

Wisconsin Public Library Consortium

Board Meeting Notes

October 20, 2025, at 2:00 pm

PRESENT: Brittany Larson, proxy for Mellanie Mercier (Bridges), Cecelia Cole, proxy for Katelyn Dubiel (IFLS), Kristi Helmkamp (Kenosha), Rebecca Scherer (MCLS), Steve Hesel (MCFLS), Tracy Vreeke (Nicolet), Katherine Elchert (NWLS), Bradley Shipp (OWLS), Steve Ohs (PLLS), Shannon Schultz (SCLS), Angela Noel (SWLS), Kristen Anderson (WRLS), Clairellyn Sommersmith (Winnefox), Marla Sepnafski (WVLS)

ABSENT: Riti Grover (Monarch)

PROJECT MANAGERS: Jennifer Chamberlain (WiLS), Melody Clark (WiLS), Laura Damon-Moore (WiLS), Rebecca Rosenstiel (WiLS)

1. Call to order

R. Scherer called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm

2. Welcome, Proxy Announcements, and Roll Call

R. Scherer welcomed the group, asked for proxy announcements, and did a roll call.

3. Consent Agenda

- a. Review agenda
- b. Approval of minutes from [August 4, 2025](#)
- c. Acceptance of Digital Library Steering Committee Meeting notes from [September 11, 2025](#)
- d. Acceptance of Technology Steering Committee Meeting notes from [September 9, 2025](#)
- e. [YTD Budget](#)

B. Shipp moved approval of the consent agenda. K. Elchert seconded. There was no discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Committee and Project Updates

a. Digital Library Steering Committee Update

K. Elchert reported that the DL Steering Committee met in September and created a nominations committee to select officers for 2026. They reviewed and weighed in on the strategic plan year two activities. The group also continued a discussion on checkout and hold limits and lending periods. The group determined to not make any changes to either the limits or the lending periods at this time. There was also a discussion on digital cards and OverDrive's Instant Digital Card program. Several systems provide digital library cards to patrons that allow them to use other electronic resources in addition to OverDrive. The group agreed to not move forward with IDC.

OUR MISSION

The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium brings together expertise and resources to support collaborative work resulting in greater equity and affordability for Wisconsin public libraries and their communities.

OUR VISION

To serve as the strategic center of experimentation, collaboration, and innovation for Wisconsin public libraries.

b. Technology Steering Committee Update

S. Hesper and K. Anderson highlighted a few items from the committee's September 9th meeting. As a reminder, the Technology Steering Committee coordinates a regular community of practice for System IT and Technology folks. The group meets virtually bimonthly and recently held their annual in-person meeting in late August, where they discussed technology standards for public library systems guided by a facilitator.

The committee received an update from the Digital Archives Backup Workgroup regarding a pilot with APTrust. This could potentially act as next generation storage for the project. Archived materials are currently being held by SCLS/Lean. This model builds on existing RW-WPLC collaboration and mirrors centralized digital preservation approaches in other states.

Expanding on the Data Dashboard Pilot project, the committee reviewed a proposal from project managers to help further promote the understanding and use of Public Library Data Visualization Tools in Wisconsin. The main activity will involve the creation of a centralized toolkit of resources and training materials to assist public libraries in becoming more data confident. It will point librarians to data tools widely available, including the SCLS and the piloted WPLC dashboard created by WILS. At the upcoming December meeting, the committee will fine-tune how to put this proposal into action. A reminder that all systems have an opportunity to participate in the Technology Steering Committee; currently we have representatives from nine systems. If you'd like someone from your system to get involved, have them reach out to Jen Chamberlain or the wplc-info email to get added to the communication list.

c. Delivery Workgroup Update

R. Rosenstiel noted that the Delivery Workgroup met twice since the last Board meeting, the last was in person at Neenah and Oshkosh Public libraries to tour their delivery facilities. Statewide Delivery fall volume counts will take place on October 27th - November 23rd. The workgroup has been working on developing best practices and service expectations for vendors.

