

**Superiorland Library Cooperative  
Advisory Board of Librarians Meeting  
August 23, 2016  
St. Ignace Public Library  
St. Ignace, MI**

**The Advisory Board of Librarians meeting for the Superiorland Library Cooperative was held on Tuesday, August 23, 2016 at the Peter White Public Library in Marquette, MI from 11:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

**Persons Attending-Dave Bonsall from Simply Superior Consulting, Facilitating the Meeting; John Schaeffer Superiorland Library Cooperative Board of Directors and Superior District Library; Casey Adams of the Roscommon Area District Library; Eric Magness-Eubank from the Alpena County George N. Fletcher Library; Skip Schmidt from the St. Ignace Public Library; Sue Lehman from the Detour School/Public Library; Lisa Waskin from the Superior District Library; Anna LaRue from the Alanson Area Public Library; and Superiorland Library Cooperative staff members Jean Montgomery, Pam Christensen.**

Christensen thanked the people present for attending the meeting. Introductions were made and Bonsall started the meeting with a brief discussion of why the group was assembled. He asked each person to be an active participant.

**Question #1**

**Which Services provided by the Superiorland Library Cooperative are most valuable to your library?**

Tech support and ALS support. Tech support is a life saver-saves us time and money. The level of personal service offered by SLC staff is wonderful. SLC service is a Godsend.

The support and savings offered by SLC is important to our 8 libraries in the system. These services are valuable because we have staff at different levels and expertise. SLC allows all libraries to offer the same level of services at each location. If we had to do this on our own, we would have to hire at least two more staff members, and cut other services. Membership in SLC saves us money and helps us keep our library services. It wouldn't be feasible for us to keep our doors open at the current level if we had to hire staff to do what SLC does to us.

It is amazing that the SLC staff is willing to do the work that they do for the amount SLC can afford to pay them. Many of these skills might be paid more in the private sector. How would we replace them if they leave. At this point, Montgomery announced she plans to retire in 2 years.

Technology is so important, and in schools, the librarian becomes the technology "go to" person by default. This takes away time from other duties and the library. Having SLC staff helps in this area. Things are always popping up and it is so time consuming to research problems, fixes and what is needed. SLC saves us from having to hire a dedicated tech person.

We would need at least one more person to do what SLC does for us.

It seems that Shawn is stretched thin at times, she tries to be responsive, but sometimes we have to wait for reports and other assistance. She tries to do what she can, but sometimes it feels like she needs help.

Amazed that the SLC staff do all that they do for us. They are versatile.

The shared catalog and shared programs such as Overdrive and databases are so important to us. Delivery and ILL are really important services.

There is talk of libraries moving cooperatives and we considered moving to Northland. That would cost us less, and many libraries feel that is important, but it is totally worth us to spend what we spend to be in SLC. The comparison in services between SLC and Northland is different, and SLC's services are so much better.

The E Rate support we get is so valuable—I would rather catalog serials---than do E Rate paperwork. To have that expertise and assistance is so helpful. I could never do it as effectively as Suzanne does it. I just don't have the experience and background to complete everything.

Without SLC and UPRLC we wouldn't have USF and Internet. Brevort has gotten where it is with UPRLC help. The new installation will be so important to them, and it wouldn't have happened without Pam and Suzanne's investment in even the smallest library.

Stipends for workshops help us take advantage of professional development and continuing ed. That is just huge, we have no budget for that, and it makes such a difference to us to be able to attend Rural Libraries Conference and other educational opportunities.

Pam and Suzanne have experience with the millages and townships. I appreciate Pam's assistance on our three millages. Her administrative experience and help were invaluable with our last election. We can call the Cooperative and they have so much more experience and knowledge—so much more than local attorneys and other experts. We would have to pay for less than expert advice, and we get that from the Cooperative in a much more quick fashion and with better results.

Local expertise and experience is better. SLC staff know our communities—not like Lower Peninsula experts. We get info for free from SLC. Legal help, paid for by coop, has also been helpful.

