1. Call to Order, Roll Call

2. Introduction of Visitors/Public Comment

Present: Aaron Skog, Brande Overbey, Ted Bodewes, Jamie Bukovac, Julie Milavec.

3. Discussion Item – Strategic Planning RFP Responses Received

Skog asked the group to determine how best to review these documents and come to our decision.

The Committee ruled out certain RFPs due to missing components of the plan as requested in the RFP: Bailey Leadership did not provide a sample. Libraries Thrive did not provide a sample, and their proposal was inadequate. VIANOVA did not provide a sample by the stated deadline. Trek did not provide a sample, a detailed workplan or budget, and did not meet the minimum qualifications of the RFP.

A discussion was held as to what the purpose for the Plan will be – to take our organization “down to the foundation” and redefine SWAN, or to develop goals and outcomes for the next few years (more surface level)? The Committee felt it was important to really dig into all issues we are facing and to have a very robust planning process.

One by One Comparison –

Sarah Keister Armstrong: The Committee felt that this document was tailored toward us well, though the experience and references were primarily library rather than consortial. Mission, vision and values were not noted for the process.

Center for Guilt-Free Success: The tone of proposal did not feel like a good fit for the organization. The Committee felt that the bio was more promotional than background driven. They felt that the materials presented and the sample plan felt somewhat dated and surface level.

Consulting Within Reach: The Committee felt that much of the breakdown was very detailed, in-depth, and that CWR’s qualifications were very impressive. They appreciated that the mission, vision, and identity were included and liked the identity piece. They also liked the non-traditional approach to discovery/focus groups. This group did their homework and also had two calls with SWAN leadership to discover more about what we’d be looking for in this plan. Bukovac had a few questions about the plan to get clarification on regarding their process, which the Committee weighed in on. One clarifying question is: what is SWAN staff’s role in preparing the actual proposal once all of the research has been done: Skog shared that he has seen the facilitator from CWR Curtis Chang present in the past (for CCS’s Strategic Plan) and that Curtis was a very engaging speaker that kept everyone active in the discussion. He’d be very comfortable having Curtis present at SWAN meetings if this organization is chosen.
CTY: They did not provide details as to the process used and the wording was very vague; it felt like there were components missing. There was no real relevant library/consortial experience for this group either. The sample was good, but the proposal did not seem to support or provide relevant detail demonstrating how they got to this sort of plan.

Dennis Jennings: Skog and Bukovac shared their experience working with this facilitator for SWAN’s last planning process, which was overall very good and effective. Bukovac felt that their method does an effective job of uncovering the information necessary. She also felt that the retreat process helps with team building and very actively gets the SWAN staff involved in the process. Skog did note that at the end, much of the work on writing the actual plan would fall upon the staff to complete once the data is uncovered. Clarification would be needed on the deliverables and who is writing the final plan – Jennings or the SWAN staff?

Eric Craymer: This response was thorough and well-researched. There were some concerns around the timeline, though that is flexible. The planning session was not clearly outlined, and specific actions not clear. Skog felt that the facilitation within the RAILS Overlay process, which he was a part of, was not ideal.

Kimberly Bolan and Associates: The Committee felt that this plan would be ideal for a library, but may not be able to adequately capture the complexity of a consortium. The sample plans were impressive, and the RFP response captured all required criteria. Bukovac liked the aspirational discussions component.

Amanda Standerfer: The Committee felt that utilizing web meetings (Zoom) wasn’t the preferred method for meeting format. Standerfer did note comparable experience with PrairieCat and other local libraries.

Overview discussion-
The Committee reviewed in further depth their top choices, on a comparison basis. A novel approach to this process with a very thoughtful plan was evident from Consulting Within Reach’s proposal. Milavec felt that CWR’s proposal had the questions that SWAN should be asking to get us to where we want to go. Additionally, this group had worked with multiple types of consortia and that depth of experience was impressive.

The Committee felt that, for others not involved in SWAN’s previous planning process, Jennings’ proposal was not as clear as it was for those who were.

The Committee further broke down CWR’s proposal and discussed elements such as relationships with other groups, perceptions of SWAN, and timeline for meetings and feedback. SWAN membership participation and external calls were also discussed. The Board thought that 10 calls to externals and 5 more calls for directors would be preferred, for example. Calls to other consortia outside of Illinois was also a popular idea.

Next steps were discussed. Calling references for CWR will be done by Skog, to gather further information and more justification for our decision and recommendation to the Board. Bukovac asked for us to also obtain a reference from one of the consortia listed on CWR’s proposal, since these would be most like SWAN. This information will be presented at the May Board Meeting.
4. Adjournment