
MEMORANDUM

TO: Library Board of Trustees

FROM: Bruce Gay

DATE: March 6, 2026

SUBJECT: Update on Waukesha County Library Plan (Act 150 committee)

At its February meeting, the Waukesha Public Library Board of Trustees passed the “Minimums to Exempt” measures recommended by the Act 150 committee. For the new minimums to be put into effect, at least half of the library boards in Waukesha County representing 80% of the population of communities with libraries needed to approve the minimums. Eight library boards rejected the proposed minimums: Butler, Eagle Elm Grove, Hartland, Menomonee Falls, Merton, New Berlin, and Pewaukee. These communities represent 42.2% of the covered population.

It is not entirely clear what will happen next. The current plan (2021-2026) includes this language:

In the event the county library standards are not approved (in accordance with the requirements in the statute), the current library standards will remain in place. In the event of that scenario, the county board of supervisors has the option to form a new county library planning committee or revive the past committee to review the standards and make new recommendations before the end of the adopted five-year plan.

It is important to note that the remainder of the plan, including the county tax distribution formula, only needs to be approved by the Waukesha County Board of Supervisors.

Waukesha County library directors are meeting on March 13 to discuss the issue. Many of the board statements added comments that the board’s did not approve the standards specifically because of reductions the number of full time employees. One board said the reduction was not big enough, and another board said they wanted the materials spending reduced more, and the FTE measure increased.

Waukesha County is one of just two counties in the state to require compliance with minimums in order to exempt from the county library tax.