Bridges Library System Strategic Planning Retreat Minutes
April 19, 2018

PRESENT
Participating Trustees of the Bridges Library System were Dick Nawrocki, Linda Ager, Art Biermeier, Jim Heinrich, Dwayne Morris, Larry Nelson, Howard Pringle, Amy Reichert, Rose Sura, Nancy Wilhelm, and Jean Yeomans. Participating library directors in the Bridges Library System: Karla Lang (Big Bend), Edell Schaefer (Brookfield), Jodi Kessel Szpiszar (Butler), Stephanie Ramirez (Delafield), Alli Chase (Eagle), Eric Robinson (Fort Atkinson), Nancy Massnick (Hartland), Leann Lehner (Jefferson), Abby Armour (Johnson Creek), Gerard Saylor (Lake Mills), Karol Kennedy (Menomonee Falls), Angie Zimmermann (Mukwonago), Brittany Larson (Muskego), Barbara Draeger (New Berlin), Cheryl Schoenhaar (North Lake), Betsy Bleck (Oconomowoc), Laura Gest (Palmyra), Jennie Stoltz (Pewaukee), Kathy Klager (Sussex), Kelli Mountford (Waterloo), Peg Checkai (Watertown), Bruce Gay, (Waukesha), and Stacey Lunsford (Whitewater). Participating members of the Bridges Library System staff were Connie Meyer, Mellanie Mercier, Angela Meyers, Laurie Freund, Beth Bechtel, Jill Fuller, Shawn Carlson and Meg Henke.

CALL TO ORDER
At 9:00 a.m., Connie Meyer called the meeting to order at the New Berlin Public Library.

WELCOME
Connie welcomed trustees, library directors, and staff to this strategic planning retreat. Connie then introduced Nancy Wilhelm of the Wilhelm Group. Nancy is a professional strategic planning consultant and a trustee of the Bridges Library System as well as a trustee of the Alice Baker Library in Eagle. Nancy has generously volunteered her expertise and services to the Library System for this strategic planning process. Introductions were made throughout the room.

OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PROCESS & GOALS
Nancy stated that the goals and driving need for a strategic plan is to improve services based on library needs and demands. Nancy led the discussion by reviewing the Bridges Library System Vision and Statement of Purpose. Conversation ensued. Noted below are the versions that resulted from the discussion:

> ### *Bridges Library System Vision*
> Strong libraries will foster an environment where people can discover, create, learn, share, and grow while providing a significant return on investment, improving the well-being of the individual and the community.
>
> ### *Bridges Library System Statement of Purpose*
> Lead and support member libraries by fostering collaboration and innovation.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN AND DISCUSSION OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES
Connie led this part of the discussion about our environmental scan. The first thing to keep in mind when considering the external environment is that, although we want to be expansive in considering possible trends and issues, we ultimately want to focus on just a few critical issues. Second, the purpose of scanning the environment is to ground our strategic plan in the realities of the world around us. Topics identified in the environmental scan discussion included:

1. PLSR – Public Library System Redesign project underway in the state of Wisconsin
2. Changes in funding, including opportunities for funding from other sources
3. WISEDATA and WISEDASH – the DPI's collection and reporting of library data
4. TEACH program
5. State aid to library systems; possibly only a temporary increase in current biennial budget ($40K increase in year 1 and $80K increase in year 2)

DISCUSSION OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITES AND THREATS
There was a SWOT (**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats) analysis. The ideas mentioned are shown in the tables below.

DISCUSSION AND IDENTIFICATION OF STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS
Nancy instructed the group to utilize their circle stickers to rank/prioritize the items identified earlier in the discussion. They were to select a first, second, and third priority item from the list in each category (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats). Each participant received a set of colored dot stickers, four of each color. The green dot signified #1 priority, the blue dot signified #2 priority, and the yellow dot signified the #3 priority. The red dot was for use as a "not applicable" indicator if necessary. Trustees and directors went around the room and placed their stickers on the strategy items by category. The staff elected not to participate in this part of the process since they wanted the local libraries and Trustees to set the goals for the plan. Nancy commented that the results would be tallied and reported to the Board, APL, and staff, and then used for next steps in the planning process. (The detail results of the ranking are included in the tables below.)

