COUNTY OF MARATHON
WAUSAU, WISCONSIN

OFFICIAL NOTICE AND AGENDA
of a meeting of the Marathon County Public Library Task Force Library System Inquiry,
Monday September 21, 2020 at 11:00 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/324014173 or number: 1 877 309 2073. Access Code for dialing in: 324-014-173.**

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

<u>**AGENDA**</u>

1.   **Call to Order**
2.   **Public Comments**
3.   **Approval of Minutes**
4.   **Discussion of Statements/Letters from MCPL Library Staff**
5.   **Discussion of October topic: SWOT Analysis**
6.   **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	**NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE**
FAXED TO: Other Media Groups	
FAXED BY: H. Wilde	**BY:**
FAXED DATE: September 15, 2020	**DATE:** _____
FAXED TIME: 4:10 p.m.	**TIME:** _____

Meeting of the Marathon County Public Library Task Force Library System Inquiry, Monday, August 17, 2020. Library Headquarters, Wausau Community Room.

Present: Mark Arend, Gary Beastrom (remote), Rebecca Frisch (remote), Sharon Hunter, Shannon Schultz (remote)

Excused: Scott Winch

Others: Ralph Illick, Matt Derpinghaus, Leah Giordano, Thomas O'Neill, Heather Wilde, Ben Deitz, 12 remote visitors

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

Public Comments – Public Comments have been submitted and posted on the MCPL website under the Task Force webpage.

Approval of Minutes
A motion was made by Sharon Hunter to approve the MCPL Task Force Library System Inquiry minutes from July 20, 2020. Seconded by Gary Beastrom. Motion carried.

System Culture and Leadership
A question was sent in advance to the two system directors. WVLS submitted a written document to the Task Force, they don't feel they need to rehash what was submitted. SCLS did not submit anything in writing, they will answer the question verbally. SCLS has conducted annual onsite visits since 2008 at each member library. All these visits and information are kept track in a spreadsheet. We ask a maximum of five (5) questions at the visits. The individual reports are shared with the SCLS Board of Trustees every month, four (4) to five (5) reports at a time and then every year we do an overall trend. We also have a library innovation subcommittee and there is an idea submission area. We do surveys all the time, we have director meetings four (4) times a year. During COVID we are making personal phone calls to see how things are going. During this time we are still doing the annual visits, but are doing them virtually.

Discussion and Comparison of the two systems
The Library Director talked with two consultants who were recommend by Marathon County. Each of the consultants felt that the library's leadership team could put together their own perspectives.
Becky Frisch reviewed the Task Force Charter and wanted to make sure the take force is addressing the bullets under Methodology.
   • Interview current library staff to determine what services are needed to enhance the library
   • Determine which library system can best provide these services to MCPL
   • Complete a Strength/Weakness/Opportunity/Threat (SWOT) analysis for each system.
   • Provide a list of pros and cons of each system to the Board of Trustees in June 2020.
The Library Board could possibly extend the task force until the end of the year 2020.

A Motion was made by Gary Beastrom to present to the Library Board of Trustees to extend the Task Force to the end of the 2020, but no longer than 2020. Seconded by Shannon Schultz. Motion carried.

September: Staff Report, October: SWOT Analysis, November: Pros and Cons, December: Final Decision
The SWOT analysis will be done by everyone and compiled by one person and then discussed at the October meeting.

The SWOT analysis and comments from staff will be sent out to task force members. Please let Ralph know if you have follow-up questions or would like to speak with MCPL staff.

Possible recommendation to the Marathon County Public Library Board of Trustees
No recommendation at this time. This agenda item will be discussed in November or December.

Becky Frisch will be retiring on September 3, but is willing to stay on the task force as a citizen of Marathon County.

Adjournment

A Motion was made by Rebecca Frisch to adjourn the meeting at 11:46 a.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 September 21, 2020.

