V-Cat Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 5, 2024, 9:30 a.m.

Call to Order and Announcements:
Chair, J. Ziebell (Neillsville), called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

Members Present in WVLS Office:
J. Jochimsen (Abbotsford), V. Calmes (Colby), M. Handel (Medford), C. Huston (Stetsonville), K. Sabelko (MCPL), P. O'Connell (Minocqua), J. Ziebell (Neillsville), L. Petersen (Owen), V. Roberts (Rhinelander), T. Blomberg (Rib Lake), and L. Ollhoff (Merrill).

Members Present Via Zoom:
L. Renel-Faledas (Crandon), J. Roth (Three Lakes), S. Bedroske (Dorchester), K. Heiting (Granton) leaving during the closed session at 11:19, A. Brill (Greenwood), T. Hall (Loyal), M. Highfill (Westboro), and H. O'Hare (Tomahawk).

Also Present:
Present in the WVLS office: K. Zimmermann (WVLS), C. Luebbe (MCPL), and M. Sepnafski (WVLS) leaving after the break. Present via Zoom: R. Metzler, (WVLS), J. Bauer (MCPL) leaving prior to the closed session, and J. Matczak (WVLS) leaving at the break.

Absent:
J. Hanson (Wabeno) with L. Renel-Faledas (Crandon) as proxy, B. Hardin (Withee), F. Albrecht (Laona), C. Soderstrom (Thorp), and T. Edge (Antigo).

Meeting Reminders:
Attendees were encouraged to familiarize themselves with the meeting reminders presented at the June meeting.

Approval of the Consent Agenda:
V. Roberts (Rhinelander) moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by L. Ollhoff (Merrill). Motion carried.

V-Cat Financial Report:
The V-Cat Financial Reports for May-July were not included in emailed meeting documents and will be presented for approval at the November 2024 V-Cat meeting.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared that 2024 marks the 25th anniversary of V-Cat and indicated that WVLS is planning a celebration of the leadership and innovation of all our V-Cat members. The history of the V-Cat consortium starts with the leadership and innovation of the M&M project, the first automated integrated library catalog between Merrill and Medford. This group then welcomed additional libraries to collaborate. The first 9 libraries joined T. B. Scott and Francis Simek Memorial library to form V-Cat in 1999. This collaboration was and still is a huge benefit to the library users in our communities. It shows a willingness to collaborate and trust with hope for better service. We will have a celebration at the November V-Cat Council meeting. In addition, we plan to do something to recognize the efforts of frontline staff who are the heart and soul of V-Cat resource sharing and access.

NICE Project Report:
K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared a report about the NWLN vote with the Council.

L. Ollhoff (Merrill) shared that a board member asked the V-Cat Council is voting since NWLN had already voted not to merge. Her board also wondered if V-Cat has considered other systems for partnership.

C. Huston (Stetsonville) asked for clarification about financing a merger, what grant money is available now, and if funds will be available later.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) responded that it is important that V-Cat Council's will on this topic be documented. The vote against a merger by NWLN is not a final no. As a group, V-Cat Council needs to decide if it is beneficial to continue the

conversation with NWLN, or if a partnership can be pursued in a different way. She noted that an ILS merger is one way to pursue some economy of scale and efficiency. In the future V-Cat could consider different approaches.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) added that WVLS staff have not had formal conversations with other library systems in Wisconsin. She noted that she believes IFLS is satisfied with their size and currently is not interested in coming together with more libraries. However, conversations are possible. Regarding the NICE project, there was a willingness from leadership at NWLS and WVLS to consider a merger as our timelines for ILS vendor exploration and review and current ILS contracts aligned.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) addressed the question on financing a merger. She referred to the V-Cat NICE 2025 Draft Budget Estimates and clarified that if V-Cat and NWLN were to move forward with an ILS merger now, LSTA grant funds would be available for the bulk of the implementation costs. Beyond the 2025-2026 grant cycle, the availability of grant funds for this project is unknown.

C. Huston (Stetsonville) asked if there is a point where a library system can get too big to offer the one-on-one services provided now. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) noted that IFLS libraries are satisfied with their size, and it is working for them. She clarified that a V-Cat merger with NWLN would increase the number of locations from 35 (branches included) to 66.

