

Minutes of the System and Resource Library Administrators' Association of Wisconsin:
Friday, November 16, 2001

Members Present: Barb Dimick (Madison PL), Jim Zwadlo (SWLS), Mark Merrifield (NFLS), Kate Huston (Milwaukee PL), Peter Hamon (SCLS), David Polodna (WRLS), John Nichols (WLS/Oshkosh PL), David Weinhold (ESLS), Ruth Ann Montgomery (ALS), Doug Baker (KCLS/Kenosha PL), Milt Mitchell (IFLS), Terry Dawson (Appleton PL), Tom Hennen (WCFLS), Doris Nix (MCFLS), Joan Airoidi (NWLS), Rick Krumwiede (OWLS), Alan Engelbert (MCLS/Manitowoc PL), Bernie Bellin (LLS), Rick Gustafson (Mead PL), Jane Ameel (Waukesha PL), Michael Tyree (West Bend PL).

Guests Present: Kathy Schneider (WILS), Sally Drew (DLTCL), Larry Nix (DLTCL), Al Zimmerman (DLTCL), Bob Bocher (DLTCL), Paul Nelson (WLA LD&L), Cal Potter (DLTCL).

The meeting was held in the Loos Room of the Centennial Hall complex of the Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee. Chair Barb Dimick called the meeting to order at 10:06 A.M.

The Chair determined that there was a quorum, and introductions were made. No additional items were added to the agenda. Item # 10, Revisit the Recommendations from the SRLAAW retreat was tabled until Lang is present.

Polodna moved approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, and Nichols seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

On a motion by Nichols, seconded by Merrifield, there was a unanimous approval to receive and file the treasurer's report.

Library District Enabling Legislation Report

Cal Potter explained that Mead PL is interested in pursuing a city district that would be a separate elected body to run the library. Two Republican legislators, Rep. Steve Kestell, Assembly District 27, and Rep. Joseph Leibham, Assembly District 26, have agreed to have the bill drafted. There is some reluctance on their part. Further meetings are needed to complete the drafting process (as per the drafter).

A discussion followed Potter's presentation. Some questions raised were:

- What guarantee is there that the city will lower the mill rate?
- Would the library district be eligible for shared revenue?
- Will this potential legislation affect only Sheboygan?
- Could the district go outside of city lines?
- Can lines be drawn upon library service areas?

Potter stated that the library community needs to be involved with the legislative drafter. Flexibility is a main concern; more of it is the best option. Cal mentioned that letters

should be written to the two legislators. Uniformity of purpose is needed for selling the library district enabling legislation.

SRLAAW Chair Barb Dimick appointed the following people to a committee that addresses library district legislation: David Weinhold, Jessica McPhail, Tom Hennen and Sharon Winkle. This group will meet and write to Rep. Kestell and Rep. Leibham.

Report/Discussion from the Public Library Electronic Resources Committee

Kathy Schneider said that with Matt Bollerman's move to New York, Inese Christman is now the Chair of the committee. Each library system will need to complete a three-question form and return it to the committee. This information will assist for collaborative licensing of electronic resources at the system level. Precise data is needed for costs and methods. The Gale Corporation is the key vendor.

Minimum Standards for Libraries

Karen Krueger told Barb Dimick that she never asked for this item to be on the agenda. As it turns out, Krueger is in Ireland. Therefore, Tom Hennen was asked to lead the discussion. He mentioned that standards are to be used to attain quality in libraries, not as a forum for crossover borrowing. Act 150 should be used to put the standards in place. Next fall, the Waukesha County Board will determine if libraries meet the standards.

Eastern Shores will consider standards as part of any future planning process. Polodna reminded the group that SRLAAW's Unifying Vision Survey recommends that standards be used and that libraries must meet the standards set. He said that this is an ambitious undertaking that's financially improbable because the current economic crisis precludes enactment. Bellin said the standards for Walworth County will be posted on the SRLAAW website. Hamon expressed concern about there being so many different sets of standards. It would be better to have more commonality. Nichols stated that standards are valuable for county levy exemption.

SRLAAW Chair Barb Dimick formed a new committee for evaluating standards, suggesting a model be established for small libraries. Hennen, Airoidi and Merrifield are the committee members.

Revisit the Recommendations from the SRLAAW retreat (Unifying Vision for Wisconsin Library Development)

This agenda item was tabled until Shannon Lang is present for the discussion.

Ideas for Coping

Hamon stated that 16 initial ideas are ways of looking at balancing needs vs. resources. He said that further discussion of the topics could be done by e-mail (using the SRLAAW distribution list).

Drew said that DLTCL staff is already working on chat software and the 24/7 issue. At the spring meeting of the LSTA advisory group it was mentioned that desk staff is interested in having more input than that of just library administrators.