SLC offers a "personal touch" the staff is there no matter your problem. They are a call or email away. And always have your back.

ILL and Rides are used so much by our patrons. How would we ever keep up without the shared catalog, MeL and RIDES.

Purchasing help is valuable. It would take us so much longer to research equipment and software, the Coop staff know what to get in the way of barcodes, scanners, monitors, etc. They do all of the ordering, and rebill us. Have equipment shipped to us or to SLC and set it up and/or deliver it to us. Help with computers and routers. It is quick and easy, and always the right thing.

The involvement of SLC Executive Director is very important at MLA, Library of Michigan, MCLS, and other library organizations in Michigan. Keep UP and N.L.P. visible, keep SLC members informed of what is happening and be our voice.

Jean is great, we couldn't get along without her.

Love our SLC shared projects like Overdrive. We could never do that without the SLC. Would like to see SLC do more pilot projects to see if we can do new services. It is easier to do these things with SLC than on our own.

## **Question #2**

**What are one or two new services you would like to see SLC offer that would be most beneficial to your library?**

Consultation on Ploughed for websites. Library of Michigan staff are not as easy to reach, or quick to respond, to questions and requests for help. Website help in general—Joomla, WordPress and other products are not so easy to use. Need help developing and updating websites. It is hard to find time to

update websites. A person or firm to help develop, design and construct a website, also to help keep it running. This is a struggle to find the time to do a good job.

Could we collect and share job openings from the UP and Northern Lower Michigan? It is hard to find up-to-date info. Maybe post things SLC staff know about or from the MLA job board.

Grantwriting help especially for goals, objectives and outcomes. I would like to write a grant for two virtual reality headsets and am unsure of how to list the outcomes.

Committees could be established to help people with grants. Pam and Lisa W. have extensive experience with grant writing and would be happy to help.

Would like help coordinating programming in the UP. Big names such as Adam Miller, etc. Get them to come to N. L.P. and UP through block booking. SLC pay travel or defray costs in some way. Ask for and negotiate group discounts.

Costume rental of Clifford The Big Red Dog and other literary character costumes—cost can be shared and costumes can be used in multiple locations during the rental period.

Bulk orders of supplies—specialty papers, arts and crafts materials, etc. Develop a standard list and purchase in bulk, to share costs. Sometimes you don't need a huge amount of things, but have to order a ream or quantity. Youth services staff could help develop lists of often-used supplies. Maybe a specialized group or committee to do this.

Video conferencing and Zoom are both good ideas, but people don't feel comfortable with the equipment. Need more instruction/practice. Could we make better use of this equipment by using it for professional development and continuing education? Need to have info on headsets, so libraries can connect without tying up the phone line.

Could we do a monthly program using the ITV. These could be a discussion about a specific topic; update on statewide issues, events, trends; SLC Committee meetings, etc.

Wish we could learn more about Deep Reading. Conference in Lansing is September 30, 2016 and getting to Lansing from the UPRLC Annual Meeting on September 29, 2016 is going to be tricky.

Is there a way we could write a grant to get an MLS program or Library Tech Certification program in UP? Waskin was in a system in Illinois that did this. Distance is such a barrier for MLS students in UP and N.L.P.

Could we team up with libraries (and maybe other organizations) to bring a big program to our area—Disney Customer Service, Maker Fair, etc. These programs are in the \$thousands, and we can't do it library by library. Is this a grant opportunity?

Could SLC serve as a Multi-Employer coordinator for staff benefits to pool our library employees? A group called INS is doing this in MI and has approached several library cooperatives and district libraries. The Michigan Cooperative Director Association will have a presentation on this topic in October. This could take the administrative burden off of each library and locate it in a central location with SLC staff. Pool benefits between SLC or multiple cooperatives. The level of benefits we can provide is important to attracting and retaining quality Library Directors and staff—both full and part-time.

