MARINet Board Retreat Minutes
January 31, 2013
Robson-Harrington House, San Anselmo

Present
Linda Kenton, Chair, San Anselmo Public Library
Scott Bauer, Marin County Free Library
Anji Brenner, Mill Valley Public Library
Abbot Chambers, Sausalito Public Library
Frances Gordon, Larkspur Library
Gary Gorka, Dominican University Library
Gail Haar, Marin County Free Library
Sarah Houghton, San Rafael Public Library
Deborah Mazzolini, Belvedere-Tiburon Library
Deb Moehrke, MARINet System Administrator

I.   Public Comment Period – No members of the public were present

II.   No Guests present

III.   SWOT Analysis and Strategic Planning

Chair Linda Kenton opened the meeting at 9:10AM and welcomed everyone. A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool that can enable the MARINet Board to understand our strengths and weaknesses and to identify opportunities available to as well as threats that could arise.

Kenton explained that the goal today is to set a clear direction as a step to building strategic plan for MARINet. which will be further developed. This work will be a basis for the development of a vision and mission statement and be tool in defining the consortium.

There was a lively discussion on the strengths and weaknesses that exist and what the opportunities and threats are for the future. Following the discussion, each participant will be given dots to vote for what they consider to be the most important issues with SWOT.

Strengths
- Reputation for resource sharing of materials. It is commented on & appreciated by patrons **I I I I**
- Stability of consortium despite leadership changes **I**
- Public percentage of value of libraries is 90% **I I I I**
- Good access to data for the measurement of services
- Strength in numbers for funding services **I I I I I**
- Commitment to solutions that work for everyone
- Political commitment is strong
- Diversity both within communities and in leadership priorities/styles/goals
- Innovate at the local level and adopt the successes MARINet-wide **I I**
- New staff with energy and new viewpoints

- The hallmark of libraries as providing free and equal access to information **I I I I I**
- Local delivery among members **I I I**
- Unity measure – If we don't have what you want we can get it quickly

Weaknesses
- Public not aware of what we offer**I**
- We don't market our services well**I I**
- Focus on our users vs non-users **I I**
- Lack of updated vision**I I**
- Total dependency on III**I I**
- Dependency on single vendor for services such as Overdrive**I**
- Beta version software not ready for prime time
- Slow to innovate**I I I I I**
- Small staff at Marinet limits what we can do**I**
- User interface difficult for patrons to use**I I I I I I I I**

   -we don't have control or prioritize the control we could have
- Leaders are older**I**
- Maintenance vs innovation**I I I I I**
- Link+ not obvious in the catalog/why do we have to 'discover' Link+**I I I I I I I**
- Patrons should never get "we don't have it**I**
- MCFL + one for decisions**I**
- Financial decisions have to unanimous
- Change-adverse staff
- Brown Act hampers communications
- Few bilingual staff inhibits service to non-speaking patrons
- Mobile access needs to be easier**I I I I I**
- Not yet reaching young adults and teens**I I**
- Nothing is mandatory**I I I**
- Inconsistent policies**I I I**
- Database needs to be more integrated**I I**
- Lack of ability to network with other directors**I I I**

Opportunities
- Marketing our services**I I I I I**
- Measure things we haven't done before to drive direction
- Build on principles in JPA
- Develop R.O.I. data for political support
- What is MARINet worth to each member**I I**
- Redefine our catalog 'face' to the public – MARINet or Marin catalog**I I**
- Shared programming sponsored by MARINet
- 'First sale' support for digital content
- Library owned electronic resources**I I I I I I**

- Link+ better integration in the catalog**I I I I**
- Never say no**I I I I**
- License ebook collections for MARINet**I I**
- Approach other libraries who have developed better user interface with III products…can we buy what they have done**I I**
- Increase staff to enable new resources**I I I I I**
- Access on mobile devices**I I I I**
- Services to children builds life-long supporters
- Expand social media to reach younger adults
- Push "any library in Marin" can do this for you
- Know our communities – what are our patrons really like**I I I I**
- Coordination of classes and materials among members
- Reach out to new members in the community by approaching realtors and using welcome package**I**
- Develop staff interaction forums
- Shared MARINet calendar
- Reassess working groups**I I I I I I I**
- New Board structure to innovate/study ideas
- Look at inconsistencies for areas we can come together
- Set firmer deadlines and mean it and provide leadership on priorities**I I I I**
- Directors sharing non "MARINet" agency priorities and collaborate when possible**I I I**
- Push the 'better' or new features in the catalog/talking points**I I I I I**
- Training can encourage networking**I**
- Library staff experts could do training under MARINet umbrella**I I**

Threats
- External funding differences among members**I I I I**
- Digital content – patrons think we are 'books' and what happens to MARINet when ebooks are the norm
- Digital licenses restrict our ability to share**I I I I I I I I**
- Programming increasing service but that is outside current vision of MARINet
- Ease of use of commercial services makes library services seem difficult**I I I I I I I I I**
- New MCFL Leadership**I I I**
- Changes at parent agency level
- Privatization of libraries
- If value of MARINet is accessed solely on financial cost
- Leaders nearing retirement
- Affluent community, high expectations and instant service
- Affluent communities like libraries but don't necessarily use them**I**
- What is the future of libraries**I I I I I**

Following the SWOT discussion, the Board looked at the priorities and listed them under identifiable themes.

Ease of Access
- Commercial products easier to use **I I I I I I I I**   Threat
- Catalog should never say no**I I I I**   Opportunity
- Our user interface not easy enough**I I I I I I I I**   Weakness
- Digital licensing threat to sharing**I I I I I I I**   Threat
- Why do we 'discover' Link+**I I I I I I**   Weakness
- Mobile access needs to be easier**I I I I I**   Weakness & Opportunity
- Reputation for sharing materials**I I I I**   Strength

Forward Motion
- Reaccess working groups**I I I I I I**   Opportunity
- Increase staff to enable new resources**I I I I I**   Opportunity
- Slow to innovate**I I I I I I** Weakness
- Balance maintenance and innovation**I I I I I**   Weakness
- Strength in numbers for funding services**I I I I I**   Strength

Marketing
- Free and equal access**I I I I I I** Strength
- Marketing our services**I I I I I**   Opportunity
- Talking points to push services**I I I I**   Opportunity
- Know what of our communities really want**I I I I**   Opportunity
- Public perceptions of the value of libraries**I I I I**   Strength

Monsters in the Closet
- MARINet owned electronic services**I I I I I**   Opportunity
- What is the future of libraries**I I I I I**   Threat
- Digital licensing restricts our ability to share**I I I I I I I**   Threat

Following the discussion, it was determined that the Board would review the priorities determined in today's discussion. At the next meeting of the Board, a discussion of the next steps will be included on the agenda.

Chair Kenton thank everyone for their ideas and participation. The Board agreed that it was a worthwhile process.   The meeting was adjourned at 12:55PM.

Respectfully submitted by Debbie Mazzolini