

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday, June 27, 2023

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

PRESENT: Mark Sain, Chris Layden, Michele Bria, Matthew Kowalski, Michael Morgan, Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Joan Johnson

EXCUSED: Ald. Milele Coggs, Teresa Mercado, Felicia Saffold, Ald. Scott Spiker

STAFF: Neil Albrecht, Heather Berg, Tammy Mays, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Joseph Moretz, Marian Royal, Rebecca Schweisberger, Kelly Wochinske

OTHERS

PRESENT: Budget and Policy Division: Nik Kovac
Milwaukee Public Library Foundation: Ryan Daniels
Summer Youth Intern – Library Administration: Brakiah Evans

President Mark Sain called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:12 p.m. on June 27, 2023 with a quorum present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Heather Berg, Office Assistant IV, introduced Brakiah Evans, Earn and Learn Summer Youth Intern assigned to MPL Administration.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes May 23, 2023**
2. **Committee Reports.**
 - a. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – June 1, 2023
 - b. Innovation & Strategy Committee Meeting Minutes – June 6, 2023
 - c. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – June 12, 2023
3. **Administrative Reports**
 - a. Financial Report
 - b. Library Director's Reports

President Sain asked the Board if any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda presented as attachment A, pages 3-24 of the agenda. There was no motion to remove any items and the Consent Agenda was accepted.

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

4. **Budget Outlook.** City of Milwaukee Budget and Management Director Nik Kovac presented information about the projected 2024 budget. The City of Milwaukee is facing a funding gap of \$183M. On June 20, 2023, Governor Evers signed a bill which included a 10% increase to Milwaukee's shared revenue. Additionally, under the bill, City of Milwaukee employee pension accounts will be converted to the Wisconsin Retirement System for employees hired after January 2024. The bill also authorized the City of Milwaukee to implement a 2% city-wide sales tax. The Budget and Policy Division estimates revenue from the tax to be \$190M. If approved and assuming all estimates are correct, funding from the sales tax, increased shared revenue, and remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds will close the budget gap for 2024. Although ARPA funding expires in 2024, the revenue changes are expected to be sufficient for maintaining City services for years to come. On July 11, 2023, the Common Council will vote on implementing the sales tax. If the tax is not implemented, significant cuts are expected for all City departments, especially Fire, Police, and Library. Per State law, all departments are asked to conduct an annual exercise to explore the implications of a 5% budget cut. Director Kovac has not yet requested this projection, but will likely direct City departments to submit budget proposals for the cost-to-continue and a 5% cut scenarios. The Board thanked Director Kovac for his presentation. Informational item.

REPORTS

5. **MPL Board Finance & Personnel Committee.** On behalf of Chair Mercado, Library Director Joan Johnson reported on the April 27, 2023 meeting. The Committee received the quarterly report of the trust fund investment performance and internal accounting controls. Informational item.

The Committee also received the auditor's report from Reilly, Penner, & Benton LLP, who issued an unqualified opinion with no recommendations. Trustee Layden moved to accept the auditor's report and place it on file; Trustee Vincent seconded. Motion passed.

6. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting.** This item was held for the July meeting.
7. **MPL Foundation Report.** MPL Foundation (MPLF) Executive Director Ryan Daniels presented an update on Foundation activities and fundraising. Year to date, MPLF has raised \$785,000 and is on track to meet its annual commitment. In partnership with the Milwaukee Bucks, MPLF received a new \$10,000 donation from the National Basketball Association (NBA). Additionally, MPLF has received increased recognition and gifts from the Milwaukee Brewers. The Board recognizes there is significant need for funding and has approved a major gift campaign. As with all MPLF funding, monies raised by the campaign will not supplant City funding and will be used for ongoing efforts in support of MPL. MPLF will work with MPL Administration to understand library needs not met by the City budget. MPLF is engaged in continued conversations with donors and some have shared they are waiting to learn more about the City's budget before committing to a donation. Several sub-committees have been created in response to the budget challenges. The Friends of MPL Literary Lunch was held on April 27th. Tickets sold out and the event raised over \$30,000. The Ben Franklin Awards Ceremony will be held on Wednesday, September 27th at the Wisconsin Club. The nominees are John Daniels and the Rotary Club of Milwaukee. President Sain thanked the MPL Foundation for their great work in helping MPL deliver great services. Informational item.

OLD BUSINESS

8. **REI Action Plan Status Update.** Library Director Joan Johnson presented an update on the Race, Equity, and Inclusion (REI) work plan. The MPL REI Committee is now co-chaired by Associate Library

Director Chantel Clark and Human Resources Administrator Victoria Robertson. The committee is comprised of staff from various departments and is charged with holding MPL accountable to carry out the REI work plan. Several personnel changes impacted the committee and caused delays in implementing the work plan. The co-chairs are focused on getting the committee re-grounded in the work and helping members understand their role. The committee is establishing mechanisms to receive feedback while also tracking and sharing accomplishments. A library staff interest group for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) has been established and is meeting regularly. The BIPOC group chair is a member of the REI committee and will act as a liaison to share information as needed. The all-day staff in-service for REI training will be held on November 30, 2023. All MPL libraries will be closed that day. The keynote speakers are American Library Association Executive Director Tracie Hall and Derek Mosley. Informational item.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

9. **Central Library 125th Anniversary.** Marian Royal, Public Services Area Manager (Central Library), presented an update on the celebration of Central Library's 125th anniversary. MPL staff was invited to submit works for a staff-only art show that will be on display from September - October. Central Library will be the theme of all pieces. The MPL Foundation collaborated with MPL staff member and artist Justin McCulla to design a t-shirt which will be for sale in the coming months. Other merchandise, including bookmarks, stickers, and window clings are being designed as well. The official anniversary date is October 3, 2023 and a celebration is planned for the following weekend, October 7-8th. Mayor Johnson will present a proclamation on October 7th, followed by a small reception. Archives and Special Collections Librarian Casey Lapworth created a self-guided walking tour of Central Library, which is also available virtually at www.mpl.org. Ms. Lapworth will present a special program about Central Library's history and Danielle Wroblewski, Human Resources Representative, will present a program on glass plate photography, which she enjoys as a hobby. The regularly scheduled architectural tour will be held, led by docents. All Trustees are invited to attend the celebrations. Informational item.

CLOSING REMARKS

President Sain noted he has a memento shovel from the Martin Luther King branch redevelopment groundbreaking ceremony. He opened discussion to identify a location to display it and other Board-related items for public viewing. MPL Administration will continue the discussion and bring recommendations to the Board. Informational item.

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of June 27, 2023 was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.