d. Newspaper Think Tank Update

L. Damon-Moore shared that the Historical and Local Digital Collections Committee co-hosted with Recollection Wisconsin, a Newspaper Think Tank on September 23rd in Milwaukee. This convening brought together a number of people who are invested in providing improved access to historical Wisconsin newspapers, entities included multiple library systems, DPI, universities, public libraries, and the Wisconsin Historical Society. A more thorough, public report-out will be coming in the form of a white paper in the coming months, but other outcomes and next steps from the day include:

- People had the chance to talk openly and candidly about their current challenges and frustrations around the gap in a centralized newspaper digitization, preservation, and access infrastructure.
- Recollection Wisconsin was able to utilize the brain trust that was in the room to discuss considerations and questions to be answered if RW is going to pursue the idea of a

OUR MISSION

The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium brings together expertise and resources to support collaborative work resulting in greater equity and affordability for Wisconsin public libraries and their communities.

OUR VISION

To serve as the strategic center of experimentation, collaboration, and innovation for Wisconsin public libraries.

“bridge” solution while WHS gets their house in order to eventually take on the centralized platform role.

- For now, the think tank conveners have created a mailing list where attendees can ask questions and share resources and ideas, and we are working collaboratively to update the All Things Newspapers document that the WPLC committee maintains on its website.

The Historical and Local Digital Collections Committee meets next month so we will continue to keep the Board posted on any further activities. R. Scherer shared that B. Miller wanted to share that DPI is supportive of the Newspaper Think Tank

e. Website Workgroup Update

M. Clark reported that the website workgroup has a draft of the website to share with the board and gave a walkthrough of the new site. After the meeting a link with a brief form will be shared with the board to gather feedback.

5. Discussion and Action Items

a. Discussion and action: 2026 Officers

The Nominations Committee has convened and presents the following slate of officers for discussion and action:

Chair: Steve Ohs, PLLS

Vice-Chair: Bradley Ships, OWLS

Digital Library Steering Liaison: Katherine Elchert, NWLS

Technology Collaborations Steering Liaison: Steve Heser, MCFLS

A. Noel made a motion to approve the 2026 slate of officers as presented. T. Vreeke seconded. There was no discussion. Motion passed.

b. Discussion and action: Digital Library Steering Committee Seat Apportionment

Each year, the Board validates the [Digital Library Steering Committee seat apportionment](#) by agreeing upon the percentage of Buying Pool contribution that represents a seat, and determining if the seats are allocated by the percentage. At the last meeting, it was suggested to adjust the Percent Apportionments to 1%-9% is one seat; 10%-19% is two seats; and $\geq 20\%$ is three seats, noting that this would ideally reduce the occurrences of systems bouncing between 2-3 seats each year.

The group reviewed the apportionment with the suggested changes. It was noted that now they are seeing changes from 9 to 10%. It was asked if the DL Steering Committee's makeup should be determined by contribution amount or just by equal representation of each partner, since it is the board that does approve all budgetary items. It was also suggested to maintain the apportionment, but move to one representative per system, with weighted voting to reflect the seat apportionment formula.

- A. Noel shared that as a small system, she never liked the idea of weighted voting.

OUR MISSION

The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium brings together expertise and resources to support collaborative work resulting in greater equity and affordability for Wisconsin public libraries and their communities.

OUR VISION

To serve as the strategic center of experimentation, collaboration, and innovation for Wisconsin public libraries.

- B. Larson asked for clarification on what decisions the committee makes? It was clarified that the committee makes decisions on the day to day operations of Wisconsin's Digital Library. For example, they can determine if changes are made to checkout and hold limits.
- T. Vreeke shared OWLSnet consortium's voting structure is one rep per library, and motions must pass by 2/3 of libraries and 2/3 of fee shares.
 - A. Noel supports this idea.
- S. Hesser is open to a number of scenarios; for one vote for each representative, but also sees the value of weighted voting. Would like to move away from percent apportionments.
- R. Scherer supports weighted voting, but understands Angela's concerns.
 - K. Anderson feels similarly, and added that larger decisions come back to the Board for final decision, where there is one representative per system.
- C. Sommersmith sees value in having two representatives per system, which can allow someone with experience a voice, as well as someone who is still gaining experience.
- C. Cole shared concern in finding another person to serve as a representative; but can also see the value in weighted voting.
- J. Chamberlain asked if there could be a blended approach: If a system had a difficult time finding a second rep (like in case of IFLS), could they simply just allow their one rep two votes?
- SCLS also utilizes weighted voting internally and shared it can feel contentious. S. Schultz suggested that over the next year, the group assesses topics as if they were voted by weighted voting instead.
- A. Noel noted it can depend on how those who vote make their choice. If the representative is asking for feedback and taking that into account, it should be okay. The problem is when those voting don't properly represent all the voices.

