



COUNTY OF MARATHON
WAUSAU, WISCONSIN

OFFICIAL NOTICE AND AGENDA

**of a meeting of the Marathon County Public Library Task Force Library System Inquiry,
Monday November 16, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.
Library Headquarters, Wausau Community Room.**

The meeting site identified above will be open to the public. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health directives, Marathon County encourages Library Task Force members and the public to attend this meeting remotely. To this end, instead of attendance in person, Library Task Force members and the public may attend this meeting by **computer or telephone conference**. If Library Task Force members or members of the public cannot attend remotely, Marathon County requests that appropriate safety measures, including adequate social distancing, be utilized by all in-person attendees. Persons wishing to attend the meeting by computer or phone may log or call into the **conference beginning ten (10) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following website: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/960786989> or number: [1 866 899 4679](tel:18668994679). Access Code for dialing in: 960-786-989.**

When you enter the conference, **PLEASE PUT YOUR COMPUTER AND PHONE ON MUTE!**

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Public Comments**
3. **Approval of Minutes**
4. **Report and discussion of meeting with County Supervisor Michelle Van Krey**
5. **Discussion of Shannon Schultz’s report**
6. **Discussion of letters received from Wisconsin Valley Library Service members (directors and board members) and others.**
7. **Discussion of task force members’ reasons for either remaining with Wisconsin Valley Library Service or moving to South Central Library Service**
8. **Adjournment**

Signed: /s/ Mark Arend
Committee Chair or Designee

***NOTICE - Pursuant to Wis. Stat. Section 19.84(2) and (3), notice is hereby given to the public that a quorum of the Marathon County Public Library Board of Trustees may be in attendance. No action will be taken.**

***All items on the agenda are considered action items, regardless of action taken.**

***All times are approximate and subject to change**

“Any person planning to attend this meeting who needs some type of special accommodation in order to participate should call the Library Administration Office at 715-261-7213.”

FAXED TO: Wausau Daily Herald, City Pages, and
FAXED TO: Other Media Groups
FAXED BY: H. Wilde
FAXED DATE: November 10, 2020
FAXED TIME: 12:35 p.m.

NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE

BY: _____
DATE: _____
TIME: _____

Meeting of the Marathon County Public Library Task Force Library System Inquiry, Monday, October 19, 2020. Library Headquarters, Wausau Community Room.

Present: Mark Arend, Gary Beastrom (remote), Rebecca Frisch (remote), Sharon Hunter, Shannon Schultz (remote at 11:02 a.m.)

Excused: Scott Winch

Others: Ralph Illick, Leah Giordano (remote), Thomas O'Neill, Heather Wilde, Ben Deitz, 13 remote visitors

The meeting was called to order at 11:01 by Mark Arend.
Mark Arend welcomed visitors to the meeting.

Public Comments – Task Force Member Frisch wanted to mention that she and several members of the task force have received several letters over the summer and recently. Task Force Member Frisch is a little confused regarding the role of other members of WVLS and the work the Task Force is supposed to do according to the charter. I would like to have a specific agenda item in November as I have some specific questions I would like directed directly to the Library Board of Trustees. I would like to talk about the relevance about the letters and the work we are to be doing. Mark Arend would like the agenda item emailed to him.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Sharon Hunter to approve the MCPL Task Force Library System Inquiry minutes from September 21, 2020. Seconded by Gary Beastrom. Motion carried.

Review and Discussion of SWOT Analysis

Mark Arend went through the SWOT Analysis which was provided to the Task Force. This document lists the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for SCLS and WVLS.

Discussion of November topic: Advantages and Disadvantages

Mark will get on the November agenda Shannon's report and have her send it to the Task Force Members in plenty of time so you are able to digest all of the information. Members of the Task Force are to send Mark what they think are their top three (3) or four (4) most important points for MCPL moving or staying the advantages and disadvantages for each.

Adjournment

A Motion was made by Rebecca Frisch to adjourn the meeting at 12:06 p.m. Seconded by Gary Beastrom. Motion carried.

/s/ Mark Arend
Committee Chair or Designee

Note: These minutes subject to approval at the next Marathon County Public Library Task Force Library System Inquiry meeting scheduled for November 16, 2020.

Meeting of the Marathon County Public Library Task Force Library System Inquiry, Monday, September 21, 2020. Library Headquarters, Wausau Community Room.