Meeting of the Marathon County Public Library Task Force Library System Inquiry, Monday, July 20, 2020. Library Headquarters, Wausau Community Room.

Present: Mark Arend (remote), Gary Beastrom, Rebecca Frisch (remote), Sharon
                Hunter, Shannon Schultz (remote at 11:06 a.m.)

Excused: Scott Winch

Others: Ralph Illick, Matt Derpinghaus, Leah Giordano (remote), Thomas O'Neill,
                Heather Wilde, Ben Deitz, 7 remote visitors

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

Public Comments – Temporarily Suspended

Approval of Minutes
A motion was made by Sharon Hunter to approve the MCPL Task Force Library System Inquiry minutes from June 15, 2020. Seconded by Gary Beastrom. Motion carried.

Review of WVLS & SCLS Governance and Decision-Making documents
WVLS is currently working through a process of changing their voting model from one person, one vote to a weighted voting model. This is where a larger library will have more votes than a smaller library.
Becky Frisch gave an example of the WVLS System Board. They are like the Marathon County Board of Supervisors in making the decisions for what goes on for WVLS. The committees and counsels are subgroups working on different areas. The WVLS System Board would have the power to approve the budget. Mark Arend clarified the WVLS System Board is appointed by the counties, it is either the County Board Chair, County Executive or County Administrator and approved by the full County Board. Under statute the number of people on the board is by population, the more populous counties have more votes.
If MCPL did join SCLS, they would have three (3) out of twenty (20) on the System Board. Much of the voting is by clusters, the libraries in a county are considered a cluster. Dane County has more based on their high population. Most counties there is more than one (1) library so they join as one (1) County.
Martha Van Pelt from SCLS pointed out that there are seven (7) counties in SCLS, fifty four (54) member libraries with sixty five (65) sites. Dane County is not a consolidated county, which is what MCPL is. Within Dane County there are twenty (20) independent libraries. Madison is counted as one (1) library, but they have nine (9) locations. Dane County library service is a library that does not have a building, they only do bookmobile. Within Dane County with the twenty (20) libraries they make up sixty percent (60%) of our population, which is why they get more clusters. Based just on the population, Madison has three (3) votes or clusters, and there are sixteen (16) remaining libraries that will be split evenly. Dane County library service provides service to all the unincorporated areas of Dane County, if you don't have a physical building you are served by the bookmobile. Because of that the, library services has two (2) votes due to the high population.

Rebecca Frisch questioned if there is a County in SCLS similar to MCPL. Martha Van Pelt responded that Adams and Portage County are similar because they are consolidated counties.

Mark Arend discussed the cost for services for the systems as the information has been updated from previous months.

Discussion of August Topic: Service to Customers Internal and SWOT Analysis and Summary
This SWOT Analysis is different, the committee is looking at the organizations. Research was done and different types of analysis were found. Questions were developed to guide the committee in doing the SWOT analysis. Complete the SWOT analysis chart in the next two (2) to three (3) weeks and turn back into Mark Arend. The information will be compiled and results will be shared at the August meeting.

Sharon Hunter mentioned that the Task Force was to interview MCPL staff. Should this be done before filling out the SWOT form? Sharon Hunter would like to volunteer Rebecca Frisch to head up the interviews and maybe the committee could come up with some questions. Rebecca Frisch mentioned that the County does have trained facilitators and we could possibly ask for help from one (1) of those County resources. The Library Director will talk with County Administration and coordinate with Mark Arend.

A motion was made by Rebecca Frisch to have the Task Force Chair, the Library Director and Rebecca Frisch meet with a County trained Facilitator to determine the technique needed to obtain information from library staff for use by the Task Force. Seconded by Sharon Hunter. Motion carried.

The Task Force members should set aside the SWOT Analysis until after the library staff have been interviewed.

Future Meeting Dates and Topics:
- August 17: Service to Customers Internal and SWOT Analysis and Summary

Adjournment
A Motion was made by Sharon Hunter to adjourn the meeting at 12:09 p.m. Seconded by Gary Beastrom. Motion carried.

