

# Bridges Library System Staff Reports

## June 2026

### Brittany Larson – Library System Director

**Meetings and Visits:** I was invited to serve in an advisory capacity in the first-round interview panel for the Watertown Public Library Director. I appreciate being invited to this welcoming group. I had a WPLC Delivery Workgroup meeting to discuss the final state delivery budget and strategic plans for the future. I was invited to meet with the staff of the L.D. Fargo Public Library in Lake Mills and appreciated our time together! I also visited the Karl Junginger Memorial Library and appreciated being given a tour by the director.

**Big Bend Library Director:** I would like to welcome Samantha Seagrist as the new Library Director for the Big Bend Village Library! A New Director Orientation occurred on June 11<sup>th</sup> to allow Samantha to meet the Bridges staff and gain an introduction to the overall library system.

**Farewell and Appreciation:** I would like to take the opportunity to say farewell and honor the service of three retiring directors from our system. Alli Chase (Alice Baker Memorial Library – Eagle), Peg Checkai (Watertown Public Library), and Karla Lang (Big Bend Village Library). Thank you for your dedication to the patrons, the field of librarianship, and to your colleagues in the system!

**Database Management Librarian Position:** The search remains in progress and I will provide an update when I am able.

**Budget 2027:** The budget season has officially commenced. Meetings are being scheduled with Waukesha and Jefferson County for their respective budget presentations later this summer. I attended the Waukesha County Budget Kickoff Meeting on June 10<sup>th</sup> and received training on new software processes related to the Waukesha County budget submission. I have worked with Bridges staff on their 2027 budget recommendations for their consultant areas and am continuing to refine this overall budget. Preliminary information on member library charges was presented at the June APL meeting. APL and the Bridges Board will see a draft of the Bridges 2026 budget in July. With the approval of the 2027-2031 Waukesha County Library Services Plan we will see the new distribution formula implemented.

**WISE Grant Ordinance:** Back in February the Bridges Board approved acceptance of federal grant dollars (distributed through the DPI's Bureau of Libraries), related to digital accessibility. In order to document it with Waukesha County (as our fiscal agent) I needed to write an ordinance to amend the budget. I will present that to the Waukesha County Finance Committee on June 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjacent County Funding:** I continue to accept and review adjacent county library funding requests from libraries across the state, and on behalf of member libraries for our respective system counties. Requests are due by July 1<sup>st</sup> but should be submitted before then to give administrative staff from the receiving counties adequate time to review and enter the requests.

**Mobile App RFP Process:** Mellanie and I worked on the Mobile App RFP process from March-June 2026. Along with a committee of member library staff, we engaged in a County RFP process to explore mobile

apps as our current vendor contract was ending. The RFP process has concluded and the Bridges Board will review the contract tonight.

**Waukesha County Act 150 Update:** I presented to the Waukesha County Executive Committee and Finance Committee on May 18<sup>th</sup> and May 20<sup>th</sup>. On May 26<sup>th</sup> the plan went before the full Waukesha County Library Board and was approved unanimously. It has recently been signed by the County Executive and is ready for the 2027 budget planning process and implementation in 2027. I would like to give sincere thanks to all those that served on the committee, including five of our member library directors (Abby Armour – Mukwonago Community Library, Nan Champe – Pewaukee Public Library, Bruce Gay – Waukesha Public Library, Stephanie Ramirez – Delafield Public Library, and Cathy Tuttrup – Brookfield Public Library). I would also like to share appreciation for County Supervisor Timothy Dondlinger, for chairing the committee.

## Mellanie Mercier – Automation Coordinator & Assistant Director

**Innovative Users Group:** In April I attended the Innovative Users group conference in Chicago. In addition to future functionality sessions, I attended sessions on using the weeding workflow for inventory management, Vega Discover, SimplyReports, Technical Services in Leap and Vega Reports.

Upcoming features include partnership with Amazon for Business to do EDI ordering and grid creation, AI for creating report scripts, 60 customizable TOMS (type of Material codes) to allow for board books/big books/tonies etc. to be displayed on their own tab in Vega Discover, bulk change holds, a TOM for 4k blu-rays, as well as Libby integration in reports.

**WILIUG:** Last week the Wisconsin Illinois Innovative User Group had their spring meeting at the Milwaukee Public Library. The first day had cataloging sessions on RDA and AI and we offered the ability to attend these sessions to 9 staff from 7 of our member libraries.

## Kelly Nelson – Coordinator of Library Development

**Library Visits:** In May, I visited the Waukesha Public Library to share what I do and chat with their management team about potential future continuing education topics.

**Community Outreach:** I attended the Waukesha County Business Alliance’s “Alliance 101” presentation and was able to meet with several area businesses, including a financial institutional that provides free financial literacy classes that can be hosted at our libraries.

**SEWI De-Escalation Skills Workshop:** Robert Hagen of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Southeast Wisconsin presented to area library staff about recognizing when someone is in crisis and we can do to de-escalate the person. A strong emphasis was placed on safety, as well as active listening. 28 staff members from across the region attended this event and I received positive feedback on the speaker and the practical aspects of the workshop.

