

THE WINNEFOX LIBRARY SYSTEM:
ITS ORIGINS, PLANNING,
AND FIRST SIX MONTHS
OF OPERATION

by

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INTRODUCTION

On January 1, 1977, the Winnefox Library System began operation. This tri-county federated system, with headquarters at the Oshkosh Public Library, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, united libraries in Winnebago, Waushara and Green Lake Counties.

The purpose of this paper is to follow the development of this new system from the time it was first considered in 1972, through its planning stage, and into its actual implementation for the first six months of 1977.

The last overall survey of library systems in the United States was published in 1969.¹ Legislation providing for federated and consolidated systems, as they are organized at present in Wisconsin, did not become enacted until December 1971, two years after publication of the Nelson Associates' survey.² Case studies such as this one provide follow-up material on developments in systems since the survey.

The circumstances which brought the Winnefox system into being were unique to its particular background and

¹Nelson Associates, Public Library Systems in the United States: A Survey of Multijurisdictional Systems (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969).

²Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43.

problems and cannot be considered typical; however, the details of its evolution serve to increase the understanding of library-oriented readers as to what some of the reasons and advantages for creating a system in Wisconsin are, as well as an awareness of possible obstacles in the way of realization. This information can be of use to persons who are contemplating the planning of a public library system, as well as to those who wish to make comparisons between this system and other systems, either in Wisconsin or elsewhere.

A brief historical background tracing the development of library systems in Wisconsin is included, as are the qualifications which needed to be met by the Winnefox Library System before it could be accepted by the Division for Library Services in Madison, the actual process through which the system was planned, its organization, and how it operated through June 30, 1977.

A library system does not spring into full being spontaneously. First, there is usually a state statute which makes provision for its creation.³ In Wisconsin, the Division for Library Services establishes the standards to which the system must conform. Wisconsin law then requires that a library system planning committee be appointed by each of the county boards in the area to be united under a system. After

³Nelson Associates, Public Library Systems in the United States, p. 18.

the county boards have met this criterion, the planning committee must agree on a system plan which must be approved by the Division for Library Services and by the board or boards of the county or counties in which it is intended to operate.

Somewhere between the first of these steps and the last, there have to be persons or groups of persons interested in libraries in their communities who are attracted to the possibilities which a library system seems to offer, and who have the ability to start the wheels turning. Many people gave many hours of their time to establish this system. They were librarians, members of library boards, representatives on county boards, and interested citizens. The system met with opposition from some of the members of various boards, and it was not without carefully prepared counter-arguments on the behalf of its supporters that the system finally became a reality.

Sources of Information

The roles these persons played in the creation of the system will be explained, through an examination of the minutes of the planning committees in Green Lake, Waushara and Winnebago counties, and through interviews with persons who were involved in the planning. In addition, information was obtained from a study of the Wisconsin Statutes, Chapter 43, which paved the way toward systems in Wisconsin; articles in the Wisconsin Library Bulletin; accounts in the

Oshkosh Daily Northwestern and Appleton Post-Crescent newspapers; proceedings of the Winnebago County Board concerned with passage of the system; the Wisconsin Administrative Code, PI 6, "Public Libraries;" the original system plan, as submitted by the planning committee to the Division for Library Services and county boards; the bylaws of the system; budget figures for the system; minutes of system board meetings; and taped sessions of the first two meetings of the system board.

Ruth Warncke, former Deputy Executive Director of the American Library Association, wrote in 1968 that

The heart of the system . . . is the commitment to cooperation of everyone involved. . . . The basic reason for the commitment . . . is that only with cooperation can you achieve excellence. Excellent . . . service is that [which] makes available to every single person the materials that he needs . . . and the assistance he requires to make good use of them.⁴

It will be shown that, until people agree to cooperate, a system cannot even exist, let alone give good service. It will also be shown that, while all libraries in a system benefit, small libraries with limited resources, funding, and personnel have more to gain from system membership than do large libraries with ample budgets and educated personnel.

Definition of Terms

The terms system, federated system, provisional certification, and municipality, as used in this report,

⁴Ruth Warncke, "Heart of the System," Wisconsin Library Bulletin 64 (September-October 1968): 314.

require clarification.

By system, is meant "a complex of public libraries within a county or multicounty area, organized and governed as a unit, in which all citizens residing in the area have access to the resources and services of the complex."⁵

There are two types of systems provided by law in Wisconsin, federated and consolidated. Only the term "federated" need be defined. A federated system may be either a single or a multi-county system which is governed by a system library board. Local libraries within the system retain autonomy over their respective operations.⁶

Provisional certification means, in effect, that a system is probationarily certified for a period of up to five years, giving a new system time to comply with the steps for full certification. To be eligible for provisional approval, "a system shall have a plan approved by the Division which provides for compliance with [whatever] standards [are] under par."⁷

The term municipality designates any political jurisdiction, including cities, villages and townships.

⁵Division for Library Services, Wisconsin Public Library System Standards (Madison, Wis.: The Division, 1974), p. vii.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, Sec. 43.09 (2)(b).

CHAPTER I

BEFORE WINNEFOX

In 1956, the American Library Association issued its revised standards for public library services. The major change which these standards incorporated was the provision for library systems. "Libraries working together, sharing their services and materials, can meet the full needs of their users. This co-operative approach on the part of libraries is the most important single recommendation of this document."¹ The inclusion of this statement helped the concept of systems gain impetus.²

When Nelson Associates published their survey of library systems in the United States in 1969, they were able to identify 1159 multijurisdictional systems existing prior to January 1, 1964.³ By multijurisdictional, the authors meant those systems which provided services to more than one

¹American Library Association, Public Library Services: A Guide to Evaluation, with Minimum Standards (Chicago: The Association, 1956), p. 7.

²Lowell Martin, "Standards for Public Libraries," Library Trends 21 (October 1972): 166-67.

³Nelson Associates, Public Library Systems in the United States: A Survey of Multijurisdictional Systems (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969), p. 2.

village, town, city, county, or state.⁴

Included in their final sample of fifty-eight systems were those of the Milwaukee Public Library System, Door County Library, and Wisconsin Valley Library Reference Service.⁵ In their original survey of the 1159 identified multi-jurisdictional systems, the Wisconsin systems of Barron County Library Service, Kellogg Public Library, Multi-County Library System, Public Library Service Center, and Shawano City-County Library were also identified.⁶ But Wisconsin systems were not as they are today. They were funded partly by grants from the Library Services Act (LSA), and the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), partly by counties, but not by state funds. The distributor and coordinator of these federal grants was the Wisconsin Free Library Commission, hereafter referred to as WFLC.⁷

Among the services offered by WFLC were scholarship programs, provision of numerous surveys and studies, and in-service training sessions. Through the latter, individual librarians learned to work together in workshops, and would later work together in systems.⁸

⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid., p. 52. ⁶Ibid., p. 278.

⁷Kathleen Imhoff, "LSCA I Has Changed Wisconsin: Federated Funds Led the Way to Better Library Services," Wisconsin Library Bulletin 71 (July-August 1975): 147.

⁸Ibid.

LSCA, . . . greatly increased federal aid, providing monies for public library services and construction, for urban as well as for rural areas. . . . State law authorized WFLC to receive and administer the funds and to supervise projects. . . . Among LSCA projects . . . [was the] Waushara-Green Lake County Library Service, . . .⁹

In 1962, librarians and interested citizens in Waushara County, wishing to improve their library services, appealed to WFLC. At the suggestion of W. Lyle Eberhart, the WFLC consultant, a planning committee was appointed by the Waushara County Board. The committee realized that, because Waushara County had a scattered, largely rural population, it could not support a library system alone. WFLC suggested that Waushara join forces with adjoining Green Lake County, with the result that that county also appointed a planning committee.¹⁰

There were five libraries in Waushara County at the time, in Hancock, Wautoma, Plainfield, Wild Rose, and Pine River. The latter, the Leon-Saxesville library, hardly deserved the designation of "library." It was merely a small, uncataloged collection of books which had been started by the local 4-H club.¹¹ There were also five libraries in Green Lake County, in Princeton, Green Lake, Markesan, Kingston,

⁹Ibid., p. 148.

¹⁰Jane Caldwell to writer, Neenah, Wis., 9 August 1977, Personal Files of writer, Neenah, Wis.

¹¹Interview with Nancy McCue, Tustin, Wis., 15 August 1977.

and Berlin. Nancy McCue, of Poy Sippi, and Luella Welch, of Redgranite, two members of the Waushara County Planning Committee, felt very strongly that library outlets were also needed in their respective towns. At first, WFLC objected to the creation of these new libraries, on the grounds that more small outlets might weaken the proposed two-county library cooperative, but finally agreed, provided they could be ready to begin service at the same time that the system was ready. The school board of Poy Sippi gave permission for an abandoned elementary school to be used as the library building. The library was given the name of East Waushara Public Library. Books were donated by interested citizens of the three surrounding townships who would use the library-- Poy Sippi, Aurora, and Bloomfield.¹² The Redgranite Public Library was located in the village hall, from its opening on March 1, 1963, until April 1, 1965, when it was moved to its present location in the Redgranite Civic Center building. It was stocked with books from the Redgranite High School library, which had been closed; from many interested people in Redgranite; and from a collection of 600 books from the estate of Stephen Nording, a local druggist.¹³ Thus, the Poy Sippi and Redgranite libraries were created in conjunction with the launching of the Waushara-Green Lake

¹²Ibid.

¹³Isabel Groth to writer, 10 October 1977, Personal Files of writer, Neenah, Wis.

Co-operative Library system, which began on July 1, 1963.¹⁴
 (See Figure 1.)