M. Clark shared that in the history of the Digital Library Steering Committee, for those systems that have had more than one representative, those reps have always voted the same. They have never had differing votes. She also suggested to continue with the percent apportionment as discussed at the previous meeting, and revisit this topic again next year. The group was comfortable with this.

B. Shipps made a motion to approve the apportionment model B. K. Anderson seconded. There was no further discussion. Motion passed.

c. Discussion and Action: WiLS 2026 Project Management Agreement

WiLS has provided a 2026 [project management agreement](#) for board discussion and action.

Updates to the agreement include the addition of the Delivery workgroup and the Communications committee. The cost for management has already been approved in the budget for 2026.

OUR MISSION

The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium brings together expertise and resources to support collaborative work resulting in greater equity and affordability for Wisconsin public libraries and their communities.

OUR VISION

To serve as the strategic center of experimentation, collaboration, and innovation for Wisconsin public libraries.

S. Heser made a motion to approve the agreement. C. Sommersmith seconded. There was no discussion. Motion passed.

d. Discussion and Action: Request to use funds for Newspaper Think Tank

The WPLC held a newspaper think tank meeting in partnership with Recollection Wisconsin on September 23rd. Project Manager, Laura Damon-Moore, attended and helped facilitate the meeting on behalf of the Historical and Local Digital Collections Committee.

The Board was asked to use funds from the Digital Newspaper Hosting line of the budget to cover project manager travel costs. Cost of travel: \$142.80. Current amount in Digital Newspaper Hosting budget line: \$14,142.48.

- C. Sommersmith asked if travel for the Delivery Workgroup is included in the budget? M. Clark noted that since Laura's travel was for a project on behalf of a committee, that it felt different than the delivery workgroup's travel. C. Sommersmith is okay with this, but would like to be consistent with travel, and would also suggest including all travel outside of annual meeting travel.
- B. Larson shared it's important to pay for travel, and can be paid for in the future as long as it's consistent. Should the budget start including a travel line for these types of travel events? M. Clark is unsure if these kinds of travel events, especially with the delivery workgroup, will continue.
- The Project Managers will continue to talk about this internally, and will bring travel costs back to the Board.

T. Vreeke made a motion to approve. B. Shipps seconded. The motion passed.

e. Discussion: Annual Membership Meeting

Each year, the Board holds a WPLC Annual Meeting in the spring. It was asked if the Board wants to hold a listening and feedback session in addition to the annual meeting as they did this year?

It was asked if there were any themes or topics they would like to see at the meeting?

- C. Sommersmith would also like to pose this question to the Communication committee.
- A. Noel noted that Directors meet on the 4th Friday of each month, so would like for the meeting to not fall on this date.
- Highlight the new website!

f. Discussion: 2026 Board Meeting Dates

Two years ago it was determined to hold WPLC meetings on the same days/time (Monday at 2:00 pm). The group reviewed the proposed dates and times for 2026 to ensure no major conflicts.

Tentative schedule:

- Monday, February 16, 2026, 2:00 PM

OUR MISSION

The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium brings together expertise and resources to support collaborative work resulting in greater equity and affordability for Wisconsin public libraries and their communities.

OUR VISION

To serve as the strategic center of experimentation, collaboration, and innovation for Wisconsin public libraries.

- Friday, April 10, 2026 at 10:00 AM (annual member meeting)
- Friday, April 24, 2026 at 10:00 AM (listening/feedback meeting) - suggested that we look to reschedule this meeting to a different date (not 4th Friday)
- TBD, In person at WAPL (April 27-29, 2026 in Sheboygan area)
- Monday, June 8, 2026, 2:00 PM
- Monday, August 3, 2026, 2:00 PM
- Monday, October 19, 2026, 2:00 PM

M. Clark asked if systems have a change to their delegate for the board, to let her know as she will be sending out meeting invites soon.