STRENGTHS

Statement/Topic	Order of Importance Rank #1	Order of Importance Rank #2	Order of Importance Rank #3	NA	Weighted score
Strong leadership	15	3	0		51
Hard working, high functioning, dedicated and efficient staff	7	1	3		26
Strong commitment to developing relationships (government, public sector, organizations all to support libraries)	1	6	4		19
Fiscally responsible		6	4		16
Right sized (# of libraries and geographically)	1	3	1		10
Influencer in legislative issues	0	4	1		9
"Inclusiveness" of all libraries regardless of size, community		1	5		7
Commitment to sustainability			5		5
Transparency		2			4
Technologically progressive	1				3
Marketing effort very strong	1				3
Creative - think out of the box	1				3
Responsive		1			2
Strong, progressive support from Board		1			2
Award winning library system Director		1			2
Communication			1		1
Standards of service			1		1
Local-centric			1		1
Well rounded service program with commitment to grow and improve			1		1
Professional and knowledgeable					0
Fair & balanced - no favoritism					0
Geographically compact service area					0
Creative problem solvers					0
Target market (communities) has strong expectations of service - high quality of life					0
Commitment to follow thru from libraries directions and collaboration					0
Ability to say "NO"					0
Relevant and influential in respective communities					0
Great libraries!					0
Strong County support (Waukesha and Jefferson)					0
Credible and accountable					0
Good reputation					0

WEAKNESSES

Statement/Topic	Order of Importance Rank #1	Order of Importance Rank #2	Order of Importance Rank #3	NA	Weighted score
Data poor (election, demographic, mkt, collection, services)	7	9	3		42
Local tech support in libraries (hardware & software)	6	3	1		25
Do not have capital funding at any level except municipality	3	1	2		13
Lack of community awareness- not fully aware of what libraries do	2	3	1		13
Too Milwaukee-centric	1	3	1		10
DPI accountability and leadership, lacks influence		4			8
Lack of diversity	1	2			7
Self-satisfaction may lead to complacency	2				6
Pursue all potential/possible revenue streams		1	3		5
Ineffective, out of date statutes	1		2		5
Lack of systems network and peer support			4		4
Resource library - role needs evolving		1	2		4
Different size/different needs	1				3
How well do we connect (schools, literacy council, jails, etc.)	1				3
Limited resources	1				3
Not a strong state-wide system; lack of follow-thru at state level			3		3
Systems lack influence			3		3
Lack of succession plan/cross training – especially system director			2		2
Lack of broadband access			1		1
Inequity of services and differing needs			1		1
Smaller sized doesn't provide opportunities (i.e.: maker spaces)					0
Geography (proximity, mobility of patrons, borders are meaningless)					0
Not enough (time, money, resources) to do all we want/need to do					0
Lack of HR professional support for member libraries					0
Lack of community support					0
Communication between Bridges Trustees and local library Trustees					0
Border issues					0
Imbalanced power and influence					0
SRLAAW - not as helpful as needed					0

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITES AND THREATS

THREATS (RISKS)

