

WiLS Board Meeting

April 3, 2025 | 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm



Zoom

Board Members (o indicates absent)

- o Michelle Byholm (Chequamegon School District)
- Jennifer Chamberlain (WiLS, ex-officio)
- Jennifer Follett (Madison Metropolitan School District)
- Gary Flynn (Gateway Technical College)
- Frank Foss (Milwaukee Art Museum)
- Jennifer Gurske (Madison Trust for Historic Preservation)
- Mindy King (University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point)
- Kristina Gómez (Milwaukee Public Library)
- Sarah Miller (WiscNet)
- Tasha Saecker (Appleton Public Library)
- Kim Olson-Kopp (Viterbo University)
- o Andrew Prellwitz (Ripon College)
- Adrienne Thunder (Ho-Chunk Nation Language Division)
- Micki Uppena (Mineral Point School District)

Guest attendees: Erin Engstrom (First Financial Bank), Kevin Pomarnke (First Financial Bank)

Staff attendees: Jeff Brunner, Melody Clark, Andi Coffin, Sara Gold, Kim Kiesewetter, Rebecca Rosenstiel, Tom Klement, Lisa Marten, Kristen Whitson

1. Call to Order; Changes/additions to the agenda

S. Miller called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm and asked for any changes to the agenda. J. Chamberlain requested we table items #11 - #13 due to late addition to the agenda re: IMLS funding statement and to allow time for board member conversation on local impacts. Agenda changes were allowed by consensus.

2. Welcome of any guests

S. Miller recognized guests to the meeting. There were no member guests in attendance today. S. Miller welcomed Kevin Pomarnke and Eric Engstrom from First Business Bank, as well as members of the WiLS Finance committee.

3. Recognition of Steve Platteter, WiLS Board member 2013-2025

S. Miller recognized the contributions of Steve Platteter to the WiLS Board from 2013-2025 who passed away on February 27. In his time on the board Steve served as the board chair, a member of the 2019 Business Model review workgroup, the finance committee and most recently as our board treasurer. Steve was an unwavering advocate for the WiLS community and he will be terribly missed. As a reminder, Steve's Celebration of Life is this Saturday at the South Central Library System offices from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm and all are welcome to attend.

4. Approval of December 9, 2024 minutes

G. Flynn moved to approve the December 9 minutes, F. Foss seconded. There was no discussion or changes. The motion carried.

5. [Investment Presentation](#) – Kevin Pomarnke & Eric Engstrom of First Business Bank shared a presentation on WiLS' recent investment performance and their perspectives on economic prospects for the coming year.

E. Engstrom shared a breakdown of the portfolio structure and allocation, adding that it is important to note the timeframe for the numbers; that these go through March 24th. Engstrom pointed out that typically Asset Allocations are kept between 1% and 5%, the current 7.43% is intentional with the current market volatility; if this reaches 10% then they may decide it's time to move cash to another allocation. Engstrom then shared that WiLS uses a *Socially Responsible* portfolio, which follows "Calvert", which is considered the gold-standard for social responsibility. Regarding the annualized net of fees, Engstrom made note of the timeframe, and that as of February, the account still had positive performance; their team is currently doing an audit of March. Overall, there are lots of gains from 2023-24 to carry WiLS through 2025 if there is some choppiness in the market.

6. Reports

a. Chair's report – Upcoming spring elections

S. Miller reminded the board that nominations for the seven open WiLS board seats will open next week through April 25. Board election voting will take place May 12-May 30. Newly elected board members will begin their term July 1. Seats open are:

- One representative for a Technical College Library seat (one-year term),
- Two representatives for a Public Library seat (three-year term),
- One representative for a K-12 Library seat (three-year term),
- One representative for a Cultural Organizations seat (three-year term),
- One representative for a Special Libraries seat (two-year term), and
- One representative for an At-Large seat (three-year term)

J. Chamberlain has been in contact with Steve Hesel, the chair of SRLAAW regarding filling the seat vacated by Steve Platteter. SRLAAW appoints this seat, it is not an elected position. At their April meeting, SRLAAW will seek a volunteer to serve on the board in a 3-year term starting in July. Members of the Board that are currently in expiring seats are encouraged to run for re-election. Board members are also encouraged to recommend colleagues to nominate themselves for open seats.

b. Finance committee report – Jennifer Gurske

J. Gurske was unable to attend the March 4 meeting, so she asked J. Chamberlain to update the board on the committee meeting. The committee discussed the WiLS mid-year financials which are looking very strong. They reviewed the investment policy and have no recommended updates to this policy. Additional topics were the 401K discretionary contribution plan (more on this in later agenda item) and considering a change to our audit and review cycle. The finance committee will be meeting next on May 13 to review a preliminary FY26 budget prior to sending to the board for their May 30 meeting.

F. Foss moved to reapprove the investment policy. K. Olson-Kopp seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion carried.