6. Strategic Planning Process Activities and Discussions

[Plan Activation and Assessment Worksheet](#)

a. Discussion and Action: WPLC Values

The group reviewed the final version of the [draft values](#). This version takes into account suggestions from the last round.

A. Noel made a motion to approve the final draft values as presented. B. Larson seconded. The motion passed.

b. Discussion and Potential Action: Strategic Plan Year 2 Activities

The group heard an update on the first year of the Strategic Plan from project managers and discussed what activities to continue working on, and/or to start working on, in Year 2 (February 2026-February 2027).

L. Damon-Moore refreshed the group on the mission and vision as we enter the second year of the strategic plan. Project managers polled the steering and selection committee members to get a sense of prioritization for year 2 activities. The big takeaway is to stay the course with current activities, as well as some specific activities for the Communications Committee. A note on process, the project managers test drove an approach that integrated a video rundown live in the meeting along with time to fill out a questionnaire and found this was a helpful and productive way to gather feedback.

A tour of the activation and assessment worksheet was provided. This tool is primarily for project managers to record activities in relation to objectives, as well as assessment measures.

L. Damon-Moore noted the Board's interest in coming back to a particular topic of interest: creating an advocacy workgroup or finding ways to coordinate advocacy regarding improved lending models.

It was asked what the project managers feel are the more challenging aspects of the plan. Simplifying communication and advocacy are both the activities that feel bigger.

OUR MISSION

The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium brings together expertise and resources to support collaborative work resulting in greater equity and affordability for Wisconsin public libraries and their communities.

OUR VISION

To serve as the strategic center of experimentation, collaboration, and innovation for Wisconsin public libraries.

R. Scherer noted a tension she sees between the original motivation behind doing a strategic plan was to help scope the work of the WPLC and create boundaries, but it feels as though the WPLC's work continues to expand. There was expressed concern that we need to continue to focus our work and stay within scope due to capacity concerns.

7. Information Sharing from Partners

- MCLS just replaced their delivery van but it got into an accident with a deer. Using a uhaul van temporarily.
- MCFLS shared member libraries met to discuss Hoopla. 10 of 15 are discontinuing Hoopla for 2026. Members are investing \$100,000 of their collection budgets into an Advantage Lucky Day collection to help address point of need access. Hoping to increase this over time.
- OWLS hopes to have their ILS committee's recommendation very soon.
- Bridges member libraries voted unanimously to discontinue Hoopla. Some members are looking to increase contributions to the System Advantage level, others need to retain those savings from the Hoopla cut to balance their budgets as a result of cuts. Some of the libraries are considering adding library Advantage accounts. B. Larson noted that she has encouraged them to contribute to the System Advantage account knowing that the different Advantage accounts, library and system, do not share hierarchically.
- NFLS will soon be dropping *Federated* from their name. They feel it is cumbersome, so they filed a DBA to begin using Nicolet Library System as their official name with the public communications.
- PLLS member libraries will be moving away from Hoopla Dec. 30th. A planning team has been discussing other approaches. Their system IT team pulled statistics to see how their spending relates to neighboring systems, and they created a series of benchmarks for each library to get spending on par. The System had been contributing \$60,000 toward Hoopla, and will be diverting that back into Overdrive content for the System Advantage collection. Additionally, they developed a five year phased in approach to getting all libraries up to their target. In the meantime, the library system will use reserve funding to help fill that gap in the intervening years. The system contribution will ramp down as member libraries increase their spend year by year. B. Larson shared that Bridges also did a phased-in approach, and might have some helpful info to share with PLLS.

8. Adjourn

A. Noel moved to adjourn, S. Ohs seconded. Motion carried, meeting ended at 3:45 pm.

Next meeting: February 16, 2026 at 2:00 pm

OUR MISSION

The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium brings together expertise and resources to support collaborative work resulting in greater equity and affordability for Wisconsin public libraries and their communities.

OUR VISION

To serve as the strategic center of experimentation, collaboration, and innovation for Wisconsin public libraries.