Regarding size, V. Roberts (Rhinelander) shared that Illinois is split into two systems and Georgia is one system. In some states a merger was a grassroots effort. In others, funding for systems was significantly reduced, and systems needed to find a different way forward.

T. Blomberg (Rib Lake) asked if the state could eliminate library systems, and wondered if it would matter that V-Cat and NWLN had merged. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) answered that we have not heard that message from the state. The PLSR program and the efforts of the state have been to pursue efficiencies and economies of scale with a grassroots movement towards collaboration.

L. Ollhoff (Merrill) added that at the state level library directors and advocates need to make sure that we communicate our appreciation for library system support to the legislators.

J. Ziebell (Neillsville) asked for more discussion and then called for a motion. It was clarified that there would be more opportunity for discussion following the motion.

T. Blomberg (Rib Lake) moved to go ahead with a vote. L. Ollhoff (Merrill) seconded.

Discussion followed regarding the clarity of the motion and the voting method.

T. Blomberg (Rib Lake) amended the motion to do a non-anonymous ballot vote to combine ILS services with Northern Waters. L. Ollhoff (Merrill) seconded.

A discussion about the motion occurred.

V. Roberts (Rhinelander) asked if member libraries had the opportunity to go to their library boards.

K. Heiting (Granton) asked for clarification on the permanence of the vote, and whether this could be voted on again in the future. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) replied that issues could be presented to V-Cat again in the future. She added that there is a parliamentary limitation that issues cannot come back within the same "session," however the definition of a session for V-Cat Council matters is unclear.

V. Calmes (Colby) encouraged libraries to think about a few things before voting. First, is NWLN the best consortia to merge with? She shared concern about the division of materials between V-Cat and Northern Waters and potential for V-Cat libraries to become large net lenders. Secondly, she added that WISCAT will not go away by adding NWLN and asked Council members to consider how much this merger would reduce WISCAT work. She requested that Council

members consider the "no" vote from NWLN and what changes may be needed to get NWLN on board with a merger. She expressed concerns about unknown additional costs to this merger in the future.

K. Sabelko (MCPL) shared gratitude for being able to participate on the NICE Team and to WVLS staff for their efforts. She also thanked workgroup members and other NICE Team members for their efforts. The exploration has been enlightening and worthwhile. MCPL's concerns remain the same as previously shared, including increase in staff workload, uncertainty about increased hold times for patrons, unknown value added for WVLS libraries with a merged collection, about longevity of savings presented, challenges experienced during workgroup processes, and the differences in the way the two systems operate. She noted that because of MCPL's concerns, and the concerns raised by NWLN and other V-Cat members, it appeared that the two systems were not ready to merge at this time.

V. Roberts (Rhinelander) expressed the positive aspects of the merger. As a library in a border county with NWLS, she sees a lot of cross county traffic. People have library cards in both NWLN and V-Cat. At Rhinelander, we don't know if there are issues with NWLN patrons, it would be nice to have that information. When using WISCAT, Rhinelander looks at NWLN's collection first as they often have what we need, especially for book clubs. In response to the concern with the different hold systems, she noted that, when she worked at an IFLS library, the holds setup worked really well, and people received things quickly. IFLS does lucky day collections as one solution to meet patron demand. She further noted that, despite budget challenges and concerns about staffing cuts, they have considered the workload increase and feel it is possible. She recognized that NWLN's smaller collection was an issue. Rhinelander adult services staff see a benefit from the workload decrease in WISCAT. And we would know if there were a problem patron across the border, and it would make working with our partners in Oneida County easier.

T. Blomberg (Rib Lake) added that she was on the NICE Team and saw an ILS merger as a definite plus for patrons and the patron experience. She noted that Rib Lake staff feel they could handle a potential 15-20% increase in workload in the area of resource sharing.

J. Roth (Three Lakes) shared that she echoed V. Roberts' (Rhinelander) comments. The financial and community aspects of this merger were hugely beneficial for Three Lakes.

A non-anonymous ballot vote was taken via paper and online ballot.
Votes were tallied publicly:
   Representative vote: 16 yea, 5 nay, 0 abstained. (66.7%)
   Weighted vote: 51 yea, 50 nay, 0 abstained. (50.5%)

Motion did not carry.

