

OWLSnet Administrative Advisory Committee Meeting Online via GoToMeeting – July 22, 2023

Present: Cathy Kolbeck, Algoma; Tasha Saecker, Owen Anderson, Nicole Casner, Appleton; Rachel Hitt, Black Creek; Jamie Hein, Clintonville; Rebecca Buchmann, Dominic Frandrup, Dawn Taylor, Shauwn Rosendale, Door County; Steph Weber, Florence; Shannon Stoner, Gillett; Allie Krause, Hortonville; Ashley Thiem-Menning, Kaukauna; Carol Petrina, Kewaunee; Holly Selwitschka, Kimberly; April de la Ruelle, Lena; Michelle Best, Katie Castel, Little Chute; Ellen Connor, Manawa; Le Ann Hopp, Marion; Ann Hunt, New London; Holly Handt, Hannah Good Zima, Lori Baumgart, John Kronenburg, NFLS; Amy Peterson, Oconto; Rachel Pascoe, Oconto Falls; Amanda Lee, Bradley Shippis, Molly Komp, Kristin Laufenberg, Chad Glamann, Dave Bacon, Debbie White, John Wisneski, Joe Lawton, OWLS; Sue Vater Olsen, Scandinavia; Elizabeth Timmins, Seymour; Jill Trochta, Suring; Eric Bailey, Waupaca; Kelly Kneisler, Weyauwega

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM and Amanda went through roll call.

2. AAC Ground Rules & online meeting etiquette

3. Minutes of the May 19, 2023, AAC meeting were approved.

4. Announcements

- a. The September 15th AAC meeting will be held in-person at the Little Chute Public Library.
- b. Katherine from Little Chute has left, and Katie Castel is the interim director.
- c. Shay from Shiocton has left. We will miss her.
- d. Kristie from Shawano County is leaving. We will miss her as well.
- e. We are still seeing people checking in damaged materials to print a transit slip AND using a yellow problem slip. In general, the yellow problem slip is used instead of a transit slip and that item should remain checked out to the patron. We're going to try making a video that goes over parts of this procedure, but if you have questions, please contact Amanda, Molly, or OWLSnet Help.

5. Review and discuss OWLSnet Borrowers' Card Program Policy

The OWLSnet Borrowers' Card Program policy and guidelines were last updated in 1999. OWLSnet made suggested changes to guideline #9 that makes it clear that the replacement fee is optional and added language to guideline #10 to include the one-year expiration date for OWLS libraries to comply with the SRLAAW best practices for cross-county billing.

The group was happy with this change and there were no questions. Amanda expects more of these policies to come to AAC because they are outdated and need to be

reviewed. The group will vote on this at the September meeting and Bradley will then take it to the board.

6. Resource Sharing List of Exceptions

A library would like to start circulating vinyl records but has concerns about sending them in delivery. It was proposed OWLSnet add them to the Resource Sharing Policy List of Exceptions. There were no concerns about adding vinyl records to the Resource Sharing Policy List of Exceptions and it was also suggested that we add passes to local attractions to the list for the vote in September.

The Resource Sharing Policy is an agreement that all libraries will circulate materials freely. But there is a list of exceptions of materials that don't travel well, have too many pieces, too large, etc.

There were a few questions about items currently circulating: backpacks with items inside can circulate as kits but could be an exception if they have too many pieces or they are too large for the delivery tubs; Library of Things items do not have to circ as long as they meet the criteria for exceptions; hotspots are considered equipment so do not have to circ; videogame consoles are equipment and don't have to circ; Watts Up? meters fall under equipment and don't have to circ. Passes for local attractions will be added to the list of exceptions to be voted on in September. (State Park Passes and Local Passes stats are kept separately in the database. If libraries want Local Passes to be returned, then they can count as a circulation. State Park Passes are not returned; therefore, they do not count as a circulation.) If anyone has additional questions on whether an item should be circulating or is an exception, please email OWLSnetHelp.

The only way items can be added to the list of exceptions is if the group votes on it. If items are not circable, CARL will give patrons an error message if they try to place a hold on them. CARL will also stop staff from checking out these materials. This works at the media code level but also with additional exception rules that can be added. CARL has been programmed to only allow some of these items to be returned to the owning library, but it is causing issues so we will reconsider this practice. If you're not sure if your materials are circulating correctly, you can email OWLSnetHelp and we'll check that your loan rules are correct.

There were some questions on lender/borrower stats and ratio stats in terms of exception items that don't circ affecting these numbers. The ILL stats are only from items that are traveling. If items are not traveling, then it does not get counted towards the lender/borrower numbers.

Libraries are reporting that patrons are returning materials on this list of exceptions to non-owning libraries which can make it difficult to get back to the owning library. In most cases, these items are not labeled to indicate which library to return to. OWLSnet

wants to know if it is feasible to standardize labeling these items so someone at the circulation desk would know not to accept it.

The group liked the idea of labeling exception items. There was discussion on making these standardized throughout OWLSnet so that they are more consistent. Items are very diverse so there would need to be some flexibility with the labels. Rebecca asked if there could be options to accommodate images so libraries can incorporate their logos.

Amanda will add vinyl records and local passes to the List of Exceptions to be voted on at the September meeting and she will also investigate label templates for these items.

