

trustee tale

Newsletter for Public Library

A Library Advocacy Success Story

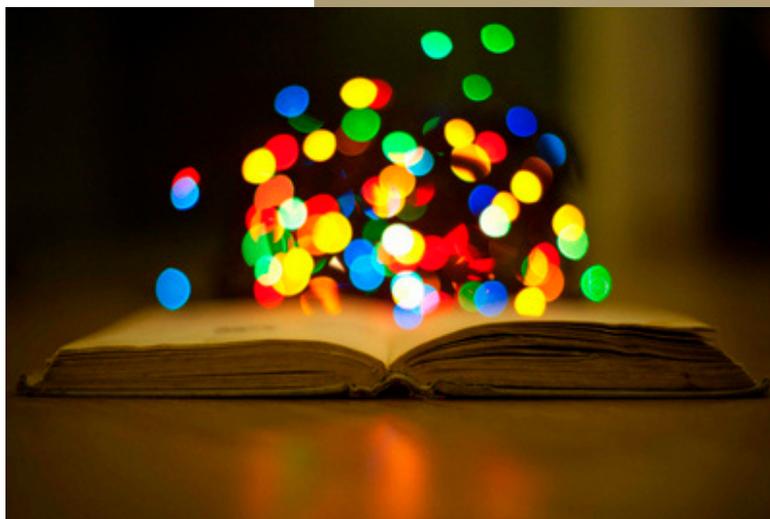
By Mark Arend, Assistant Director
Winnefox Library System

Libraries in one of our rural counties went through an interesting experience recently. At a county board finance committee meeting the committee chair suggested that since state statutes only require that counties reimburse libraries 70% of the cost for serving county rural residents the county should reduce their 100% reimbursement to the 70% minimum. None of the other committee members opposed this, although some questioned whether the libraries should be cut to the minimum or whether the cut to the minimum should be all at once or phased in over several years, but there was no objection to the idea of cutting the libraries.

Since county funding is an important part of the libraries' funding this raised significant concerns. The library directors went into action and developed a three-part plan.

1. Planning and Education: The library directors started by educating themselves and their trustees about the issues. A main talking point was that the county funding formula (which is not the statutory formula used by many counties) had been agreed on by both the county and the libraries as a fair way to allocate the costs of library service to rural residents. We calculated the impact of county funding cuts on services to county residents. Information sheets were developed, as was a model resolution addressed to the county board supporting full county library funding.

2. Reaching out to Friends and friends: The directors and trustees began contacting "Big-F" Friends (members of organized Friends groups) as well as "small-f" friends (library users and supporters who were not involved in Friends organizations). Known library supporters outside of the county with contacts with county residents and officials were also contacted. All were provided with information and talking points and were asked to contact their county supervisor. The model resolution was sent to all cities,



(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

villages, and towns in the county asking them to support full library funding. Information was submitted to local newspapers.

3. Contacting county supervisors: The directors, trustees, Friends, and friends began contacting elected officials. Library supporters began attending county board and board committee meetings to talk about the importance of libraries during “public comments” periods. Municipal boards and library boards passed resolutions addressed to the county board.

The campaign had good results. When the question came before the full county board several months later full funding for libraries passed without a dissenting vote!

Lessons Learned:

- There is a tremendous reservoir of good will towards libraries; we only have to tap it. Even people who weren’t regular library users understood the importance of libraries to their communities.
- It took work. Many people spent a lot of time crunching numbers, collecting information, and drafting and revising statements and information sheets.
- This was primarily an educational effort. Many people did not understand how libraries are funded and the part county funding plays. Some supervisors did not understand the important role libraries play in the lives of their communities and constituents.
- It was vital that the libraries cooperate with each other; luckily the directors in that county meet regularly and are used to working together. We took Ben Franklin’s observation seriously: “We must indeed all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately.”
- It was important to show that there was broad support for libraries from people in all walks of life throughout the county. Lots of voters and taxpayers had to contact their supervisors.
- This was a group effort. Every person who participated made a difference. The voices and stories of ordinary library users made a strong impression.

Wisconsin Trustee Training Week Webinar Series

Last year’s webinar series was so successful we’re doing it again. **Wisconsin Trustee Training Week will be August 17-21, 2015.** Each day at noon there will be a one-hour online information session you can attend from office or home, or on the go. All library board trustees, staff, volunteers, and Friends group members are welcome to participate. There is no charge, and the webinars will be recorded.