Statement/Topic	Order of Importance Rank #1	Order of Importance Rank #2	Order of Importance Rank #3	NA	Weighted score
PLSR - Public Library System Redesign	20		1		61
Non-library users unaware	2	15	3		39
Circulation as a measure is antiquated - can create the impression libraries are not being used; so much more to libraries now	1	3	1		10
Political changes - state and local levels		2	6		10
Poor economics- funding impacts		3	4		10
Centralizing everything may not be best/true (ie: overhead)	2	1			8
Chapter 43 - potential changes and unintended consequences			5		5
Potential that we are not considered an essential service			3		3
Demographic change and the need to change services along with it	1				3
Mind set of "One size fits all" - it does not!	1				3
Cross County service delivery but funded locally and provided regionally			2		2
Safety - staff, building, patrons		1			2
Privacy & Cyber security			1		1
Aging population			1	1	1
Retirements of key staff and loss of institutional knowledge and history					0
Lack of realization we are a community service					0
Change can be disruptive to the status quo					0
Perception our system is too small - only 2 counties					0
Comparisons are more than population					0
Google				4	0
Lack of recognition of the value of the library staff; understanding they are professionals; lack awareness					0
Lack of Tech support					0
Not much room to expand office space					0
Delivery services not as smooth as we would like					0
Not centrally located					0
Uncertainty of state and federal grant funding					0
Changes in structure could reduce/lessen collaboration					0
Loss due to theft				2	0
Financial incentive to leave joint libraries				2	0

OPPORTUNITIES

Statement/Topic	Order of Importance Rank #1	Order of Importance Rank #2	Order of Importance Rank #3	N A	Weighted score
Facilitate data collection to show gaps w/non-users and to know our collection for collection management	12	5	5		51
Show the state how a successful library system is formed and what benefits come from this (value of library system infographic)	7	3	5		32
Share talent and grow connections	2	6	3		21
Support training of staff	1	5	2		15
Boot camp for trustees (retreat, find other opportunities too)	1	3	4		13
Become more influential with legislators	2		2		8
Support "what libraries do" for local libraries - (business donations, trustee pool, school system, etc)	1	1			5
Stronger adult programming - a resource for ideas	1		1		4
Survey methods for libraries		1	1		3
Workforce development - Paul Decker; libraries as a workplace (Starbucks); education opportunities, workforce development series of programs		1	1		3
PLSR – Public Library System Redesign			2		2
Digitize collections		1			2
It never hurts to ask			1		1
5 minute talks - show and tell opportunity			1		1
Autonomy opportunities - chapter 43					0
Centralize trustee orientation for libraries (templates, ideas, widen pool)					0
Know your markets					0
Foster career development					0
Libraries Transform - example of showing the muni/market what we do					0
Capitalize on our aging populations to expand services					0
Information & Technology education and instruction					0

DISCUSSION AND IDENTIFICATION OF SERVICES GOALS AND ACTION STEPS
Connie facilitated the next part of the discussion to develop a list of services goals by category.
Identified below are the lists developed from this part of the discussion.

Strengths
- Relationship building
- Communication (closings, text notification)
- Templates (develop a library of resources for use by all)
- Talking points for Trustees and Directors
- Onboarding
- Partnership database
- Advocacy - encourage participation at Legislative Day
- Advocacy – WLA membership; explain value of membership
- Mentorship and staff development
- Training on communicating with Boards and Funders
- Consultants list – building, accessibility experts, strategic planning, etc.
- Protect/retain staff
- Increase staff
- Staff survey
- Professional development
- Cross training
- Succession planning
- CAFÉ System Admin position

Weaknesses
- Data poor – demographics of users and non-users, collection and usage
- Gale Analytics
- Collection HQ
- Additional training on reports
- Push of reports and data
- GIS charting
- Local IT – user training (ongoing)
- Local IT tech support for libraries (library pay/system subsidize); library centric; staffer =trust vs. contractor

Opportunities
- Friends – grow local support (meet-ups, resources, tapping into their passion)
- PLSR – stay engaged

Threats
- Relevancy- more marketing, collect stories
- Target marketing of events/programs to non-users
- Partnerships
- Google

WRAP UP & NEXT STEPS
Connie Meyer thanked all Trustees, directors and staff for taking this day to help identify the topics and strategic goals that will serve as the guiding process for improvement and innovation for the Bridges Library System. Meeting minutes will be distributed prior to the next APL meeting.

ADJOURNMENT
At 4:20 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes prepared by:
Meg Henke
Administrative Specialist