

**System and Resource Library Administrators Association of Wisconsin
(SRLAAW)
Q2 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Date: Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Recorder: Steve Heser, Milwaukee County Federated Library System

1. Call to Order

Chair Vreeke called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm.

2. Quorum Determination

Members Present - Tracy Vreeke, Chair (NFLS), Steve Heser, Vice Chair (MCFLS), Karin Adams (Manitowoc PL), Sherry Anderson (NWLS), Nick Demske (Racine PL), Garrett Erickson (Sheboygan PL), Bruce Gay (Waukesha PL), Leah Giordano (Marathon County PL), Riti Grover (Monarch), Sue Heskin (Superior PL), Karol Kennedy (Bridges), Angela Noel (SWLS), Jessie Lee-Jones (Platteville PL), Steve Ohs (PLLS), Steve Platteter (PLLS), Collen Rortvedt (Appleton PL), Shannon Schultz (SCLS), Bradley Shipp (OWLS), Clairellyn Sommersmith (Winnefox), John Thompson (IFLS), Krissy Wick (Madison PL).

Affiliated Members/Guests – Jen Chamberlain (WiLS), Ben Miller (DPI), Beth Tomev (DPI), Laura Sauser (WLA), Steve Conway (LD&L), Kristen Whitson (Recollection WI), Kris Adams Wendt (LD&L), Betsy Bleck (LD&L), Peter Loeffel (LD&L)

3. Proxy Announcements

Sherry Anderson will serve as proxy for Marla Sepnafski (WVLS), Tracy Vreeke for Sarah Sugden (Brown County) and Karin Adams for Rebecca Scherer (MCLS).

4. Introductions/Welcome Guests (Vreeke)

5. Approval of the Agenda (Vreeke)

S. Anderson made a motion to move agenda items #7 and #10 to occur after #12. Gay seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

Thompson made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. S. Anderson seconded. **Motion carried.**

6. Approval of the Minutes from February 5, 2024 (Vreeke)

Shipp made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Grover seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

7. Treasurer's Report

Chair Vreeke referred to the April 2024 report submitted by Treasurer K. Anderson.

8. Annual SRLAAW Membership Fees 2024 (Anderson)

S. Anderson asked if only systems pay membership fees? Or are resource libraries also adding funds? Rortvedt stated historically that systems have only been the ones that paid. Thompson stated he did not recall ever seeing a resource library pay anything toward these amounts. Anderson stated this would be a great conversation to have long term regarding what membership fees are used for and what their purpose is. There was consensus to move this subject to the next meeting agenda for more discussion.

9. WLA ALA Councilor report (Anderson)

S. Anderson reported that in the past there was a feeling that SRLAAW didn't really have a good feel for what direction ALA was heading and now that she is resuming duties as ALA Chapter Councilor she would like to ask SRLAAW membership what kind of information and reporting that they would find useful. This report today took place at LibLearnX. Sommersmith asked about what, if any, discussion took place regarding the Association of Library Professionals that was formed in response to political activism on the part of ALA. S. Anderson reported there was no discussion that took place regarding that organization. Chair Vreeke was interested in their changes to core values and what discussions took place. S. Anderson stated there was a great deal of debate on paring down to five core values from the previous eleven, but it passed unanimously. Ten past ALA presidents ultimately wrote a letter to ALA Council expressing concerns about the five core values and omission of others. A lot of people were incensed regarding 'professionalism' and 'democracy' being dropped from the list of core values. Many SRLAAW members expressed appreciation for the report.

S. Anderson also note that if you have an opportunity to read the report of the meeting to look at the Intellectual Freedom Committee portion and keep a close eye on their efforts to revise the freedom to read statement. ALA is also offering a "law for librarians" yearlong program where a public library and school representative would be trained on intellectual freedom issues. S. Anderson is the public library representative and Monica Treptow from DPI is the rep on the school side for Wisconsin. The hope is this program will allow the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom to extend their support for libraries that need it.

10. Affiliated Organization Reports:

- a. Recollection Wisconsin. They are piloting a Recollection Wisconsin digitization initiative in the Fall of 2024. The plan is to take some of that additional state funding to use with the pilot and have actual people do the work of digitization. Recollection staff are looking for three host sites to work with graduate students to work as paid interns from UW-Milwaukee and UW-Madison. They are very excited about the prospects and helping organizations that really need the staffing to do digitization projects. Internships for students and travel are paid. The expectation is that digital collections will be added to Recollection Wisconsin but they are also reserving one to two spots each semester and summer for tribal library archives.

The Digital Public Library of America is looking for a new institutional home and

Recollection staff will keep us updated on developments.

Chair Vreeke and S. Anderson reported that they were both at the Culture Keepers event in April made up of tribal libraries, archivists and museum culture curators. Dr. Williams attended almost the entire event. They hadn't met for 8 years, but it was a joyful event that hadn't happened in a while and it was very moving.

b. DPI

Tomev relayed how recently Dr. Williams had traveled throughout the state for School Library month and National Library week visiting schools such as those in Madison and the Sun Prairie school district. During National Library Week they visited Monarch Library System and spent time in Sheboygan. Dr. Williams and Dr. Underly were doing a lot of outreach and putting a highlight on public and school libraries. It was wonderful to see collaborations taking place among libraries and schools. One pattern that kept arising in their conversations was that staffing issues were a larger issue than book challenge issues. Many libraries are out there struggling and DPI is taking note of these developments.

