

trustee tale Newsletter for Public Library

Trustee Orientation: Building Effective Library Trustees

*By Mark Arend, Assistant Director
Winnefox Library System*

You probably remember your first day on a new job. You were taken around the premises, introduced to new co-workers, and told where to park, hang your coat, and eat lunch. What was your first library board meeting like—did you know what was going on or did it take a few meetings to figure things out?

Too often new trustees are left to pick things up on their own, piecemeal. They see the monthly expenditures but haven't been given a copy of the budget to put the expenses in context. There's discussion of ongoing problems or activities that they may be asked to vote on. They're in the uncomfortable situation of not quite knowing what's going on.

But it doesn't have to be like this. Investing an hour or two in trustee orientation before the first meeting will pay off by informing the new trustee what's going on and help to make them feel part of the team.

Both the director and another trustee—ideally the President or another officer—should lead the orientation session. It could start with a short review of the trustee's duties and what is expected of trustees. Then give them their trustee manual, or show them the online manual if they prefer, and review the contents. A tour of the library with staff introductions will give you a chance to stretch your legs. Be sure the tour includes "behind the scenes" as well as public areas.



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Wisconsin Trustee Training Week Webinar Series

What's a Webinar?

It's like a seminar, but instead of traveling to it, it travels to you. You can access webinars using your PC, tablet, or smartphone.

We are presenting four free one-hour online information sessions—especially for library trustees. Attend 1, 2, 3, or all 4 webinars. If you can't attend then all sessions will be recorded and will be available for viewing soon after each session.

The sessions are:

- **Assessing Library Facility Needs in the 21st Century, August 18, Noon – 1 p.m.**
An overview of the issues facing old and new library facilities, and techniques and tools for tackling both.
- **The Role of Social Media in Library Advocacy, August 19, Noon – 1 p.m.**
How trustees, boards, and Friends groups can use Facebook, Twitter, and other social media to create change.
- **The Biggest, Baddest Issues Facing Public Libraries, August 20, Noon – 1 p.m.**
Top 10 issues facing public libraries, and how trustees can help keep libraries vibrant and relevant in the 21st Century
- **Building the Future by Building Your Staff, August 21, Noon – 1 p.m.**
Librarians who can write code are doing great things for their libraries: get examples of how librarians are using their software skills to build better futures, and what libraries can do to help.

More information on the sessions can be found on the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/nicolet-federated-library-system/wisconsin-trustee-training-week-2014/658319180894961>

To participate all you need is either an internet-connected computer or an iPhone®, iPad® or Android® device. For the audio you need headphones or speakers connected to your computer or you can use a telephone or speakerphone to call in (long distance rates apply).

New to webinars?

This page <http://extranet.winnefox.org/ce/trustees/webinar-series> has information on attending webinars, testing your computer and connection, and downloading webinar software.

The Wisconsin Trustee Training Week series was developed by the Nicolet Federated Library System, and is supported by these library systems: Winnefox, Outagamie Waupaca, Arrowhead, Eastern Shores, Indianhead, Manitowoc-Calumet, Mid-Wisconsin, Northern Waters, South Central, Southwest, Waukesha County, Winding Rivers, and Wisconsin Valley.

FAQ

We've been having trouble getting a quorum at some of our meetings. I've read that there's a provision in statutes that we don't need a majority present for a quorum. Can we do this?

Possibly, if it's done properly.

Section 43.54(e) of Wisconsin Statutes states: "A majority of the membership of a library board constitutes a quorum, but any such board may, by regulation, provide that 3 or more members thereof shall constitute a quorum." So if a majority of your board is four or more you can designate a board quorum of no less than three. This cannot be done on an ad hoc basis whenever the board finds itself lacking a quorum at a meeting. The correct way to do this is to include a provision in the board's bylaws stating that a quorum consists of the desired number of trustees.

Legislative Update: Act 157

by Walter Burkhalter, director

Outagamie Waupaca Library System

Since the establishment of public library systems in Wisconsin, one of their primary goals has been to ensure that all of the state's residents have equitable access to good public library service and for many years the public library community has also had a goal of any state resident being able to use any public library. The good news is that in the 40 years that public library systems have been in existence significant progress has been made toward achieving these goals. All of the state's residents do have access to public library service and many of the state's residents are able to use any public library they desire.

However one of the persistent challenges for many years is to equitably fund the costs that are associated with seamless library use. Beginning in 1997 what is commonly referred to as Act 150 amended Wisconsin State Statute 43.12 so that municipal libraries within a county could receive payment for services provided to residents of the county not living in a municipality served by a library. In 2005 this was extended to adjacent counties through Act 420. Neither of these changes was ideal since they established a minimum payment of 70% of the actual cost.

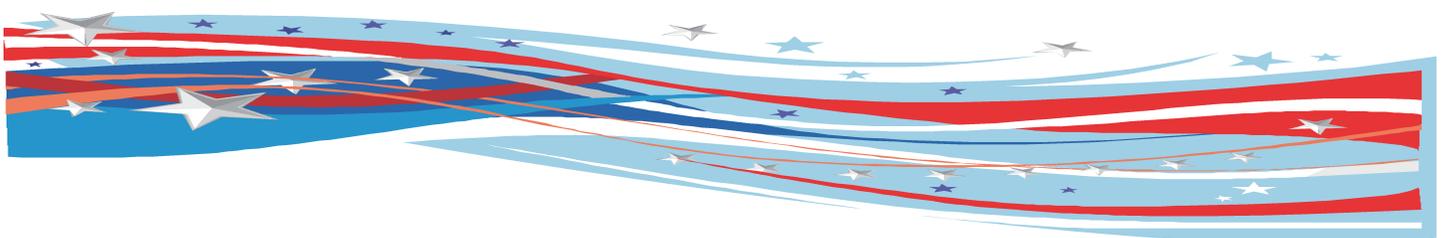
Another challenge that remained unaddressed was how to equitably fund service between counties served by a consolidated county library and the municipal libraries in an adjacent county. Act 157 attempts to address this situation. In 2013 the Wisconsin Library Association formed a task force to reach consensus on how this could be achieved.

The group met several times and proposed that legislation be amended so that the following would occur:

- Allow use from residents of a consolidated county library to be billed in a manner that is similar to those who reside in a county served by municipal libraries if the consolidated county library chooses to bill.
- Preserve situations where a consolidated county library is not billing by not allowing libraries in adjacent counties to bill them with out first being billed.

These concepts were incorporated into AB288 which eventually became Act 157. The legislation, like Act 150 and 420 before it, is far from perfect. However, it does provide some avenue of equity that did not exist before. Libraries in a county adjacent to a consolidated county library may now bill for service to residents in the consolidated county that do not live in a municipality served by a branch of the consolidated county library. Consolidated county libraries that do not bill adjacent counties will not be billed for service to their residents by libraries in those adjacent counties.

Funding library service in Wisconsin will continue to be an issue. Unfortunately there probably is not a perfect solution that will make everyone happy. Hopefully we will be able continue to work together to provide changes that will get us toward adequate funding.



Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Annual Conference
Connect. Engage. Transform
November 4 – 7, 2014

Kalahari Resort & Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells,

*Library conferences aren't just for librarians!
Attend sessions aimed at library trustees and talk
with other trustees about library issues*



Trustee Orientation

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After the tour review the budget and policies. Then finish up with a general discussion of the library's long-range plan, recently completed and upcoming activities and programs, and any other issues likely to come up in meetings.

By holding a short orientation you are helping new trustees become active, participating trustees right away rather than six months from now.

Have questions?

Contact us and
we'll try to help.

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