Drew has been working on a model for a collaborative digitization project with the Great Lakes Maritime Historical Project. Some of the questions raised recently have been:

- What kinds of materials are to be digitized?
- What priorities should be established?
- Who are the interested parties?
- What are the technical issues?

Airoldi said that communication about issues is needed. Funding difficulties are necessitating our abilities to do something for nothing.

Mitchell surfaced the controversial issue of changing system boundaries. Mindsets might need to be changed. There is a need to support libraries from afar. Shared access websites are becoming important. So are foundations for systems. Small libraries are almost convenience stores because of automation systems, shared databases and the Internet. The libraries of Tulsa, Oklahoma are an example of this. Small libraries should not be equated with bad or poor service. Interactive reference service educates small libraries and their patrons. Perhaps we need to rethink providing service to all libraries. The idea of minimum standards is germane to this.

Merrifield said that more R & D for smaller libraries is needed. Some of this is already going on. Existing projects with smaller libraries should be used as a template before implementing them with larger libraries.

Nichols stated that economics will fuel the change (or lack thereof). With 24/7 we need to collaborate on staff services, which are by far the top expense involved. It is not the time to wait for state dollars; it's time to join together. Drew mentioned that the Federal Institute for Museums and Libraries is another funding source besides state or federal dollars. Grants need to be applied for collaboratively. The deadline for this grant cycle is February 1, 2002.

Future Legislative Activities/Update

Nelson said that WLA approved the 2002 Legislative agenda. For the 2003/2005 budget state senate districts will be used as basis for coordinating legislative activities. It is vitally important to build better relationships with legislators. We need to promote more and have more contacts. An example would be for legislators to visit libraries during National Library Week. More effective use of L.D. & L. members is necessary. More individuals are needed to track specific issues.

For the 2002 election year, we should invite gubernatorial candidates to speak. They will need a minimum audience of 50 people. A survey needs to be developed before next fall for distribution to the candidates. Links to the WLA web site are needed for the

candidates. Ongoing relationships with candidates and legislators are needed, not just ones that are used during budgetary crises. It is necessary to work at the Assembly District level, too.

Krumwiede recommended library systems using inserts in Sunday newspapers to educate people about services offered. Promotional videos might also be helpful. Nelson said to distribute system newsletters to state and local legislators. The WLA agenda has been approved and is on the WLA web site.

Lunch

The group broke for lunch at 12:15 P.M. During the break, Milt Mitchell was honored for his years of service to both IFLS and SRLAAW. More importantly, he was celebrated for his sense of humor, his timing, and his ability to make people laugh. His retirement begins in January 2002.

The recorder for the first half of the meeting was Michael Tyree. Because Tyree had to leave after lunch, Polodna volunteered to take minutes for the afternoon.

County Library Tax Exemption Requirements

Dave Weinhold reviewed his paper on the county library tax exemption. Discussion followed, pointing out problems that changes in the law might create for many municipalities, and that more guidance is needed when joint libraries are established. Weinhold noted that he just wanted SRLAAW to be aware that legislation might be proposed.

Motion by Baker, seconded by Hennen, that DLTCL take a proactive role in identifying issues related to developing joint libraries. Carried.

Hennen asked that the two-tier tax proposal that he advanced be reviewed by SRLAAW members for more in-depth discussion at a subsequent meeting.

Library Systems Issues and Operations Updates

Cal Potter provided an update on the situation facing Milwaukee County Federated Library System.. Doris Nix provided additional details and context.

Discussion: System Staff as State of Wisconsin Employees

Bernie Bellin asked if there had ever been consideration given to pursuing "state employee" status for library system employees. Since counties have been the building blocks for systems, the state employee designation has not been pursued. While there would be benefits to having system staff qualify for state employee health insurance rates, it was viewed that not being state employees provided flexibility and opportunity to system employees in other areas.

BadgerLink Re-design

Sally Drew presented information and demonstrations of the Badgerlink website and digitization projects undertaken in Wisconsin.

Formation of the State Superintendent's Public Library Legislation and Funding Committee

Cal Potter announced that the state superintendent would be establishing a library legislation and funding committee which would include the individuals named by SRLAAW for a similar committee (Bellin, Hall, Hamon, Lang, Polodna) as well as representatives from other agencies/institutions which might have an interest, such as the League of Municipalities and the Legislature.

DPI/DLTCL Program Updates

Division staff provided reports on recent actions relating to E-Rate, Filtering, LSTA funding, and TEACH. Due to carryover and unrequested funds from the current grant cycle, it has been proposed that additional LSTA dollar be devoted to technology initiatives in the system block grants and shared system grants for 2002.

State of Library Technology

Bob Bocher provided updated information on the REACH Internet grant program and the LITAC schedule and focus for 2002.

The next meeting of SRLAAW will be held from 12:00 to 4:00 pm, January 28, 2002, the day before WLA Library Legislative Day.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.

Recorded by Michael Tyree and David Polodna