

# trustee tale Newsletter for Public Library

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## The Impact of Governor Walker’s Budget Proposal on Public Libraries

*By Mark Arend, Assistant Director  
Winnefox Library System*

Recently, Governor Walker introduced his 2013-2015 Executive State Budget. The proposed budget contains a number of provisions that are likely to have a significant impact on Wisconsin’s public libraries

Because public libraries are operated by local government units, the proposed freeze in county and municipal aid payments, which had been reduced in the last budget, combined with a continued limit on local levy increases, will make it difficult, if not impossible, for most local governments to continue providing their current levels of service. With all local services being closely scrutinized, libraries will have to compete with other local government services for scarce resources.

Public libraries may also experience cuts in the services provided to them by their systems. The last budget decreased public library system funding by 10% from the previous biennium and the Governor’s proposed budget would keep this funding flat for the next biennium.

There are some library-related increases in the proposed budget. Funding for Badgerlink <http://www.badgerlink.net/>, Newsline for the Blind, and service contracts with the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library, the UW System Libraries, the Cooperative Children’s Book Center, and the Milwaukee Public Library received modest increases to allow them to continue to provide services at the current levels.

The proposed budget will go next to the Joint Committee on Finance for consideration before being considered by the full legislature.



## Planning for the Library's Future – Part Two

By Rick Krumwiede, Director  
Outagamie Waupaca Library System

In the last edition of Trustee Tale, Planning for the Library's Future – Part One covered the benefits of planning and some planning basics. This article includes some background information on planning methodologies developed by the Public Library Association and an outline for one possible planning model.

### PLA Planning Methodology

Over the years, the Public Library Association (PLA) has produced several publications emphasizing the necessity of local planning for effective library service. In 2001, PLA published *The New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach*, by Sandra Nelson (Chicago: ALA, 2001). That work, further developed and refined by Sandra Nelson, became *Strategic Planning for Results* (Chicago: ALA, 2008). The books present a comprehensive planning process for public libraries, with appropriate steps, time-frames, and necessary work forms to achieve results. The method encourages the use of a committee and facilitator and outlines a five-month process that involves assembling participants and information, determining the library's service responses, establishing goals and objectives, developing the final plan, informing the community, and putting it all into action.

The selection of an appropriate facilitator is an important consideration, and the right choice will depend on local circumstances. While it is tempting to hire a library planning professional to conduct the process, the cost can be prohibitive. Sometimes a community leader or local official has the skills to conduct the process, but if they do not, the result can be an outcome that is misdirected or poorly developed. While a library professional can bring certain knowledge of the field to the discussion, sometimes a facilitator who is not from the field can ask clarifying questions that help to provoke thought, challenge assumptions, or direct the flow of discussion. If you do not have the budget to hire a professional, you may be able to recruit an experienced facilitator for little or no expense from your local businesses, schools, or UW Extension office. Your regional technical college may offer a quality assurance program or specialists to assist businesses and non-profits in the area.

### One Possible Planning Model

This planning process outline is based on the five-month model in *The New Planning for Results* (Chicago: ALA, 2001).

#### Month 1: Plan to Plan

1. Decide on the process to be used: The board commits to a process and arranges for a facilitator.
2. The board establishes participants for the planning committee: The director or staff may arrange logistics, and coordinate invitations, or recruit acquaintances or family members.

#### Month 2: Invent the Future

3. Determine the Community Vision. Visualize success-what would it include? Articulate elements of the vision, those affected, the benefit and result.
4. Identify Community Needs: Collect data, conduct S.W.O.T. analysis, compare and prioritize statements or outcomes.
5. Determine the Library's Service Responses.

#### Month 3: Assemble Future

6. Draft Goals and Outcomes  
*Goal:* The outcome your community (or target group) will receive because the library provides a particular service response.  
*Outcome:* The way the library will measure its progress toward a goal.
7. Identify Activities: What is required to achieve the goals?
8. Determine Resources Required: Personnel, partners, materials, equipment, facilities, funding.

#### Month 4: Inform Everyone

9. Write the Plan, committee review, Board approval.

#### Month 5: Move Into the Future

10. Communicate the plan to staff, the governing body, and the community.

Ongoing: Re-allocate resources and implement the plan.

