

Wisconsin Public Library Consortium
Annual Membership and Board Meeting Notes
April 29, 2020
Online via Zoom*

ATTENDEES: Jean Anderson (SCLS), Abby Armour (Johnson Creek PL), Kathy Baker (Marshfield PL), Laura Beldavs (Cedarburg PL), Evan Bend (OWLS), Meagan Bennett (Bloomer PL), Shawn Carlson (Waukesha PL), Jennifer Chamberlain (MLS), Emma Cobb (Verona PL), Noreen Fish (La Crosse PL), Jeff Gilderson-Duwe (WLS), Anne Hamland (WVLS), Julie Harrison (Verona PL), Jamison Hein (Clintonville PL), Steve Hesel (MCFLS), Sue Heskin (Superior PL), Mehta Hess (Marshfield PL), Rachel Hitt (Brillion PL), Anne-Marie Itzin (NWLS), Tina Kakuske (Door County PL), Clare Kindt (Brown County PL), Mellanie Mercier (BLS), Eric Norton (McMillan PL), Judy Pinger (Milwaukee PL), Steve Platteter (ALS), Kelly Rohde (Mead PL), Rebecca Schadrie (MCLS), Amy Stormberg (Amery Area PL), Martha Van Pelt (SCLS), Tracy Vreeke (NFLS), Molly Warren (Madison PL), Kathy Wegner (Neillsville PL), Maureen Welch (IFLS), Karina Zidon (Platteville PL), Janay Ziebell (Neillsville PL)

1. Welcome and Introductions

The group was welcomed at 1:00 pm. It was noted that project managers for WPLC will start the meeting off with a review of statistics and a roundtable follow up. Then we will have a presentation of the Collection Development Committee Recommendations by a Collection Development representative, who is also a Board member and the Board's liaison to the Steering Committee, Maureen Welch. After that we will hear from Steering Chair, Noreen Fish and she will provide Steering's perspective on the process this year and that body's thoughts and feedback on the recommendations. It was noted then the group will move into a discussion time around sustainable funding for Wisconsin's Digital Library. It was asked if there were any questions before beginning. There were none.

2. Annual Membership Meeting Presentation of Information

a. Brief statistics review

Stats showing a five-year comparison were shared. The first chart shared shows the circulation from the Wisconsin's Digital Library for the past five years. Each year, the circulation continues to grow, we went from 3.5 million circulations in 2015 all the way up to 5.8 for last year, in 2019. It was noted it will be very interesting to see with the increase in usage we have seen the last couple of months, if 2020 circulation totals will get us to that 6 million mark.

The second chart showed the unique users for the past five years as well. We went from seeing 144,947 unique users in 2015 to 192,097 in 2019, which is roughly a 32% increase in unique users over those five years.

The next chart moved into this year's data. This chart and the last one are similar in that they are both looking at unique users. The last one is five-year data, and this chart is showing year over year comparison which is helpful for showing how 2020 usage is diverging because of the pandemic. It was noted that March and moving into April of this year, are showing a steeper increase compared to last year's unique users.

Checkouts for the last three months were shown. From February, we went from 508,726 checkouts to 561,553 in April (which isn't over yet – the April numbers were run as of April 26th).

Over just that small period of time, we are seeing a 10% increase in usage. Which is hard to do in a collection that circulates on average 98% of its collection annually. So, it's an already highly used collection that is seeing a 10% increase in usage.

The next chart shown was new users. In February of 2020 the Digital Library had 5465 new users which is pretty normal as the average number of new users for the previous six months has been 5,135 new users per month. But in March we saw a drastic increase of new users with the potential of April seeing just as many.

The next two charts look at user activity for the past three months. We have seen a spike in active visits by users and a pretty significant increase in page views, especially the week of March 16th, which is the week that most public libraries in Wisconsin began limiting access and closing.

The final slide of statistics was showing as of this day, the current checkouts, holds and current average wait period for Wisconsin's Digital library. It was noted that the current average wait period is much lower at 33 days than it has been in the past. And we are hoping with the generous grant we received we will see that wait time go down even more.