Break – until 10:45

Bibliographic and Interface Committee Report:
Committee Chair, C. Luebbe (MCPL), reviewed the written report that was previously shared with the Council.

Cooperative Circulation Committee Report:
Committee Chair, V. Roberts (Rhinelander), mentioned there was no update to share as the committee was not able to meet in August.

ILS Evaluation and Review Committee Report:
K. Zimmermann (WVLS) reported on behalf of the committee and briefed Council members on the ILS Evaluation and Review Committee's Report from August 2023.

She added that updated quotes from two vendors considered were requested, as the quotes from 2023 were no longer valid. She noted that if V-Cat Council chooses to go into closed session, the details could be discussed.

J. Jochimsen (Abbotsford) moved to go into closed session to discuss updated quotes, seconded by L. Ollhoff (Merrill). A roll call vote was taken. All V-Cat Council members voted to go into closed session. Motion carried.

M. Handel (Medford) moved to come out of closed session, seconded by V. Roberts (Rhinelander). A roll call vote was taken. All V-Cat Council members voted to come out of closed session. Motion carried.

The V-Cat Council opted to postpone a vote on an ILS product until an updated quote from Sierra was received and until information on Koha's improvements was received. Specifically, the Council wanted to know if Koha's improvements addressed the concerns noted in the ILS Evaluation and Review Committee's Report.

Report of the ILS Administrator:

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared about the status of the following projects:

Adult patron records expired and inactive over 5 years with no fines or fees as of July 1, 2024, will be purged. She noted that Birth date is used to determine "adult" records rather than patron type. A list of patron record numbers to be purged was sent out in late June, and a reminder was sent in early August. Libraries that needed adjustments due to their records retention schedule or that needed a record of purged patrons, were asked to contact WVLS staff by Wednesday, August 28.

Patrons without birth dates. After the patron record deletions are completed, WVLS will be sending library staff lists of patron records that do not have birth dates. Per V-Cat guidelines, all patrons must have a birth date in their account. Since V-Cat does not collect unique ID numbers for patrons, birthdates are vital to identifying individuals., Birthdates, along with full middle names, can protect against fraudulent use of library cards, or of library staff accidentally sharing library activity information with the wrong individual.

Patron code 4 accuracy check. This summer with the help of MCPL Library Specialist and UW Madison Information School graduate student, Jailin Peterson, the US Census Bureau's Geocoder Batch Addressing tool is now being used to identify patron records with inaccurate patron code 4 information. Inaccuracies can happen when addresses are updated, and the patron code 4 is not adjusted. The eventual goal is to perform checks on records annually, and to validate records on a more regular basis.

If WVLS staff can determine a correct patron code 4 using the geocoder tool along with their local field mapping, they will update patron code 4 in patron records, and report changes to the library. The report will include the patron number, the former patron code 4, and the new updated patron code 4.

If WVLS is unable to verify the patron code 4 based on address, a list of patron records will be sent to libraries to be reviewed for address and patron code 4 accuracy.

As part of this process, new codes were added to the patron code 4 listings in Sierra.
- o Ccl-Stanley, city of in Clark County
- o Mcl-Dorchester, village of in Marathon County
- o Vcl- Plum Lake (removed Sayner from the listing as Plum Lake includes both Sayner and Star Lake but all 3 don't fit in the description)
- o Pcl- Amherst (corrected so that there is township and village)

How to handle the following additional fields and residencies were being considered:
- o Forest County tribal land
- o Mcl - Village of Brokaw
- o May need to consider additional categories for other counties in Wisconsin to allow for listing of "libraried" and "unlibraried" municipalities.

Sierra changes will be made for fine free and fine reductions at Rhinelander and Stetsonville in September.
Sierra changes for Remote Outreach / Bookmobile service for Antigo Public Library / Langlade County were in progress.

Sierra and Innovative Updates
Innovative Support Ticketing System

Innovative/Clarivate is implementing a new case management system for support. A webinar on the new system was planned for 1:00 p.m. following the V-Cat Council meeting. Innovative's migration to a new case management system for support means WVLS staff will need to archive all tickets prior to January 2017.

A new email notices product, LX Starter, is now available for consortiums at no additional cost. It requires Sierra 6.2, which was released earlier this year. WVLS servers need to be upgraded prior to a migration to Sierra 6.2 and before we would be able to use this new product.

