

WiLS Board Meeting

August 22, 2025 | 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Ripon College Library | 300 Seward St, Ripon



Board Members (☐ indicates absent | ☒ indicates attended virtually)

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|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Renee Anhalt (Madison College) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Miller (WiscNet) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Michelle Byholm (Chequamegon School District) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kim Olson-Kopp (Viterbo University) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Chamberlain (WiLS, ex-officio) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Margaret Ottenad (Kettle Moraine School District) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Follett (Madison Metropolitan School District) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tasha Saecker (Appleton Public Library) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frank Foss (Milwaukee Art Museum) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Andrew Prellwitz (Ripon College) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Gurske (Madison Trust for Historic Preservation) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jill Roth (Demmer Public Library) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kristina Gómez (Milwaukee Public Library) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shannon Schultz (SCLS) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mindy King (UW - Stevens Point) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brenna Weston (Polk County Historical Society) |

Staff attendees: Sara Gold, Rebecca Rosenstiel, Tom Klement (remotely), Erin Hughes (remotely)

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

J. Gurske called the meeting to order at 10:01 am and asked for any changes to the agenda. No changes were suggested.

2. Meeting Host Welcome & Logistics

A. Prellwitz welcomed everyone to Ripon College on student move-in day!

3. Welcoming new Board members & Introductions

J. Gurske led round robin introductions, asking everyone to share the best piece of advice they've ever received (work or personal). New board members were welcomed!

Pieces of advice include: Assume others have the best intentions; Doing a "year of you"; give compliments freely; be yourself; if it's not a "hell yes" then it's a "hell no"; don't sweat the small stuff; dare to be wise; reach out first; fill *your* cup first/close to-dos at the end of the day and come back to them tomorrow; know your value and trust your worth; pause and think, don't just react; delete "it" (whatever is taking your time) from your phone- be intentional with your time; "go to the store and get some more" / be patient; don't dwell on mistakes but learn from them; practice daily gratitude; and "what joy might be in this hour" / think about best-case scenarios.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

T Saecker moved to approve the May 2025 meeting minutes, S. Miller seconded. No discussion or changes suggested. Motion carried.

5. Election of Board Officers

The nominations committee presented the following slate of officers for the 2025-2026 board year: Mindy King, chair-elect and Kristina Gómez as treasurer. J. Gurske thanked her fellow members of the nominations committee for their service: Andrew Prellwitz and Michelle Byholm. J. Gurske opened the floor for additional nominations - none were presented.

S. Schultz moved to accept the slate of officers for 2025-2026, A. Prellwitz seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

6. Annual Board Orientation

J. Chamberlain shared a brief organizational history of WiLS, reviewed the WiLS board member roles & expectations, provided a brief overview of the WiLS service portfolio, and shared the current WiLS Five Year Strategic Plan.

J. Chamberlain reiterated the Board plays a role in helping us stay mission and values focused. Communication is an important aspect of board role, please share WiLS' services and opportunities with colleagues, and share comments, needs, ideas that you're hearing from your network(s) with WiLS.

There were no questions or further discussion.

7. Overview of WiLS Finances

a. Board and Financial Oversight

J. Chamberlain shared an overview of how the WiLS board members participate as financial stewards of the organization.

b. Review FY26 Budget

J. Chamberlain presented a slightly adjusted budget from what was shared in May 2025 to account for new information available from preliminary FY25 year-end. Additionally, the financials team is suggesting a modified audit/review cycle to get us on a 3-year cycle of audit and reviews (x2). Chamberlain also hired an organizational development consultant to help review and formalize our organizational structure.

Using the FY26 Budget as an outline, J. Chamberlain described WiLS' main revenue sources as an independent 501c3 organization, and gave an overview of our main expense areas.

Discussion: M. Ottenad asked why the staff retirement model is setup the way it is, and not something else, such as a match? J. Chamberlain shared that this model was chosen for sustainability- staff are aware that there may be years where a contribution is not possible. It was asked if the travel line was for staff development/continuing education. J. Chamberlain explained that travel is for those reasons including project work and conferences.

c. June 2025 preliminary financials

T. Klement shared the current June 2025 (FY25 year-end) balance sheet and budget with actuals. We continue to maintain an excellent current asset-to-liability ratio. We finished FY25 very strong with higher-than-expected investment returns and exceeding every revenue target. We also kept our FY25 expenses largely within budget.

Discussion: M. Ottenad asked for clarification on why the office supplies line is over budget. J. Chamberlain noted that WiLS began renting out a storage unit in Madison.

