

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday, October 24, 2023

**Central Library
Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room
814 West Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53233**

PRESENT: Mark Sain, Michele Bria, Teresa Mercado, Ald. Milele Coggs, Matthew Kowalski, Michael Morgan, Ald. Scott Spiker, Joan Johnson

EXCUSED: Felicia Saffold, Erika Siemsen, Sup. Kathleen Vincent

STAFF: Chantel Clark, Melissa Howard, Yves LaPierre, Tammy Mays, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Joseph Moretz, Karli Pederson, Victoria Robertson, Rebecca Schweisberger, Kelly Wochinske

OTHERS

PRESENT: MPL Foundation: Ryan Daniels

President Mark Sain called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:08 p.m. on October 24, 2023 with a quorum present. The agenda items were taken out of order but are presented here in numerical sequence.

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

1. **Trustee Recognition.** President Sain read the resolution for Chris Layden thanking him for ten years of service on the Board. Trustee Bria agreed to serve as Vice-President in the interim. Mayor Johnson has appointed Venice Williams to replace Chris Layden; she will begin her tenure in November 2023.

CONSENT AGENDA

2. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes September 26, 2023**
 3. **Committee Reports.**
 - a. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – October 11, 2023
 4. **Administrative Reports**
 - a. Financial Report
 - b. Library Director's Reports
 - c. Statistics
 5. **2024 Board Meeting Schedule.**

President Sain asked the Board if any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda presented as attachment A, pages 3-20 of the agenda. There was no motion to remove any items and the Consent Agenda was accepted.
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BOARD DEVELOPMENT

6. **Restorative Practices Community Circles.** Public Services Area Manager (Branches) Dr. Tammy Mays introduced D'Shaunta Stewart, Circle Keeping Facilitator, and Jenny Wright, Education & Outreach Librarian, shared information about the Community Circles at MPL.

Restorative Circle Keeping is a practice that seeks to offer conflict resolution that goes beyond traditional punishment and typically involves finding time and space to discuss issues and creates a safe space for teens to talk about their experiences. In recent years, the number of security incidents involving teens has increased and MPL staff recognized the need to help improve teen communication and conflict resolution skills. Additionally, the Circles can help staff gain confidence in creating a sense of community for young people using the library. MPL received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to fund the Community Circles and the program also receives funding support from the Milwaukee Public Library Foundation. The Circles are held at Atkinson, Center Street, Mitchell Street, and Washington Park branches. Prior to moving to the temporary location, a Circle was held at Martin Luther King branch. These locations were identified as locations with a large youth demographic.

The Circle Keeping contract was originally awarded to a full-time facilitator for a 12-month contract and the original contractor resigned after 4 months. MPL re-issued the Request for Proposal (RFP) and two Circle Keeping Consultants were offered part-time positions. One consultant, D'Shaunta Stewart, accepted the contract and was hired in September 2022.

Ms. Stewart shared an overview of the Circle format and anonymous quotes and anecdotes from participants. In addition to circle sharing, activities included creating vision boards, journaling, and affirmations. In total, 51 Circles were offered at the 4 selected branches. Although attendance counts were low, the positive impact for individual teens has been tremendous.

In 2019, Circle Keeping training was offered to MPL staff by Restorative Circles, LLC. MPL partnered with the Office of Community Wellness and Safety to identify strategies for improving relationships with youth and providing an alternative to banning them from the library. Dr. Mays and Ms. Wright presented to United Neighborhood Centers of Milwaukee to connect with other community groups offering Circles. Ms. Stewart attended the Children's and Young Adult Librarians meeting in September to offer training in hopes librarians will continue the work at their locations even after the grant ends on October 31, 2023. Ms. Stewart also offered a 'True Colors' Circle for managers and staff at Central Library. Dr. Mays and Ms. Stewart were interviewed by the Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service and WTMJ-4.

Dr. Mays offered thanks for the committee for their ongoing support. The Board expressed appreciation for MPL's work to support youth in Milwaukee. Informational item.

REPORTS

7. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting.** Library Director Joan Johnson reported on the October 9, 2023 meeting.

Action items:

- The Board approved the 2024 MCFLS budget of \$5.29M, which included a 10% increase in State aid.
 - o Total State aid = \$3.92M
 - o As the Resource Library for Milwaukee County, MPL receives 6% of State aid
 - MPL will receive \$245,324 from Milwaukee County to support MCFLS and member libraries

- Additional State funding will be used to provide savings to members on shared electronic resources and county-wide services
- Overall, members will see a savings of nearly \$150,000
- MCFLS is leading migration to a new online shared catalog called Aspen Discovery
 - The additional cost of the resource is \$20,000, which will be absorbed by the system and paid out of the increased State aid
- The Board approved the MCFLS System plan
 - The plan focuses mostly on strategic planning work and support for member libraries
 - Marketing support for members is included in the plan
 - The plan was submitted to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in October
 - Collaborative activities between systems is encouraged
 - MCFLS Marketing Director is working with her counterpart in the Bridges System to create radio ads on a local station
- The Board approved a 2024 Continuing Education Agreement with the Bridges System
 - The Bridges System will administer continuing education for both systems together
 - MCFLS will see a savings on consulting costs
 - MPL staff regularly takes advantage of the training opportunities offered annually

Informational item.