### **Question #3**

**Which Services prepared by the Superiorland Library Cooperative could be reduced or eliminated to free up resources for other projects?**

World Book Web-is that an SLC program or Library of Michigan? It was pointed out this is a MeL product not SLC.

We all use what we need and ignore what we don't. I would hate to say eliminate something I don't use, but others do. Some services are more important than others to each library.

Mango, Zinio, Sanbourn Maps, etc. are not as utilized as they should be. How can we promote usage and educate people about all of these services. We need more promo on these products.

We could live without NovelList, but it is cheap, so we do it.

Could we do library by library petting zoo- and training on these products? Do a day in each library to help patrons with their devices and our products.

Are older patrons resistant to using the on-line products due to lack of skills or fear of devices.

Elevator speech about each product to build interest.

Like the fact that Zinio can ease pain of cutting print titles—tell patrons they are still available via electronic. Overdrive too, lets us augment our collections.

Alpena staff does a good job in informing people about electronic services when they sign up for a new card. They ask "Do you want to know about electronic access"? Electronic card access.

Work one-on-one with new patrons to introduce them to library and new products. Just like a gym membership—free library personal training. Could we do a better job of this? Ask patrons if they want email alerts about overdues, programs, services, etc.

We need an SLC Marketing Committee to help promote all of our SLC shared services and MeL.

Committees could help with Best Practices and Community of Practice. Committees could share expertise and mentor others.

SLC Staff set-up MeL Reference Desk on St. Ignace reference computer. This allows patrons to go right to MeL subject areas—even if they don't use, they ask about MeL.

Need more training on the MeL resources and WebJunction. There is so much out there, it is so hard to keep up and stay knowledgeable and learn how to learn everything.

Democratize Overdrive selections—the library Kimberly Young was with did this—patrons could request titles and they were added. SLC member library staff are helping to select materials and develop the collection. Adams said he is reluctant to select because he feels his interests might not be shared by others. Christensen stated that when selectors choose titles that are "odd", she wonders about the demand of them, but they seem to be popular. Having a number of people select titles broadens the collection and helps us have something for everyone.

Could we expand Overdrive to have even more titles.

Could we activate the buy it now? Can we have a "Suggest a Title" spot where patrons can suggest titles they would like?

Discussion about Amazon Smile and the fund raising potential of that. Many libraries are using Amazon Smile and Montgomery identifies that library to receive the Amazon Smile proceeds if they participate.

#### **Question # 4**

##### **From a Structural Standpoint, how could Superiorland Library Cooperative be improved?**

SLC is well organized. People seem to be where we need them.

It is amazing the dedication of people—for example, Suzanne Dees still assisting with USF funding requests. It is a real credit to SLC that people are so invested in the organization.

SLC should consider succession planning. What will we do when Jean retires and should be prepared when other staff leave? Who will fill positions? SLC, as well as our libraries, need to consider this. Not everyone knows what they do. We need to find ways to keep the knowledge held by staff in

the organization. Evaluate strengths and try to preserve that knowledge. When new staff are hired, try to plug weaknesses.

SirsiDynix is an area where staff excel. Reports and Appi's are so specialized, not many people have this knowledge.

Having NMU in the UP is a benefit, but management positions can be difficult to fill. Alpena has taken at least 9 months to fill last two professional slots. Search process can be lengthy and difficult.

The "Never Say No" customer service philosophy of current staff must be preserved. It is wonderful. We never hear "We can't do that". The staff seems excited to be there.

Shawn has a beautiful voice!!!

Would like SLC to develop surveys for all libraries about services, customer service, etc.

The staff is hands on.

Library Directors and other professional staff consider the SLC and what it does when considering moving to the area or taking a position at one of the SLC libraries. Professionals research what support and resources they will have.

Keep the SLC viable so it can continue to attract quality people.

Technology will not go away. It may change but it will always be central to our services. SLC needs to invest in technology and tech training for staff.