#### Summary

However the library decides to go about its long-range planning, it needs to happen! Be sure to make the process inclusive of library staff, local officials, community members, and the business community. Be prepared to provide the necessary resources and information. Plan your planning so that the participants know how much involvement and responsibilities they will have. Once the plan is completed, promote it, execute it, re-allocate resources as necessary, measure and review results, and make appropriate adjustments. A good planning process includes a plan for evaluation and review. A plan is never truly finished, since periodically the process should be repeated.

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## Trust in Your Trustees

By Will Manley

Politicians prefer your board's views on library needs over yours

It frustrates me profoundly to have someone in the library profession approach me at a conference to challenge my credibility as a speaker—usually in view of the fact that I'm retired, out of touch, and behind the times. In other words, I'm no longer actively involved in library matters.

My defense is immediate. I explain that while I may be retired from the administrative wars, I now play an even more important library position: I am a trustee. Inevitably the response is both derisive and dismissive: "Trustees aren't really a part of our profession, are they?"

While that rejoinder really bugs me, I have to grudgingly admit that it does carry a certain element of truth. Quite frankly, trustees do not belong to the library "tribe." But that is precisely why they are the most important players in the public library arena.

Here's a quiz: What are the three main duties of a library board of trustees? If you answered (a) hire and fire the director, (b) make library policy, and (c) secure library funding, you are correct. Everything else they do, from attending meetings to approving minutes, is strictly secondary.

Of their three main duties, securing funding is by far the most critical. Trustees can be much more effective fundraisers than librarians, precisely because they are outside the library tribe. They don't know the secret library handshake, the litany of obscure library acronyms, or the meaning of the terms "autoregressive bibliographical interface," "triangulated title access," or "multipolycentric reference control." Heck, most of them haven't a clue what OCLC stands for.

Does that make them aliens from outer space? No, that puts them on the same level as the local politicians who control the library purse strings. Point one: Local politicians hate to be talked down to by professionals. It doesn't matter if it's the police chief, city engineer, or library director. Every profession has its mumbo jumbo jargon that makes laypeople feel stupid and out of the loop—something local politicians hate to feel. Point two: When library directors go hat in hand to the city council to ask for departmental budget hikes, what do council members see? They see special interest professionals who want to feather their tribal nests.



*"I am not out of touch!  
Now, where do you keep  
the record albums?"*

But when library trustees do it, councilpeople see constituents: bankers, salesmen, nurses, plumbers, and homemakers. They see their next door neighbor, their child's soccer coach, a congregant from their church, a high school classmate. They see registered voters—the folks who will determine whether they get reelected. And don't kid yourself: Getting reelected is job one for every politician.

Many years ago, I became director of a good-sized library, filling a months-long vacancy. Before I was hired, the board was forced to get very involved in the library budget process, and my first week as director happened to be budget week. The entire board of trustees appeared before the city council to plead for three new librarian positions. The next week was election week. The board was unsuccessful in getting the three positions—the council granted it five.

After the meeting, the police chief came up to me and asked, "How do I get one of those boards of trustees?"

This article has been reprinted with permission from the November/December 2012 *American Libraries* magazine, published by the American Library Association. Will Manley has furnished provocative commentary on librarianship for over 30 years and in nine books on the lighter side of library science.

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### Resources

This document was adapted from the following Department of Public Instruction, Public Library Development Team resources:

*Wisconsin Public Library Standards*, Chapter 2: Imperatives for Planning  
Trustee Essential 11: Planning for the Library's Future  
Administrative Essential 16: Planning for the Library's Future

## FAQ

*I've recently retired and plan to spend part of the winter where it's warmer. Can I participate in library board meetings online while I'm gone?*

Nothing in statutes prohibits trustees from attending meetings via phone call or online communication if they can't physically attend, although there may be local ordinances or policies prohibiting or limiting such participation. Many libraries and library systems have access to "GoTo Meeting" software which allows easy voice communication and document sharing for meetings where attendees are not physically present in one place.

Note that a meeting conducted entirely by conference call or online is still subject to all provisions of the Open Meetings Law and must make provision for members of the public to observe the meeting. And you should always test any software well before the meeting to make sure that it is working properly.

***Have questions?***  
Contact us and  
we'll try to help.

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## WAPL 2013

Spring  
Conference  
2013



Fifty  
Shades  
of Libraries

The 2013 Wisconsin Association of Public Librarians Conference will be held May 1-3 at the Grand Geneva Resort & Spa in Lake Geneva. At this time registration and program information has not been posted online but it should be there soon.

Watch <http://wla.wisconsinlibraries.org/wapl/conferences-events/wapl-2013-conference> for more information.

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