                                        /s/ Mark Arend
                                        Committee Chair or Designee

It is my opinion that the Marathon County Public Library would be best served by changing its system membership to the South Central Library System. I base my opinion on several factors.

First, we are significantly larger than any of the other twenty-four libraries in the Wisconsin Valley Library Service. The two next largest libraries in our current consortium are approximately one-quarter of our size. The remaining libraries are a small fraction of our size. The net effect of this logistical reality is that our needs are marginalized when viewed from the perspective of our current system. We have an obligation to ensure that our Marathon County library users receive the very best service for the money that we invest in our system membership, and we should pay our membership fees to a system that has other libraries of similar size, and serves those libraries equally and equitably. My experience during the past ten years has been that we are not a priority in this system. The other MCPL letters to the Task Force cite numerous examples of this reality.

Secondly, our membership in the South Central Library System would give Marathon County library users overnight access to more than three times the number of materials to which they currently can access. We would be connected to the academic center of the state- think of the increased access for students in this region! (Please note: Interlibrary loan access to out-of-system materials requires separate request forms and significant limits to procure. Loans take longer, and quantity limits apply.)The President and CEO of the Greater Wausau Chamber of Commerce agrees with this assessment for reasons related to growth and attracting businesses and professionals to this area.

Last but not least, I have noted to this board repeatedly for several years that the statewide library materials delivery system, based in SCLS, could and should include our building and location as a primary hub for those deliveries. We should be a part of that, and MCPL has the space available to take advantage of that opportunity to help facilitate library services throughout Wisconsin.

I am deliberately avoiding the rancorous conflict that our current system's leadership has attempted to foster during our period of review and reflection. Understand that MCPL is not statutorily required to prevail in a public argument about whether there are "service issues." My leadership team has met with the WVLS leadership three separate times between 2011 and 2019 to express our concerns and dissatisfaction with their support with issues that were important to us. What we have gotten in response has not inspired me to believe we should remain in this system.

I am, and have been, available to any MCPL Board Trustee or Task Force member if they care to better understand or appreciate my own personal experiences with the current system membership. My goal is to guide our library to a better future in a more responsive and capable system. The question I respectfully put forth to the Task Force members and MCPL Board Trustees is that we ask ourselves whether we want to elevate this library to a better future, or do we wish to merely settle?

Ralph Illick
Library Director
Marathon County Public Library

Having been asked for my thoughts on the possibility of contracting with the South Central Library System rather than the Wisconsin Valley Library System, I had to look no further than very current events to represent my eleven years of experience with WVLS. I reviewed the draft 2021 WVLS Budget this last week and noticed some oddities I wanted to understand. My first email questioned having reserves listed as income and the full value of those reserves also listed as expenditures. I pointed out in the body of my email that this appeared to me to be a comingling of balance sheet items with budget items. I further noticed a one third drop in income representing a million dollar change from the prior year's budget. I must mention that the draft budget was presented without a single footnote and no accompanying narrative to explain the catastrophic loss of income. I also noticed that columns on the third page had significant formula errors resulting in totals three times the sum of the three numbers added together. I emailed several questions for clarification. The response I received later that same day thanked me for noticing the formula errors and also explained that; "The IT and LEAN WI budgets are not included in the primary budget because we want the state aid account revenues and expenditures tracked more easily."

There may be several reasons for not including all available information in a budget, but to make the line items easier to track has nothing to do with whether or not something would be listed on a draft budget. No other questions were answered. I was, however, told that WVLS understood that it would be confusing to leave a third of the budget out without making any mention of the change, but that they had made the choice to only include the numbers shortly before submission to the Department of Public Instruction.