The headquarters for the system were at the Berlin Public Library in Green Lake County, which was the largest library. Supported during its first year by a \$20,000 LSCA grant, the system received half that amount for the second year, the other half being supplied by the two counties. After that, the system was funded entirely by the counties. In 1977, still maintaining its autonomy as a two-county system, it was incorporated into the larger Winnefox Library System.¹⁵ "Local appropriations for public library service increased significantly with new support from county government, but state aid was still lacking."¹⁶

In 1965, the Wisconsin Free Library Commission merged with the Department of Public Instruction and became known as the Division for Library Services.¹⁷

The passage of a revised library law in the state in 1971 meant state funding for library systems, as well as provisions for establishing these systems. No longer were systems dependent upon federal funds, although these monies

¹⁴Jane Caldwell to writer, 9 August 1977, Personal Files of writer, Neenah, Wis.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Kathleen Imhoff, "LSCA I Has Changed Wisconsin," p. 149.

¹⁷Ibid.

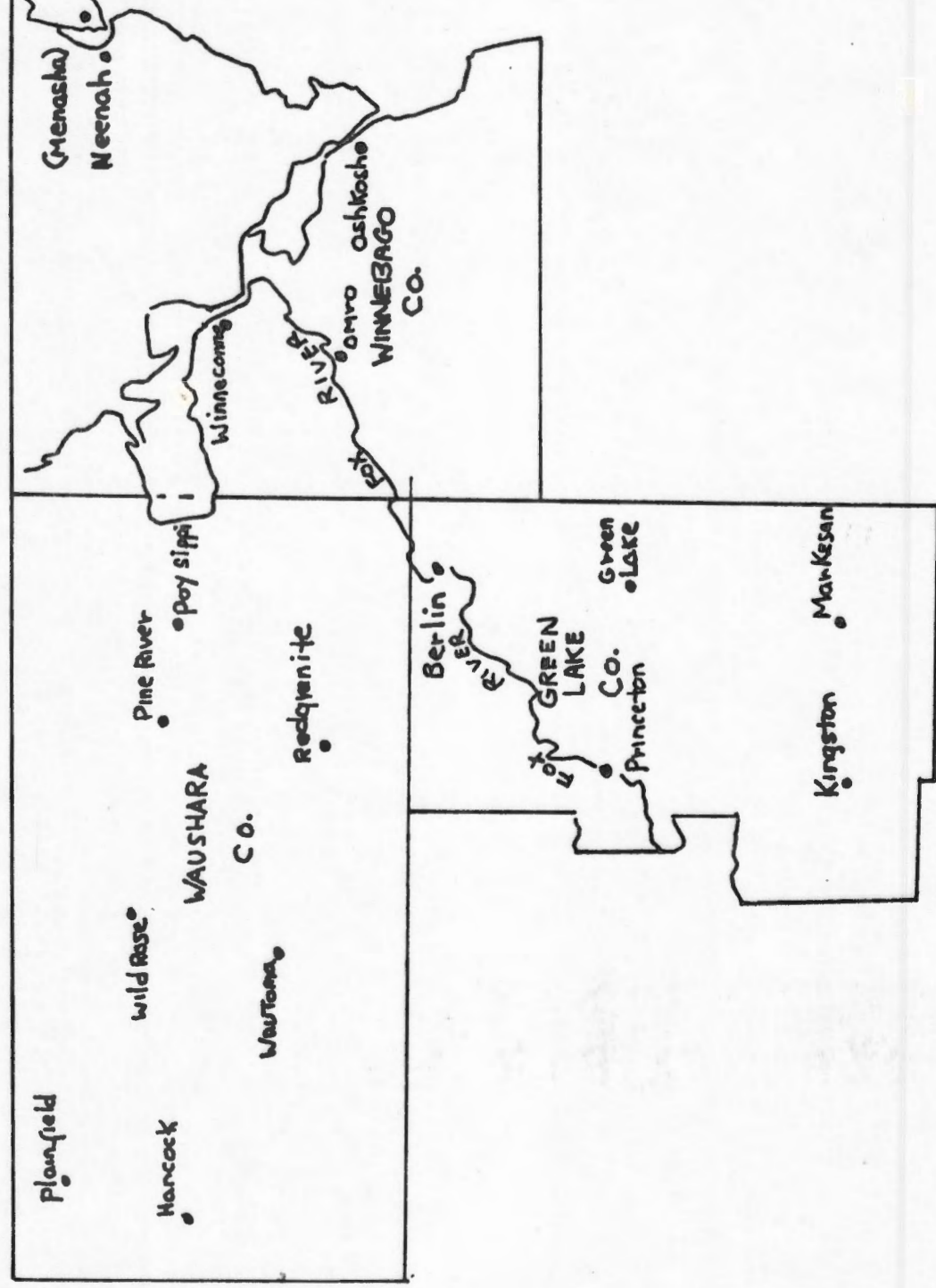


Fig. 1. Map locating 12 libraries composing Waushara-Green Lake Cooperative Library System and 4 libraries in Winnebago County which united to form Winnefox Library System. Location of Menasha is indicated.

were still available.

On March 1, 1972, four Wisconsin systems were provisionally certified. They were the Wisconsin Valley Library Reference Service, encompassing Villas, Oneida, Forest, Taylor, Lincoln, Langlade, Clark, Marathon, Wood, and Portage counties, with headquarters at Wausau; the LaCrosse Area Library System, including Monroe, Juneau, and LaCrosse counties, headquarters at LaCrosse; the Multicounty Library System, composed of Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland, Iron, Burnett, Washburn, and Sawyer counties, centered at Ashland; and the Milwaukee County Library System.¹⁸ The alacrity with which two of these systems became provisionally certified was not amazing, considering that they had existed prior to state law.¹⁹ Forty-three additional counties had appointed planning committees by March 1, 1972.²⁰

By the time the Winnefox Library System entered the planning stage, its committee drew upon the models presented not only by the Wisconsin Valley Library Service, but also on the Mid-Wisconsin Federated Library System, encompassing

¹⁸W. Lyle Eberhart, "It's Your Move! Toward the Goal of a Statewide Library System Network," Wisconsin Library Bulletin 68 (July-August 1972): 195.

¹⁹Wisconsin Valley Library Service and Milwaukee County Library System (formerly Milwaukee Public Library System).

²⁰W. Lyle Eberhart, "It's Your Move! Toward the Goal of a Statewide Library System Network," p. 195.

Fond du Lac and Dodge counties, with headquarters at Fond du Lac, certified on January 1, 1975, and the Outagamie Library System, with headquarters at Appleton, also certified on January 1, 1975.²¹

By January 1, 1976, one year before Winnefox became certified, there were eleven systems in Wisconsin. Winnefox is the twelfth and newest system.²² (See Figure 2.)

²¹Recertified as the Outagamie-Waupaca Library System on 1 January 1976.

²²"Library System Gets \$50,371," Appleton Post-Crescent, 21 August 1977, sec. 3, p. C5.

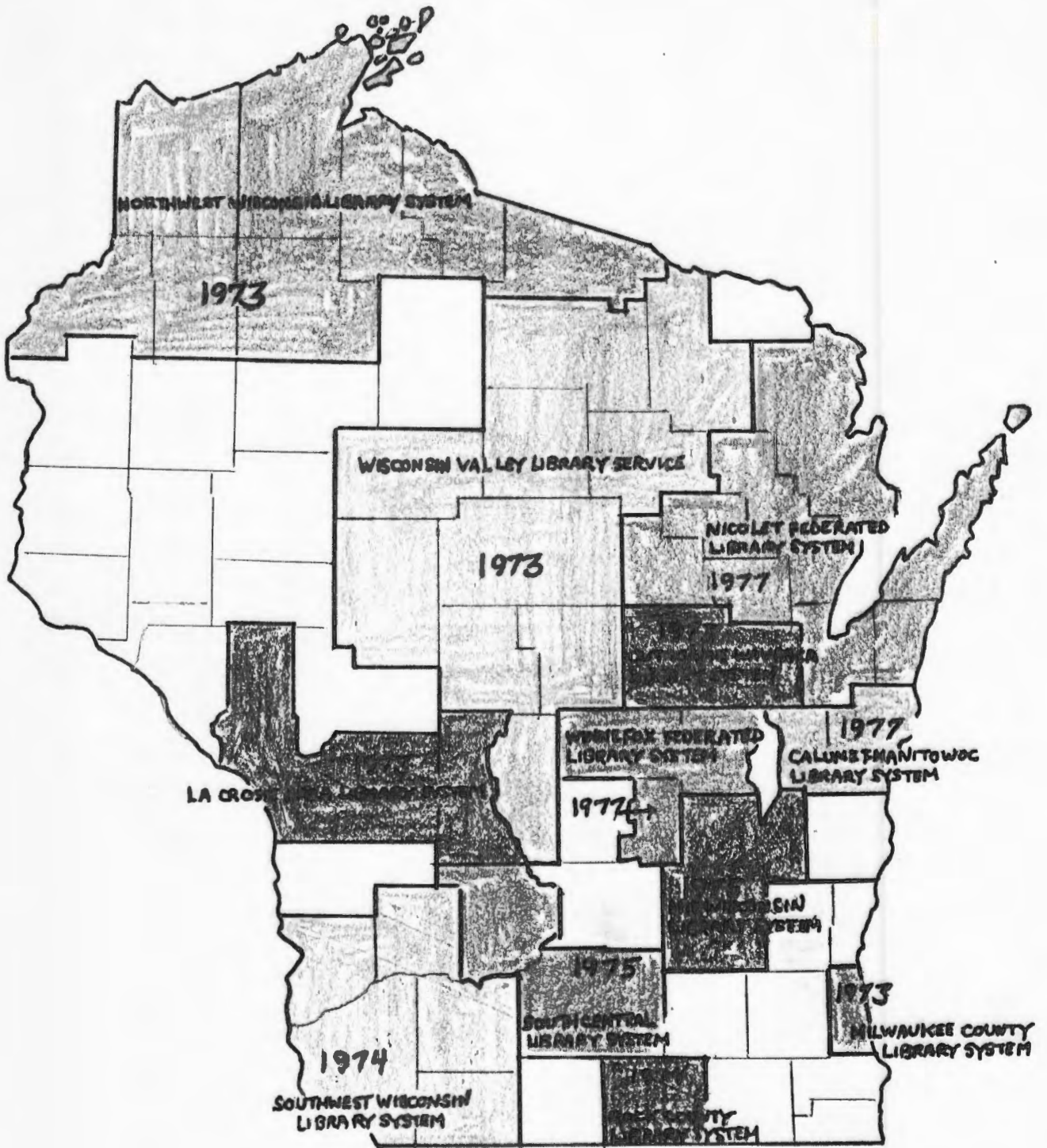


Fig. 2. Wisconsin Public Library Systems, 1 January 1977. Dates indicated are of most recent certifications.