8. **MPL Board Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting.** Trustee Mercado reported on the October 24, 2023 meeting.

Informational items:

- The Committee received the Quarterly Review of Fund Investments report from Mr. Wayne Sattler of US Bank
- The Committee received the Quarterly Report of the MPL Trust and Gift Funds

Action items:

- The Committee approved the minutes from the July 25, 2023 meeting.
- Library Director Joan Johnson presented the annual request to expend funds from the MPL investment fund in 2024. Each year, MPL can request to withdraw up to 5% from the fund. Unrestricted funds are used for public programming, marketing, and professional development. Restricted funds are used for materials purchases. The 2024 request is 4.5%, with \$252,000 unrestricted and \$15,000 restricted, for a total of \$267,000. The Committee approved the request and moves approval to the full Board. Trustee Bria moved to approve the 2024 gift fund expenditure; Trustee Mercado seconded. Motion passed.

9. **MPL Foundation.** MPL Foundation (MPLF) Executive Director Ryan Daniels presented an update on fundraising and MPLF activities. Director Daniels reiterated the MPLF mission to support MPL's efforts and to supplement, but not supplant, City funding. To date, MPLF has raised \$1.65M, up from \$1.39M at the same time last year. The 2023 Benjamin Franklin Awards Ceremony was held on and honored the Rotary Club of Milwaukee and John W. Daniels, Jr. The sold-out event raised \$441,726.50, up over 7% from 2022. At year-end, MPLF is closing out grants and contacting donors to request their continued support at the same or increased levels. The MPLF Board is working on building a major gift campaign, which includes a \$150,000 donation from Rockwell Automation in support of the makerspace at the new Martin Luther King branch. MPLF will begin fundraising for the donor wall at Martin Luther King branch as soon as practicable. Trustee Bria expressed

appreciation for the MPLF team and Board for their dedicated efforts and support of MPL.
Informational item.

10. **Summer Reading Program Update.** Kelly Wochinske, Library Public Services Area Manager (Education & Outreach), presented an update on the 2023 Summer Reading Program. Each summer, MPL strives to ensure children and teens have access to reading materials and activities to help avoid summer learning loss and a safe place with caring adults. This year, 3,157 children signed up for the Super Reader Squad and 512 teens signed up for the Teen Summer Challenge. Additionally, MPL provided service at 97 childcare outreach sites and 133 school-age outreach sites. Outreach services included: deposit collections, professional development and programming tools for site staff, and a supply of giveaway books for each participant to add to their home library. In total, MPL served 20,538 youth and children. The Book by Book Adult Summer Reading program had over 1,000 participants.

Summer library programs included book-based hands-on programs and digital photography workshops. The MPS Summer Academies middle-school classes visited MPL makerspaces and LibraryCorps served six sites, offering book-based steam workshops and reading buddy support.

MPL participated in the Mayor's Earn & Learn Summer Youth Internship Program and hosted 10 interns system-wide. Interns worked on a variety of projects, including: supporting summer reading, creating displays, helping with programs, and public equipment troubleshooting. The program offered interns additional training as well as college and career readiness support. Regular tasks included creating social media posts and a reflective presentation which they shared at the end of summer celebration.

The MPL Outreach team was invited to 86 community events and attended 72. Events included: MKE Rec playgrounds, neighborhood events, concerts, farmers markets, parades, and festivals.

Informational item.

OLD BUSINESS

11. **2024 Budget.** Library Director Joan Johnson shared a summary of the proposed budget for MPL. At the beginning of the budget process, MPL recognized the need to prepare for potential budget cuts and corresponding service model changes. MPL embarked on a robust community engagement project and created internal work groups to help inform service model planning. As the 2024 budget outlook has improved, the focus shifted to identifying opportunities to grow and expand services in a way that is responsive to the community feedback. The final community engagement report will be shared with the Board at the November meeting. Director Johnson will use the report to work with the Mayor to identify short- and long-term goals and priorities for the library. There are three possible budget amendments that directly implicate MPL by providing additional funding to cover Sunday service hours year-round. The MPL budget team has been working diligently with the Budget Office and Common Council Finance & Personnel Committee to discuss these amendments and the library's plan for implementing Sunday service. If the amendments pass, the expanded hours will be reflected in the MPL service hours presented to the Board for approval in November. Informational item.
12. **RNC Host Committee Update.** Deputy Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns and Associate Director – Public Services Chantel Clark presented a memo with the revised fee structure for library meeting space rental during the Republican National Committee in 2024. The memo is attached at the end of these minutes. The City Attorney's Office slightly amended the vendor agreement and

MPL will secure approval from the RNC Host Committee before presenting the final agreement and fees to the Board. A federal agency has requested use of a room at Central Library, which would eliminate the use of that room by any other party. The agency has agreed to provide investments for technology upgrades in the Loos Room. Additional information will be forthcoming. Trustee Bria moved to accept the meeting venue fee and terms proposal for the RNC; Trustee Morgan seconded. Motion passed.

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of October 24, 2023 was adjourned at 5:56 p.m.