The server V-Cat is using to host Sierra needs an operating system upgrade. Currently V-Cat/LeanWI is running Sierra on CentOS 7, which is unsupported as of Sierra 6.2 / June 2024. V-Cat has the option to consider either a server migration or a move to cloud hosting with Innovative.

Currently V-Cat's ILS is self-hosted on rented server space. LeanWI manages the updates, security, backups, and any server/network management. This is a benefit as we have some control over the configuration, however it is largely determined by Sierra's software constraints. Historically self-hosting has been the most cost-effective method. To upgrade to Sierra 6.2, LeanWI will need to set up new servers with a different operating system. Then Innovative will migrate the Sierra Application and Database to the new server. Innovative may charge for this migration.

The other option is to move to Innovative cloud hosting. The Sierra application and database would be hosted on servers in the cloud. Innovative would manage the updates, security, backups and any server/network management. There is a possibility that cloud hosting would put less responsibility on LeanWI staff, but the difference between self-hosted and the responsibility for maintaining security and access to cloud hosted Sierra is unknown. Pricing and terms for cloud hosting are set by Innovative, and the cost has come down significantly. While server capacity can be reduced if V-Cat moves to cloud hosting, a good portion of the infrastructure costs required to maintain network connectivity to the cloud-hosted ILS remains, any savings would be minimal.

With IFLS, and possibly NWLS making the move to cloud hosting, it is important to consider. Equity of effort is important for the LeanWI partnership.

L. Ollhoff (Merrill) asked about security concerns with cloud hosting and self-hosting. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) indicated that WVLS staff could provide more information at the November V-Cat Council meeting.

V. Roberts (Rhinelander) asked for the cost of self-hosting. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) noted that it is complicated. Most of the V-Cat Hardware and Equipment Maintenance includes the infrastructure costs required to maintain network connectivity and a smaller amount covers server hosting. .

Shared Sierra Passwords must be reset when any staff with knowledge of the username and password leaves a V-Cat member library. This is necessary to protect the database, the member library as well as other V-Cat libraries, WVLS, and V-Cat library users. V Cat libraries were asked to notify WVLS of staffing changes. To ensure staff status are recorded correctly in V-Cat and other areas, and that new staff get added to WVLS email lists, E. Brewster (WVLS) has created a form to report changes. The form is available on the V-Cat Technology page and is password protected with the same password as the V-Cat training page.

V-Cat Training Report:
K. Zimmermann (WVLS) presented upcoming V-Cat training opportunities.

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared an upcoming scholarship opportunity for the Back in Circulation Conference.

Report of the ILS Specialist:
R. Metzler (WVLS) reported that routine database maintenance occurred as normal that that there was nothing unusual to report. She also noted that the LSTA Cooperative Cataloging Grant team would be meeting again soon.

R. Metzler (WVLS) shared a new procedure for potentially counterfeit materials and reminded the Council of the V-Cat recommendation on counterfeit materials.

Recommendation Review / Aspen Appetizer / Sierra Snack:

Aspen Appetizer

K. Zimmermann (WVLS) shared preliminary Aspen Test Server information. Each library's Aspen test server URL has "test-" appended to the front. The test server is not live and is updated once a month, approximately two weeks before Aspen upgrades. Changes in the test server are not migrated to live sites. The test sites provide an opportunity to test and experiment without affecting the live site and patron experience. Currently all test sites have Aspen's Accessible Browse Categories turned on for individuals who navigate websites without a mouse or track pad. K. Zimmermann (WVLS) indicated that more information about Aspen test servers and an opportunity to participate in testing will be forthcoming, and that some testing working sessions will be available for those who are interested.

Request for Agenda Items:

A Council member requested that an overview be given on the security of cloud-based servers and the pro/cons of a cloud-based server.

Upcoming Meetings:

       V-Cat Cooperative Circulation Committee - Wednesday, September 18

       V-Cat Bibliographic / Interface Committee - Tuesday, October 8

       V-Cat Council - Thursday, November 14 (note date change due to WLA conference)

Adjournment:

Chair, J. Ziebell (Neillsville), called for a motion to adjourn. L. Ollhoff (Merrill) moved to adjourn, seconded by P. O'Connell (Minocqua). Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

SUBMITTED: 9/16/2024 R. METZLER, RECORDER