CHAPTER II

THE PROVISION FOR SYSTEMS IN STATE LAW

When the 1963 library standards law was revised and became Wisconsin Statute, Chapter 43, on December 7, 1971,¹ library systems in the state became state supported.

The Division for Library Services (hereafter referred to as the Division) is instructed by this law to write standards for public library systems to

. . . be based on population served, adequacy of buildings and physical facilities, qualifications and number of personnel, book resources and other library materials, financial support, and such other standards as the Division finds necessary to insure adequate library service.²

The system must comply with the rules for certification, as set forth in Wisconsin Administrative Code.³ The standards must conform to Section 43.15 of the library law, which requires the following:

Population. The territory in the system must have at least one public library in a city with more than 30,000

¹"Winnefox Federated Library System Plan," n.p., 1976, p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

²Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.09 (2)(a).

³Wisconsin, Public Libraries, Administrative Code (1972), sec. PI 6.06.

population. The area itself must have a population of 85,000 or more.⁴

Financial support. Systems are eligible for state aid only if municipalities within the system have given financial support to their public libraries in the preceding year in an amount which, when added to state aid, is adequate to support public library services. This figure must not be lower than the average support for the previous three years.⁵

Territory included. No county may have more than one library system.⁶

Methods of Organization. A federated system must have a designated headquarters library. Each included county must furnish library service to residents of municipalities who do not maintain a public library.⁷

Chapter 43 also specifies that county boards are empowered to appoint county library planning committees, to consist of "not less than 7 nor more than 15 members."⁸

⁴Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.15 (1)(a)(b).

⁵Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.24 (2).

⁶Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.15 (3)(b).

⁷Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.15 (4)(a).

⁸Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.11 (1), (2)(a).

Members are to include representatives from existing public libraries, but only one county board member. Appointments are for three years or until the committee's final report is accepted by the county board and the Division, whichever occurs first.⁹ These persons are to meet at least once every three months and are to serve without pay, but are to be reimbursed for expenses connected with their committee assignments [such as for travel expenses].¹⁰

The purpose of the library planning committee is to determine whether there is potential in the area for a public library system and to draw up a system plan on how such a system should be organized. If a multi-county system is being considered, the committee holds joint planning sessions with similar committees from adjoining counties. Representatives from all libraries in the county are to be invited to attend these meetings.¹¹

Copies of the committee's final report are submitted to the Division for approval and filed with the county board. Upon acceptance by both of these agencies, the committee is dissolved.¹²

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.11 (2)(c).

¹¹Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.11 (3)(a).

¹²Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.11 (3)(a), (4).

The system plan, as indicated, must be approved by the Division.¹³ After the county library planning committees and county boards are informed of the decision, the county boards must then approve the system. Upon approval, the Division specifies the effective date of the establishment of the system, which is always January first of the year specified. (But up until March 1, 1972, the law permitted systems to be certified on either January 1 or March 1.)¹⁴

General provisions for public library systems are also specified, such as terms of office for board members, elections of members, fiscal years, administration, annual reports, cooperative services, rules protecting the jobs of existing employees, retirement benefits for system employees, and rules on contracts and bidding.¹⁵

The statute determines the number of members to serve on a system board:

In a federated public library system whose territory lies within 2 or more counties, the system board shall consist of at least 15 and not more than 20 members appointed by county boards jointly. Appointments shall be in proportion to population . . . but each county shall be represented by at least one member on the system board. The remaining . . . members shall include such representatives of the library boards governing public libraries of

¹³Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.13 (1)(a).

¹⁴Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.13 (3).

¹⁵Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.17 (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), and (9).

participating municipalities, and public members appointed from the counties at large as the county board determines.¹⁶

A federated system board, while serving as a joint agency of the counties it represents, must, on the other hand, constitute a separate legal entity, that is a governing body independent from the city and county governments in which it operates, for these reasons:

(1) To have "exclusive custody and control of all system funds," (2) To be free "to construct, enlarge and improve buildings," (3) "To make contracts," (4) "To sue and be sued."¹⁷

It has the same functions as a regular library board with respect to the system, but it does not infringe on the rights of member libraries to conduct their respective operations.¹⁸

The statute provides grants for county library planning committees' expenses, not to exceed \$2,000.¹⁹

In 1977, the section on state aid of the library law was revised to incorporate certain provisions which had

¹⁶Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.19 (1)(b).

¹⁷Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.19 (2)(a).

¹⁸Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.19 (2)(b).

¹⁹Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.23.

previously been part of the Administrative Code. The rest of the section remains unchanged and is as follows: Each public library system receives an annual amount of state aid, based on the following formula:

1. For each person residing in territory within the system, 50 cents.
2. For each square mile of territory within the system, \$6 in a single-county system, \$9 in a 2-county system, \$12 in a 3-county system, \$15 in a 4-county system and \$18 in a system containing 5 or more counties.
3. An amount equal to 7 percent of the total operating expenditures for public services in territory within the system from local and county sources in the preceding year.²⁰

²⁰Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.24 (1)(a)(b)(c).

CHAPTER III

PLANNING WINNEFOX

When Wisconsin passed its revised library law in 1971, providing funding for systems, members of the Waushara-Green Lake Cooperative Library System realized that, because they did not have sufficient population nor a municipality of 30,000 to meet the criteria for eligibility as a federated system, they would have to link themselves to a county which did meet these criteria. They had two choices; they could become a part of the already existing Fond du Lac County Federated Library System, whose headquarters was in Fond du Lac, or they could try to get Winnebago County to initiate a system, with proposed headquarters to be at the Oshkosh Public Library.¹ Oshkosh was the logical and only choice as headquarters, since neither of the next largest cities in Winnebago County, Neenah and Menasha, served populations of 30,000 or more.

The cooperative preferred the latter path, because members had been depending on the Oshkosh library since 1963 for referral and reference service, for which they paid

¹ Interview with Nancy McCue, Tustin, Wisconsin, 15 August 1977.

Oshkosh by contract.²

The board of the Oshkosh library was receptive to this idea. On March 1, 1972, it voted unanimously on a resolution requesting the Winnebago County Board of Supervisors to appoint a library planning committee. The possibility of such a committee had already been discussed by representatives of the Oshkosh, Neenah, and Menasha public libraries.³ However, nothing came of this first attempt.

Meanwhile, Green Lake and Waushara Counties reappointed planning committees. A few persons began negotiating at the Green Lake County Courthouse as early as October 24, 1972.⁴ This committee did not become official, however, until there were seven members.⁵

On March 17, 1973, the chairpersons of the two committees, Nancy McCue, of Waushara County, and Kay Swan, representing Green Lake, and three other members, met in Madison with W. Lyle Eberhart, who was now Director of the Division. He suggested that they make contact with the Fond du Lac

²Ibid.

³"Library Planning Proposal Would Cover Entire County," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, 2 March 1972, p. 14.

⁴Green Lake County (Wisconsin) Library Planning Committee, Minutes, 1972-73, meeting of 24 October 1972. (Type-written.)

⁵On 29 January 1973, it was not yet official, but on 26 February, members were to request payment vouchers for expenses. Such payment would be made only to an official committee.

County Federated Library System⁶ and obtain copies of that system plan, and arrange to hold a meeting in the near future with that system's personnel.⁷

On May 22, that meeting took place at the Green Lake County courthouse.⁸ It was suggested at the meeting that, if Waushara-Green Lake joined the Fond du Lac system, the headquarters of this smaller system might be transferred to Ripon (in Fond du Lac County) from Berlin (in Green Lake County) where it was situated. This suggestion was not agreeable to the two counties, because they wanted to keep the system headquarters at the Berlin Public Library.⁹

The chairpersons of the Waushara and Green Lake planning committees sent a report to their respective members, stating:

Because of our present contract with Oshkosh for Fox Valley Reference and Loan Service, the consensus seems to lean toward the preference of waiting for the possibility of the formation of a System centering around Winnebago County and Oshkosh. Although there are some immediate enticements in joining the Fond du Lac County System, in the long run, we think we shall be better served by

⁶On 1 January 1975, Dodge County joined this system and it was recertified as the Mid-Wisconsin Federated Library System.

⁷"Library System Future Studied," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, 20 March 1973, p. 13.

⁸Waushara County (Wisconsin) Library Planning Committee, Minutes, meeting of 22 May 1973.

⁹Interview with Nancy McCue, Tustin, Wisconsin, 15 August 1977.

waiting for Oshkosh to organize a System.¹⁰

It was not until over a year later, however, that members of the Oshkosh Public Library board and Leonard B. Archer, director of the library, approached the Winnebago County Board.¹¹

In an effort to elicit a favorable vote, McCue and Swan wrote a joint letter to the Winnebago County Executive:

The appropriate committee of the Winnebago County Board is to meet with you in the near future . . . to reconsider the approval of a committee to study the question of forming a County Library system.