It was shared that the WPLC received \$250,000 for Wisconsin's Digital Library content from the WI Department of Public Instruction, in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, LS-00-19-0050-19. Project managers submitted a pandemic funding request to DPI in March for the funds.

b. Roundtable follow up and survey results

The Board, Steering Committee and Collection Development Committee met at the end of October last fall. There were two main goals of the meeting: To discuss goals and value of the collection, and how to move the consortium and collection forward to meet those goals and enhance value. The morning half of the meeting the group went through some statements to help identify those goals and the value and came out from that with several statements like the one you see here. Then in the afternoon, they broke out into groups focusing on the five different topics, Advantage, Collection, In-State Advocacy, Nation Role & Publishers, and Sustainable Increases. The purpose of the meeting was to develop those goal statements and then for each of the five discussion topics create goal statements, recommendations or even activities around those topics.

From that meeting, all of the statements were put into a survey and sent to the Board, Steering and collection development committee members. It was noted that the group wouldn't spend a lot of time on each point in the survey as the group will see them reflected in the recommendations and they are to be included in the slides which will be sent out after the meeting.

There was a lot of agreement on many of the statements. There was 100% agreement that for example, the WPLC should work with libraries, publishers, authors and we should work to reduce holds and increase patron satisfaction, etc. There were several statements where 95% of respondents agreed. Statements like WPLC will explore partnerships and other avenues for increased resources. There were also some statements that saw 90% agreement. There were also a handful of statements where agreement varied a little. However, for the majority of

those that weren't in agreement, were not in disagreement, they were just unsure which can be seen reflected in orange in the chart.

c. 2021 Collection Development Committee recommendations

Both of the outputs of the Roundtable and the statements from the Roundtable are referenced and were incorporated into the 20-21 recommendations. Maureen Welch was introduced to walk through those recommendations.

- High Holds and Patron Dissatisfaction Recommendations
 - Increase budget by a fixed amount based on a 5% increase each year for 5 years, beginning in 2021.
 - Explore partnerships and other avenues for increased resources and maximizing the use of the collection.
 - Increase always-available content.
 - Research and evaluate the balance of purchasing up front vs. purchasing by holds to determine the most effective way to purchase in light of continuous publisher model changes.
- Cost Effectiveness of Purchasing & Circulation Models Recommendations
 - Clarify and document what publisher and model factors are being considered as content is purchased.
 - Educate all members of the consortium about available models and how they are being utilized.
- Publisher Issues Recommendations
 - Create a recommended list (good guys list) of publishers that selectors would use.
 - Work with other libraries/consortia to share data to better understand publisher landscape.
- Advantage Effectiveness Recommendations
 - Evaluate the success of the hold reduction program (satisfaction, circulation, etc.).
 - Provide guidance and support to Advantage selectors.
- Collection Development of Series Recommendations
 - Work with OverDrive to develop a list of currently owned titles that are in a series and identify gaps in that series.
 - Purchase gaps in a series and work with OverDrive, if necessary, to connect with publishers to gain access to those titles.
 - Inquire with OverDrive if there is potential for a discount if multiple titles of one series are purchased or implement a standing order for series titles.
- Magazine Collection Recommendations
 - To better understand the statewide need, the recommendation is to do a statewide survey of interest in magazines.

i. Steering Committee's thoughts on recommendations

Steering Chair, Noreen Fish, was introduced to state the Committee's thought on the recommendations.

She reported that in 2019 the Collection Development Workgroup became a standing Committee of the Steering Committee. This provided us the opportunity to move the group's timeline up and have a first draft of the recommendations available to the Steering Committee at our February meeting where we were able to provide feedback and receive a second draft at our April meeting.

At both meetings, we reviewed the recommendation to get an understanding of the groups thoughts and opinions and provide feedback and suggestions for change. The Steering Committee will vote on the recommendations at our May 21st meeting.

For each of the recommendations, I'll briefly share our discussion notes, feedback and thoughts.

