

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

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

PRESENT: Mark Sain, Chris Layden, Michele Bria, Ald. Milele Coggs, Matthew Kowalski, Michael Morgan, Erika Siemsen, Ald. Scott Spiker, Joan Johnson

EXCUSED: Teresa Mercado, Felicia Saffold

STAFF: Hermoine Bell-Henderson, Heather Berg, Maria Burke, Eileen Force Cahill, Tammy Mays, Sam McGovern-Rowen, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Joseph Moretz, Amelia Osterud, Karli Pederson, Victoria Robertson, Marian Royal, Rebecca Schweisberger, Kelly Wochinske

OTHERS

PRESENT: Budget and Policy Division: Mason Lavey
MPL Foundation: Ryan Daniels, Antoine Carter

President Mark Sain called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:05 p.m. on October 25, 2022 with a quorum present. Trustee Coggs participated by conference phone.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Patron Phyllis Wax submitted a statement to be read into the record. The statement is attached at the end of these minutes.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes September 27, 2022.**
2. **Committee Reports**
 - a. Innovation & Strategy Committee Meeting Minutes – October 4, 2022
 - b. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – October 13, 2022
3. **Administrative Reports**
 - a. Financial Report
 - b. Library Director's Reports
 - c. Statistics
4. **Revised 2022 Meeting Schedule.**

REPORTS

5. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting.** Trustee Erika Siemsen reported on the October 3, 2022 meeting. The 2023 MCFLS budget and systems plan. MCFLS is prioritizing use of resources and expertise to encourage patrons to return to the libraries. There is an effort to support member libraries and advocate on their behalf. A library compensation study will be undertaken to define positions, classifications, and provide guidance for library directors. Informational item.
6. **Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting.** Committee member Trustee Spiker reported on the October 25, 2022 meeting and presented the following action items:
 - The Committee approved a request to expend \$205,000 unrestricted and \$15,000 restricted funds from the MPL investment fund in 2023. Trustee Morgan moved to approve the request and Trustee Kowalski seconded the motion. Motion passed.
 - The Committee approved the contract award for Financial and Compliance Audit Services of the Milwaukee Public Library Trust Fund to Reilly, Penner, & Benton. Trustee Bria moved to approve the contract award and Trustee Spiker seconded. Motion passed.
7. **MPL Foundation.** Milwaukee Public Foundation Executive Director Ryan Daniels provided an update on fundraising. The Benjamin Franklin Awards Ceremony (BFAC) was held in September and honored former MPL and MPLF Board Trustees Arthur Harrington and Dr. Joan Prince. Over 300 supporters attended the event and MPLF raised over \$416,000. MPLF continues to grow its donor base and over 35% of the BFAC donors were new. To date, MPLF has raised \$1.85M, which includes several multi-year commitments. This total does not include the \$1.3M grant to MPLF to support the AmeriCorps program. Director Daniels commended the MPLF Board and staff for their fundraising efforts. President Sain complimented MPLF on the successful BFAC and selecting well-deserving honorees.

OLD BUSINESS

8. **Contract Award – Circle Keeping Initiative Consultant.** In March 2022, the MPL Board approved a contract award to a consultant to run the Restorative Practice Circle Keeping programs. The original recipient resigned from the position on Thursday, July 14, 2022. On August 3, 2022, the Library released a second Request for Proposal (RFP). Four qualified proposals were received and ranked according to the requested qualifications listed on the RFP. At the September 27, 2022 meeting the MPL Board approved awarding the Library Circle Keeping Consultants contract to Angela Harris and D'shaunta Stewart, up to \$50,000.00 with each consultant working 10 hours per week. After the September Board meeting, Angela Harris retracted her bid. To ensure the correct contract is approved by the Board, MPL Administration recommends awarding the full contract to D'shaunta Stewart, who will work the full 20 hours per week and will receive the remaining portion of the grant. Trustee Layden moved to approve the contract award and Trustee Morgan seconded. Motion passed.
9. **2023 Budget.** Library Director Joan Johnson thanked the Board for their excellent guidance at the September meeting and gave a brief overview of the proposed service models and plan. The information and data requested at the September meeting was provided to Trustees prior to the meeting and new information was listed as Attachment C of the agenda. Director Johnson shared a revised memo detailing the methodology that will be applied to decision making around service model designations. The memo was revised following the Common Council's response to Mayor Johnson's proposed budget. It is attached at the end of these minutes. The Board engaged in robust discussion about the methodology and offered ideas for collating the data to better inform decisions. MPL will refine the methodology and criteria to develop a transparent and clear model that can be

applied to decision making going forward. Director Johnson reviewed the current Common Council budget amendments relating to the library and Deputy Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns shared next steps in the budget process. Informational item.

9. **Summer Reading Program.** Kelly Wochinske, Library Public Services Area Manager (Education & Outreach), presented an update on the 2022 Summer Reading Program. Each summer, MPL strives to provide high quality out-of-school learning experiences for children and teens and avoid summer learning loss. The Super Reader Squad and Teen Summer Challenge encourage participants to read, explore interests, and learn. A virtual platform is used to track reading time as well as library visits and program attendance. This year, MPL featured a public art scavenger hunt which encouraged participants to visit neighborhoods throughout the city. Summer outreach was coordinated through the Education and Outreach Services (EOS). This year marked 20 years of summer reading outreach and boasted the highest number of participants in that time. MPL provided 'Super Reader Squad In a Box' kits for partners to use on-site. Partners received book bundles, activity booklets, and weekly updates that included reading tips, book recommendations, and virtual resources. Summer reading wrapped up with a virtual dance party with DJ Bizzon. Ms. Wochinske thanked all MPL staff and the MPL Foundation for their support of the summer reading program. Informational item.

NEW BUSINESS

10. **2023 Board Meeting Schedule.** The Board reviewed the 2023 meeting schedule. Trustee Bria moved to approve the schedule and Trustee Kowalski seconded. Motion passed.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

11. **Central Library Business Commons.** Hermoine Bell-Henderson, Library Services Manager - Coordinator of Business, Technology and Periodicals, shared information about the grand opening of the Central Library Business Commons. The Business Commons was made possible by funding from the Schoenleber Foundations and Elaine C. Lange donation, with guidance and additional fundraising by MPL Foundation. It is a collaborative space where patrons can work, utilize free resources, and have access to expert library staff. The Business, Technology, and Periodicals team will focus outreach, programming, and partnerships on workforce development, financial literacy, business, and the practical aspects of daily life for patrons. The grand opening was held on October 20th. Patrons were able to view the space, learn about its purpose, and receive a free professional head shot photo. Informational item.

CLOSING REMARKS

President Sain noted the holiday book exchange will be held at the November meeting.

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of October 25, 2022 was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Dear Ms. Johnson,

I hope the library's budget will not be cut. I also think it is essential to provide an alternate community venue for the time the King Library is being demolished and rebuilt. As a neighborhood resident pointed out, they need more, not fewer safe places. Why would we remove all access for that 2-year period?

As for which branches should have reduced services or hours, it doesn't make sense to base that determination on the newness or physical condition of a branch. Which branches are most used or provide services residents can't access at home (computers, internet) or elsewhere in their neighborhood? If hours or services must be reduced it makes sense to reduce them in more well-to-do areas which can more easily find alternatives, rather than in lower income areas.

I hope you will share these opinions with anyone else involved in making these decisions.

Libraries are essential to the culture of our city. I don't want to see their services cut anywhere, but if they must be cut let's not do it in the areas which need them most.

Best,

Phyllis Wax