The Waushara and Green Lake County Library Planning Study Committees have progressed as far as they can, for their next step is to request attachment to a system already approved. As you know, each county must join a System centered around a city of at least 30,000 population. The Fond du Lac County Library System already in operation has approached our committees hoping we decide to join them. They realize, of course, that as the number of counties included increases, the ratio of state aid progresses upward based on geographical area and population.

For several years, the Waushara-Green Lake County Cooperative Library has received excellent help from the Fox Valley Reference and Loan Service through the Oshkosh Public Library. Not only is Oshkosh our most logical geographical center for a System, but Mr. Archer and his staff have been so helpful at all times that we should like to consider joining a Winnebago County Library System to continue our familiar and excellent relationship. . . .¹²

¹⁰Nancy McCue and Kay Swan to Waushara and Green Lake Planning Committees, 24 September 1973, copy in Personal Files of writer, Neenah, Wisconsin.

¹¹Winnebago County (Wisconsin), Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors (Oshkosh, Wis.: n.p., n.d.), 3 December 1974.

¹²Nancy McCue and Kay Swan to Orrin King, 25 November 1974, copy in Personal Files of writer, Neenah, Wisconsin.

Despite these efforts, the resolution was defeated. The opposition came from Neenah and Menasha through communications which were read at the meeting and in a public hearing held before a vote was taken. The Town and the City of Menasha, for instance, each sent communications opposing the use of a study committee.

Amy Glaister, a member of the Neenah library board, stated, "It is possible that the taxpayers of Winnebago County would be saddled with the expense if the state decided to withdraw their support." Carl Snyder, president of the Menasha library board, stated that the City of Menasha would not benefit from a committee. "The boards would lose control and an increase in taxes would result from the formation of such a committee."¹³ Snyder recently stated that the fear of losing autonomy--control--was the biggest single objection to the formation of a planning committee. He felt that once the committee was appointed, a system was almost certainly to result.¹⁴ Paul J. Glaister appeared as a taxpayer, opposing the "spending [of] taxpayers' money for the formation of a County Library Planning Committee."¹⁵

¹³Winnebago County (Wisconsin), Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors (Oshkosh, Wis.: n.p., n.d.), 3 December 1974.

¹⁴Interview with Carl Snyder, Menasha, Wisconsin, 14 August 1977.

¹⁵Winnebago County (Wisconsin), Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors (Oshkosh, Wis.: n.p., n.d.), 3 December 1974.

Despite these arguments, the resolution might have passed by a simple majority had not the opposition resorted to a loophole: Library law provides state funds of \$2,000 to be used for expenses by members of library planning committees. The opposition amended the resolution to read "that the county clerk is authorized to issue checks not to exceed \$2,000, etc."¹⁶ Any resolution involving money--even though, in this case, the money was state, not county, funds--requires a two-thirds majority to pass.¹⁷ The vote was, ayes, 29; naves, 15.¹⁸

Before the proposal went before the board again, Archer made contact with the Division and obtained permission to fund the \$2,000 through the Oshkosh Public Library. The Division granted his request, and, in January, 1975, the resolution passed by a simple majority of 28 to 13, five not voting. The opposition was wholly from Neenah and Menasha. All supervisors from Oshkosh who voted were in support of the resolution.¹⁹

The first meeting of the Winnebago County Planning Committee was held on March 10, 1975, at the county executive's

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Interview with Sharon Lenz, Oshkosh Public Library, 5 August 1977.

¹⁸Winnebago County (Wisconsin), Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors (Oshkosh, Wis.: n.p., n.d.), 3 December 1974.

¹⁹Ibid., 21 January 1975.

office in the court house. Two of the seven original committee members represented the Oshkosh Public Library, and one each represented the other libraries in the county, namely, the Neenah Public Library, the Elisha D. Smith Public Library in Menasha, the Carter Memorial Library in Omro, and the Winneconne Public Library. There was also a representative from the county board.

This representation was in compliance with Section 43.11 of the library law, titled "County Library Committees," which states: "This committee, of 7 to 15 members, shall reflect the population distribution of the county, and include one member of the county board."²⁰

At this meeting, Jane Younger of the Division explained the duties of the committee.²¹ As set forth in state law, these duties consist of investigating "the potential of a public library system in the county and adjacent counties," and the preparation of "a plan for the organization of a county or multicounty system."²² At a subsequent meeting, plans of other systems were read and discussed.²³

²⁰Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.11 (2)(a).

²¹Winnebago County (Wisconsin) Library Planning Committee, Minutes, 1975-76, meeting of 10 March 1975. (Type-written.)

²²Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.11 (3)(a).

²³Winnebago County (Wisconsin) Library Planning Committee, Minutes, 1975-76, meeting of 14 May 1975.

It was at the fourth meeting, on June 25, 1975, that a problem of township funding first came up. This proved to be an obstacle which nearly delayed provisional certification of the system by two years.

The Neenah Public Library is supported not only by the City of Neenah, but by four surrounding townships, those of Clayton, Vinland, the Town of Neenah, and the Town of Menasha. The Menasha library is supported by the Town of Menasha, also. The board members of these libraries were concerned that they would no longer be eligible, under a system, to receive support funds from these townships.²⁴ It was over a year before a ruling finally came from the state attorney general, Bronson LaFollette. (See p. 31 for this ruling.)

Meanwhile, at the next meeting, the first draft of the system plan was distributed by Archer to the committee. It was given the title, "Winnefox Federated Library System Plan."²⁵ After the system became provisionally certified, the word "federated" was dropped from the title. "Winne" refers to Winnebago, and "fox" refers to the Fox River, which flows through all three counties.

By February of the following year, the system plan

²⁴Interview with Carl Snyder, Menasha, Wisconsin, 14 August 1977.

²⁵Winnebago County (Wisconsin) Library Planning Committee, Minutes, 1975-76, meeting of 29 July 1975. (Type-written.)

was ready, but a ruling on the township funding was still not forthcoming. The members decided to take copies of the plan to their respective library boards for discussion and approval.²⁶

At the April 22, 1976, meeting, final changes were made in the plan. The representative from the Neenah library read a letter from the president of her board accepting the plan "if [Neenah were] not obligated to provide library service for which [there would be no reimbursement]." Representatives from both Neenah and Menasha said that each of their boards wished to attach a letter to the plan, explaining their reservations. A Menasha representative, Virginia Roessler, moved that the Winnefox Federated Library System plan be adopted. Acceptance was unanimous.²⁷ This was the final meeting of the planning committee.

On May 12, 1976, a public hearing was held at the Winnebago County court house, at which Snyder repeated his objections. He felt the plan was "being forced" on Menasha.²⁸ Just because Roessler had voted to accept the system plan did not indicate the thinking of the rest of the Menasha board,

²⁶Winnebago County (Wisconsin) Library Planning Committee, Minutes, 1976-76, meeting of 12 February 1976. (Typewritten.)

²⁷Ibid., 22 April 1976.

²⁸"Menasha Library Objects to Winnefox Plan," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, 13 May 1976, sec. 3, p. 26.

in his estimation. He was not convinced that the plan could operate without taking away from the operations of the individual libraries, even though it was pointed out to him that state law required that stipulation. Another objection was that the cost of running the system might leave very little to distribute to individual libraries. Archer indicated that system funds come from the state income tax pool, and that Winnebago County was already paying for library systems elsewhere in the state without receiving anything in return because it had no system of its own. At that meeting, the question of township funding was brought up again by David Murray of Menasha, a former representative on the planning committee.²⁹

In a letter to Snyder, Eberhart wrote, "If the attorney general's opinion determines that these existing financial arrangements are not legal, there are, I believe, still alternatives which will appropriately protect both your services and autonomy."³⁰

At the August 1976 meetings of the county boards in Green Lake, Waushara, and Winnebago, the plan, having been accepted by the Division, was submitted for approval. Green Lake and Waushara both approved the plan, but the Winnebago

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰"Winnefox Library System Plan to Be Submitted to County Board," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, 2 July 1976, p. 3.

board voted to table the resolution for thirty days.³¹ Then, on September 22, 1976, in a letter to Snyder, Bronson LaFollette finally gave this ruling:

Any city, town or village in a county levying a tax for a county library . . . upon written application to the county board, shall be exempt from the tax levy if the city, town or village making the application expends for a library fund, during the year for which the tax levy is made a sum at least equal to a sum which you would have to pay towards a county tax.³²

This ruling meant that the Towns of Neenah and Menasha, which were contributing more towards the Neenah and Menasha libraries than they would be paying in county taxes, were exempt from paying taxes to support the county bookmobile service. The towns of Clayton and Vinland, however, would have to pay taxes in addition to their support of the Neenah library because their support was less than they were paying in taxes; they would, however, receive bookmobile service. Taxation and/or tax exemption, however, had no bearing on system operation. In other words, the system would not affect the funding which Neenah and Menasha were receiving from their townships. Since LaFollette's letter did not specifically address itself to this issue, board members of the Neenah and Menasha libraries were still hesitant to

³¹Winnebago County (Wisconsin), Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors (Oshkosh, Wis.: n.p., n.d.), 17 August 1976.

³²Bronson LaFollette to Carl Snyder, 22 September 1976, Personal Files of Carl Snyder, Menasha, Wisconsin.

commit themselves to accepting the system.

Six days following this ruling, the plan was once again presented to the county board. Dorothy Draheim, the planning committee member who had represented the Neenah library board, voiced the opposition of her board to the plan, stating that "the city's [sic] libraries would suffer a financial loss if the resolution was adopted."³³ In a recent interview, Draheim explained that the reservations of the Neenah board were based on the fact that LaFollette's letter still did not answer the question of whether township funding would be affected by the system.³⁴ Draheim is at present (September 1977) a member of the Winnefox Library System board. Snyder was present to reiterate his objections.