The schedule is still being put together but planned topics include donor development, Friends groups, and evaluating your library’s service program.

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.

Contact your library or library system for more information on Wisconsin Trustee Training Week.



Save the Date!

This year’s Wisconsin Library Association annual conference will be held November 3-6, 2015 at the Madison Marriott West.

There are always a good range of programs for trustees and this is a good opportunity to talk with trustees from around the state.



The Future of Public Library Systems in Wisconsin

By Mark Arend, Assistant Director
Winnefox Library System

In recent years library systems have been under tight budget constraints. Funding for systems in 2012 was reduced 10% from the previous year and has not changed since. As costs increase systems have had to change the way they provide services to member libraries and have also had to reduce services.

Throughout 2013 and 2014 several agencies and organizations have studied different aspects of system funding and services.

- **Creating More Effective Library Systems:**
In 2013 the System and Resource Libraries Administrators' Association of Wisconsin (SRLAAW) undertook a process to examine how public library systems can remain effective in meeting member library needs in the future. The ultimate goal of this process is for systems to provide services that help their member libraries to better serve Wisconsin library patrons now and in the future.

- **ILS Study:** In 2014 WiLS conducted an in-depth study of shared integrated library systems (ILS). An ILS is the hardware and software that combines the library's catalog, patron database, circulation, public catalog, etc. In Wisconsin, all 17 public library systems support an ILS that is used by most, if not all, of their libraries. WiLS, formerly Wisconsin Library Services, is a non-profit membership organization that facilitates collaborative projects and services to save libraries time and money and to advance library service.

- **Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Lean System Study Work Group:** The Legislature's Joint Finance Committee inserted language into the 2014 – 2016 Biennial Budget Bill directing the Department of Administration to conduct a study of library systems, focusing on these areas:

1. Consolidating systems.
2. Increasing the use of technology.
3. Reducing duplications and inefficiencies.

4. Utilizing Lean production principles.
5. Increasing the sharing of services among library systems

Although the Governor vetoed this proposal the DPI's Division for Libraries and Technology conducted such a study in 2014.

The DPI Lean System Study report was forwarded to the Council on Library and Network Development (COLAND). COLAND is a committee appointed by the Governor which is charged with advising the Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction on library issues. In January 2015 COLAND approved a set of recommendations that were forwarded to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

- **Strategic Vision for Library Systems in the 21st Century Workgroup Recommendations:** These recommendations focused on five system service areas:

1. Consulting
2. Technology support
3. ILS/ILL/Delivery
 - a. One state—one collection
 - b. Resource libraries
 - c. Statewide delivery service
4. Coordination of electronic services
5. Continuing education

The DPI is in the process of putting together workgroups to implement these recommendations. The Future of System Services Roadmap outlines how they plan to implement these recommendations. It is anticipated that these workgroups will begin working in July 2015 and implementation will begin in 2016 and the first half of 2017

All these documents are available online at <http://dpi.wi.gov/coland/strategic-vision>



FAQ

***A prospective library trustee has spent some time in jail.
Can they still be appointed to the board?***

Possibly. You would need to determine the nature of the offense.
Article XIII, Section 3 of the Wisconsin Constitution states:

(2) No person convicted of a felony, ... and no person convicted, ... of a crime designated ... as a misdemeanor involving a violation of public trust shall be eligible to any office of trust, profit or honor in this state unless pardoned of the conviction. Even if this person is eligible to serve as a trustee your municipal chair needs to consider the case before the appointment is made. If the nature of the offense is likely to call the person's integrity or trustworthiness into question, or to raise concerns about the proper care and stewardship of the library, they should not be appointed.

Have questions?

Contact us and
we'll try to help.

Mark at Winnefox
arend@winnefox.org
920-236-5222

Editor: Mark Arend
Graphic Artist: Renee George

If you have questions, comments or suggestions
for future articles, send them to:
WLS: Mark Arend, 920-236-5222
or email arend@winnefox.org

trustee tale is written and distributed by Outagamie
Wauvaca Library System (OWLS) and Winnefox Library
System (WLS). Distribution to your board is funded by your
home system.



Winnefox Library System
106 Washington Avenue
Oshkosh, WI 54901-4985