

# WiLS Board Meeting

May 30, 2025 | 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Appleton Public Library | 200 N. Appleton St.



**Board Members** (○ indicates absent | ● indicates attended virtually)

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

**Staff attendees:** Rebecca Rosenstiel, Tom Klement (remotely)

## 1. Board Photo & Warm Up Activity

In-person attendees participated in a warm up activity where they got to know each other's most-anticipated summer plans; and then the group went to the ground floor of the library to have a group photo taken.

## 2. Call to Order; Changes/additions to the agenda

S. Miller called the meeting to order at 10:26 am and asked for any changes to the agenda. No changes were suggested.

## 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

G. Flynn moved to approve the April 2025 meeting minutes, M. Byholm seconded. No discussion or changes suggested. Motion carried.

## 4. Informational: Reports

### a. Chair's Report: Election Results!

S. Miller shared the results of the recent WiLS Board Election. WiLS is really fortunate to have such widespread interest in serving on our board. Of the six types of seats open, half of the races were contested. Our two public library seats had 8 people running to fill them! The board may want to consider some strategies to help avoid larger turnover number at next election. With our bylaws coming under review this coming year, that might help us consider how we might adjust either by voluntary term extension or some other mechanism.

Newly re/elected Board seats will begin their terms in July.

- Technical College Library seat (1 year) – Renee Anhalt, Madison College
- Public Library seats (3 years) – Kristina Gomez, Milwaukee Public Library and Tasha Saecker, Appleton Public Library
- K-12 Library seat (3 years) - Margaret Ottenad, Kettle Moraine School District
- Cultural Organizations seat (3 years) - Brenna Weston, Polk County Historical Society
- Special Libraries seat (2 years) - Frank Violette Foss, Milwaukee Art Museum

- At-Large seat (3 years) – Sarah Miller, WiscNet

At their meeting in May, SRLAAW appointed Shannon Schultz, SCLS to be their representative on the WiLS Board; Shannon will also begin their term on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Discussion:*

J. Chamberlain reminded the Board that there is still one open appointment seat; if the Board would like to make an appointment, they may do so. There were multiple nominees for Public Library seats; and the current Board makeup has solid representation from large public libraries; Additional representation from a small- or mid-size library would be beneficial. A. Prellwitz suggested adding Board appointments as a charge for the Nominations Committee: Board members would send recommendations to the Nominations Committee, who would present the list of names to the Board at their next meeting for voting on appointment. M. Byholm pointed out that recommended individuals should also be checked with that they are available and interested in serving on the WiLS Board by appointment. K. Olson-Kopp asked if the intent was that there would always be Board representation for small- to mid-size public libraries? The group decided yes. With members of the Nominations Committee present, T. Saecker recommended Jill Roth at Edward U. Demmer Memorial Library of Three Lakes, who was one of the Public Library seat nominees, to serve in the appointed seat.

G. Flynn moved to appoint Jill Roth to serve on the WiLS Board for three years in an Appointed seat. M. Uppena seconded. The motion passed unanimously. There was no further discussion.

**b. April 2025 Financials**

T. Klement joined the meeting remotely and walked the board through the April 2025 financial report. Things still remain very strong as we enter into our last quarter of the year; and WiLS is expected to end the year with a surplus. Revenue is expected to be closer to budget, once May and June reconciliations are completed. J. Chamberlain added that Consulting revenue is likely to end under budget, as some projects took more time to complete. T. Klement also noted that OverDrive has begun adding a 3% charge to all credit card payments, so WiLS is now paying OverDrive by check. WiLS and OverDrive are keeping these discussions open. Expenses are as expected, with a slight overage in general supplies due to WiLS now renting a small storage unit. All in all, the bottom line is looking good.

**c. [Director's Report](#)**

J. Chamberlain noted that the 401(k) distribution process has been documented and formulas used for calculations are noted; sharing there is a new Finance Committee Member, Kerrie Goeden from SCLS; and shared that WiLS is coordinating with and assisting the Wisconsin Humanities Council as they find a new home.