Present: Mark Arend, Gary Beastrom (remote), Sharon Hunter, Scott Winch (remote at 11:04 a.m.)

Excused: Rebecca Frisch, Shannon Schultz

Others: Ralph Illick, Matt Derpinghaus, Leah Giordano (remote), Thomas O'Neill, Heather Wilde, Ben Deitz, 14 remote visitors

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 by Mark Arend.
Mark Arend welcomed visitors to the meeting.

Public Comments – None

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Sharon Hunter to approve the MCPL Task Force Library System Inquiry minutes from August 17, 2020. Seconded by Gary Beastrom. Motion carried.

Discussion of Statements/Letters from MCPL Library Staff

The first letter is from Director Ralph Illick. Are there any comments?

Gary Beastrom commented that it is pretty obvious from all of the letters from the staff that they are very much in favor of the switch for a variety of reasons. One question I would have, we are looking at an extra \$100,000 to join South Central versus WVLS. Is that in the budget? Does that need to be budgeted countywide? We are expecting a \$5,000,000 shortfall, are we being good stewards of our money with the switch.

Mark Arend stated, it is too late to pull out in 2021. If the change were to go in, it would be for 2022. Knowing that it is a year out, questions were asked of Director Illick.

Director Illick spoke of the costs. It is accurate that the costs would be greater in SCLS, it is also true that we would need fewer staff. We would make up the difference in the costs through attrition and reorganizing. We could be spending less by going to SCLS because we wouldn't need the same staff. SCLS would be doing our cataloging and with the technical assistance they would give us. We would be saving an estimated amount of \$200,000 a year with salary and benefits.

The second letter is from Business Manager Tom O'Neill. Are there any comments?

The third letter is from the Library Services Team. Are there any comments?

The fourth letter is from Library Support Services Manager Matthew Derpinghaus. Are there any comments? Gary Beastrom commented on all the letters. They are all singing the same song, just a different tune. Appreciate the specificity of the comments from the different staff. Scott Winch also agrees with Gary. The trend is the same with the letters that were received. Sharon Hunter also agrees and appreciates the time and thought staff put into the letters.

Mark Arend asked the committee if they have additional questions for library staff or if they would like additional information from library staff.

Gary Beastrom had a question. MCPL is currently serving as the resource library for most of Northeast Wisconsin. Can someone define for me what exactly a resource library is and what it does for these? What happens to that if we switch to SCLS? Can we continue to be

their resource library or do we not and if not, who is their resource library? I have received emails from various librarians from the north and northeast. I guess it has been sticking with me throughout this process as to what happens to them.

Mark Arend commented, that is a good question. That has come up, and I have asked Shannon Schultz to speak to that at the next meeting. The question came up too late to make the agenda for this meeting. I've asked Shannon from the DPI, would she speak to that at the next meeting. We will make sure that the questions are noted in the minutes. Scott Winch questioned if the other libraries up north would be able to join SCLS if we made the switch. Mark Arend wanted to leave that discussion until the next meeting. There are a number of things that could happen if MCPL made the switch. Shannon will be double checking the statutes because there are mentions of resource libraries in the statutes, she will be covering the whole thing.

Discussion of October topic: SWOT Analysis

The Task Force has received some examples or possible questions to consider to do the SWOT Analysis template. Please complete the analysis over the next couple of weeks and send it back to Mark Arend. The information will be compiled into one document with hopes to be sent out before the October meeting.

Adjournment

A Motion was made by Scott Winch to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 a.m. Seconded by Gary Beastro. Motion carried.

/s/ Mark Arend
Committee Chair or Designee

November 3, 2020

MCPL Task Force:

This report addresses the impact of a MCPL departure on the remaining libraries in WVLS, including the options they would have, and how they would continue to receive services. It also addresses the ability for MCPL to serve as a resource library and whether other libraries would be able to join SCLS if MCPL changed its affiliation. The statutes, system staff, library directors, and both online catalogs were consulted to obtain these answers.

As part of my responsibilities at the state library agency (DPI), I have frequent contact with all 16 public library system directors and various system staff, and I know many of the 381 public library directors in our state. I hold both of these systems in high regard; both are excellent systems staffed by dedicated people, and neither have recent history of deficiency in response to the system effectiveness statement, as required on each library board's annual report to DPI. At least according to their annual reports, member libraries are satisfied with both systems.