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For each of the recommendations, N. Fish briefly shared the Committee's discussion notes, feedback and thoughts.

- For the High holds and patron dissatisfaction recommendations, we were in favor of exploring partnerships for increase resources, increasing always available content, and researching and evaluating the balance of purchasing up front vs. purchasing by holds.
- Regarding the 5% increase for the next five years, the majority supported an increase but wanted to see what those increases looked like for each system over the next five years and in addition, came to an agreement that we would prefer a fixed rate increase vs a 5% increase. It was agreed that a fixed rate based on the average 5% increase over the next five years should be used.
 - There was a question "By "fixed rate," do you mean a set dollar amount rather than a percentage?" It was clarified that yes, a set dollar amount.
- The Committee supports the recommendations for Cost Effectiveness of Purchasing & Circulation Models as well as the Publisher Issues Recommendations and suggested no changes for those.
- The Committee was excited to see the Advantage Effectiveness Recommendations and appreciates the support for Advantage selectors.
- The Committee was also in great support of the Collection Development of Series Recommendations. It was noted that gaps in series have been problematic and the group appreciates the emphasis addressing those issues.
- Finally, the Magazine Collection Recommendation. This has changed slightly since the first draft of the recommendations. Very recently, OverDrive offered an opportunity for the WPLC to provide 10 digital magazine titles to the whole state, via simultaneous use for \$15,000 per year. A survey was sent out to the Steering Committee to understand current demand and existing supply, as well as to

ascertain each system's interest in adding this package of 10 titles for the entire consortium for \$15,000. The Steering Committee will continue this discussion at our May meeting and could potentially approve adding magazines to the collection using funds from the buying pool this year.

- A question was asked where would the \$15,000 come from in the budget? It was noted that it would come out of the base-line buying pool amount.

d. Buying Pool increase and sustainable future funding discussion

The Collection Development Committee met and reviewed the feedback from both the Board and Steering and incorporated that feedback into what is the current draft of the recommendations that Maureen reviewed with us earlier.

With the current situation (COVID-19) and closures, many libraries are being told that budgets will most likely be cut for next year. Because of that we know there is a concern about recommending an increase now.

It was noted that both the Collection Development Committee and the Steering Committee met this month and had this discussion and felt it is a great opportunity to further discuss future funding and whether or not to recommend an increase in budget for the next year because of recent events, at this meeting.

It was also stated that the Collection Development Committee did decided to keep the 5% increase in the recommendations for now and make changes depending upon feedback from today's discussion.

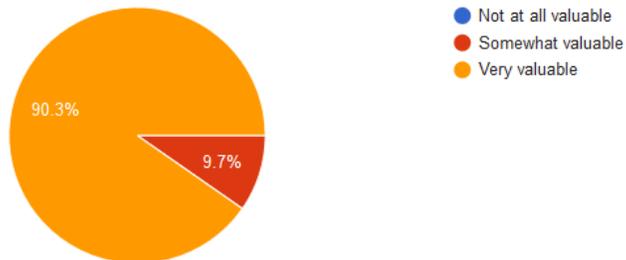
Six different points, or thoughts, from the Collection Development Committee and Steering Committee's discussion on this topic were shared to help frame the discussion.

- Concerns that an increase may not be realistic post-pandemic and there is a suggestion to hold off on an increase for the 2021 budget until there is a better idea of how public library budgets may be affected and reconsider the increase for 2022.
- Excitement from some systems to move forward with the increase and see what that impact would look like. This is an opportunity for systems to get input from their libraries about adding additional funds and it is time for libraries to do everything they can to make sure their library puts extra money into the digital collection.
- Need to consider whether this pandemic will change borrowing patterns overall all. The digital library has seen a great increase in use in the past month. Are users going to be more leery of going into their physical libraries and more willing to utilize electronic resources? In which case even with shrinking budgets we may see a greater need for electronic resources over physical materials.
- If OverDrive use increases, libraries need to support that increase and pay for it.
- Some systems are interested in bolstering additional funding in the Advantage accounts to help meet demand and mitigate holds and keep it on the local level.
- The consortium needs more money for the demand and need of the digital library, however, even before the pandemic and budget uncertainties, an increase of even just 5% was going to be a stretch, now it may be impossible for some libraries/systems.