Also highlighted was the conversation happening among the Recollection Wisconsin Governing Board Foundations working group re: seeking information from WiLS on what it could look like if RW became a service of WiLS. The Board offered up other areas of consideration, including staff working time- would this add more work for existing staff, and/or would additional staff need to be hired; funding for technologies and equipment; financial liabilities; and contracts with vendors. This conversation will continue at a future board meeting.

J. Chamberlain asked for any questions from the Board regarding anything else on her report. No other questions or clarifications were asked.

**5. Action: FY26 Budget approval**

J. Chamberlain presented a draft budget for next year. We continue to present a deficit budget largely because we conservatively estimate revenue while predicting our expenses more liberally. There is one known factor that will impact our revenue: Overdrive has changed their policy on credit card use and will now be assessing a usage fee. We will pay Overdrive by check, which will reduce our credit card rebates by approximately \$30,000. Additionally, we are unsure how broader budgetary uncertainty, at the federal, state, and local level, might impact our members' decision-making when it comes to consulting projects. The tightening of the LSTA grant funding at the state level will certainly impact DPI's ability to contract with WiLS to do research or other support projects. Also, the loss of the NEH grant for the Roving Archivist program impacts our work in the digital projects space. We are hopeful we can find private funding or other grant opportunities to continue this work with Wisconsin Native Nations.

In short, J. Chamberlain is presenting a worse-case scenario budget and is hopeful that as the year progresses we will find additional revenue sources to balance our budget. WiLS has strong reserves to address any shortfall.

*Discussion:*

T. Klement added that because WiLS has strong reserves, there is comfort in being realistic; if the budget does begin to fall into the negative, reserves can be used and *then* we can start looking at what areas can and should be adjusted.

A. Prellwitz asked if anyone knew when and how reserve funds have been used in the past 5- or 10-years? J. Chamberlain will share a spreadsheet with this information with the Board after the meeting.

G. Flynn noted that the reserves fund balance has been increasing each year; does WiLS have a policy that the reserves cannot exceed a certain amount? J. Chamberlain confirmed that there isn't.

G. Flynn moved to approve the FY26 budget. T. Saecker seconded. The motion passed unanimously. There was no further discussion.

## **6. Action: Forming the Nomination Committee**

*Background:* Per the WiLS Bylaws, the chair-elect and two other board members comprise the Nominations Committee. The chair-elect serves as the chairperson of the nominating committee.

*In the meeting:* We are looking for two volunteers to assist Jennifer Gurske in determining a chair-elect and treasurer. The committee will present a slate of candidates at the first regular meeting of the fiscal year, which will be held in August.

Volunteers for the Nomination Committee are:

- Michelle Byholm
- Andrew Prellwitz

## **7. Action: Forming the Bylaws Review Committee**

*Background:* The WiLS Bylaws are reviewed every three years. The last comprehensive review was completed in June 2023. The Bylaws Review Committee will launch the review process this fall with the hopes of having a revised edition ready for the board's spring meeting.

*In the meeting:* A call for 3 volunteers to serve on the committee.

The committee won't begin this work until early Fall, and it is anticipated to take 2-3 meetings at most to review and make suggested revisions to the bylaws. J. Chamberlain will pull the group together.

Volunteers for the Bylaws Review Committee are:

- Kristina Gómez
- Sarah Miller
- Kim Olson-Kopp

## **8. Discussion and Action: Employee Handbook Revisions**

*Background:* The WiLS employee handbook is reviewed in full biennially (on even years) or as needed by the WiLS Staff Development team. Jennifer identified two policies in need of updates and worked with the staff development team, Admin team and the staff as a whole to modify these in our employee handbook: travel reimbursement and equipment purchasing.

*In the meeting:* The board will discuss and approve proposed revisions.

*Documents:* [Travel Reimbursement Policy](#), [Equipment Purchasing Policy](#)

*Discussion:*

G. Flynn noted that language in the Travel Reimbursement Policy could be tweaked, suggesting that the per diem reimbursement should include “GSA”.

K. Gómez moved to approve the revisions to the Travel and Equipment policies. M. Byholm seconded. The motion passed unanimously. There was no further discussion.