Nevertheless, the plan was approved by a narrow margin of 25 to 18.³⁵ Had the measure failed, a two-year delay would have been necessary before the system could be voted on again: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, of which the Division for Library Services is a part, plans its budget biennially; therefore, had Winnefox not been provisionally certified in 1977, the Division would have had to

³³Winnebago County (Wisconsin), Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors (Oshkosh, Wis.: n.p., n.d.), 28 September 1976.

³⁴Interview with Dorothy Draheim, Neenah, Wisconsin, 7 September 1977.

³⁵Winnebago County (Wisconsin), Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors (Oshkosh, Wis.: n.p., n.d.), 28 September 1976.

postpone allocation of funds to support the new system until January 1, 1979.

The boards of the Neenah and Menasha libraries had still not decided whether to join. They were given until the end of October to accept or reject the plan. On October 29, 1976, the Neenah board held a special meeting, and at that time voted unanimously to join the system.³⁶ They had received assurance from the attorney for the city of Neenah that the system would not affect the township funding.³⁷ The Elisha D. Smith Public Library of Menasha did not join and in September 1977 was not a participant in the system.

³⁶"Neenah Library Board O.K.s Winnefox System," Appleton Post-Crescent, Twin City News Record, 2 November 1976, p. 3.

³⁷Interview with Dorothy Draheim, Neenah, Wisconsin, 7 September 1977.

CHAPTER IV

THE WINNEFOX PLAN

The Winnefox plan was written in April, 1976. Some changes have occurred since that time.

Provisions of the plan will be explained in the order they occur in the document, as follows:

- Objectives
- Membership
- System Board Government
 - Powers
 - Representation
 - Meetings
- Financing
- Service Plan
 - Provisional certification
 - First year - funding
 - personnel and services
 - Second year
 - Third year
 - Fourth year
- Funding
- Administrative staff
- Headquarters and Resource Library
- Advisory Committee of Librarians
- System Services
- Extension and Improvement of Local Library Service
- Continuous Planning

Objectives

The plan's objectives are stated in its preamble:

It is the purpose of this system plan to present a library program financed through the cooperation of Winnebago, Green Lake, Waushara and/or adjacent counties, combined with state fiscal resources (aids) which will provide, through cooperative efforts, improved library

service to all the residents of the system area of a kind, quantity, and quality that has heretofore not been possible.

In addition, legal access to participating public libraries for all residents within the system area and direct aid for improvement of library services also provide justification for the establishment of the system.¹

Membership

Member libraries, and their addresses, are listed in Appendix B. In conformance with PI 6, the system plan allows for additional counties to join after the system is established.² These counties will have to follow the same process as did Winnebago, Waushara and Green Lake, to join.³

System Board Government

The powers and representation of the system board as dictated by state law, are explained in Chapter II.

Terms of office are from January 1 and for three years (except for first appointments), complying with the law, which states:

Upon the initial establishment of a board the members shall be divided as nearly as possible into 3 equal groups to serve for terms expiring on January 1 of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th years, respectively, following their appointment. Thereafter, regular terms shall be for 3

¹ "Winnefox Federated Library System Plan," n.p., 1976, p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

² Wisconsin, Public Libraries, Administrative Code (1972), sec. PI 6.06.

³ "Winnefox Plan," p. 4.

years and shall commence on January 1.⁴

Terms were determined at the initial board meeting by the drawing of lots.⁵

In the original plan, the board was to meet at least three times a year.⁶ This plan was revised by the bylaws to four meetings a year, in January, April, July and October. The first meeting of 1977, however, did not take place until February. Provision is made for the board to meet more often in the future, should system business warrant it.⁷

Financing

Library services are to be financed from "existing appropriations of the system area," and through state aid. State aid is to be used for whatever is needed to operate the system, the balance to be allocated to the participating libraries. Of primary consideration is "the extension and improvement of local library services to all residents of the system area."⁸ All funds are received, allocated and kept account of through the system headquarters library.⁹

⁴Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1977), Chap. 43, sec. 43.17 (1).

⁵Winnefox Library System Board (Wisconsin), Minutes, meeting of 24 February 1977.

⁶"Winnefox Plan," p. 4. ⁷Ibid. ⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 5.

Service Plan

Provisional certification. This requirement was discussed in the Introduction to this paper.

First year (funding). The system board is to make a direct money grant for the first year of operation to the participating libraries in the system.¹⁰ Since the plan was written, the budget has been revised. The budget for 1977 may be seen in Appendix D.

First year (personnel and services). Chapter PI 6 of the Administrative Code requires, by the end of the first year "a minimum of one professional staff member, who shall devote a substantial amount of time to system services" in administration, and in information and advisory services to adults, "and by the end of the fourth year," at least two of the following: Information and advisory service to young adults, information and advisory service to children, and organization and control of materials.¹¹

The Winnefox plan was drafted before the library law was revised to include sections which were once part of PI 6. One of these changes was in Section 8, which is now part (2)(c) of Section 43.24 of the law. The wording remains the same:

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Wisconsin, Public Libraries, Administrative Code (1972), sec. PI 6.06.

Each system shall provide the following services during the first year of operation:

1. Interloan of library materials among all participating libraries.
2. Reference and reference referral services from the headquarters library.¹²

Second Year. The qualifications required for the second year are also now part of state law:

Each system shall provide the following services by the end of the 2nd year of operation:

1. Complete library service as provided at the headquarters library . . . to any resident of the system on the same terms as the service is available to residents of the headquarters community.
2. Service agreements with all adjacent library systems.¹³

Part (2)(f) of Section 43.24 stipulates:

A public library system shall, by the end of the 2nd year of its operation, develop formal agreements with other types of libraries in the system area, providing for appropriate sharing of library resources to benefit the clientele of all libraries.¹⁴

Third year. The law requires, by the end of the third year:

1. Inservice training for library personnel within the system.
2. Rapid and regular delivery and communication systems.
3. The honoring of valid borrowers' cards of all public libraries in the system by all public libraries

¹²Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1977), Chap. 43, sec. 43.24 (2)(c).

¹³Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1977), Chap. 43, sec. 43.24 (2)(d).

¹⁴Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1977), Chap. 43, sec. 43.24 (2)(f).

in the system.¹⁵

Fourth year. No specific criteria are set forth by law or Administrative Code as to how far the system must progress by the end of the fourth year. The Winnefox plan states that, by then, the services which are to be continued on a permanent basis will be determined, and at that time, a new plan for final certification will be drawn up and submitted to the Division for approval.¹⁶

Fifth year. The Winnefox system aims for final certification in the fifth year, which is 1981.¹⁷

Funding. The Administrative Code states that, if the state appropriation to the system is lower than that which is called for under the funding formula, the requirements for the first through the third years may be modified. "Instead, the Division shall require a level of performance proportionate to the pro rata share of aids which is granted the system."¹⁸ Wisconsin systems were funded up to only 50 percent of the amount designated by the formula in 1976, and to 75 percent in 1977.¹⁹

¹⁵Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1977), Chap. 43, sec. 43.24 (2)(e).

¹⁶"Winnefox Plan," p. 11. ¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Wisconsin, Public Libraries, Administrative Code (1972), sec. PI 6.06 (1).

¹⁹Interview with Virginia Perez, Oshkosh Public Library, 22 August 1977.

Administrative Staff

The plan states that the system will be staffed in accordance to the law, the Administrative Code, and "local initiative." The law specifies that there be a head librarian who is to be appointed by and directly responsible to the system board.²⁰ The code specifies a single professional staff member.²¹

Leonard Archer, the director of the headquarters library, is also designated as the director of the system by the Winnefox plan, "until such time as, in the estimation of the System Board, the Winnefox . . . System would be better served by a separate administrator."²²

Headquarters and Resource Library

The Oshkosh Public Library is the headquarters and resource library of the system. "Contracts and agreements implementing this shall be negotiated between the System Board and the Oshkosh . . . Board."²³

Advisory Committee of Librarians

The plan calls for an advisory committee of public librarians to be established for the purpose of counseling

²⁰Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.17 (4).

²¹Wisconsin, Public Libraries, Administrative Code (1972), sec. PI 6.06.

²²"Winnefox Plan," p. 12. ²³Ibid.

the system staff and board regarding services and operations. When, in accordance to law, agreements with other types of libraries are developed, the counseling committee shall include librarians from these libraries, also.²⁴

System Services

Under this provision are listed services to be initiated by the system insofar as funding permits. These include advisory and consultant services by the system coordinator to member libraries on such matters as "administrative problems, special services, development of policies, [and] technical procedures."²⁵

Other proposed services include the development of collections of art prints and audiovisual materials for loan to participating libraries; bookmobile services; books-by-mail; cable TV; free telephone service; a weekly book van from the headquarters library to member libraries; a system-wide monthly newsletter; sharing of library resources with other types of libraries; cooperative centralized cataloging and processing; building up a central collection of the more expensive reference and general loan materials "which are too costly in terms of user demand for individual libraries . . . to purchase"; inservice training (through workshops); inter-library loan; cooperation with other state systems through

²⁴Ibid. ²⁵Ibid., pp. 13-14.

formalized agreements; public relations; reference and referral services; "copying facilities, microform materials, print-out facilities, interlibrary reference referrals, and trained reference personnel to service requests"; and a system-wide library card.²⁶

Extension and Improvement of Local Library Services

This section of the plan summarizes the content of the preceding sections.²⁷

Continuous Planning

The system will work closely with the Division "on developing and maintaining the administrative code rules" and on expanding the materials collection to meet the needs of member libraries. "Such planning shall . . . include methods of providing service to isolated, disadvantaged, and handicapped residents. . . ." ²⁸

The plan closes with the explanation that its contents are provisional and subject to amendment "by agreement between the System Board and the Division. . . ." ²⁹

²⁶Ibid., pp. 13-15. ²⁷Ibid., p. 16.