A poll was given to gauge the current perspectives of the participants and the results were shared:

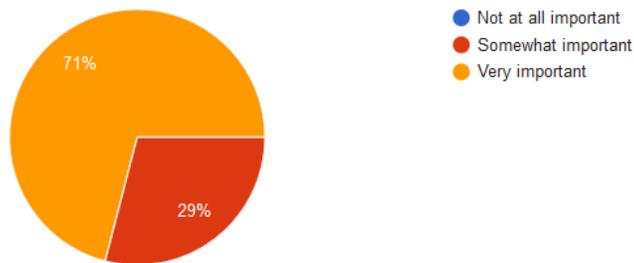
How valuable is the Digital Library to your library and patrons?

31 responses



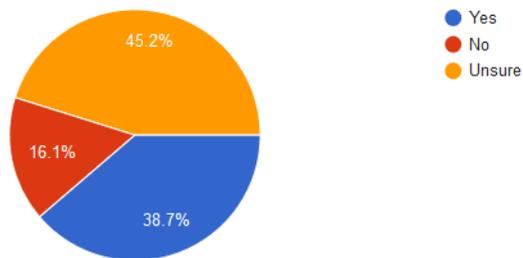
How important do you think it is for WPLC to continue to increase the investment in the Digital Library?

31 responses



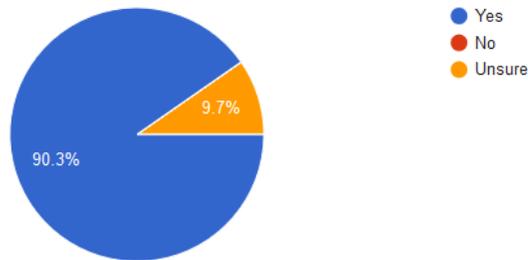
Would you support a 5% increase in investment for 2021 if it would increase your library's contribution to the Digital Library?

31 responses



Would you support a 5% increase in investment for 2021 if the money came from elsewhere and it did NOT increase your library's contribution to the Digital Library?

31 responses



Discussion:

- WRLS had a directors meeting and all agreed more money needs to be put into the digital library, especially now. There was some hesitation as to how it might affect their budgets now, but still all agreed there needs to be an increase.
- MCFLS spoke with directors. They really value the consortium and OverDrive. However, after a discussion, they voted against a five percent increase and would prefer to put more money into their local system advantage account.
- Winnefox and its libraries support the basic concept of an increase. Winnefox libraries put in more than twice as much into their advantage account on a planned basis than they do for the consortium portion. Then with the pandemic they agreed to put in \$25,000 more for their advantage. Their libraries have a commitment for supporting this. For some libraries no time is the right time for an increase and that will always be the case. The momentum of building a regular increase into the shared pool is long overdue. It's not a great time but it is long overdue.
- A majority of OWLS Directors support the 5% increase though one director does have a concern about what her Library's budget will look like in 2021.
- It was asked what the average increase in cost per title is? The cost per title typically doesn't go up like a database would, with a 3 or 5% increase annually, it is more sporadic and is usually on the heels of major lending model change. The majority of large publishers have moved to a metered by time lending model. Many will allow a one- or two-year license.
- NWLS would prefer to hold off on an increase for 2021 until 2022 to see what budgets are going to be post-pandemic.
- It was clarified that the NWLS pays for the buying pool and does not divvy up the cost among the libraries. The libraries have been putting money into their advantage account. Funds received by the county pay for their buying pool costs. Before the pandemic, the NWLS system was in favor of the increase.
- SCLS did a survey. Only half responded. 51% said okay with 5% increase but a large contingency was concerned about the post COVID-19 budget.
- NFLS too support the 5% increase.
- MCLS reported based on responses from directors so far, it's likely MCLS libraries will support the increase even if the current economic circumstances make everyone nervous.