## **9. Discussion and Action: Pro Bono/VTO policy**

*Background:* In 2019, a Business Model Workgroup charged by the WiLS Board recommended the allowance of up to 2% of staff time to pro bono activities within our member community. The policy was adopted but never codified. The staff development team and Jennifer have refined the policy to include volunteer opportunities within this program.

*In the meeting:* The board will discuss the proposed policy and consider approval.

J. Chamberlain brought this idea to the staff development team, inspired by a local organization board she sits on – the Volunteer Center of Washington County. Fellow board members work at local companies who offer VTO time, and it seemed like a good addition to our pro bono policy. Not all staff are in a position or have a readily available opportunity to give back professionally within our member community. By recognizing staff volunteer interests, we broaden the opportunities for staff to give back to the broader WiLS community and/or the greater Wisconsin community at large while allowing staff to follow their passions. The total time allowable, 2%, remains the same, and ensures we can manage the time dedicated to volunteer efforts. We typically report this “give back” time in the WiLS annual report.

*Document:* [WiLS Pro Bono/VTO policy](#)

*Discussion:*

A. Prellwitz asked if the percentage of Pro Bono/VTO time varies and if the service is considered in their annual review process? J. Chamberlain shared that it does not vary; all staff are offered 2% of their time to put towards volunteering with communities and organizations that resonate with them. We do not use pro bono/VTO hours as a metric in performance reviews.

G. Flynn moved to approve the Pro Bono/VTO policy. T. Saecker seconded. The motion passed unanimously. There was no further discussion.

## **10. Discussion and Action: WiLS Data Collection & Use Policy revision**

*Background:* The WiLS Data Collection & Use policy was approved in 2019. We are proposing the following revisions to this policy to help clarify how WiLS uses, stores, and protects any data we collect primarily in member consulting projects like strategic planning.

*Document:* [WiLS Data Collection & Use Policy revision](#)

*Discussion:*

J. Chamberlain shared that this policy revision better defines how and when we use any data we collect from our member libraries or communities. The Board asked for clarification on what third party vendors does WiLS have data saved on, and what is WiLS doing with that information; as well as data

that WiLS receives from partner organizations, for example DPI? J. Chamberlain is going to double check with WiLS staff member Kim Kiesewetter on these details. G. Flynn also added that the phrasing around PII could be adjusted, suggesting to remove the word “or” and moving the “data” around. The Board agreed that this is a great conversation to have; and that maybe it doesn’t need to be codified in a policy; once there is clarification on these points, the Board will discuss again.

## 11. Determining the meeting schedule for 2025/26

This year we experimented with holding 4 meetings, rather than 5. S. Miller asked the board for feedback on how this schedule worked in terms of time of year, frequency, and the content/pacing of the meetings. As a reminder, the board met in August (in person), December (online), April (online), and May (in person).

### *Discussion:*

M. Byholm noted that 2025/26 is going to be a heavy review year, and so having a fifth meeting would be beneficial; the Board were in agreement, adding that a fifth meeting could be cancelled ahead of time if it ends up being unnecessary. S. Miller added that it would be beneficial to have this topic of conversation at the end of each year: to look ahead at the upcoming year and decide if the year should have four or five meetings.

M. Byholm moved that 2025/26 have five meetings scheduled. A. Prellwitz seconded. The motion passed unanimously. J. Chamberlain shared that she will aim to add a virtual meeting in the Fall, possibly October, to the schedule.

## 12. Lunch & Recognition of Board Service

The Board took a break for lunch, and the outgoing Board members were recognized for their service:

- **Adrienne Thunder** – Adrienne has served a 3-year term as our cultural organization representative. During her tenure, the WiLS board approved the creation of the Culture Keepers Collective, a Native-led collaborative group focused on needs of cultural workers to advance their communities’ work within tribal libraries, archives, and museums.
- **Gary Flynn** – Gary stepped in to fill Ashley McHose’s final year of her term as the technical colleges library representative. Even though Gary was only on the board for one year, he was an active contributor and most recently encouraged the Board to increase the Ideas to Action fund for the coming grant cycle.
- **Micki Uppena** – Micki has served a 3-year term as a K12 library representative. Micki has served on the Ideas to Action grant application review committee, and has been vocal in representing the needs of our K12 members.