It would be easy to think I am pointing to a one-time issue, I am not. This perfectly represents how I have come to expect working with WVLS will go. With eleven years of having experienced inaction, characterized by misleading and redirecting responses, I can say I long ago came to the conclusion that the way to best help Marathon County Public Library move forward has been to not rely on WVLS for assistance or leadership. Efforts to work together have consistently ended with significant time loss and frustration that can easily end with the acceptance of a substantial lowering of expectations rather than the elevation of our community through positive action. I have watched as several new managers and staff members, including me during my first several years here, pointed out that they would show everyone else how they would use their people skills to build a working relationship with WVLS. Without exception, each has concluded after relatively short periods of time that there must be systemic reasons why WVLS is either not interested in, or not capable of, providing the service MCPL pays for and expects.

Having spent my adult life working to make organizations successful, and having studied why struggling organizations work at a fraction of expected throughput, I have come to a few conclusions as to why WVLS has neither the capacity nor apparent interest in utilizing its resources to help MCPL achieve our goals. First, WVLS has extremely limited capacity with fewer than nine employees. The organization chart presented to the task force included a multitude of names and positions from the Wisconsin Governor to employees of other systems in an apparent attempt to embellish limited capacity. No employee of MCPL was able to provide me with any example of any contact they have had with any of the people listed on that page with the exception of employees of WVLS. Even those contacts were defined as extremely minimal since several WVLS employees work from home and have very limited contact with us. When I consider my recent budget experience with what I would characterize as a document defined by accounting non-sense I find myself looking no further than the point of contact's title, "Educational Consultant". With so few people wearing so many hats it would be wrong to expect vocational excellence from anyone who is working in several unrelated positions at the same time. By comparison, I am certified as a non-profit accounting professional (CNAP) with a Bachelor of Science in accounting. I mention this since the South Central Library System has in charge of their accounting office a trained professional who has attained the same CNAP certification. The delivery system at WVLS is managed by an employee in addition to their other responsibilities while the delivery lead at SCLS is managed by a logistics coordinator who learned the trade as a manager at a regional Walgreens distribution center. I want to say it is an unenviable position that the WVLS employees are in when limited training and experience can be confused with a lack of effort. These comments are not to say that they are not working to the best of their ability, but to recognize it is not reasonable to expect excellence from an individual not formally trained in many of the disciplines for which they are responsible.

I would very much like to work with a system focused on, and capable of, serving libraries the size of MCPL. The vast majority of libraries in WVLS are extremely small and they are run by people with little or no industry experience. Those are the people who are probably very well served by the WVLS model. There has been significant mention of the important role MCPL plays in the success of the smaller libraries in the WVLS system which at face value appears to suggest more than is the case. I have thought for years the only value WVLS recognizes in having MCPL in the system is to play the role of benefactor. The citizens of Marathon County continue to spend money for services that that have gone to other counties. The tax paying citizen of Marathon County can no longer afford to subsidize surrounding communities.

There are a great many advantages to be had in joining the SCLS. With so much disruption in our schools and universities we need to provide Marathon County with the best resources available. This may also be a chance to address the so-called brain drain where young people leave our community to never return after leaving to seek out resources in places like Madison. A SCLS connection to Madison may well be the first step toward "brain gain", a program I have read much about where Israel has spent thirty years providing improved resources to youth in a successful effort to keep the best and brightest from leaving. This is a wonderful opportunity.

Tom O'Neill
Library Business Manager

Statement regarding considerations for changing systems from the Library Services Team:

Items available per system: Without considering MCPL holdings, WVLS has roughly 654,000 items available in print holdings. SCLS currently has about 2.75 million print holdings. If we became a part of SCLS, MCPL wouldn't be the primary resource library and our patrons would have many more items to choose from. Also, the types of materials offered would be much more extensive. We would have access to more timely material and a much more expansive range of topics and formats. Because of the relationship to Madison we would have access to academic materials that could help further the education of our community. We would also have access to more items on business trends, areas of job growth and books with an even greater range of viewpoints. Many of the libraries in WVLS do not have the budget to replace outdated materials, materials in bad condition or order materials outside of the most popular titles. Therefore a lot of responsibility is left up to MCPL to fill that need.