7. Circulating Consumables

Consumable kits are kits that have some part of it that doesn't come back to the library. Some of these may include something like a knitting kit that has knitting needles, yarn, and a pattern where the patron keeps what they make with the yarn. Other kits include completely consumable materials and the only thing returned to the library is an empty bag. Other kits are given away in Ziploc bags and nothing is expected back. OWLS asked DPI about whether these types of kits count as circulation. In 2018 they said they could not count. In 2020 they said they could count. Amanda asked again last month and got the following answer: "A kit which contains items purchased by the library which is checked out by a patron for a specified period, returned to library, and made available for another patron to check out counts in your circulation. The knitting kit meets the PLS definition to be included in circulation. The Ziploc craft bag does not count as circulation. The example where only the bag comes back technically meets the definition but I do not think it meets the intent of the definition so I would leave that to local interpretation."

OWLSnet needs to decide locally about whether the kits where an empty bag comes back to the library counts as a circulation.

There was a general consensus that these should not count as a circ. The sentiment is that it's not fair to give out a consumable product and expect a patron to bring back an empty bag and that this is a way to inflate circ. However, the group would like to know what other consortia in the state are doing, especially those that are neighboring OWLSnet, so these items are being counted the same way.

OWLS anticipated this and created a consumables media code in CARL. If we decide to keep them separate, then we will pull the consumable stats from the annual report data. This wouldn't become a policy, only procedural, but if becomes an issue at any point then it may need to be policy. Bradley added that circulations don't impact state funding; the formula doesn't look at circs. It could impact county funding but not in a clear way. It would only matter if non-residents were using consumable kits at a higher

rate than other materials. If DPI comes back with a different decision in the future, then we may need to revisit the topic.

Little Chute added that they are currently doing this and do not bill a patron if an empty bag does not come back.

To be clear, if items are included in these kits/take-and-makes/grab-and-go's such as scissors, glue, rulers, etc., and you expect them to come back, then those count as a circ and the kit media types should be used. If only an empty bag is coming back, use the consumable media type.

Overall, most libraries are providing some sort of service or program with “to-go kits”, and they can be counted as self-directed activity for the annual report.

Bradley will put this on the agenda for the next system directors’ meeting to see if we can get more information from other systems and if DPI can give a more defined response. OWLS will then decide based on those responses.

Break: 10:50am – 11:00am

8. Discuss Waiving Bills

In OWLSnet, there are a few different types of fees:

- a) Overdue fines
- b) Standard fees (replacement card fees, RFID replacement, etc.,)
- c) Service fees (printing, copies, etc.,)
- d) Bills (lost or damaged items)
- e) Manual fines – many of these came over during our migration to CARL and may be any of the above

Overdue fines are determined by the checkout location. The location where the patron pays the overdue fine or other fees is allowed to keep the money; however, bills for lost or damaged items need to get forwarded to the owning library. This was agreed upon by all the libraries. Staff should not be waiving another library’s bills without first contacting the owning library. If you are unsure as to who the owning library is, you can contact OWLSnet Help or wait to review the Bills Paid Elsewhere by Owning Location and Transacting Location on the OWLSnet Stats page.

Today’s discussion is not about making a decision on waiving bills at the system level. OWLS cannot make a controlled policy statement since it would need to go to each board to decide. Door County is discussing going fine free and wanted to ask AAC if working together to waive older bills would be possible. Rebecca added that going fine free is a way to remove barriers to access but that old bills and fees also create barriers. Door County is looking to put a policy or procedure in place for writing off old bills for patrons and is wondering if libraries are willing to reciprocally waive bills. They are only

looking at old bills where the owning library isn't immediately available and most likely they will never receive payment for that billed item.

It is not easy for staff to determine which library the old charges that migrated from Sierra belonged to. OWLS, however, exported all fine information from Sierra prior to migration and can pull the information for you if needed. Owen added that if there is a date listed under the "returned" column, then it is most likely a fine. If there is no date, then it typically is a bill.

If libraries are thinking of going fine free, then they can contact OWLSnet Help and Molly will work with you to decide on the criteria you want to use for waiving old fines, but this involves TLC as well.

Owen asked if we could just treat the transacting branch as the owning branch for the old bills, since it's not feasible to check with OWLS for each individual item? Again, OWLS cannot create a controlled policy statement for this. The Kaukauna board does not care about waiving old bills and fines, but other boards are not okay with blanket waiving. Some asked about coming to an agreement with all the boards deciding locally what to do with these items. Bradley answered that if the group agrees, we could do what we did with collections and draft a resolution and then keep track of when all the boards have passed it, if they do. But from the online chat it appeared that many libraries' boards would not agree to this.

Ashley added that during COVID, Kaukauna staff went through all their registration cards to check patrons for up-to-date info. If any had old bills, they would contact the owning library and ask if they had an issue with them removing the old bill. They haven't found it to be a huge issue to contact directors to get it taken care of. Owen has been great to work with and gave certain criteria to Kaukauna in which they could waive old bills. Ashley was using the State Debt Collection website where she got the 7-year rule for waiving old bills, which is what Kaukauna follows. Legally, bills older than 7 years are not considered collectible by the state.

OWLS will work on getting a list of all libraries and what they do locally in terms of old bills.

9. Adjourn at 11:41 AM