Miller reported that the LSTA 2024 awards are in and guidelines are available. WiseGrants will be open for use on June 1 to enter in information. Miller was happy to report they are ahead of schedule for release of the guidelines as opposed to last year. IMLS funding remains flat and they are looking at \$20,000 less this for this next cycle. The Biden administration is looking to reduce IMLS funding in the future. If that moves forward, DPI will use funding for staff first, grants second. Miller was cautiously optimistic that there won't be any major cuts.

Flexible facility grants. Using ARPA funding for facility improvements. Lots of issues were noted with regard to the application. To get a grant you have to have a 100 MB connection, but TEACH only allows 1/3 of libraries to get 100 MB connection based on usage reports. Discussion ensued about getting better connection speeds beyond TEACH and how criteria used to get stronger connections are flawed. Lots of dissatisfaction that has escalated to the point that DPI has reached out to DOA to address these issues at the highest level. Dolly Parton Imagination Library. The Department for Children and Families received ½ million dollars to grant out money to institutions that would provide Imagination Libraries. Miller cautioned that is very resource intensive and libraries may not be able to provide capacity or even be eligible to participate. Looking at around 40-50 organizations making use of those

Rortvedt asked about DOA non-state grants. BM did not have any information available.

c. WiLS

The Culture Keepers event at Black River Falls occurred from April 17-19 and was hosted by Ho Chunk Nation. WiLS had a very successful annual meeting in February and the annual report is now available. Ideas to Action is now open for applications through June 3. Nominations for positions on the WiLS Board were held recently, closed on April 26 and elections will be held in early May.

d. WPLC

The WPLC annual meeting was held last week, and the board met earlier today. The data dashboard project is moving forward and a brief demo of the dashboard is available as part of the annual meeting materials. The board did decide today to use \$40,000 in leftover magazine funding on digital content.

e. WLA

Sauser referenced the report attached to the packet. The Library Legislative Day date has been announced as February 11.

f. COLAND

No COLAND report was made but Miller mentioned that the next COLAND meeting is taking place next week.

11. State Budget Advocacy Update (Conway)

Conway provided an update on legislative efforts and setting the stage for success in the next budget session.

1. Legislative Maps. New legislative maps are different and lots of incumbents are either completely out of a district or combined with another. Lots of changes will be evident at Library Legislative Day. Control of the legislature will not really change all that much, but there will be more competitive races. A number of library champions are retiring as well.
2. Past Legislative Session. Conway felt LD&L and libraries did really well, but the challenges faced with new bills that were introduced will be a precursor on what to expect later. LD&L worked actively with DPI on language and was successful. LD&L was prepared for the five bills that came their way, but the concepts may come back in different forms. Advocacy by WLA and LD&L was critical to meeting these challenges.
3. Book bans and Counties Withholding Funding. LD&L provided assistance to libraries on an as needed basis to advise them on meeting these challenges. LD&L wanted to work with the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) again and they were receptive to collaboration. The WCA provided a legal opinion that was extremely helpful to libraries on how that practice of withholding funding over library materials is illegal. This opinion could be useful in the future with other situations.
4. Next Budget Session. Conway stated that being loved by both sides is a help, but he did stress the need for more champions in Joint Finance. This next session will be challenging mostly because of the new dynamics and makeup of the Joint Finance Committee and legislature. Conway noted that they will need a budget request number by June 2024, along with information about what libraries and systems did with the allocation. Information on what systems are going to do with the new allocation will be needed by the end of October. The more details provided, the better. How did this money improve services to libraries and lives of their constituents? Stories are essential. Discussion ensued about possible legislative changes to include OverDrive usage calculations in cross county payments. Chair Vreeke will work with system directors to provide a number for the budget request by the end of June.

12. LD&L Report (Gay)

Gay reported 184 attendees participated in Library Legislative Day in February. For 2025, the date has been set for Tuesday, February 11 and the Park Hotel will again be the location for the morning session.

On March 24, a message was circulated to all SRLAAW members regarding discounted registration provided by EveryLibrary for the Library Advocacy and Funding Conference (LAFCON). EveryLibrary is an organization designed to build voter support for libraries and claims to be non-partisan, although there is a donation link affiliated with Act Blue (a Democratic fund raising organization) on their website. Concern was raised regarding any SRLAAW support for EveryLibrary and the impact on relationships with the legislature. Sauser stated she plans to meet with the CEO of EveryLibrary, John Chrastka, later in May to discuss their advocacy model and how their communication is causing problems with library relations with the legislature. Conflating book bans and challenges muddies the water at this time and makes WLA and LD&L messaging less effective. S. Anderson expressed desire for a cautious approach.

13. Discussion Items:

a. EveryLibrary Conference Discussion

Email communication on the conference, concerns on using SRLAAW and/or system funding to support EveryLibrary. They are 501c4, but the conference comes through as a 501c3 and donations are not made directly to Act Blue. Discussion ensued on SRLAAW involvement with EveryLibrary and concern about optics and how this might effect relationships with the legislature. N. Demske stated that concerns put out by WLA and LD&L should hold precedence over other concerns. S. Anderson presented concern that state funding that they rely on could be in jeopardy as the result of providing SRLAAW funding to this conference. General consensus among those in attendance was not to provide SRLAAW funding now and let systems/libraries handle funding on their own. Appreciation was made to LD&L for the work they do and recognition of all the work they do behind the scenes. Discussion ensued regarding the best way to handle communication of these issues in the future.

b. ChatGPT in libraries (tabled)

14. Member Roundtable

15. Next Meeting: August 2 or 9, 2024, 9:30-11:30am Marathon County Public Library, Wausau, WI (We will have a gathering the night prior- more info to follow)

16. Adjournment