- Bridges would prefer to table the possible increase till 2022 and in meantime systems can add whatever they want to their advantage accounts.
- SCLS, NFLS, WVLS and NWLS would support adding to advantage.
- There was a question about tabling the increase for 2021 but adding an increase for the holds reduction amount. The group was overall not in favor of this.
- It was noted there will always be a new reason to table the increase "until next year."
- It was stated that if downloadables are a resource Wisconsinites need, then we need to figure out a way to provide them.
- In a collection that circulates at 98%, there is definitely need to increase the breadth of offerings. Only increasing holds accounts doesn't address that.
- It was noted that WVLS libraries are increasing Advantage spending right now, something they've never contributed to. The holds reduction method is a better compromise.
- Changing the destination of the increase doesn't matter for MCLS.
- There was additional agreement for the need to increase the breadth of the collection.
- NFLS favorite choice is to move forward with the increase. But post COVID budgets are concerning.
- It was asked what happens if a library system can't make their portion? It was noted that would be a Board decision.
- There's never a good time for an increase. In general, in favor of increase.
- It was noted that this may be tossing a bomb, but is there a way to change the contribution formula based on financial strength of the systems, so systems that are better could support those who are in a worse position? It was noted that a formula workgroup was formed a few years ago and made changes to this. That workgroup is no longer active and the Board would need to consider whether or not to revisit making changes to the current formulas.

3. Break and Membership Meeting ended at 2:07 pm

4. Board Meeting Welcome and Call to Order

Vice Chair Anne Hamland called the meeting to order at 2:12 p.m.

ATTENDEES: Evan Bend (OWLS), Jennifer Chamberlain (MLS), Jeff Gilderson-Duwe (WLS), Anne Hamland (WVLS), Steve Hesel (MCFLS), Anne-Marie Itzin (NWLS), Mellanie Mercier (BLS), Steve Platteter (ALS), Rebecca Schadrie (MCLS), Martha Van Pelt (SCLS), Tracy Vreeke (NFLS), Maureen Welch (IFLS)

ABSENT: Kristen Anderson (WRLS), David Kranz (SWLS), Rob Nunez (KLS), Steve Ohs (LLS)

GUEST: Jessica MacPhail (Racine/LLS)

Project Managers: Melody Clark (WiLS), Sara Gold (WiLS)

5. Consent Agenda

a. Motion to approve agenda

Moved to approve: J. Gilderson-Duwe

Second: S. Hesper
Results: Motion passed
Discussion: None

- b. Motion to approve minutes from [February 21, 2020](#)

Moved to approve: M. Van Pelt
Second: T. Vreeke
Results: Motion passed
Discussion: None

- c. Acceptance of Steering Committee minutes from [February 20, 2020](#) and [April 17, 2020](#)

Moved to approve: M. Van Pelt
Second: R. Schradrie
Results: Motion passed
Discussion: None

- d. [YTD Budget](#)

It was reported that an error was found in the 2020 Budget. An increase of \$3000 in project management fees was approved last year for project management of the Wispublib email list creation and maintenance. The new project management contract was signed with that increase noted, however, the additional \$3000 did not get added to the budget, so systems weren't charged for that this year. At their 2021 budget meeting, the Budget Committee suggested taking that additional amount of \$3000 out of reserves for this year for project management.

Motion to take \$3000 out of reserves for project management for 2020

Moved to approve: A. Hamland
Second: J. Gilderson-Duwe
Results: Motion passes with one abstention
Discussion: None

- e. Decisions made between February 26, 2019 and current meeting
There were no decisions made.

6. Discussion: Debrief from annual meeting topics.

M. Clark informed the group that the project managers asked DPI for an addition \$75,000 per year for the next three years in tandem with an increase from the systems and libraries and shared the Pandemic Funding Request submitted by project managers to the DPI. It was noted that document contains some significant data that was used to contextualize the need for the request. An impactful stat is that it would cost the WPLC \$7.3 million to fulfill all current holds, as of March.

