

Jefferson County moves to new library system

By Amy Smith Union staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, May 13, 2015 8:58 am

JEFFERSON — The Jefferson County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday unanimously approved the Jefferson County Library Board's withdrawal from the Mid-Wisconsin Federated Library System.

Also approved during the board's monthly meeting was a partnership with the Waukesha County Federated Library System and creation of a new two-county library system. All eight municipalities included in the Jefferson County library system unanimously approved the withdrawal.

On March 26, the Jefferson County Library Board unanimously voted to begin the process of withdrawing Jefferson County from the MWFLS in anticipation of joining Waukesha County. This decision was based on a recommendation submitted by the county's Library System Review Committee.

The review of the county's current library system was in an effort to provide the citizens of Jefferson County with the best available library resources and also to look at what services and resources other library systems could provide. The review committee held question-and-answer sessions with Mid-Wisconsin Federated Library System and four adjacent library systems — South Central Library System, Arrowhead Library System, Lakeshores Library System and Waukesha County Federated Library System.

After completing this review, the Jefferson County Library System Review Committee recommended that the Waukesha County Federated Library System would be the best option for Jefferson County.

By joining Waukesha County, library customers can expect a staff that includes five full-time professional librarians; a stable, feature-rich, user-friendly automation system; outstanding technical support; a fiscally responsible organization; access to a large, robust Café catalog of more than 2.3 million items and popular online databases; and "1,000 Books Before Kindergarten" mobile app, among other things.

Prior to its vote Tuesday, the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on the issue. The lone speaker was Sue Hartwick, of the county library board, who urged the county board's support.

"All of the library boards, all of the municipal boards, have voted 100 percent in favor of it and now we need approval by a two-thirds majority to continue with this process of withdrawing from Mid-Wisconsin and joining with what we think is going to be a better fit for Jefferson County with the Waukesha County Federated Library System," Hartwick said.

It was noted that the change is being made in an effort to reduce costs and better utilize resources. There is no financial impact to Jefferson County.

The Waukesha system director is Connie Meyer, former longtime director of the Dwight Foster Public Library in Fort Atkinson.

In other business, the council:

- Amended the personnel ordinance to include the creation of HR0570, Safety in the Workplace and HR0685,

Safety Shoes and Safety Eye Protection Allowance Policy.

- Approved extending the term of the Task Force on County Government Operations and Organization to Aug. 31. The task force will report its findings and recommendations to the board at the Sept. 8 board meeting.
- Approved a resolution ratifying County Board Chair Jim Schroeder's issuance of an emergency declaration on April 23, following the detection of H5 avian influenza within Jefferson County.
- Approved a resolution encouraging the state Legislature to make the changes necessary to ensure the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents has adequate resources to distribute to UW-Whitewater and the Jefferson County Cooperative Extension in order to maintain the effectiveness of the educational partnerships serving the residents of Jefferson County and the state of Wisconsin.
- Approved a resolution in support of the local stewardship program and encouraging the state legislature to maintain the program as requested in the governor's budget.
- Approved a resolution supporting the retention and expansion of Wisconsin's current long-term care system of Family Care, IRIS, Partnership and Aging and Disability Resource Centers.
- Approved a resolution opposing a requirement to debt service and referendum levy amounts on property tax bills, as it would impose a financial burden on Jefferson County by requiring software updates, hardware enhancements and additional printing expenses and result in a negative impact for taxpayers due to the confusing language.
- Approved a resolution opposing 2015 Senate Bill 21 and 2015 Assembly Bill 21, as it relates to repealing the Wisconsin Fund Program for private on-site wastewater treatment system replacement or rehabilitation for low income homeowners.