

V-Cat Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 6, 2023, 9:30 a.m.

Abbotsford City Hall Public Learning Center



Call to Order and Announcements:

V-Cat Council Chair, J. Ziebell (Neillsville), called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

Members Present at the Abbotsford City Hall Public Learning Center:

J. Jochimsen (Abbotsford), V. Calmes (Colby) leaving at the break, S. Bedroske (Dorchester), M. Handel (Medford), K. Heiting (Granton), T. Hall (Loyal), J. Ziebell (Neillsville), L. Ollhoff (Merrill), and R. Ludvigsen (Gilman).

Members Present Via Zoom:

L. Renel-Faledas (Crandon), F. Albrecht (Laona), K. Sabelko (MCPL), V. Roberts (Rhineland), C. Soderstrom (Thorp), H. O'Hare (Tomahawk), J. Hanson (Wabeno), M. Highfill (Westboro), and J. Roth (Three Lakes) joining at 9:48am.

Also Present:

J. Bauer (MCPL), C. Luebbe (MCPL) leaving after the budget, R. Metzler (WVLS) attended via Zoom, and K. Zimmermann (WVLS) attended in person.

Absent:

K. Heistad (Antigo), A. Brill (Greenwood), C. Huston (Stetsonville), P. O'Connell (Minocqua), L. Petersen (Owen), T. Blomberg (Rib Lake), and B. Hardin (Withee).

Meeting Reminders:

J. Ziebell presented the following meeting reminders:

For all attendees:

- We will be recording today's meeting.
- Please introduce yourself before speaking, or after making a motion or second. "Name from Library."
- Stay on topic to respect everyone's time.
- Allow others to complete their thoughts before speaking up.
- If you are not a V-Cat Council member, please refrain from participating in discussions unless you are a committee member giving a committee report or responding to a committee related question.

For In-Person Attendees

- Face the camera when speaking as much as possible to ensure remote attendees can see you clearly.
- Avoid side conversations or whispering to others in the room. This can be distracting to both in person and remote participants.

For Remote Attendees

- Turn your video on when possible. This helps us feel more connected.
- Mute yourself when not speaking to cut down on background noise.
- Avoid multitasking or working on other tasks during the meeting.
- We will have an assigned person to monitor the chat to assist remote participants and address any issues.
- If you need to leave the meeting early, let us know via chat.

Approval of the Consent Agenda:

L. Ollhoff (Merrill) moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by K. Heiting (Granton). Motion carried.

V-Cat Financial Reports:

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) presented the [V-Cat Financial Reports](#) for April - May 2024.

It was asked if V-Cat would see a change in the amount billed from WALTCO. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) clarified that courier services are paid by WVLS and are not a V-Cat expense.

J. Jochimsen (Abbotsford) moved to accept the financial reports as presented, seconded by T. Hall (Loyal). Motion carried.

Committee Reports:

Bibliographic and Interface Committee Report:

Chair, C. Luebbe (MCPL), shared highlights from [the written report](#).

Cooperative Circulation Committee Report:

Co-Chair, J. Jochimsen (Abbotsford), shared highlights from [the written report](#).

M. Handel (Medford) asked about the difference between Medford staff and Medford adult patron codes. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) noted that patron codes operate differently for each library because of Sierra's loan rules. At some libraries the staff and adult patron codes have the same loan rules, and others have different loan rules for staff. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) requested that those interested in more information about their library's patron codes send an email to help@librarieswin.org.

A Council member asked if materials used for storytime and other library programs could be checked out even though they aren't leaving the building. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) noted that the DPI Annual Report instructions detail what should be counted as circulation. It does make sense to track the use and location of materials for storytime and other programs. Currently checking out materials is the easiest.

H. O'Hare (Tomahawk) requested a monthly report identifying billed and damaged items that have not yet been paid for in addition to the monthly report containing items patrons have paid for. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) responded that she would investigate the feasibility of generating this report with information about the owning and check-out libraries.

NICE (Northern Wisconsin ILS Consortium Exploration) Project Report:

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) presented the following recommendations.

Records Standards Recommendation:

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) noted that there are not a lot of differences between Northern Water Library Network (NWLN) and V-Cat for the fields needed in patron and item records. How information is stored may be different, but the type of information is the same.

H. O'Hare (Tomahawk) requested clarification on required and optional fields for item records. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) agreed that clarification would be useful for training information.

Holds Fulfillment Recommendation:

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) noted that this recommendation was one of the more difficult and that coming to a consensus was not easy. The recommendation is a compromise and will allow both NWLN and V-Cat to maintain current local hold fulfillment practices.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) defined Priority of Local Holds and High Demand. She reiterated that the recommendation is to keep both practices in place.

It was noted that in the case of a merger, NWLN and V-Cat will need to come to an agreement for guidelines for High Demand collections early during the implementation process. A survey will be sent to library staff to better understand the top priorities for High Demand collections.

The recommendation also suggests that the ILS be set up so that materials are paged locally first at the hold pickup library, then within a local group, then within V-Cat, then within NWLN.