Documents: [March 4, 2025 committee meeting notes](#), [Investment policy](#)

c. Financial report – Tom Klement, Chief Financial Officer

T. Klement shared the February financials – we are at 67% of the budget year and revenue is looking right in line! Staffing expenses are on target as are many other expense lines. Office supply expenses now include a monthly storage unit rental fee, so we are going exceed this budget line significantly due to this new expense.

Documents: [February 2025 Budget with Actuals](#) & [Balance Sheet](#)

d. Director's report – Jennifer Chamberlain

Document: [April Director's Report](#)

J. Chamberlain asked if there were any questions on the written report. No questions were asked.

7. Discussion and Action: 401K discretionary contribution and related policy

The document shared in advance of the meeting provides an overview on how the Board established the 401K discretionary plan, and how the plan is described in our retirement plan summary. J. Chamberlain needs the board to weigh in on several decisions to help with implementing a contribution this year.

First, the board reviewed the employee handbook language. M. King shared their appreciation for the explanation, and asked what happens if a staff member would choose not to contribute to a 401K account. J. Chamberlain explained that all staff already have an account setup regardless on if they are contributing to it; and if the Board approves this plan, staff will be instructed on how to find this information and how to monitor it. M. King asked about the language in the handbook that states an employee is eligible to enroll after two

months, but the language also states that an employee is eligible as long as they were employed through the last day of the way; what happens if someone is hired less than two months from the end of the year? J. Chamberlain doesn't believe the language is contradictory, but will check for clarification from TandemHR and have that language adjusted if warranted ahead of the handbook approval in May.

Secondly, in consultation with Tom and the finance committee, Jennifer is recommending we allocate \$10,000 of FY24 profits toward the profit-sharing distribution to all eligible staff members. A. Thunder moved to approve the \$10,000 recommended discretionary contribution based on the FY24 year-end surplus with the option to return to the Board annually for any adjustments, and G. Flynn seconded. The motion carried.

Next the board reviewed four possible allocation criteria that can be used to determine how the monies are distributed across the staff. J. Gurske asked if any of the options presented were seen as typical for employer contributions? J. Chamberlain said that models based on compensation seem most popular at the corporate level. K. Gomez asked if the formula for option number 1 could be shared; and asked what compensation is tied to in option 2. J. Chamberlain shared that the formula for number 1 was designed by the plan administrator, and that she got that sense that this person did some hand-calculations. Staff salaries may see a cost of living increase, but there aren't any typical merit-based increases. J. Follett asked if the model chosen by the Board today would be only for the current fiscal year, or if it would be ongoing? J. Chamberlain advocates for the Board to pick a model for this year only, leaving it open to adjust or move to a different model in another year. The Board voiced their preference for option 4, as that seemed to show more love for every employee, from bottom to top. S. Miller suggested that it might be worth it to pull a report from TandemHR to ensure fair market value for staff, and that this could also be a valuable tool for the Board and maybe form a small workgroup to review compensation and benefits annually.

M. Uppena moved to adopt option #4 for fiscal year 2024, M. King seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion carried.

Lastly, the board discussed how we should document this process going forward. J. Chamberlain suggested that she can build a document that outlines the approach for this process for the Board to review in May, instead of trying to make this into a policy.

Document: [401K Plan Background and Next Steps](#)

8. Action: Acceptance of the 2024 Audit and 990

S. Miller reminded the board that WILS conducts a full audit every other year. This was a review (not full) audit. S. Miller requested a motion to accept the report and 990 filing, unless there are any questions or concerns from the board. No questions were asked. G. Flynn moved to accept the report and filing, M. King seconded. The motion carried.

Documents: [2024 Audit Review Report](#), [990 \(2023\)](#)

----End of joint meeting----10 Minute Break

9. Presentation and Action: Ideas to Action - Kim Kiesewetter, Data Analyst and Sara Gold, New Business Development and Consortia Manager

K. Kiesewetter presented an update on the 2024 Ideas to Action grant program. Thank you to Jeff Brunner for serving as co-lead on Ideas to Action this past year. Sara Gold is stepping into the co-lead role this year. The process that has been in place since it was updated in 2020 will remain the same for 2025, but the plan is to review the process later this year and reassess for 2026. Nine projects and \$37,740 were awarded in 2024; and since 2020 Ideas to Action grant-funded projects have reached 11,962 individuals. 95% of projects are expected to continue beyond the Ideas to Action funding.

As done in year's past, we are looking for volunteers from the board to serve on the Ideas to Action selection committee. Volunteers are: Frank Foss; Kim Olson-Kopp; Jennifer Gurske; and Jennifer Follett.

