

MEMORANDUM:

To: Winnefox Library System Trustees
From: Clairellyn Sommersmith, Director
Subject: Report of System Activities
Date: May 20, 2025

Strategic Plan: In April and May WiLS, our strategic planning provider has been in the information gathering stage. They have met in person with Winnefox System Staff and with member library directors. They have met virtually with our contractual partners. Additionally, there was the general survey and the Winnefox Board questionnaire. They are now spending the summer months distilling this information into themes and from those themes will be working with the Strategic Planning Team to create clear, achievable, and measurable goals. The Strategic Planning Team, made up of myself, Marcy Cannon, Angela Schneider, and Andrew Prellwitz, will meet with WiLS in July.

State Budget: Angela Schneider, Karla Smith, and I attended the Joint Finance Hearing in Kaukauna on April 2. I spoke, along with Door County Library Director Dominic Frandup and OWLS Library System and Kaukauna Public Library Trustee Cindy Fallona. We asked the committee to keep the Governor's budget recommendation that increases library system state aid by 6 million dollars over the next biennial. The current budget request includes a 4 million increase to the base in 2026 and a 2 million increase to the base in 2027. At this point there is no indication how Join Finance might modify the Governor's budget concerning library system aid. The Library Development and Legislation Committee (LD&L) will meet with legislators this month, but the biennial budget is not anticipated to be shared until August. I am currently prepping the 2026 Winnefox budget anticipating flat funding from the state, but I will include additional services, if there are budgetary increases, based on the strategic plan goals.

New Director Spring Training: I was invited to speak at the statewide New Director Spring Training in April. This is a three day training session hosted and facilitated by the Library Services Team of the DPI open to public library directors who have begun their positions in the past year. There were four Winnefox directors in attendance. Ben Miller, the Division Director, and I presented "Alphabet Soup: An Introduction to the Wisconsin Library World through our Acronyms."

Policy of the Month Club: This month I helped launched a statewide resource "The Policy of the Month Club." I am working with three other library system staff and two Library Services Team staff members to send monthly emails to libraries highlighting one policy a month. These emails will include sample policies along with recommendations of what to include or not include in each of these policies. We are launching the Club with a policy audit which will allow a library to go through the list of policies all libraries should have, see which policies they have already created, and which ones need to be updated. The goal of the Club is the remove many of the intimidation barriers library directors feel when approaching policy updates, create more shared resources across the state, and help director prioritize the time needed to keep policies up to date.

WAPL Conference: The Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries Conference was held in Oshkosh this year and we had excellent participation from member library staff. Thanks to LSTA funding we were able to give away 18 scholarships for staff to attend. These scholarships were given to member library directors and support staff, and two Winnefox trustees. Six Winnefox member library staff presented at the conference, including Carter Memorial Director, Anna Dinkel, and Oshkosh Library Director, Darryl Eschete. I, also, presented on a panel speaking about library Friends and Foundations.

Passport Program: Winnefox will be launching the Passport Program on June 1 for the second summer in a row. The program encourages all library patrons to explore Winnefox libraries beyond their local locations. For every five libraries a patron visits, they earn a raffle ticket. There are three Grand Prizes, along with a bonus prize from each County.

Postcard Advocacy: The statewide advocacy campaign "Speak Up for Libraries," which educates the public about the importance of library funding, is launching a postcard initiative. Interested patrons can choose to write a postcard to their federal elected officials telling them why their library is important. The goal of the postcards is to demonstrate the importance of federal library funding and to let the public know about the potential elimination of IMLS in October of this year.

Staff News: Winnefox held another staff meeting Field Trip in May. I wanted to share Winnefox Administrative Specialist, Tracie Schlaak's testimony about the Field Trips: "The one thing that remained constant at all libraries was the pride the directors had while touring their libraries. You could tell they really cared about their patrons and have adapted accordingly. Thank you to Lucas at Markesan, Mary at Neshkoro and Chris at Berlin for the wonderful tours and can't wait to see more Winnefox libraries!"

The WCTS office received a \$400 donation to purchase Large Print books. These titles will be added to the Large Print rotation collection.

Library News: Nancy Bell, current director of the Shawano County Library and previous Reader's Advisory Librarian at Oshkosh Public, will be the new director of the Ripon Public Library. Her first day is July 7.

Hancock Public Library will break ground on their community room project next month. This contribution project is partially funded through the Flexible Facilities Grant.

Patterson Memorial Library in Wild Rose opened the first JobPod in the Winnefox area. The individual meeting room paid for by the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board will offer a private space for job seekers. The computers in the pod will include links to numerous resources on the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development website. Oshkosh Public Library is the second Winnefox library to receive a JobPod grant. Their JobPod will open later this year.

On April 26th Montello Public Library hosted an open house celebrating their 90th Anniversary.