**WI Libraries Buildings & Spaces Webinar:** One of the ongoing statewide continuing education projects educates library staff on library buildings. In May, we hosted “New Libraries, Shared Spaces: Developing Mixed-Use Library Facilities”, a webinar that shared the building process of two recently opened mixed-

use facility libraries sharing space with residential units and retail businesses. This was a practical webinar for any library considering this venture.

### Upcoming 2026 Events

- **Collaborating for Community Success Series** – Hosted by Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the League of Wisconsin Municipalities
  - [Building and Leveraging Your Municipal Relationships Webinar](#) – Thursday, June 11, 2-3 pm; This session is especially for libraries!
  - [Leveraging Library Collaboration Webinar](#) – Thursday, June 18, 2-3 pm; This session is especially for local governments!
- [SEWI Libraries Director Retreat](#) – Friday, August 7, 9 am – 4 pm, Registration opens Friday, June 26.
- [Trustee Training Week](#) – Monday, August 10 – Thursday, August 13, Registration is now open for this free virtual conference. Register for each session individually. All sessions will be recorded.
  - [Wisconsin Library Law](#) – Monday, August 10, 12 - 1 pm, Presented by Kris Turner
  - [What You Need to Know about AI and Libraries](#) – Tuesday, August 11, 12 - 1 pm, Presented by Crystal Trice
  - [Board Documents 101](#) – Wednesday, August 12, 12 – 1 pm, Presented by Laura Meade
  - [All Playing in the Same Orchestra: Collaborating for Community Success](#) – Thursday, August 13, 12 – 1 pm, Presented by Kami Lynch and Teresa Schmidt

## Angela Meyers – Coordinator of Youth and Inclusive Services

### Meetings

Participated in the Infrastructure Workgroup for the Wisconsin Public Library Standards Project, the DPI Youth Services Consultants Meeting, and the Michigan Alliance for Cultural Accessibility (MACA) meeting.

### Youth Services

Supported member libraries in preparation for the 2026 Summer Library Program by coordinating 96 programs and workshops for families and teens. Attended the first workshop in Mark Hayward's Yo-Yo Guy series at Whitewater Public Library.



Mark Hayward, the Yo-Yo Guy, at Whitewater Public Library



Spring Family Day participant pets therapy dog named Oakley

### **Inclusive Services**

The Third Annual Spring Family Day was held at the Library Memory Project at Dwight Foster Public Library in Fort Atkinson on Sunday, May 17, 2026. This partnership event included Jefferson County libraries and the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Jefferson County. A total of 23 participants attended and enjoyed music by the P-Town Project, visits with therapy dogs, snacks, and a craft project.

Coordinated a book collection for the Waukesha County Jail and orphanages in Ghana with a Waukesha County officer. A total of 409 books were collected for the jail and 407 books for the orphanages.

### **Professional Development**

Completed KnowBe4 Q2 Security Training: Callback Phishing; Project and Meeting Management 101 for Waukesha County’s Standards of Service Excellence certificate program; the NAMI De-Escalation

Program offered through SEWI Libraries; and Microsoft Teams for Libraries through the Indiana State Library.

## **Emily Heller – Public Communications Coordinator**

### **Tracks in the Stacks Bigfoot Hunt**

The systemwide hunt bigfoots kicked off on June 1 and is going well! Brookfield reported that they had 48 entries in the first week! Event details: <https://bridgeslibrarysystem.org/bigfoot/>

### **Web Accessibility Project**

I have been working through the training modules for Allyant/CommonLook PDF to learn how to properly remediate any pdf files to be fully accessible. There are 11 modules to work through to learn how to tag properly, set up tables, list and links, and how to build forms. I have also been working with Midwest Pano to transition the 360 tours into an accessible platform. Training for that will come later this summer.

### **Repair Café Logo**

I worked with Kelly to design a new logo to use for her new program series, Repair Cafés. We are working on the marketing materials next to promote them later this year.



## **Consulting**

On June 24, I will be presenting to Town of Genesee Parks Committee with Retzer Nature Center/Waukesha County Parks about our collaboration on the Story Hikes at Retzer and what other member libraries do for Story Walks and Story Trails. It is a brainstorming and information gathering session for the Parks Committee.

## **In the news:**

- Bigfoot Hunt Interview on 620 AM Radio: [What's on Tap interview](#)

## **[News Archives](#)**

**Newsletter Data:** Industry standard/goal is 44% Open Rate

- Marketing Magic:
  - June 5: 45.12% Open Rate
  - May 15: 61.45% Open Rate
  - May 1: 56.47% Open Rate
- Monthly Bridges:
  - May 15: 44.14% Open Rate
  - April 21: 45.59% Open Rate
- Monthly Legislators:
  - May: Legislators – 27.78% Open Rate / Staff - 38.89% Open Rate
  - April: Legislators – 38.89% Open Rate / Staff – 50% Open Rate