J. Chamberlain also further explained that the capital funds for Recollection Wisconsin and WPLC are donations collected by WiLS on each group's behalf, as the fiscal sponsor for these groups; and these funds need to be reflected in the budget. T. Klement also noted that negatives in the P&L sheet are due to the timing of billing and payments.

8. Director's Report

J. Chamberlain referred the board to her written report and asked for any questions or comments. It's been a great summer at WiLS, and we are gearing up for an active fall with several new projects kicking off.

S. Gold shared further information on the UW-Madison iSchool practicum student who is joining WiLS this semester: they will be working with WiLS staff members in different capacities to learn about library

consortium work.

9. Presentation: Culture Keepers Collective Update

Erin Hughes, Digital and Community Outreach Archivist, shared a project update on the Culture Keepers Collective and Convening.

[Slides](#)

The Culture Keepers Collective is administered by WiLS and led by an all Native advisory council. The Collective encompasses the ongoing work of the Mukurtu Midwest Hub alongside other digital projects, including grant initiatives that provide support to tribal libraries, archives, and museums.

Key Activities over the past year include:

- Finished the NEH Grant - Curating Indigenous Digital Collections in the fall of 2024
- Attended the opening of Waagax Hakiruxaraxara Hosto (Ho-Chunk Nation Library)
- Held monthly coffee hours
- Received funding from the Green Bay Packers Foundation
- Received NEH Grant for a Roving Archivist - terminated in April
- Submitted IMLS Grant, notified it wouldn't be considered because of funding cuts

In early May, more than 65 tribal librarians, archivists, museum curators, and cultural heritage professionals from across the Great Lakes region gathered at Legendary Waters Resort & Casino in Red Cliff Nation for the 2025 Culture Keepers Convening – a three-day event focused on community-building, knowledge exchange, and cultural stewardship.

In Fall 2024, the Advisory Council membership expanded and is continuing to bring on new voices. One of the goals moving forward is to formalize the council's structure to better support the group's mission. To aid in this, they've also set strategic priorities for 2025 to 2028, which include: Foster Collaborative Partnerships and Community Engagement; Financial Sustainability and Organizational Management; and Empower TALM Staff and Strengthen TALM capacity.

In the coming year, we'll focus on evaluating and strengthening our current collaborations, expanding our audience, and deepening community engagement.

Discussion: R. Anhalt asked for more information on what the Advisory Council does. E. Hughes shared that the group meets four times per year for about an hour, and meeting materials are shared out ahead of time. An example of something they have worked on recently was to help draft messaging related to funding cuts to project work.

Anyone interested in subscribing to the mailing list can sign up [here](#).

10. Ideas to Action Grant Awards

S. Gold thanked the Ideas to Action committee members, Frank Foss; Kim Olson-Kopp; Jennifer Gurske; and Jennifer Follett for serving on the committee this year to help with selection. We had the largest pool of applications to date, making it a challenging decision. We were impressed with the quality of submissions, and it was a difficult decision to make.

The committee is recommending the awarding of the following nine grants, totaling \$40,000 in awards.

- Ridgeland Area Library - *Read, Paint, Quilt: A Celebration of Local Art*

- America's Black Holocaust Museum and the Dr. James Cameron Legacy Foundation - *Expanding Access to Black History: Digitizing the Beckum-Stapleton Little League and ABHM Archival Collections*
- Ashland High School Library & Makerspace - *Anishinaabe Handcraft Literacy*
- Burlington Public Library - *Compassion Kits @ Your Library*
- Edgerton Public Library - *Monthly A1C and Blood Pressure Testing*
- Ho-Chunk Nation Museum and Cultural Center - *Walls for Community Art Shows*
- Racine Public Library - *Racine Participatory Defense Hub*
- Chilton Elementary and Middle School Libraries - *UNPLUG and CONNECT-Screen Free Week*
- Prairie Lakes Library System - *Passport Picks: Check Out the World*

S. Schultz asked how A1C testing would be handled in Edgerton Public Library's proposal; S. Gold shared that they are planning scheduled clinics. The committee is excited about the variety of projects that have been selected. There were many great ideas, and the need is high; it will be interesting to see how many applications we receive next year. R. Anhalt asked how submissions are selected, and K. Olson-Kopp shared that there is a grading rubric used.

S. Miller moved to approve the recommended Ideas to Action projects, M. King seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

S. Gold shared that some of this year's applications were short on important information needed to select the proposed project, and that communications back to these submissions will include a push to reapply in a future year. Looking ahead, the application process will be refined, with additional parameters and guidance on projects that will be accepted. Additionally, we are considering a process that can address repeat submissions.

