

JANUARY 2021 UPDATE TO MEMBERS

Colleagues and Friends,

MCPL TASK FORCE VOTED ON WVLS MEMBERSHIP

Following are the highlights of the December 21, 2020 meeting of the Marathon County Public Library Task Force:

- In a 3-1 vote, the six-member MCPL Task Force approved a recommendation for Marathon County to withdraw its membership from the Wisconsin Valley Library Service and to join the South Central Library System. Votes to withdraw from WVLS were cast by MCPL Board President **Sharon Hunter**, MCPL Trustee **Scott Winch**, and recently retired Marathon County Conservation, Planning & Zoning Director **Rebecca Frisch**. MCPL Trustee and Marathon county Board Supervisor **Gary Beastrom** cast the dissenting vote. DPI Public Library Administration Consultant **Shannon Schultz** abstained. MCPL Task Force Chair **Mark Arendt**, whose consultant assistance as the retired Winnefox Library System Assistant Director was solicited by MCPL, also abstained after stating that he would vote only in case of a tie.
- Sharon Hunter cited 15 reasons why Marathon County should leave WVLS. The list, which parallels the list of “Advantages to Moving to SCLS” in the *Advantages and Disadvantages Comparison Sheet* reviewed by the MCPL Task Force in November is attached.
- Rebecca Frisch stated that MCPL is included in the [2016 Marathon County Comprehensive Plan](#) and [2018-2022 Strategic Plan](#), and strongly suggested that these documents be cited in appendix of the MCPL Task Force Report provided to the MCPL Board.
- Scott Winch agreed with the comments made by Hunter and Frisch above and stated the decision should be guided only by what is best for Marathon County.
- Gary Beastrom expressed reservations about the loss of MCPL as a regional resource library, as well as potential for a “black eye” for the county if the decision to leave adversely affected either Marathon County resident use of library services in surrounding counties or WVLS ability to fully participate in existing library service partnerships in the northern half of the state.
- In preparation for writing a draft MCPL Task Force Report for the MCPL Board, Arend instructed Task Force members to send him their lists of system membership advantages and disadvantages.
- Arend will draft a report and share it with individual Task Force members for final review and edits.

- The MCPL Task Force will meet on **January 11** to formally approve the draft report. Members anticipate this meeting to be very brief as writing the report will have been done outside a formal meeting.
- The MCPL Task Force Report will be included in the board packet for the **January 25 meeting** of the MCPL Board.
- Instructions to virtually attend the above meetings will be shared via this email list once meeting notices are posted.

FOR FURTHER REFERENCE

The Marathon County Public Library System Exploration Information [and Updates page](#) on the WVLS website includes information about MCPL Task Force meetings since January along with the letters mentioned above. Anyone with an interest in the MCPL Task Force process and future of WVLS should take the time to read this information. MCPL also maintains its own Task Force web page [here](#).

WI Statute [43.18](#) outlines the process for a county withdrawing from a library system. The earliest date Marathon County could withdraw is January 2022, following adoption by 2/3 vote of a resolution by the Marathon County Board of Supervisors at least 6 months prior to the close of the system's fiscal year.

On behalf of the WVLS Team, I want to thank you all for the support you provided WVLS in 2020. As we enter 2021, I encourage you to continue your outreach and to share your thoughts about WVLS services with us. Diverse points of view are valued and your opinions matter!

Best wishes for a healthy and successful New Year,

Marla

Marla Sepnafski, Director
WISCONSIN VALLEY LIBRARY SERVICE
300 N First Street
Wausau, WI 54403
715/261-7250
msepnafs@wvls.org
<http://wvls.org>

Advantages to Moving to SCLS	Advantages to Staying with WVLS
<p>Larger collection of materials for patrons to access</p> <p>Weighted voting system</p> <p>Ala cart pricing</p> <p>More continuing education and professional development opportunities that pertain to the size of MCPL</p> <p>Opportunity for more collaboration with like size libraries</p> <p>Specialized staff to assist MCPL to achieve its goal of becoming a premier library</p> <p>Joining a system that MCPL has a positive working relationship</p> <p>ILS System that is more conducive to the needs of MCPL</p> <p>MCPL would be a member/peer of similar sized libraries leading to improved collaboration, opportunities, and services offered which would transcend MCPL to the next level and beyond.</p> <p>MCPL would have the opportunity to restructure staff responsibilities/positions to take advantage of SCLS services offered and to shift funding to offset the increased membership cost of the new system.</p> <p>MCPL customers would be better served by increased access to materials, programs, and services.</p> <p>Larger inventory of available materials</p> <p>More services available and support staff</p> <p>Opportunity to network with “like size” libraries</p> <p>Member libraries more similar in size</p>	<p>Proximity - close by and rental income</p> <p>Deliveries more often and less wait time for materials</p> <p>Service as Resource Library to Central and Northeast WI</p> <p>Definite financial benefit—strong return on investment; good value, especially considering lack of evidence of poor service</p> <p>Leadership—MCPL is a respected and valued leader, can assert a lot of influence within the system both professionally and financially</p>

Disadvantages to Moving to SCLS	Disadvantages to Staying with WVLS
<p>the number of holds on a item would be larger in SCLS</p> <p>MCPL will have transition costs and transition challenges to deal with for a few years.</p> <p>MCPL staff (and potentially customers) will need to learn a new system beyond what they are knowledgeable about or comfortable with.</p> <p>Effectiveness of being heard at Board meetings (comparative sizes of member libraries)</p> <p>Deliveries less often and longer wait times for requested materials</p> <p>Loss of Resource Library to Central and Northeast WI</p> <p>Loss of rental revenue and initial cost of startup</p> <p>Far more expensive—MCPL was cutting services because \$80,000 was too much. How can they justify paying \$200,000? What are they going to get for the taxpayers to explain that decision?</p> <p>Lack of demonstrated patron support—we have not seen any evidence that the residents/users of MCPL want this. This will change their everyday interactions with the library. It sounds like only specific staff want this, and library service should focus on residents and library users, not staff.</p>	<p>Somewhat limited service offerings and staff</p> <p>Less broad scope of available materials</p> <p>The potential for “bad blood” after this experience—if they stay they may want to consider some facilitated discussions to improve their relationship</p>