

MCPL System Investigation; September 2021 Update No. 2

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Colleagues and Friends,

At yesterday's Marathon County Public Library (MCPL) Board of Trustees meeting, the board revisited its recommendation to the Marathon County Extension, Education and Economic Development (MCEEED) Committee for the county to withdraw from WVLS and join the South Central Library System.

During the discussion, MCPL Board President Sharon Hunter asked board members if they wanted to return the recommendation to the MCEEED Committee or to take some time to address the service issues raised during the MCPL Task Force process. A motion was made by Michelle Van Krey, seconded by Dino Corvino, to postpone consideration of withdrawal from WVLS for one year to allow further assessment to occur. The motion passed on a 6-0 vote.

Reviving the former Task Force was briefly discussed but set aside in favor of requesting MCPL Board President Sharon Hunter, MCPL Board Vice President Kari Sweeney (also MCPL delegate to the WVLS Board) and Interim Director Leah Giordano to begin the process of clearly defining optimal MCPL system service needs and establishing criteria for assessing system performance.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The MCPL System Task Force Inquiry recommendation was brought to the MCEEED Committee following the [January 25](#) meeting of the MCPL Board during which a motion for Marathon Co. to continue its membership in WVLS was struck down on a 3-4 vote.

On February 4, the MCEEED Committee planned to set a date for a public hearing as the next step in a process for Marathon Co. to withdraw from WVLS. However earlier in the day, Committee Chair Sara Guild received a request from the MCPL Board to postpone the public hearing until further notice.

During the [March 15](#) MCPL Board meeting, DPI Public Library Administration Consultant Shannon Schultz responded to questions regarding the impact to current WVLS member libraries should Marathon Co. decide to withdraw. Later in the meeting, MCPL Director Ralph Illick recommended that the "Statement Concerning Public Library System Effectiveness" in the library's annual report indicate **WVLS "did provide effective leadership and adequately met the needs of the library"** in 2020. The motion passed 6-0.

The [minutes of the April 19 meeting](#) report that the MCPL Board instructed the MCPL Director to begin a process of informing the public about the motion to move to a new system.

In May, MCPL Director Ralph Illick resigned. The MCPL Board then named MCPL Public Services Manager Leah Giordano as Interim Director and is currently undergoing a search for a new director.

Agendas for May-August meetings of the MCPL Board did not include further discussion and/or action regarding the vote to leave WVLS, and informational meetings or listening sessions with the public were not scheduled. Shannon Schultz was invited back to the July meeting to give a short presentation about library trustee responsibilities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The MCPL System Exploration Information [and Updates page](#) on the WVLS website shares information from MCPL Task Force and MCPL Board meetings since January 2020. 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 2023, 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.

If you have questions or concerns about this information, please let me know.

Warmest regards,

Marla

Marla Sepnafski, Director

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