

Walworth County Library Planning Committee
County Board Room 114
Walworth County Government Center
100 W. Walworth Street, Elkhorn, Wisconsin
July 27, 2021

Facilitator Steve Ohs called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Committee Members Present: Susan Pruessing, Nancy Russell, Emily Kornak, Walter Burkhalter, Edgar “Skip” Mosshamer, Jill Rodriguez Peter Wautlet, Catherine “Katie” James

Excused: Brian Broga

Walworth County Administrator Ex-Officio Member: Mark Luberda

Public: None

Agenda: Skip Mosshamer moved and Emily Kornak seconded to approve the agenda. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Approval of Previous Minutes: Skip Mosshamer moved and Katie James seconded to approve the minutes of July 13, 2021. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Public Comment: None

Unfinished Business:

A. Rough Draft of Plan Document:

Following discussions from the last meeting, Steve Ohs has been working on the Statement of Purpose for the draft Plan of Library Service. He has also added background information, information on regional library system membership, information on current library services to county residents, and embedded Walworth County “Fast Facts from 2019”. A graph showing municipal support per capita vs. library has also been added because it is recommended by DPI. The consensus of the committee is to have Steve Ohs continue working on this draft plan document.

New Business:

A. Library Feedback Review:

Steve Ohs sent out to all of the Walworth County directors a process update and the various funding models that are being considered by this committee. Directors can find additional information on the Walworth County website. Steve hasn't received any feedback from the library directors. Emily Kornak noted that the directors have spent time at their monthly advisory committee meetings talking about the funding formula. The outcome of the formula changes will impact the libraries differently. Emily feels that the best solution is to stick to the formula in the statutes with libraries each receiving 100% funding reimbursement.

Katie James went out to several of the libraries and talked to the directors. They talked about the background on the formula, how they think the formula problems started and what their preferred funding model is. None of the libraries want to lose funding nor do they want other libraries to lose funding. Walter Burkhalter noted that this is a reimbursement of expenditures by the libraries for county usage.

B. Funding formula for use in 2022 County Plan of Library Service:

Skip Mosshamer is concerned that the committee will not be able to make a decision this evening. He also recommends that the formula be reviewed every year for a few years. His preference is for Model 2 or Model 4. He prefers Model 4.

Emily Kornak asked how we justify any library being reimbursed more than 100%. She understands that Walworth County total funding has been at 100% reimbursement but determining the reallocation of those funds will be difficult to justify.

Jill Rodriguez stated that the former formula needed fixing and that looking at trends might be a good idea. However we need to make a decision. There will probably always be disagreement to some degree on the allocation of the funds. We should put something in place and then look at it in another year. From listening to discussions at LLS Board meetings, Jill thinks libraries are expecting 100% funding and we're fortunate that Walworth County is willing to fund the full 100%.

Steve Ohs stated DPI recommends including a "next steps for future planning section" in the document itself. This would be a good place to put recommendations for the future.

Katie James stated the Model 4 was preferred by Matheson library director Lisa Selje. Katie feels that the resources a library provides should be a factor in determining funding. She would also like these discussions to be held earlier in the year for budget purposes. March or April would be preferred. Mark Lubberda stated that normally that is the case. This year was different because the previous problem needed to be addressed first and then a whole new committee needed to be appointed.

Walter Burkhalter wishes he would have seen the problem sooner and he has no problem with having an interim formula in the plan. The goal should be to get to 100% reimbursement as calculated in the statutes. There shouldn't be any library getting more than 100%, but it may take time to get to the 100% level. The previous plan also listed required standards in the document. The libraries are strongly in favor of removing the standards from the Plan of Library Service and the standards should not be a factor in how much funding the library gets.

Skip Mosshamer asked if digital resources can be used as a part of the calculations and he also would like to move the date of the meetings to March or April each year.

Jill Rodriguez stated that this funding formula is only to reimburse for the cost of services to people who don't pay for a library through municipal taxes. Maybe libraries are being underfunded by their municipality; advocacy and public relations are also important to funding for a library.

Mark Lubberda commented that he will be reviewing the results of the committee's recommendation and will give those results to the Walworth County Board. His focus was to make sure the funding is at least 70%. But he did some computations on his own using the data given. He found that in all of the models any deviation from the full 100% funding leaves the smaller libraries getting the biggest overall percentage decrease in total reimbursement. Any deviation from the full 100% reimbursement to all will require an explanation to the full Board. Mark Lubberda will need to provide that explanation to the County Board.

Walter Burkhalter stated that electronic circulation can't be used at this time because there is no way to determine where users actually live. There is no breakdown by municipality in electronic circulation numbers. Libraries are encouraged to report electronic usage to DPI though. Steve Ohs noted that vendor platforms are not consistent so the LLS staff would have to be certain to get the correct information counted for electronic circulation. If the System is the arbiter of that information as to what gets counted and what doesn't get counted, there may become friction between the libraries. Regional library systems function best when libraries trust one another.

Peter Wautlet commented that the predecessors put a funding model in place that they thought was equitable. Peter doesn't want to cause harm, and is looking at the Model 4 as the best scenario. Walter noted that the previous formula did cause harm and that this committee needs to be diligent in creating the new formula.

Skip Mosshamer moved to adopt Model #4 for the next year. Katie James seconded the motion. There was additional discussion about whether the final plan should be for only a one year term or whether the plan could be written so that the formula would be reviewed after one year. Mark Lubberda stated the committee would need to come back in a year to review the plan. The current committee members will be asked to remain on the committee or be reappointed if necessary. The libraries will need to understand that the committee talked about this in depth and understands the implications. The committee is making what they believe is the best choice that was appropriate and balanced. The motion was reread. All were in favor and the motion carried.

C. Identify next steps:

Steve Ohs will bring the plan back again with general language passages and a method to see what has been revised. Steve asked consent to apply this formula in the plan. Mark Lubberda indicated that he has heard sufficient discussion to explain to the Walworth County Board that the decision was made to continue the historical basis of funding by calculating the amount over 70% minimum according to the methods prescribed here and that the committee would like to transition fully to 100% funding for all libraries using gradual steps.

Mark Lubberda would like discussion at the next meeting to also focus on any changes to the language concerning the use of standards. If they are eliminated, there will need to be an ordinance change and an explanation why the standards are being removed.

Next meeting: Steve Ohs will send out a doodle poll to find a couple of dates for the next meetings.

Adjournment: Emily Kornak made a motion to adjourn and Skip Mosshamer seconded. The committee adjourned at 7:39 pm.

Notes recorded by:

Janice Martin, Office Manager for Lakeshores Library System