Cataloging and Bibliographic Committee: Currently, MCPL accounts for approximately 40% of the circulation in WVLS. Right now we get only 1 vote equating our 1 membership in the 25 libraries, even with our 8 additional branches. When recommendations from the Bibliographic Committee are made to WVLS we can easily get outvoted by the rest of the libraries even though we account for a greater percentage of materials and circulation. While SCLS has 54 libraries, they have weighted voting and several similar-sized libraries to MCPL. Because of this we are much more likely to be in agreement on how to handle records and services.

Another item to consider would be record management. When there was a discovery of approximately 40,000 incomplete records found in the catalog, MCPL reached out to WVLS for assistance. Not all of the records were MCPL holdings but as MCPL has their own cataloguers it was brought to WVLS's attention. WVLS responded that they could not provide that service and would have to contract out the work to Backstage. Backstage would charge 50 cents per record. When looking at the services offered by SCLS the same record management services included in a contract with SCLS would cost only 15 cents a record.

Concerns over staff constraints: Issues with the current catalog are not clearly communicated with the staff and when issues are found staff are not given any updates as to the resolution. We believe that SCLS's open-sourced ILS would allow for quicker response times over catalog concerns as they have full-time employees who are dedicated to the ILS.

While WVLS offers a variety of services they are much more limited with the amount of time they can spend on items or projects because they simply have a much smaller staff. For example, SCLS has a Technical Services Consultant, Circulation Services Consultant, two ILS Support Technicians, and a Metadata Specialist that are all full-time employees that we can reach out to. WVLS has one full-time ILS Administrator and an ILS support staff member who has other duties. In addition, the other libraries in WVLS do not have additional cataloging staff or technology staff like MCPL does. WVLS thus provides these services to those small libraries which often means MCPL's requests are put on the back burner or we do it ourselves. Given their limited staff, WVLS is forced to prioritize essential functions of other libraries before the aspirations of ours.

One project that MCPL staff were unhappy with WVLS's service is when we requested help in finding a workable option for our inventory system back in 2013. MCPL needed an inventory system that was compatible with our call number systems and even though MCPL constantly provided updated information and error codes to WVLS staff it took years for WVLS to find a workable solution which was given to us near the end of 2018. There was a time when the issue was not even being worked on or considered by WVLS staff until a past staff member had returned to WVLS and continued to work with us on the issue until its resolution.

Staff training: SCLS provides a wide variety of specialized hands-on training and conducts workshops in-person and via web conferencing. Since MCPL has staff with very focused roles, our staff's knowledge extends beyond the rudimentary trainings provided by WVLS. For example, MCPL has multiple librarians on staff, a Marketing and Social Media specialist, a specialist who handles our website and any additional promotional materials and an IT specialist. These staff members focus solely on these responsibilities outside of their desk shifts so they are in need of more advanced training. SCLS has a deeper and broader level of service and experience. This would be beneficial to our staff as we could attend workshops geared towards programs and services that we would like to begin to offer; such as running a large makerspace or offering specialized circulating collections. Currently, MCPL does a lot of research on our own when it comes to looking for ways to implement new innovations for our community. Partnering with SCLS would save our limited staff time and energy by using SCLS's expertise and experience with more advanced training.

Respectfully submitted by the MCPL Library Services Team

When I think about what a library system should do and/or provide, the first thing I think of is leadership. When I think of WVLS, leadership is the first thing that comes to mind; however, not for guiding the way, but more for a lack thereof.

Leadership should be innovative. Yet one of my first encounters with WVLS showed anything but. When I first started in my position, I wanted to implement a new timing and print solution. When I inquired about this to WVLS, I was told that they were looking into a solution used by another system but had yet to test it. We were more than welcome to set-up and test the system for them. To me it seemed as if WVLS was understaffed and didn't have the manpower to properly vet their suggested software. The message I received from this experience was you're a big library, you have an IT team, and you're on your own.