The Board addressed the question from the Annual Meeting, regarding a way to change the contribution formula based on financial strength of the systems, so systems that are better could support those who are in a worse position? The Board agreed that introducing a needs-based or equity-weighting to the cost sharing formula would be a divisive quagmire. The group agreed that the current formula of 25% population and 75% usage is working.

It was noted that the message of having a state-wide collection helps meet the needs of users and should be supported.

A MCFLS library had received some anecdotal comments from someone who had just moved from LA County. The patron noted that the LA County OverDrive consortium was able to fulfill holds much better than WPLC. There was a question about how that happens. Project managers reported that OverDrive provides peer reports for consortium similar in size to WPLC. We receive reports on spend and collection size. WPLC is the lowest in spend compared to all of its peers. It was also noted that many of those consortia/libraries don't have the governance structure that WPLC does and selecting is done by one or two full-time people who are able to make quicker selection decisions.

There was a question about if the Board should make a decision on increasing the budget for next year. The group was reminded that the Steering Committee meets in May to vote on the recommendation. The recommendation for the buying pool gets populated into the budget and approved by the Budget Committee. It is then submitted to the Board to vote on at their next meeting on June 15th. The Board can always change the buying pool amounts at that time, but it was noted it would be best to avoid that. The group was encouraged to discuss thoughts on an increase with their Steering Reps.

There was a motion to approve the support of the WPLC Steering Committee shared buying pool recommendation increase for the next 5 years.

Moved to approve: J. Gilderson-Duwe.

Second: T. Vreeke

Additional Discussion: There a question about the actual amounts that would be approved as the amounts change each year due to usage and percentage. There was a comment that this increase is still not enough to make a big dent in the holds. Libraries are going to have to evaluate our collection development funding, and decrease physical print items to accommodate patron demand for eBooks. There was a question about the fixed amount vs a five percent and why Steering had wanted this. It was also asked if this was over complicating the decision.

It was clarified that the Steering Committee members know that the base buying pool amount fluctuates each year based on usage and population, however they had all agreed they would prefer that the increase for the next few years was a fixed amount versus based on a percentage of the budget.

It was also noted that the current version of the Collection Development Committee's recommendations is the fifth version. The group was reminded of the Board and Steering Communication Best Practices document they developed in 2018 and were reminded to check in with their Steering representatives after meetings.

MCFLS and WVLS noted that they see a value in the collection and would like to see an increase, but will vote no for an increase due to conversations with their directors.

Result: Motion passes; 9 yes, 3 no

7. Discussion: Marketing and advocacy from Social Media Committee

At the last meeting, the Board tasked the Social Media Committee with thinking of ways they would consider pursuing advocacy of the Digital Library and WPLC and ideas on story gathering

targeting both the public and libraries. The Board reviewed the Committee's ideas. They agreed they would like to see a proposal put together with more detail and a dollar amount needed for the Facebook ads and kits.

Discussion: Board Representative for Collection Development Committee

The Collection Development Committee's charge is to evaluate the composition of the collection purchased by the digital buying pool with particular attention on known concerns and potential additions to the collection. The committee is made up of three Board members, three Steering Committee members, and three Selection Committee members.

Due to a Board member stepping down from the Committee, we need to replace a Board member on the Committee. We are looking for a volunteer. A call previously sent out did not solicit any volunteers.

Discussion: No one volunteered to fill the position. Project managers will look at gaps in representation on the committee and reach out to specific Board members.

8. Information Sharing from Partners

Winnefox: Their libraries contributed an additional \$25,000 to advantage due to the pandemic.

IFLS: Their libraries contributed \$35,000 additional for their advantage.

SCLS: They added \$72,000, \$50,000 from Madison PL Foundation.

9. Meeting Evaluation

How did the meeting go? Was everyone participating? How might we improve for our next meeting?

Discussion: Consensus was that the meeting went well.

10. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn: M. Van Pelt

Second: J. Gilderson-Duwe

Result: Motion passes

Meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Next meeting: June 15, 2020 at 9:00 am.