²⁸Wisconsin, Libraries, Statutes (1971), Chap. 43, sec. 43.24 (2)(g).

²⁹"Winnefox Plan," p. 16.

THE WINNEFOX LIBRARY SYSTEM:
ITS ORIGINS, PLANNING,
AND FIRST SIX MONTHS
OF OPERATION

by

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Approval

Date

FIRST:

SECOND:

CHAPTER V

WINNEFOX IN OPERATION

"This is an historic occasion." With these words, Donald Rothenbach, who had just been elected president of the new Winnefox Library System board, formally opened the proceedings of the first meeting.¹

The meeting began at 4:00 p.m. on February 24, 1977, in the third floor meeting room of the Oshkosh Public Library. First on the agenda was an introduction of the fifteen members of the board and others attending the meeting, many of whom had never before met. This introduction was followed by the election of officers.

Following are the results of the election: Rothenbach, president, was also president of the Oshkosh Public Library board, and had served on the planning committee; Ronald Goudreau, Neenah, vice president; Helen Volkman, Winneconne, also a former planning committee member, secretary; and Wesley E. Schneider, former member of the planning committee and member of the Oshkosh Public Library board, treasurer.²

¹Winnefox Library System (Wisconsin) Board meeting, 24 February 1977. (Taped.)

²Winnefox Library System (Wisconsin), Minutes of the Board, 1977, meeting of 24 February 1977. (Mimeographed.)

Eleven of the fifteen members, including all the officers, were from Winnebago County. (See Appendix A for names.) There were two each from Green Lake and Waushara counties, reflecting the proportion of population in the system. Three of the board members also served on the boards of their respective counties: They were Carl Woizeski, on the Winnebago County Board, a former planning committee member; Wilton Wilsnack of Green Lake County; and Herbert Bahr of Waushara County. Also present were Leonard Archer, director of the system; Robert Wolf, business manager of the Oshkosh Public Library; Mary Nintzel, administrative assistant at the library; and a reporter from the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, as well as several spectators.³

At this meeting, the proposed bylaws were read and revised. During the discussion, the question arose as to who needed to be present to comprise a quorum. It was decided that representation from all three counties was unnecessary since the system board would recognize no county lines.⁴ In the opinion of the writer, this spirit of unity was a healthy sign, compared to the partisan attitudes during the actual planning. (Amended bylaws are included in Appendix C.)

The contract between the Oshkosh library and the Winnefox system was reviewed by the board. It was in the wording of this agreement that the name of the system was officially

³Ibid., p. 17. ⁴Ibid., p. 18.

changed from Winnefox Federated Library System to Winnefox Library System.⁵

The contract restates that the director of the Oshkosh library shall also be the director of the system. The Oshkosh library, as designated headquarters, provides the space for the system offices (in fact, they are housed, at present--September 1977--in the very meeting room where this first meeting took place) and for the system collection. The Oshkosh library is also responsible for providing reference materials and assistance, consulting service, and loan of materials to all residents of the system area; for making available its staff and materials to all residents of the system area; and for maintaining financial support of its library services "in an amount not less than that of the previous year."⁶ In return, the system board is to integrate its collection with that of the Oshkosh library; provide adequate staff for system operation, and "integrate their work with that of the staff of the Oshkosh Public Library."⁷

The agreement reiterates the list of services mentioned in the system plan which the system promises to carry out, and further agrees to cooperate with the headquarters library in building that library's collection, "including materials

⁵"Agreement Between Oshkosh Public Library and the Winnefox Library System," 24 February 1977, p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

⁶Ibid. ⁷Ibid., p. 2.

purchased with federal or state funds," as well as to fulfill the standards set forth by the Division "as soon as possible." The system is to use its funds as specified by the Division (state law, as revised in 1977, specifies that only 20 percent of the system's budget may be used for administrative purposes), and is to reimburse the Oshkosh library for establishing the system headquarters' offices. The agreement must be renewed formally at the end of each year of operation.⁸ The last main order of business at the February meeting was a review and approval of the proposed budget for 1977.⁹

The new coordinator of the system, Virginia Perez, began her duties on March 1, 1977. She was formerly coordinator of the Outagamie-Waupaca Library System in Appleton. Her first undertaking was to visit each of the sixteen member libraries and the Menasha library to meet the staffs and familiarize herself with each library's resources, and discuss some of the proposed system programs. Her observation was that "the Neenah Public Library with numerous staff positions and adequate budget contrasts with libraries operating with volunteers and meager funding."¹⁰ It is the writer's

⁸Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁹Winnefox Library System (Wisconsin), Minutes of the Board, 1977, meeting of 24 February 1977. (Mimeographed.)

¹⁰"Report of the Coordinator, Winnefox Library System," presented 13 April 1977 before the Winnefox Library System board. (Mimeographed.)

observation that system consulting services to small libraries, who often employ volunteers or staffs with little or no library education, must be a major advantage to them. For instance, Perez visited the Omro library in August and helped write the budget for 1978.¹¹ Neenah, on the other hand, requires little help of this kind, having an adequately trained staff.

Systems have a good opportunity to apply for and enter into competition for federal grants, "and that's the icing on the cake," Perez commented, in a recent interview.¹² She applied for four LSCA grants in April. These were for: (1) printing service, (2) collections enrichment, (3) 8 mm and 16 mm film collections, and (4) fine arts collection (art reproductions and sculpture).¹³ In addition, she later applied for (5) funds for service to the deaf, and (6) service for inmates of correctional institutions, as well as two other grants not directly related to the system.¹⁴ None of these grants was forthcoming by June 30, 1977, the date at which this report terminates. In August, two federal grants in the amount of \$34,371 and \$16,000 were received. The

¹¹ Interview with Virginia Perez, Oshkosh Public Library, 22 August 1977.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Report of the Coordinator," April 1977.

¹⁴ Interview with Virginia Perez, Oshkosh Public Library, 22 August 1977.

larger grant funded three of the services Perez applied for in April, namely collections enrichment, 8 mm and 16 mm film collections, and fine arts collections. (Printing service was not funded.) The smaller grant funded service to the deaf. (Service for correctional institutions was not funded.)¹⁵

The Winnefox system has already met the stipulations called for by statute for the first year, namely, providing interlibrary loan to all participating libraries and reference and referral service from the headquarters library. Perez stated that referral is available to all member libraries either by phone or letter (most use the mail). If the headquarters library does not have the material requested, the Oshkosh Public Library refers it to other libraries in the Fox River valley, or to Madison or Milwaukee.¹⁶

Advisory and consultant services, as specified in the system plan, have been implemented (as in the case of helping to write the budget for the Carter Memorial Library in Omro, previously mentioned). The audiovisual collection is being developed. Bookmobile service will not be provided by the system since this is a county-funded service.¹⁷

¹⁵"Library System Gets \$50,371," Appleton Post-Crescent, 21 August 1977, sec. 3, p. G5.

¹⁶Interview with Virginia Perez, Oshkosh Public Library, 22 August 1977.

¹⁷Ibid.

There is not yet a books-by-mail service, cable TV, or free telephone service. Libraries may call the headquarters library at their own expense.

A van has been purchased, and Perez herself drives it, but service between the headquarters library and member libraries is not yet on a regular basis. System funds provide a certain percentage of the salary of a not-yet-hired combination van driver and maintainer of the system's audiovisual collection. Perez recommends that this position be full-time, and she may apply for a CETA¹⁸ grant to fund the balance of the salary.

At this time, Winnefox employs three full-time persons: a coordinator, a graphic arts specialist, and a secretary. The secretary's salary for 1977 is funded through a CETA grant.¹⁹

There are rotating collections of audiovisual materials and large print books. There are no formal agreements between the system and other types of libraries and no cooperative centralized cataloging and processing. Development of the collection and inservice training were both implemented in 1977, but after June 30.²⁰

¹⁸Comprehensive Employment Training Act.

¹⁹Interview with Virginia Perez, Oshkosh Public Library, 22 August 1977.

²⁰A workshop on interlibrary loan was scheduled for September at the Oshkosh Public Library.

Formalized agreements with adjoining systems are not yet a reality. There is a monthly newsletter circulated among member libraries which keeps the staffs apprised of projects in various parts of the system. The graphic arts department is available to produce professionally-styled signs, posters, brochures and similar articles for member libraries. One project was the system directory.

As yet, there is no system-wide library card, but a "Winnefox Library Card" was made available on July 5, 1977, which entitles those applying to free use of the Oshkosh library provided they are residents of the system. (Menasha residents are not eligible.)

The amount of state aid for 1977 was \$126,040. Of that amount, the member libraries received a total of \$27,076.29, or 25 percent. The 1970 census figures are used to determine how much money each library receives, fifty cents per capita. Oshkosh received approximately 50 percent of the funds, being the largest population center. (See Appendix D for the 1977 budget.)

Libraries may spend their allotments at any time during the year. They do not receive the money directly; rather, the bills are forwarded to the system headquarters for payment. All funds are accounted for in this way. The only stipulation on the spending of the money is that it cannot reduce the operating budget already being received by the

library, and it is to be used to improve library service.²¹

Some of the ways the money was used in the first six months were to increase book collections, install paperback racks and card catalogs, buy office supplies and equipment, and install telephone service.

You've improved your library service if people can be in contact with the library for information, or more importantly, I think so many people call and say, "Do you have such and such a book?" So they don't have to make a trip, if they live rather far away, or if they're elderly or have difficulties.²²

The Leon-Saxesville Public Library at Pine River used its money to install a children's corner, with carpeting and low chairs and shelves.²³ It is the writer's observation that this library had come a long way from the days when it was merely an uncataloged collection of books donated by the local 4-H club!

