelm motion to strike this strategic issue from the plan passed unanimously.

Review Key Strategic Issue #10: Regional Library System Membership and Services – Some language changes were recommended specifically related to statements about PLSR. This section will be amended based on these recommendations and will be finalized at the next meeting.

Review Key Strategic Issue # 5: Standards – Karol provided some history of the standards. The current standards are not aspirational, but are meant to be the minimum to exempt from the county library tax. The purpose is to ensure that all county residents have access to at least the basic level of library service and to minimize the amount of crossover borrowing. They are also meant to serve as a basic level of service for any community considering creating a library for their residents.

There were some questions about the Library Service Effort Ratio (LSER). This was developed as an alternate method of meeting the minimum to exempt quantitative standards requirements. This ratio measures whether most of the libraries municipal residents do most of their library business at their home library. Generally about 75% of libraries qualify for exemption based on LSER.

The current plan does allow for a one-time exception during the library plan cycle for each library on each of the standards, but does not include language regarding acts of God. The intent is to include language that would provide exceptions when events like the pandemic occur and all libraries are forced to change service levels.

Each of the minimum to exempt standards were discussed along with the comparison to the Wisconsin Public Library Standards which were finalized in 2018. It is difficult to compare the State and County standards since the conditions are different in different areas of the state.

Materials Spending per Capita: It was suggested that because the cost of materials has increased during the life of the plan that the standard should be raised as well.

Hours Open: There were no objections to current hours requirements.

FTE: This is directly linked to hours open. It was mentioned that for some libraries the minimum to exempt may not be enough to run the library effectively.

Collection Size: This does not include electronic materials. It was suggested that perhaps this should be decreased based on the transition to electronic materials. The data does show a slow transition. In 2019, 90% of items circulated were physical items. In 2020, the percentage was 83.4%, but the pandemic influenced this. So far in 2021, it is 85.8%. Consider the possibility of decreasing this requirement.

Computers: Libraries are seeing more patrons coming in with their own devices and the demand for computers has decreased. Consider decreasing this requirement.

Wi-Fi: This is still important to include even though it has become a standard service since it would be important for any new library to offer.

The quality assurance standards were developed to help ensure libraries were efficiently managed. All of these remain relevant. The committee will consider the addition of a standard requiring each library to have the core policies included in Tier 1 of the Wisconsin Public Library Standards. These could be developed over a number of years.

System staff will work with the county budget analyst to prepare for additional discussion of this strategic issue at the next meeting. The committee also recommended system staff reach out to former System Director Connie Meyer to review how the numeric standards were developed during the previous planning process.

The next meeting will be Monday, October 11 at 4:00 PM at Hartland Public Library (110 E. Park Avenue, Hartland, WI 53029).

At 5:27 p.m., a Gaughan/Gay motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Mellanie Mercier, Recorder