

Northern Waters Library Service Board of Trustees Bi-Monthly Meeting

May 17, 2025

10:00 a.m.

Location: Online and In Person at NWLS Headquarters

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Jeff Burke called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. Everyone was formally introduced to Katherine, our new Director and she thanked the Trustees and NWLS/Staff for their dedication to a smooth transition. There was a moment of silence for long term Trustee, Samuel Pomush of Superior who passed away April 26, 2025.

Present: President: Jeff Burke (Vilas County), Treasurer: Clarence Campbell (Ashland County), Connie Cogger (Bayfield County), Ron Leino (Douglas County), Howard Hendrickson (Douglas County), Kathryn McKenzie (Douglas County), Roxanne Lutgen (Iron County), Dian Delong (Sawyer County), Sue Hendrickson, (Douglas County), Richard Logan (Vilas County), , Jim Crandall (Bayfield County), Buzz Byrne (Burnett County), Ron Buckholtz (Sawyer County), Erin Fox (Burnett County), Katherine Elchert (Director), Michelle Gostomski (Business Manager)

Absent: Vice President: Jocelyn Ford (Washburn County), Courtney Dietsche (Douglas County), Linda Featherly (Washburn County), Donna Knuckey (Library Representative from Winter)

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Discuss and Consider 2024 Annual Audit and Presentation

Partner Sheanne Headley of Baker Tilley presented a clean audit and financial reports for 2024. Motion by Roxanne Lutgen, second by Buzz Byrne to accept the 2024 Annual Audit. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Discuss and Consider Assignment of the Reserve Fund

Motion by Sue Hendrickson, second by Ron Buckholtz to approve the Director of NWLS to assign the fund balance for these purposes: for future sick/vacation payouts, capital improvements and remaining reserve funds presented as unassigned. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Approval of March 15, 2025, Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Motion by Ron Buckholtz, second by Sue Hendrickson to approve March 15, 2025, Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Acceptance of January and February 2025 NWLS Expenditures

Motion by Ron Buckholtz, second by Sue Hendrickson to accept the January and February 2025 NWLS Expenditures. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Director's Report

[Institute for Museum and Library Services Update:](#)

Late Friday, March 14, 2025, the Trump administration issued an [executive order](#) to eliminate the “non-statutory components and functions” of several federal agencies and entities, including the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) (IMLS), a small federal agency providing funding to museums, libraries, and related institutions. IMLS makes up 0.004% of the federal government’s budget and every library in the U.S. receives funding from IMLS in the form of grants.

IMLS oversees the [Library Services and Technology Act \(LSTA\)](#) 'Grants to States Program' which is the largest source of federal funding support for library services in the U.S. [Wisconsin](#) received \$3.23 Million in 2024, which equals \$0.55 spent annually per resident through Grants to States Program. Additionally, IMLS oversees the Native American Library Services program, an instrumental funding source for Wisconsin's Tribal Libraries.

Under the previous acting director for IMLS, Cyndee Landrum, Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Library Services Team was cautiously optimistic that Grants to States would continue as mandated by federal statute. Congress has allocated FY 2024 and FY 2025 monies to the [LSTA Grants to States program](#) which is statutory. Given that the executive order proposed the elimination of only "non-statutory components and functions" of IMLS, the expectation was for the federal government to uphold their obligations related to the LSTA monies duly approved by Congress. (See article from [EveryLibrary](#) regarding the difference between statutory and non-statutory.)

On March 20, 2025, Landrum was removed and the Trump Administration appointed Keith Sonderling. This spurred a bipartisan group of U.S. senators who sponsored the 2018 IMLS reauthorization bill to send [a letter to Sonderling](#) stressing the small agency's importance to all communities, and underscoring the responsibility to fund and staff the agency at levels authorized by Congress.

On March 31, 2025, Trump's newly installed director placed the majority of IMLS employees on administrative leave, [according to the labor union](#) that represents them. State and tribal libraries in Wisconsin no longer have access to their contact person at the agency and have been unable to obtain the status of current grant funding.

On April 4, 2025, nearly two dozen states (including Wisconsin), [filed a lawsuit challenging](#) the March 14, 2025 Executive Order. Here's a couple of press releases from [the Governor's office](#) and [the State Superintendent's office](#). Three days later, the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), whose members include museum and library workers nationwide, have sued over what the ALA called, [in a release](#), "the Trump administration's gutting of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)."

On April 8, 2025, letters went out to tribal libraries all over the United States terminating their funding from IMLS, specifically their Native American Basic Grants (NAB) and Native American Enhancement Grants (NAE). The reason cited for these terminations was that the grants were "inconsistent with IMLS priorities" and that President Trump's Executive Order of March 14, 2025, mandated the elimination of non-statutorily required activities. As a direct result of the loss of these federal grants, Mashkiizibii Agindaasooowigamig (Bad River Tribal Library) has been closed.

On May 1, 2025, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia [granted a temporary restraining order](#) to block the Trump Administration's dismantling of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The decision was issued in response to [a lawsuit](#) filed by the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). Similarly, on May 6, 2025, [a federal court issued an injunction](#) against the March 14, 2025 EO stating that it violated the Administrative Procedure Act.

If you are looking for resources and articles to explore further, the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives is [maintaining a running list of statements and news articles](#) from the executive order onward. Below are some close to home (Wisconsin) news articles and resources:

- [Small Wisconsin libraries might be hit hard as Trump targets federal funding](#), WPR, 3/27/25

- [Wisconsin libraries brace for steep drop in services under federal funding cuts](#), *Wisconsin Examiner*, 4/21/25

Additionally, the DPI website has the following related resources:

- [Libraries – Grants and Funding](#)
- [2023-27 LSTA Five-Year Plan](#)
- [Where does LSTA Grant to States funding go? \(Infographic\)](#)

Federal funding and programs are vital to supporting the libraries in Wisconsin. DPI has launched a [webpage tracking federal funding](#) and its effect on public schools and libraries across the state. Included is an [interactive map](#) showing how federal funding impacts libraries statewide.

Our statewide professional organization, Wisconsin Library Association (WLA), in addition to coordinating efforts for the ongoing statewide biennial budget, has been instrumental in organizing the Wisconsin library community in a coordinated advocacy initiative.

Joint Finance Committee Hearing:

IFLS and NWLS joined forces for the Joint Finance Committee hearing in Hayward, WI. We had over 15 supporters from both systems, including public library and system staff. We had three speakers to ensure we got the full 5 minutes to advocate for Wisconsin libraries and the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA). Katherine, along with a Library Trustee from Osceola Public Library and the Rice Lake Public Library Director, [all spoke on behalf of the group](#).

After JFC changes to the current budget are sent to the Senate and Assembly for floor votes in each house, the legislature usually delivers its final product to the governor by the end of June. The governor completes his veto review within 30 days of receiving the bill, and then signs it into law.

NWLS Staff:

Due to the uncertainty re: NWLS's federal funding, system staff has decided to postpone posting the open ILS Administrator position. This will give staff time to evaluate the needs of our system libraries and consider changes to the ILS Admin job description. ILS Admin duties are being divided between staff members, along with other reallocation of responsibilities. Katherine plans to revisit this late summer/early fall when we have more information about the upcoming state budget and the state of IMLS reauthorization.

8. Discuss and Consider Member County Appropriation Request

Motion by Ron Buckholtz, second by Dian DeLong to approve a member county appropriations increase of 3% for 2026. Motion carried unanimously after discussion.

9. Adjourn

Motion by Sue Hendrickson, second by Connie Cogger to adjourn at 11:35 AM. Motion carried unanimously.