A discussion occurred about the current paging step up. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) explained that holds are paged first at the hold pickup location, then within the county, then at any V-Cat location. She said that the current setup could be adjusted.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) pointed out that the Holds Fulfillment Recommendation suggests adding an item record when all attached items on a bibliographic record are in High Demand to allow all patrons the ability to place holds and continue to limit holds fulfillment for High Demand items.

A discussion related to the Holds Fulfillment Recommendation followed.

J. Jochimsen (Abbotsford) asked if V-Cat libraries could prioritize local holds even if NWLN and V-Cat choose not to merge. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) replied that this feature could be turned on using Agency Holds in Sierra if V-Cat would like to do so. She suggested that if all parties agree to the merger, it may be useful to turn on this feature before the merger to assist with preliminary testing and troubleshooting.

V. Calmes (Colby) brought the discussion back to the current paging priority set-up, asking if it is the most efficient set-up. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) responded that paging priority is set to page at the local library, then county, then all libraries based on the way libraries receive funding at the local and county level. She noted that recent conversations with WVLS staff and library directors, and discussion during today's meeting indicate this may no longer be a priority. She suggested that the paging priority lists could be reconsidered.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared that this information about holds and collections will be available on the Nice Project website's FAQ page: a high holds comparison from March 21, 2024, bib records added for 2023, and unique titles added in 2023.

Cataloging Recommendation:

There was a discussion about the use of a spreadsheet to create bibliographic records instead of the MARC alert process. R. Metzler (WVLS) explained that when using the spreadsheet, a bibliographic record is created overnight and that kits can be created in a similar way.

ILS Recommendation (Revised):

A Council member asked if Sierra is going to be supported by Innovative going forward. R. Metzler (WVLS) shared that the Innovative team emphasized their support of Sierra and that they "are committed to Sierra". K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared that the [May 2024 issue of American Libraries](#) noted that Innovative is no longer promoting Sierra for new implementations.

K. Sabelko (MCPL) asked if updated pricing for Sierra was received. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) informed the Council that an updated quote was acquired and that new numbers are included in budget information to be shared later in the meeting.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) noted that NWLN and V-Cat collections are proportional to the needs of their communities and shared [a document](#) illustrating the relationship between registered borrowers / extended population size and library collections for both consortiums.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) presented a [draft NICE budget](#) including a listing of estimated V-Cat library shares and costs. She mentioned that all V-Cat libraries would see a reduction in cost if the consortiums merged.

A discussion occurred about the budget information presented.

L. Ollhoff (Merrill) asked if the other consortiums in the state that had merged continued to see a pattern of savings. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) noted that information about continued savings over time was not gathered and made a note to investigate.

H. O'Hare (Tomahawk) asked for clarification on what would be included in the marketing line in the shared NICE budget, specifically wondering if that line was to cover staff training and library board information. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) said the marketing line is designed for patron awareness and information. It's possible that it could be expanded to provide information for library boards.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) reminded the Council about the FAQ page on the NICE website and encouraged members to fill out the form with any questions not answered on the page. The NICE Leadership team is continuing to provide answers to questions received.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared the timeline for the NICE project, highlighting that by the end of June a full report will be available. She affirmed that the report will mostly consist of information libraries have already received, and not a lot of new information. The report will include all the recommendations the Council has already seen along with a few overarching recommendations.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) announced that NWLN plans to vote on July 18 and the Northern Waters Library System Board will meet and vote on July 20.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) asked the Council what additional information was needed that might be helpful to members as they weigh the NICE project recommendations, and how much time would be needed to make the decision.

K. Heiting (Granton) indicated that if the full report is available by the end of June, she can be ready to vote August 1. She also asked when the project would start. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) answered that V-Cat has a hard contract cut off for Sierra of August 31, 2025. With that in mind, the start of a merger and migration would be in February 2025. Library staff would receive training throughout 2025, and V-Cat libraries would go live on the new Sierra toward the end of 2025.

V. Calmes (Colby) asked if the NICE project ends if NWLN votes no at their July meeting. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) answered that it depends on why NWLN voted no. If the merger recommendation does not pass, then WVLS staff and NWLS staff will talk to see if there's something that can be done to find a path forward together. If we cannot find a way forward, then perhaps it will be done.

K. Heiting (Granton) asked if the votes will need to be unanimous. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) answered that each system will follow their consortium's voting model.

V. Calmes (Colby) shared she felt that V-Cat needed to have more discussion about the NICE project. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) responded that Council member feedback has been encouraged throughout the NICE project process during V-Cat Council meetings.

A discussion occurred about training needs with the merged ILS. V. Calmes (Colby) noted that libraries are short-staffed with part-time employees. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared that a new instance of Sierra will require minimal new training compared to an ILS merger with Koha.

S. Bedroske (Dorchester) asked if there will be changes in how part-time staff do their job. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) answered that the basics will not change, but the codes will change.

S. Bedroske (Dorchester) noted that the actual jobs should still feel familiar. She offered that staying with Sierra helps her feel more comfortable with the project. She added that her biggest concern was how we handle holds and High Demand collections and shared that she likes the recommendation.