Additionally, the Ideas to Action grant has always been capped at \$5,000; WiLS is considering exploring opportunities for WiLS' vendor partners to also sponsor grant awards. The Board supports this idea, noting that this will strengthen vendor partnerships and can work as marketing for these vendors. It was asked if the process would be to accept projects then ask vendors to sponsor a specific project, or if WiLS would approach the vendor first? S. Gold shared that the idea would be to approach the vendors for a general sponsorship; and maybe it would be Ideas to Action has grant-funded projects and sponsored projects. M. Ottenad suggested a leveled sponsorship. S. Miller shared that, working with vendors, they look for less recognition than would be expected. The Board couldn't identify a downside to this idea; rather it fits WiLS' mission, it identifies and fills a need for WiLS members, and helps build a collaborative relationship with WiLS' vendor partners.

The Board determined to establish a subcommittee to explore and refine this idea. Volunteers are: S. Miller, S. Schultz, M. Ottenad, T. Saecker, and J. Follett

J. Chamberlain asked what the Board feels is a good ratio for applications received and grants awarded. J. Follett suggested a tiered approach, or a funding match; some way that WiLS could potentially still support projects even if WiLS can't support in full. The Board was supportive of repeat applications year-over-year, with a preference for selecting projects from organizations that had not received an Ideas to Action grant previously. J. Chamberlain noted that each Ideas to Action award also has a WiLS staff

liaison (by volunteer), so the number of granted awards impacts staff capacity; the amount of staff time varies based on the project and the needs of their staff- it can range as due-date reminders from regularly-scheduled meetings to discuss progress and needs. S. Schultz asked if libraries with grant writers on staff might have better chances for receiving funds? S. Gold shared that the application process was created in such a way to keep it simple for anyone to be able to apply. J. Chamberlain shared that in previous years, WiLS hosted open meeting times to answer questions and help guide applicants; it might be good to offer these sessions again. B. Weston agreed that this would be helpful: it can help refine or reframe the project in-mind. R. Anhalt asked if staff would still be able to sustain as liaisons if vendor partnerships did bring in more sponsorships? This is a great consideration, and something that the subcommittee can evaluate and address.

11. Approve Data Collection Policy

The board saw this policy revision at our last meeting and had some follow-up questions. Namely the board wanted assurance that any 3rd party vendors we work with meet our policy requirements.

Jennifer Chamberlain met with Kim Kiesewetter and confirmed that:

- a. We rarely collect PII in the first place. When we do, it's always separated from survey results and destroyed after we collect the needed information. Example of this is when a community survey participation incentive is offered. Most data we collect is demographic, and not considered PII.
- b. We store data in aggregate almost exclusively.
- c. SurveyMonkey and Dropbox are the 3rd party tools we use, and we do not store results in SurveyMonkey. Dropbox meets encryption standards. Again, though, there is little to no storage of personally identifiable information for our purposes.

A. Prellwitz moved to approve the Data Collection Policy, S. Schultz seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

12. The Board Year Ahead

- J. Gurske shared a reminder that we review the WiLS bylaws every three years. Our committee is assembled and we have meetings scheduled for October to start our review. We will communicate with the board on our progress and hope to have a revised set of bylaws for your consideration in the spring.
- J. Chamberlain shared that she will be inviting staff to meetings throughout the year to offer Project and Service Spotlights. On deck is cooperative purchasing, consulting, and an update on How we Work at WiLS - our favorite tools and organizational structure. If board members have suggestions for things you'd like to know more about, please don't hesitate to ask.
- 401K discretionary contribution consideration - Last year, the board implemented a discretionary retirement plan contribution that the board can revisit annually. Because we had another year-end surplus, J. Chamberlain will be working with T. Klement and the finance committee to bring the board a proposal for distribution this coming year, following a completed audit review.

13. Wrap Up & Next Meeting

J. Gurske asked everyone to share in one word something they learned, appreciated, struck your curiosity, or that you're really excited about from today's meeting. Comments were: grants, Coda, new thought partners, grants, hell no, Murkutu, team atmosphere, Recollection Wisconsin, connections,

Newspaper Digitization Initiative, growth, connections, energy, convening, Culture Keepers, excited (vibing!).

S. Miller moved to end the meeting, K. Olson-Kopp seconded. No discussion. Motion passed.

The meeting ended at 2:45pm.

Next meeting will be via Zoom on November 4, 2025.