SLC takes care of the nuts and bolts.

#### **Question #5**

**What is your vision for the Superiorland Library Cooperative if everything was what you hoped it would be?**

- Exactly what it is now.
- We would like teleportation, so staff could travel without the time and effort. Maybe we need a helicopter or drones.
- More communication in person and virtually.
- Greater presence in person and via video
- Make new ideas available—training, webinars, collect best practices and share. SLC should be the conduit for new ideas, etc. We could attend webinars all day, have SLC staff present one or two takeaways from the webinars and programs they attend to save us the time.
- More SLC opportunities to get together, we are so isolated. Increase familiarity with each other. Give libraries the opportunity to exchange ideas and get together and visit with each other. Would like to do visits to other libraries. Have a "Walk in my Shoes" day or have Directors swap locations and give constructive criticism about facilities—we don't see the dust; workflow; etc. Get us out and about to see each other's' libraries. We can borrow ideas and build on what works in one location. Don't reinvent the wheel
- Like the fact that SLC held Advisory Board in more than one location, so east end and below the bridge did not have to travel so far. Would like to have every SLC library have the opportunity to host an event—not always go to Marquette. Pick 2, 3 or 4 strategic locations and repeat events.
- Develop a database of programming that has been done at one location, so we can all share that knowledge. Build on Pam's Best of the Beat from Rural Libraries Conference. Get ideas about presenters—who is good, who will travel, who likes our area.

- SLC and Committees share best practices, ideas, communities of knowledge. Develop committees and ask Directors as well as other staff and Board members to participate, so we get a real broad exchange of ideas.

### Question #6

#### What would make your library an even more valuable resource for the community?

- Being able to do better community outreach
- We are no longer the place on the hill where people come for knowledge, people have choices of where to go, and we are not always their choice. We need to be proactive and attract them to the Library, not wait for them to show up.
- Help with Economic Development in our economically depressed area. Help develop job programs or help people get jobs. WPA.
- We don't have to solve the problems, but should find people working on those problems and help them and support them. Do research, share ideas, etc. Reuse of strip malls, zoning information, blight abatement, articles, etc. Pass these items along.
- Cooperate and collaborate in the community. Write letters of support or ask for letters of support. Ask grant writers to add token \$\$ for library materials or supplies to support their activities. Be a supporter, we may not be most effective at changing things, but we can make it better with our resources. We can enhance what happens in the community.
- Libraries are impartial. Help build community support
- Develop public spaces—Third Place. Build a place in the community
- We need to get 8 libraries to act as one system
- Confront community issues, homelessness, hunger, literacy skills, mental illness
- Improve the lives of families and children. Provide a safe space, one that can support them. Serving snacks can attract people and help them with hunger at the same time.
- Build literacy skills in non-readers, technology skills too
- Attracting kids by having a safe place as well as one that excites and inspires them
- We could use a Teen Services person to take advantage of programs other libraries are doing
- Pokemon Go, etc.
- Youth are our future—they will support millages, the library, etc.
- We would love a high school library in our community. Schools can't offer libraries and public libraries can't always help in schools due to a shortage of staff. Some schools won't let public library into the schools. Teachers and administrators don't understand the different roles each type plays or why one can't replace the other.
- We would love to do more programming for adults and children—with "big" names that will attract an audience. Stevens Puppets, Theresa Irish
- Involve grandparents more—have them share their knowledge and their understanding of the importance of education.
- Support school libraries in our community so we can all work together
- We need an SLC calendar, so we can promote each other's events and take advantage of performers who will be in our area. Google Calendar? Even a kids calendar.

**Coming up in the future**

Alpena Book Festival September 24, 2016. The same day as Michigan History Conference. September 29, 2016 "The Boy Who Harvested the Wind" author William Kankwamba will be in Alpena.

Superior District Library received a Big Read grant to feature Edgar Allan Poe. These activities will take place in September and October 2016.