A library board is not legally required to provide justification when changing system affiliations. Per [s. 43.18\(1\)](#) of the statutes, a participating municipality or a county may withdraw from the system by adoption of a resolution by a two-thirds vote of its governing body, at least 6 months prior to the close of the system's fiscal year. A library would first have to withdraw from its current library system before affiliating with another, and then remain a member for no less than 3 years before it could make a change again.

The most significant impacts to the remaining libraries, if MCPL were to depart by this method, would stem from WVLS losing the funds from both the membership fees from MCPL (\$80,000) and the reduction in state aid (\$375,000) that the system would qualify for. Such loss would require WVLS to reduce the services it could offer, and some staff that offer them. WVLS has discussed the possibility of reductions in such services as the number of database subscriptions, scholarships, professional development opportunities, and spending on the OverDrive Advantage collection, as examples. Such action would not only reduce the services available to the remaining libraries, but would also likely increase their fees, as they currently rely upon MCPL to drive cooperative project costs and other fees down. In other words, they would likely have to pay more for less, which increases the inequity in that region of the state-- something that the Wisconsin library community has spent years trying to repair through the Public Library System Redesign (PLSR) project. The mission of the PLSR project is to ensure all Wisconsin public libraries have

the capacity to provide equitable access to excellent library services regardless of the race, ethnicity, income, gender, or employment status of the people they serve, or *their location within the state*. A reduction in services would push WVLS libraries farther from this goal.

The remaining libraries expressed that they would also miss MCPL's leadership, not just as the system's resource library, but as a larger library with more staff. As a larger library, other libraries rely upon MCPL staff to serve on system committees and in other capacities, in ways that staff at smaller libraries cannot because they lack the staffing that would allow them to take time away from their libraries. If MCPL departs, these libraries would have to find a way to participate more fully and directly on system committees; this can be very challenging for the small libraries in particular, but also for understaffed libraries of any size.

MCPL will not be able to continue as the resource library for WVLS if it changes affiliation because, per [s. 43.16\(2\)](#), the resource library must be a member public library that meets specific requirements (it must have a collection size of at least 100,000 volumes, be open to the public at least 50 hours each week, and it must employ at least one full-time, permanent reference librarian with an MLS). If no member library meets those requirements, then WVLS must contract with either the academic library with the largest operating budget in the system area who meets the requirements, or with a resource library in an adjacent system-- in this case, the choices are limited to the libraries Appleton, Brown County, Eau Claire, La Crosse, Madison, or Superior.

None of the remaining WVLS libraries currently meet these requirements; however, one of them could see this as an opportunity to serve as the regional resource library. Platteville Public Library provides this service and leadership for the South West Library System despite not having the collection size to be the sole resource library. SWLS contracts with Madison Public to fulfill the statutory requirement.

Remaining libraries will likely be damaged by the withdrawal of MCPL's collections from the ILS; however, MCPL is a net borrower, which means that it fills its own patron requests for items through the use of the other libraries' materials more than their own. The smaller libraries are net lenders, which means that they lend more materials to other libraries like MCPL more than they borrow. That is not unique to MCPL; large libraries commonly borrow from others more than they lend. Madison Public is a net borrower as well. Regardless, the loss of those materials will increase the pressure on local libraries to have stronger, more self-sufficient collections, which, of course, costs money.

In response to the question of whether other WVLS libraries could follow suit: Counties are the building blocks of public library systems; any change in system affiliation precipitated by this one would need to take place at the county level, per [s. 43.18\(1\)\(ar\)](#). For this to happen, the municipal governing bodies with libraries that make up at least 80 percent of the total population of all the municipalities with libraries within a county would have to approve withdrawal from the system. If that happened, then all libraries

within that county would be required to change system affiliation. That said, libraries whose municipal borders cross county lines-- such as Abbotsford, Colby, and Dorchester-- have the option to change their declaration of home county, which, in effect, could allow them to choose which system to affiliate with. While not truly an exception, the system borders align in this particular circumstance, allowing these libraries that choice, as only municipal borders are considered when determining home county (the physical location of the library building is irrelevant). Generally, however, the decision to change systems may only be done county by county, not library by library.

The MCPL board is not legally required to take any of these effects into consideration when making its decision, but the decision should make sense for MCPL, and for Marathon County residents most of all. I would like to offer some clarifications, and recommend that the MCPL board consider them when making its decision.