The difference brought about by system membership was perhaps not dramatic at the Neenah Public Library, but it benefitted as a recipient of the next-largest allotment after Oshkosh, a sum for the first year of over \$5,000.

Menasha had always used the Appleton Public Library for referral service and had not been billed. When it decided to stay out of the Winnefox system, Appleton sent a letter to

²¹ Interview with Virginia Perez, Oshkosh Public Library, 22 August 1977.

²² Ibid.

²³ "Winnefox Library System News Report, 12 April 1977." (Mimeographed.)

the Menasha board indicating that it would be billed in the future. An agreement has been arranged.²⁴

Virginia Roessler, who served on the planning committee, was the sole supporter of the system on the Menasha board. In an interview, she was asked why she was in favor of it, when her fellow board members were opposed. She replied,

None of the reasons which were given to me for opposing the system seemed right to me. I couldn't see, with the system set up as it is, with the legal papers supporting all of the libraries and keeping their autonomy, and covering every possible angle that might cause opposition, I just couldn't see why any of the arguments that they gave could be supported.

She cited those arguments as involving autonomy of the library board and the use of local funds to support the system, specifically ruled out by the system rules. She regretted the loss of state aid which would have been available had Menasha joined the system.²⁵ Menasha's allotment would have been over \$4,000 for 1977.

²⁴ Interview with Carl Snyder, Menasha, Wisconsin, 14 August 1977.

²⁵ Interview with Virginia Roessler, Menasha, Wisconsin, 15 August 1977.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper was to present the history of the Winnefox Library System from its initial planning through its first six months of operation. It forms a case study in the problems of establishing systems and the resolution of those problems.

The document of chief importance in promoting the concept of public library systems in the United States was the American Library Association's Public Library Services: A Guide to Evaluation, with Minimum Standards, published in 1956. It cited cooperation between libraries as its "most important single recommendation."¹ At least eight multi-jurisdictional Wisconsin systems were in existence in 1969, according to Nelson Associates' survey.²

These first Wisconsin systems were partially supported by federal grants, through the Library Services and Construction Act. In its third year of operation (1965), the

¹American Library Association, Public Library Services: A Guide to Evaluation, with Minimum Standards (Chicago: The Association, 1956), p. 7.

²Nelson Associates, Public Library Systems in the United States: A Survey of Multijurisdictional Systems (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969), pp. 52; 278.

Waushara-Green Lake Cooperative which played a major role in the eventual creation of the Winnefox Library System was weaned from federal support to total support from its two participating counties.

Wisconsin's revised library law, passed in 1971, provided state funding of library systems for the first time. The law provided a funding formula to systems, based on population, area, and existing library support. It outlined provisions for implementing, organizing, and operating public library systems.

The Waushara-Green Lake Cooperative was not eligible for state funds because no library in the two-county area met the specification of serving a minimum population of 30,000. In order to obtain the benefits provided by membership in a system, Waushara-Green Lake approached the Oshkosh Public Library in adjoining Winnebago County in 1972, urging its director and board to initiate a three-county library system which would link Green Lake, Waushara, and Winnebago Counties. The Oshkosh library met the population requirement and had provided reference and referral service to the cooperative since 1963, and was, therefore, a logical choice as headquarters library.

Three years passed before the Winnebago County Board finally agreed to appoint a library planning committee in 1975. The boards of the Neenah and Menasha libraries were

opposed to appointing a committee because, being well-staffed and supported, they did not feel they had much to gain through system membership. Board members also feared they would lose autonomy if the system headquarters were in Oshkosh.

After the planning committee finally was appointed, another problem arose concerning township funding. Neenah and Menasha library boards feared that belonging to a system might mean they would become ineligible for financial support from their surrounding townships. They sought a ruling on this question from the state attorney general. Delay on his part held up approval of the system. When it was finally forthcoming, the wording of his decision did not address itself specifically to the question. After the Winnefox Library System was approved by the Winnebago County Board in September 1976, Neenah voted to join, having been assured by the Neenah city attorney that system membership would not affect township support. The Menasha library board voted not to join.

The system plan drawn up by the library planning committee stated that its purpose was to provide "improved library service to all residents" of the three-county system.³ Its provisions, based on those of state law and the Wisconsin Administrative Code, outlined the services the

³"Winnefox Federated Library System Plan," n.p., 1976, p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

system expected to implement in its first three years. These services included direct financial grants to member libraries in proportion to their populations, interlibrary loan among all participating libraries, reference and referral service from the headquarters library by the end of the first year, complete library service to any resident of the system by the headquarters library, service agreements with adjacent systems, formal agreements with other types of libraries in the system area by the end of the second year, inservice training for library service personnel, rapid and regular delivery and communication systems, and the honoring of valid borrowers' cards at any member library by the end of the third year. It detailed other proposed services, such as development of an art print and audiovisual collection, a weekly book van, free telephone service, and copying facilities for materials such as microforms.

At the first meeting of the Winnefox Library System board in February 1977, a reciprocal agreement between the system and the Oshkosh Public Library was approved, which stipulated that these agencies would closely integrate their resources and personnel in order to provide optimum service to system participants.

The initial undertaking of the system coordinator, Virginia Perez, after starting her position on March 1, 1977, was to acquaint herself with the staffs and resources of all

libraries in the system and outline the provisions of the system. Soon afterward, she applied for several federal grants, some of which were forthcoming in August 1977. She also began providing consulting service, and was driver of the van which delivered materials to member libraries, though not on a regular weekly basis. All of the first year requirements, as laid down in Wisconsin law, were implemented in 1977.

Case studies such as this one provide follow-up information since the national survey by Nelson Associates in 1969. The background and problems of the Winnefox Library System cannot predict the path of another public library system, since the history of each system is unique; however, an awareness of the reasons which lie behind the formation of this system, of the obstacles which stood in the way of its realization, and of the means by which these obstacles were overcome, serve to enlarge the understanding of readers who contemplate the creation of a new system.

Conclusions

Cooperation is an essential ingredient in the creation of a public library system. This cooperation must be among the personnel of the respective libraries who are to participate in the system, during its planning stages, and among member libraries, as well as board members of the realized system, because consensus is of importance if optimal service

is to be provided.

All libraries in the Winnefox system benefit from the annual financial grants they receive from the state. In addition, systems receive preference in competition for federal grants. The resources of libraries in the Winnefox system are increased through free access to the collections of the headquarters library, which will concentrate its collection building, in part, on the more expensive, not as much used materials; from reciprocal loan among all libraries in the system; and also from other public library systems in the state of Wisconsin. Member libraries also receive free reference service from the headquarters library.

Small libraries have more to gain through use of the system's rotating collection of audiovisual materials and equipment, art prints, and large print books, and through counselling and consulting service to their staffs from the system's personnel than do large libraries which are already supplied with many of these resources and with educated staffs.

Suggestions for Further Study

In 1981, the Winnefox Library System is to receive final certification. A follow-up study for the years 1977-1981 would put its history into a broader perspective. This study can be used as a comparison with that of another system, either in Wisconsin or a different state, to show variations

in state laws, reasons for creation of systems, and benefits to respective member libraries.

It can be used as part of a larger survey, comparing several or all Wisconsin systems; or comparing Wisconsin systems to those of another state or other states.

APPENDIX A

MEMBERS OF THE WINNEFOX LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD

Donald Rothenbach, President, Oshkosh
Ronald Goudreau, Vice President, Neenah
Wesley Schneider, Treasurer, Oshkosh
Helen Volkman, Secretary, Winneconne¹
Lou Andrews, Oshkosh
Herbert Bahr, Berlin
Dorothy Draheim, Neenah
Robert Fick, Oshkosh
Nancy McCue, Poy Sippi
Ann Martin, Neenah
Dale Pluhar, Oshkosh
Kay Swan, Berlin
Mary Jo Widener, Neenah
Wilton Wilsnack, Markesan
Carl Woizeski, Larsen

¹ Replaced as secretary at the July annual meeting by Nancy McCue.

APPENDIX B

MEMBER LIBRARIES OF THE WINNEFOX SYSTEM

Berlin Public Library
121 W. Park Ave.
Berlin, WI 54923

Carter Memorial Library
205 S. Webster
Omro, WI 54963

Dartford Public Library
534 Mill Street
Green Lake, WI 54941

East Waushara Public Library
1003 Commercial St., Box 113
Poy Sippi, WI 54967

Hancock Public Library
Hancock, WI 54943

Leon-Saxeville Township Library
Box 14A
Pine River, WI 54965

Markesan Public Library
76 N. Bridge St., Box 377
Markesan, WI 53946

Mill Pond Public Library
Kingston, WI 53939

Neenah Public Library
240 E. Wisconsin Ave.
Neenah, WI 54956

Oshkosh Public Library
106 Washington Ave.
Oshkosh, WI 54901

Patterson Memorial Library
500 Wisconsin St.
Wild Rose, WI 54984

Plainfield Public Library
Municipal Building
Plainfield, WI 54966

Princeton Public Library
432 Water St.
Princeton, WI 54986

Redgranite Public Library
Pine River Street, Box 291
Redgranite, WI 54970

Waushara/Green Lake Coopera-
tive
121 W. Park Ave.
Berlin, WI 54923

Wautoma Public Library
Box 269
Wautoma, WI 54982

Winneconne Public Library
Winneconne, WI 54986

Winnefox Library System
106 Washington Ave.
Oshkosh, WI 54901

APPENDIX C

THE BYLAWS OF THE SYSTEM BOARD

WINNEFOX LIBRARY SYSTEM

OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN

- I. Pursuant to the requirements of the statutes of the State of Wisconsin (43.19, (1), (2), and (3)), the Winnefox Library System Board shall consist of a number of members mutually agreed upon by the County Board of Supervisors of the respective counties making up the Federated Library System Service area.
- II. The officers of the Board shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. No officer of the Board shall hold the same office for more than three years consecutively. Officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Board, or an adjournment thereof, or at a special meeting called for the purpose. In case of an election not being held before their term would otherwise expire, they shall hold their respective offices until the election and acceptance of their successors.
 - A. Executive Committee.