## 13. Updates on Federal Changes, funding, policy

### a. Impacts and Opportunities in WiLS

J. Chamberlain shared the direct impacts on WiLS’ work:

- Loss of an NEH grant to fund a Roving Archivist program for several Native Nation partner communities; also potential IMLS grant paused.
- LSTA grant pause and reduction in potential research opportunities.
- IMLS Gaming Grant facilitation and review - temporarily reinstated.

J. Chamberlain then shared the direct impacts on WiLS’ member community:

- Roving archivist cancellation directly impacts WI Native communities we were poised to work with
- Nation Nation libraries and terminated (now reinstated) IMLS funding

- Grants to states and other LSTA uncertainty has impacts on public libraries and systems
  - WPLC - potential impacts on statewide delivery funding
  - CE/Professional Learning support
  - Badgerlink
  - Data services - IMLS annual report data
- Overall funding uncertainty - will state legislators follow suit with federal administration policy decisions? how will libraries purchasing power be affected?

**b. Sharing time from board members**

The Board was given the opportunity to share what is happening in their organizations, and the impacts on different sectors.

- G. Flynn shared that it's forcing them to think about things they don't typically think about, such as the student enrollment cliff. Decision on Act 10 is expected to change things. Next FY budget is already set; but the year following that is already expected to begin at a deficit. TRIO is beginning to sunset, and their President has eliminated the DEI department entirely. Both Grant writers have left, so now the library is left to find-, create-, and submit applications to grants on their own. A reality is that recessions tend to see increased revenue in Technical College.
- M. Byholm mentioned that WiLS offers multiple resources for students *and* staff, but not enough school staff know about it, especially when schools don't have dedicated Library Media Specialists- it would be worth it to try to find ways to get WiLS-services in front of a wider audience. Suggests WiLS reaching out to CESA Admin first, to get a pulse on best ways to reach school admin. It might be good to connect with AWSA and/or WASBO.
- K. Gómez shared that coming from the municipal level is a higher focus on staff efficiency and quantifiable outputs.
- A. Prellwitz and K. Olson-Kopp shared that there is an increase in awareness of the demographic/enrollment cliff.  
K. Olson-Kopp noted that they had proactive reductions last year, in hopes that they could get ahead of changes. Right now, the enrollment for Fall looks okay.
- J. Chamberlain asked the group if anyone was feeling any affects to the updates to accessibility rules; the news out of ICOLC is that libraries and the content they offer fall under this. K. Olson-Kopp noted that they haven't felt direct impacts; but knows that University of Wisconsin's libraries have had to go through major overhauls.
- S. Miller noted that WiscNet is hearing from their members that they would like more opportunities to connect and partner with other organizations doing similar work. Is there a space for WiLS to build these types of connections- not necessarily to lead but to act as host? There has also been a renewal of interest in Community Action Networks (CANs). J. Chamberlain shared that WiLS has had a lot of success recently hosting an informal discussion among Academic Librarians related to using government web resources in turbulent times – thanks to one of our member libraries asking to co-host.
- J. Gurske shared that they don't have any federal grants right now- 40% of their revenue is membership-based. However historically they have received funding from the Wisconsin Humanities Council. They are concerned about the Historic Preservation Fund - \$160M grant program on chopping block, and new staff that they were hoping to hire is no longer an option at this time. Their main focus is to keep using funds for continued preservation efforts. They've been partnering with new organizations that aren't obvious partners – some silver lining.

J. Chamberlain asked the Board to make sure to pass on any opportunities for partnerships and/or projects to WiLS- we're excited and open to bring focus to ideas.

**14. [Discussion: I Like, I Wish, What If](#)**

Jen led the board in an activity to help reframe how we think about the library and cultural organization community in terms of:

- what we appreciate;
- what we wish could be true; and
- how might we re-envision the future.

Images of the Board's activity will be shared after the meeting.

**15. Adjournment**

J. Follett moved to adjourn the meeting. G. Flynn seconded. The motion passed unanimously. There was no further discussion.

**The meeting ended at 1:44pm and followed with a tour of the beautifully remodeled Appleton Public Library!**

Next meeting – Watch for a meeting poll in June to set the 2025/26 meetings