I think leadership should be willing to do whatever it takes to make getting the job done easier. Yet, when it came time for an ILS update, the whole system was being asked to sacrifice half of their normal working day to allow this to happen. Ideally when working in IT, you'd like to be as unobtrusive as possible. When we asked whether this update could be completed at night, we were told no as there weren't any technicians from Innovative (ILS) available. Yet when the Library Director called the ILS directly, we were told that this could easily be done overnight.

I think leadership should provide direction and follow through. Yet, the current decision making and "voting system" provide anything but. A democracy is great if it has leadership that provides guidance and makes the final decision, whether those in the democracy realize that the decision made is good for them or not. Last year it was discovered that the phone notification system was failing and that it was becoming obsolete. A temporary replacement system was suggested and voted on. It was to be put in place and to carry the system until a solution was found, yet there still isn't one in place. It may not make that big of a difference to most of the libraries in the system but for us, until it is remedied, it means hundreds of phone calls and man hours. Our library provides approximately 40% of the funding, accounts for nearly half of the circulation, and also does the bulk of the work because system leadership is unwilling to step-up, make a decision, and follow-through on that decision.

I believe that there is a significant lack of leadership in our current system. I believe that the leadership of this system is unwilling to be held accountable for their actions or inactions. I believe that MCPL would benefit from being in a system that provides support, with more professionals who understand the complexities that accompany information seekers as a whole. I believe that the best thing for MCPL to do is to join a system with other like sized libraries where decisions are made through a fair voting system and where innovative ideas mesh with follow-through. MCPL should join a system that provides leadership.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew M. Derpinghaus M.L.I.S.
Library Support Services Manager

How to do a SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool that helps organizations identify where they're doing well and where they can improve, both from an internal and external perspective. It is an acronym for "**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats." Usually an organization focuses the analysis on itself; in this case we are looking at two potential vendors or suppliers of service.

The questions below are examples of the sorts of things to look at. Feel free to expand on these and add additional ones.

Step 1: Strengths (Internal positive factors)
Start by asking what each library system's strengths are. Where do they excel and where do their strengths match up with MCPL's needs?
- Have they earned a good reputation for service and support?
- Are their staff experienced and capable?
- Do they have solid relationships with member libraries.
- How responsive are their staff?
- How innovative are they?

Step 2: Weaknesses (Internal negative factors)
No matter their strengths, any system will have weaknesses. What are they less good at and where do their member libraries see need for improvement?
- Are staff able to predict and anticipate libraries' needs
- How long does it take them to implement new services, or to improve existing services?
- How attentive are they to quality control?

Step 3: Opportunities (External positive factors)
In addition to strengths, a good library system will bring with them extra opportunities to help your library.
- What services do they provide that would allow MCPL to reallocate resources to other projects and services?
- Do they have expertise that help MCPL enhance its services?
- How willing are they to improve their service?
- How professional are they in helping you enhance your services?
- How does the system support libraries' advocacy efforts with local officials?

Step 4: Threats (External negative factors)
Talking about threats in the SWOT analysis, you need to focus on both the current threats and the future ones. Are there factors that could hinder the system from providing good service to MCPL?
- How stable is the system? Does there seem to be a lot of internal discord? This could be between system staff, between member libraries, or between system staff and member libraries.
- Do libraries seem happy and satisfied with system services?
- Are there opportunities that MCPL might miss out on by choosing this system?
- Because of the effect of COVID-19 on the economy, municipalities will be facing financial difficulties over the next several years. How can the system help libraries deal with this?

SOUTH CENTRAL LIBRARY SYSTEM

Strengths	Weaknesses

Opportunities	Threats

WISCONSIN VALLEY LIBRARY SERVICE

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	**Threats**