There shall be an Executive Committee of five members to meet with the Director upon call. The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the President, the Immediate Past President, and one member at large from each county, to be appointed by the President. The purpose of this committee shall be to give tentative approval to the Director on matters relating to the month-to-month operation of the Library System. This will avoid the necessity of monthly meetings for such matters as the decision on whether or not to advertise for bids and the advising on policy matters that are not financially binding on the Board. The committee is to be advisory only, and none of its actions shall be binding on the Board as a whole.

- III. Duties of all officers shall be such as by custom and law and the rules of the Board usually devolve upon such officers in accordance with their names. The President shall be a member of any committee.

Public presentations of the budget and Library System programs will be handled jointly by the President of the Board and the System Director, or their representatives.

- IV. The Annual meeting of the Board shall be held in July.

- V. There shall be four quarterly meetings of the Board: January (except in the first year of operation - 1977 - when the first meeting of the Board shall be in February), April, July, and October. The quarterly meetings shall be held on the second Wednesday of the designated months.

The Board meeting date and agenda shall be publicized before meetings. Minutes for the preceding meeting and the agenda for the next meeting shall be in the hands of Board members at least four days before the meeting date.

- VI. Special meetings may be held at any time at the call of the President or Secretary or at the call of any two members of the Board, provided that written notice thereof be given to all Board members at least 24 hours in advance of the special meeting.

- VII. A quorum for transaction of business shall consist of a simple majority. Wisconsin statutes 43.54 (1e).

- VIII. The order of business at all regular meetings of the System Board shall be as follows:

Call to Order
 Minutes of Previous Meeting
 Financial Reports
 Reports of Special Committees
 Report of the Director
 Unfinished Business
 New and Miscellaneous Business
 Adjournment

- IX. The Board shall operate as a committee of the whole and shall conduct System business only as a Board. Individual action on the part of any committee or individual shall not be binding on the Board.

- X. The Headquarters Library Director shall be the System Director and Executive Officer of the policies adopted by this Board.
- XI. The System shall be called and known as the "Winnefox Library System" and that shall be the style and signature of all instruments and papers relating to its publications or business.
- XII. No immediate relative (son, daughter, brother, sister, wife, husband, mother, or father, or anyone else situated in a similarly close relationship) of a System Board member or any administrative member of the System staff shall be considered for employment on the System library staff.
- XIII. These Bylaws, having been adopted by a majority of all members may be altered, added to, or repealed only by the concurrent action of a majority of all the members of the Board at a regular or special meeting thereof upon two weeks written notice of the proposed changes.

APPENDIX D

WINNEFOX LIBRARY SYSTEM

1977 BUDGET

STATE FUNDS	\$126,040
A. FUNDS TO BE ALLOCATED TO MEMBER LIBRARIES (See Note A)	<u>-27,076</u>
BALANCE OF FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR SYSTEM OPERATIONS	<u>\$ 98,964</u>

SYSTEM OPERATING BUDGET

B. PERSONNEL:		
Salaries and Wages	\$21,958	
Fringe Benefits	<u>5,095</u>	
TOTAL		27,053
C. MAINTENANCE - HEADQUARTERS OFFICES		4,000
D. SUPPLIES		4,180
E. AUTOMOTIVE EXPENSES		800
F. TELEPHONE		500
G. TRAVEL, TRAINING AND CONFERENCES		1,550
H. SUNDRY AND FIXED CHARGES		560
I. SERVICE CONTRACTS		17,900
J. SYSTEM MATERIALS		23,072
K. CAPITAL OUTLAY		<u>19,349</u>
		\$ 98,964

WINNEFOX LIBRARY SYSTEM
PROPOSED 1977 BUDGET
EXPLANATORY NOTES

A. FUNDS ALLOCATED TO MEMBER LIBRARIES

25% of all funds received from the Division for Library Services are to be allocated to member libraries. Population served is based on 1970 census figures. Allocations are based on proportionate population.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>POPULATION SERVED</u>	<u>PROPORTIONATE SHARE (%)</u>	<u>PROPORTIONATE SHARE (\$)</u>	<u>CASH PAYMENT</u>
Berlin	5,297	3.2778	\$1,032.84	\$1,032.84
Green Lake	2,371	1.4672	462.32	462.32
Kingston	1,986	1.2289	387.23	387.23
Markesan	2,028	1.2549	395.42	395.42
Princeton	1,446	0.8948	281.95	281.95
Hancock	1,117	0.6912	217.80	217.80
Leon-Saxeville	1,263	0.7815	246.25	246.25
Plainfield	1,619	1.0018	315.67	315.67
Poy Sippi	2,423	1.4993	472.43	472.43
Redgranite	645	0.3992	125.79	125.79
Wautoma	2,141	1.3248	417.44	417.44
Wild Rose	585	0.3621	114.10	114.10
Waushara-Green Lake Coop.	8,752	5.4157	1,706.49	1,706.49
Menasha	22,739	14.0708	4,433.71	-
Neenah	26,611	16.4668	5,188.69	5,188.69
Oshkosh*	<u>80,581</u>	49.8632	<u>15,711.87</u>	<u>15,711.87</u>
	161,604		\$31,510.00	\$27,076.29

* Includes Omro (\$456.45) and Winneconne (\$313.53)

B. PERSONNEL

\$ 27,053

<u>Salaries and Wages</u>	<u>Annual Salary</u>	<u>1977 Budget</u>
Coordinator	\$16,450	\$13,708
Secretary	8,100	-
Graphic Arts Specialist	7,300	6,083
Clerical Assistant	<u>2,600</u>	<u>2,167</u>
	\$34,450	<u>\$21,958</u>

Fringe Benefits

Health Insurance		\$ 1,701
Social Security (.0585 x \$19,791)	=	1,158
Retirement (.113 x \$19,791)	=	<u>2,236</u>
		<u>\$ 5,095</u>

The proposed headquarters staff of three (3) full-time and one (1) part-time employees is a minimum requirement for administering and handling System projects and materials. The secretarial position has been funded through the Winne-Fond CETA Consortium through January 1978. All other proposed staff are budgeted for March-December 1977.

Fringe benefits are health insurance (Blue Cross/Blue Shield @ \$94.50 per month for 9 months), Social Security, and Wisconsin Retirement Fund contributions for all employees except for the clerical assistant. Fringe benefits paid for the secretary will be reimbursed by CETA.

C. MAINTENANCE - HEADQUARTERS OFFICES

\$ 4,000

This account is to reimburse the Oshkosh Public Library for renovation of the office area and a proportionate share of ongoing maintenance costs and utilities.

D. SUPPLIES \$ 4,180

This amount is a minimum to cover office supplies, printing supplies, postage, and other miscellaneous supplies necessary for System Headquarters operations. A summary breakdown of the proposed supply budget is as follows:

Office Supplies	\$2,270
Printing Supplies	680
Postage	800
Miscellaneous Supplies	<u>430</u>
	<u>\$4,180</u>

E. AUTOMOTIVE EXPENSES \$ 800

This account is for gasoline, automotive supplies, and automotive maintenance.

F. TELEPHONE \$ 500

For two phones, one extension

Installation	\$ 73.14
Fixed Monthly Rate (25.92 x 10)	259.20
Estimated Long Distance Charges	<u>167.66</u>
	<u>\$ 500.00</u>

G. TRAVEL, TRAINING AND CONFERENCE \$ 1,550

This account is for the travel expenses of System employees and System Board members, conferences and training expenses, installation and monthly cost of an ETN (Educational Telephone Network).

H. SUNDRY AND FIXED CHARGES \$ 560

This account is for insurance, dues and sundry charges.

I. SERVICE CONTRACTS \$ 17,900

Teletype Service \$1,400

Interlibrary Loan and Reference
Referral Service \$4,500

Oshkosh Public Library Materials
Base \$6,000

This is to reimburse the
Oshkosh Public Library for the
additional heavy use of its
library materials.

Material Processing \$6,000

This is to reimburse Oshkosh
Public Library for processing
an estimated 1,500 items of
System materials at an average
cost of \$4.00 per item.

J. SYSTEM MATERIALS \$ 22,618

This account is for all library materials
and A-V equipment and materials purchased
by the System for circulation among
member libraries.

K. CAPITAL OUTLAY \$ 19,349

Delivery Van \$6,000

Office Furniture

Modular Office Units

Coordinator	\$3,100
Graphic Arts	1,850
Reception Area	1,400
Work Room	150
Conference Area	225
Installation	200

Draperies	899	
Work Table	75	
3-Drawer Files (2)	359	
Coat Rack	57	
Steel Shelving	128	
A-V Storage Cabinet	113	
Chipboard Shelving (6 sections)	510	\$9,066

K. CAPITAL OUTLAY (Continued)

Office Equipment

Typewriters (2)	\$1,500	
Silk Screen Equip.	350	
Dictation Equipment	150	
Cassette Dictator/Trans.	200	
Portable Dictator	150	
Portable Tracing Board	100	
Drafting Table and Lamp	200	
Calculator	149	
Intercoms (2)	116	
Regiscope Camera	1,000	
Paper Cutter	58	
Book Trucks (3)	<u>310</u>	\$4,283

TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY

\$ 19,349

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