J. Chamberlain reminded the board that in 2022 the WiLS board made a longer term commitment to Ideas to Action by establishing a [sustainability plan for Ideas to Action](#). The plan outlines a 3-year commitment from the board to the Ideas to Action program, and established a restricted fund, which in subsequent years has been increased to \$50,000. This restricted fund is there to help sustain our commitment to this program. According to the plan, the board must review and approve it every three years. J. Follett moved to approve the plan for another 3-year period, F. Foss seconded. The motion carried.

Lastly, we need the board to approve the amount for the 2025 grant cycle. The past several years the board has given out on average \$35,000 per year. This year we gave out closer to \$37,000 because we underspent the previous year.

A. Thunder moved that we allocate \$30,000 for 2025, M. Uppena seconded. The motion carried. G. Flynn asked if the group thought that \$30,000 would be enough, especially considering the impacts from federal funding changes? K. Gomez asked if WiLS staff had the capacity if more projects were to be funded; K. Kiesewetter answered yes, and shared that WiLS staff volunteer to partner with awardees as liaisons. A. Thunder offered a friendly amendment to allocate \$40,000 for 2025, M. Uppena seconded. The amendment carried.

10. Discussion and Action: WiLS Statement on IMLS Funding and Impacts

J. Chamberlain and the communications team are seeking board feedback on a drafted statement we would like to share with members regarding threats to IMLS funding and programs. We see this statement as a strong show of support to our members and the valuable funding that fuels many programs our members' communities have come to rely upon. Because this would be an official statement from the organization, and because we are keenly aware of the greater environment our members are in, we are seeking board endorsement of the statement on behalf of WiLS and its membership.

The Board was asked if they had any questions, feedback, or concerns about the statement. Members noted that the statement is timely, necessary, and eloquent; and gave support for releasing the statement with the understanding that many organizations are not in a position to do so, so if WiLS has the ability, we should. It was asked if the statement should be signed by members of the Board; if it should come from the Board; or if it should be left unsigned. A few Board members shared what their organizations do regarding statements, which is varied depending on the situation. The group agreed that the statement can send in the next @WiLS newsletter with bumper language that shows WiLS Board and staff support, but is not formally signed. If anyone would like to talk more about this outside of the meeting, please reach out to J. Chamberlain before midmorning Friday.

11. TABLED until May meeting ~~Discussion and Action: Employee Handbook Revisions~~

12. TABLED until May meeting ~~Discussion and Action: Pro Bono/VTO policy~~

13. TABLED until May meeting ~~Discussion and Action: WiLS Data Collection & Use Policy revision~~

14. Update: DEIA Action plan progress, Kristen Whitson, Digital Specialist and Consortia Manager

K. Whitson and J. Chamberlain are coordinating the WiLS DEI work and action plan creation. Kristen shared a brief summary of Dr. Bright report and how WiLS is approaching our action plan.

Our first action steps include

- fine-tuning our communications on how we talk about and define this work.
- Integrating EDI moments in staff meetings and making sure we are holding space for staff to express their worries, concerns, hopes
- Listening to our WiLS members and stakeholders on their needs, interests, and current environments
- integrating changes into hiring process

Kristen and Jen invited the board members to share any reservations or hesitancy on WiLS action plans and how they might interact with their own organizational directives or stances. The Board did not have any questions or concerns about this work, and voiced support and appreciation that WiLS is planning to continue the work. K.

Whitson thanked the Board and shared that if anyone has any questions or concerns that they would like to talk about after the meeting, they can always reach out to either Kristen or Jennifer.

Documents: [WiLS Board Report on EDI](#), [EDI Slides](#)

15. Board member round table: Navigating Federal orders on a local level

S. Miller invited board members to share what they are experiencing at their local organizations in reaction to various executive orders, including threats to IMLS staffing and funding, DEI related programs, etc.

K. Gomez shared that it feels like things are moving quickly and slowly at the same time. For example, Milwaukee Public Library has some race-forward workgroups that they are unsure if/how to keep this work moving forward. The uncertainty has an affect on everyone. On a more positive note, the city recently hosted a Know Your Rights program for the immigrant and refugee communities that was heavily attended and highlights the city attorney's open office hours; this was supported by the city government.

G. Flynn compared the current situation to a Mission Impossible scenario, emphasizing the need to navigate policies without triggering alarms; and also noted the need to reemphasize policies regarding law enforcement on campus, especially for ELL students.

J. Chamberlain shared that WiLS has gotten word this week that some grant-funded projects have now been cancelled: an NEH grant that would support a new program for roving archivists; in partnership with DPI and Washington State, an IMLS grant on a gaming program; and a project that we were subcontractors on with OCLC. While this is disheartening, from a financial standpoint WiLS is going to be okay.

16. Adjournment

G. Flynn moved to adjourn the meeting. F. Foss seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried. The meeting ended at 4:31pm.

Next meeting – Reminder that the May 30 meeting will be in person at the new Appleton Public Library, so make sure you build in travel time on your calendars.