Wisconsin's public library systems were founded in 1971 with the belief that, while library service is a matter of statewide concern, each region has its own unique culture and set of circumstances. The MCPL board should consider any possible effects of affiliating with a system outside its own region.

We have heard about the comparison between the number of items each system has in its shared ILS. When considering the size of collection, the board should also consider the number of users in the system, and user habits. While SCLS has a larger collection, it also has many more users, and those users are accustomed to the high demand of materials in the system and actively place holds to get their items. This does not appear to be the case in WVLS. In a comparison of holds queues for 25 random fiction and nonfiction books on the NYT bestseller list, WVLS shows, on average, fewer than 2 holds per item on the bestseller list, while SCLS shows more than 5 holds per item on the same titles. Many factors can affect the wait time, including reduced transportation efforts, population density, and frequency of patron visits. However, the maximum number of holds on an individual item was 107 for WVLS, and 669 in SCLS. This difference in user habits may come as a shock to MCPL patrons, many of whom just want their items and do not care about internal processes or system affiliations. A culture change of this magnitude will require a well-organized public relations plan as MCPL educates and trains its patrons in the use of a new online catalog.

Connection with the UW was presented as a benefit of changing systems. I am not sure I understand this, because the UW is not in the SCLS ILS, and MCPL would still need to go through interlibrary loan to access its collections, just as it does now. That process would not change, and nothing prohibits MCPL from developing such relationships now.

The MCPL board should be aware that a top priority of PLSR implementation is the development of a new statewide delivery model. Any changes in this model, which will be determined in collaboration with the statewide delivery network participants including the 16 public library systems, might alter the role that SCLS plays in statewide delivery. At

this point, it would be difficult to predict how that would impact delivery cost or service, but such change should be considered when making this decision.

While none of these factors is insurmountable, the MCPL board should take them all into consideration to fully understand the effects they may have on those who reside in Marathon County. If the board is undecided about system affiliation at this time, then it may wish to explore these issues further. If, however, the board is certain that MCPL will change systems, it may wish to further consider whether now is the right time to do so. The Wisconsin Library Association's Library Development and Legislation Committee is aware of legislative concern over funding of public libraries in response to the negative public perception of library closures during the pandemic. The MCPL board should carefully consider the stability of its support from the county at this time, so that it can make a sustainable decision that is in the best interest of the residents of Marathon County.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon M Schultz

Shannon Schultz, Public Library Administration Consultant
Division for Libraries & Technology

Summary of Comments Received from WVLS library Directors and Trustees

- Decision will affect the other WVLS libraries
- Praise of WVLS services and staff
- MCPL will lose influence in the system: now they are the largest library with the most influence—at SCLS they will be a smaller fish in a larger pond.
 - New V-Cat voting structure gives MCPL more voice.
- Effect on Marathon Co. economy
 - Waltco layoffs?
 - \$908,691 in system funding
- MCPL will pay more to SCLS than they pay to WVLS.

	SCLS	WVLS	Difference between SCLS & WVLS
ILS costs	\$105,037	\$74,738	\$30,299
Other system service costs	\$73,744	\$37,851	\$35,893
	\$178,781	\$112,589	\$66,192
Rent to MCPL	\$15,000	\$42,153	-\$27,153
Other Income to MCPL	\$6,749	\$26,900	-\$20,151
	\$21,749	\$69,053	-\$47,304
Net cost (total costs minus income)	\$157,032	\$43,536	\$113,496

- There will be significant ILS migration costs in addition to the increase in annual fees.
- MCPL likely to get less attention from SCLS than WVLS
- MCPL has not articulated why it is dissatisfied with WVLS services or why it wants to move to SCLS.
- With only 6 one-hour meetings the task force has not fully discussed the issue.
- Is this the time to make a major decision like this: COVID, general economy, public funding concerns, PLSR.
- We have not investigated member library satisfaction with either WVLS or SCLS.

- MCPL does not have a strategic plan and therefore cannot reliably say whether either system could respond to their needs.
- Given the COVID pandemic and economic uncertainty, is this the best time to make a move like this?
- MCPL has not adequately discussed their dissatisfaction with WVLS and tried to work with them to improve the situation.
- WVLS can better understand the needs of Marathon Co residents and MCPL because they are local.