L. Ollhoff (Merrill) added that she was apprehensive about the training needed for the merger with Koha, but now with the more recently completed recommendations, she feels more confident and comfortable with the project.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) asked the Council what potential benefits they see for their patrons. K. Heiting (Granton) answered that she believes the extended collection will be a benefit. M. Handel (Medford) voiced disagreement with the benefit of the extended collection because of WISCAT. R. Metzler (WVLS) reminded the Council that WISCAT is staff intensive, slow, and not provided by all V-Cat libraries. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) also noted that there are patron barriers of use because WISCAT is a separate discovery platform, patrons need to know to ask, and library staff often need to be involved in patron requests.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared that the NICE Report will be provided by the end of June and will include a brief key takeaways document.

H. O'Hare (Tomahawk) requested an updated timeline to provide to her library board and suggested that a "pros and cons- type document" be created to share with them. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) replied that she would see what could be put together for this purpose. H. O'Hare (Tomahawk) further requested that the timeline include general dates for the merger/migration process and the order that things will be done.

K. Heiting (Granton) noted that an added benefit to all V-Cat patrons would be the access to all the NWLN libraries, so if traveling they can use those libraries as well using their existing V-Cat patron account.

The discussion turned to when V-Cat Council could meet to vote on this project. K. Heiting (Granton) suggested the September 5 regular V-Cat Council meeting. K. Sabelko (MCPL) noted that MCPL would like to vote sooner rather than later. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) asked if August 1 would be okay for the Council. Discussion occurred about the need for library boards to receive information, with a few libraries preferring to vote at the September meeting. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) said she would take some time to consider libraries' responses before setting the next meeting date.

Break

Proposed 2025 V-Cat Budget:

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) presented the proposed [2025 V-Cat Budget](#). She noted three small changes had occurred to correct dates.

L. Ollhoff (Merrill) moved to approve the 2025 V-Cat Budget as presented, seconded by S. Bedroske (Dorchester). Motion carried.

Report of the ILS Admin:

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) announced a new [Book Club Form](#) for library staff to share their scheduled book clubs' titles. Information from the completed form will be added to [this publicly available spreadsheet](#) to help ensure materials are available to meet the needs of library book clubs.

WVLS recommends bib level holds for book clubs. Item level holds may be slightly faster, but they are problematic. Libraries were reminded that if item level holds are used that they will likely need to do additional follow-up, especially if the "not wanted before date" is used.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) noted that Aspen test server setup is underway. Bywater hopes to have test sites up and running by the end of June. More information will be shared when WVLS is ready to assist libraries.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared that gender information has been removed from all patron records, as recommended by legal counsel. As part of this process patron records were updated and now have an updated date of 6/4/2024. If library staff are running reports on patron records, they will want to use "patron last circulation active date" or "patron expiration date" instead of "patron updated date."

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) reported that item record scoping is turned on in Sierra. This is a database security measure and will limit item record changes to each library's items. WVLS is working through each library's Sierra logins to implement and will be in touch with each library as changes are made.

V-Cat Training Report:

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared the [Fall 2024 training schedule](#) with the Council.

Report of the ILS Specialist:

R. Metzler (WVLS) reported.

V-Cat Cataloging Report

LSTA ILS Merger Exploration Grant funds are being used to improve bibliographic records:

- Two part time catalogers have been hired to work through bib record updates that could help with matching in the event of a merge
- Backstage process to update 7357 records without OCLC numbers will occur soon.

LSTA Cooperative Cataloging Grant Report

- A statewide group of public library system cataloging experts has applied for a grant in the 2024-25 LSTA grant cycle to continue its work toward statewide bibliographic record standards.

Recommendation Review & Sierra Snack:

Presented by K. Zimmermann (WVLS).

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared that damaged slips on items should only be used when the item is returning to the owning library. She noted that there is an updated [form](#) available on the V-Cat Consortium website. When using this form, it is important that library use the Sierra tool 'Check-In (do not fulfil holds)'. To find this tool, go to Sierra Function Check-In (No Patron), click the Tools menu, and select 'Check-In (do not fulfil holds)'.

A discussion occurred about what type of damage is appropriate for marking on the damage slip. H. O'Hare (Tomahawk) shared that this topic may need further discussion. It is challenging for staff when patrons receive charges. To prevent this, Tomahawk staff have started adding damage slips and comments to items. She's noticed that some patrons look over things that come from other libraries and will make comments. Putting the slip on the item helps ease the patron's mind.

S. Bedroske (Dorchester) requested more information about what type of damage libraries would like to charge for.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) agreed that member libraries have a wide variety of perspectives and said the V-Cat Cooperative Circulation Committee will consider options and bring this topic to the Council in the future.

Request for Agenda items:

J. Jochimsen (Abbotsford) requested that V-Cat discuss out of state patrons and access to Libby.

Upcoming Meetings:

August TBD: Special V-Cat Council Meeting
July 12, 10:00 am: Cooperative Circulation Committee
August 6, 10:00 am: Bibliographic / Interface Committee
September 5, 9:30 am: V-Cat Council

Adjournment:

K. Heiting (Granton) moved to adjourn, seconded by S. Bedroske (Dorchester). Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 12:27 p.m.