

**MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MINUTES  
Tuesday February 23, 2010  
Central Library Meeting Room 1  
814 W. Wisconsin Ave.**

**PRESENT:** Sharon Cook, John Gurda, Ald. Ashanti Hamilton, Art Harrington,  
Ald. Nik Kovac, Sup. Theo Lipscomb, David Riemer, Marty Schreiber,  
Gretchen Schuldt, Dir. Bruce Thompson, Paula Kiely

**EXCUSED:** Ald. Milele Coggs, Joan Prince

**STAFF** Chris Arkenberg, Meg Diaz, Bruce Gay, Kelly Hughbanks, Joan Johnson,  
**PRESENT:** Sandy Rusch Walton, Taj Schoening, Crystal Sura, Paul Wilant, Judy Zemke

**OTHERS** Eric Pearson, Budget and Policy Division  
**PRESENT:** Amy Hefter, Legislative Reference Bureau  
Leslie Silletti, Mayor's Office

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President David Riemer called the special meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 8:10 a.m. on February 23, 2010 with a quorum attained at 8:15 a.m.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT** Alderman James Bohl addressed the Board stating that the Common Council is very cognizant of the fact that the City is in a precarious situation with this budget. The effect of the drop in the stock market on the required payments to the City's pension system has lead to difficult decisions in order to create long-term sustainability with assets like the library system. Alderman Bohl stated that he supports the endeavor of the Library Board in looking at a long-term sustainable plan for the system. He added that reduced library hours are not sufficient for library patrons to utilize library resources.

Citizen Michelle Sment stated that foresight is needed to prevent further decline to the library system. Libraries are important to the community and enhance the quality of life, especially for children who have no place to go. The library system needs to be taken care of before it is too late.

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**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Library Facilities.** President Riemer stated that declining budgets have reduced library hours of public service and the purchasing of library materials. He added that there is no indication that the decline of revenue for the city and subsequently for the library is over. President Riemer referred to the motion listed as attachment A, page 2 of the agenda. He stated that the basic philosophy of the motion is to replace some neighborhood libraries with some mixed use libraries, and consolidate several libraries into a larger area library and add a smaller express library - although that combination may not be in every case. The thrust of the motion is to set the direction for the Library Director and the Board of Trustees to work with the Mayor, the Budget Office and the Common Council to propose specific steps to implement the changes to the library system. President Riemer asked the Board if the motion is clear.

1. **Library Facilities.** (continued)

After discussion, President Riemer revised the wording as follows:

The Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees believes that the: B. to An approach **(as illustrated in the attached spreadsheets)** calculated with the assistance of both Library Administration and the City Budget Office to cost no more than what the *status quo* would cost as projected in the future ~~and illustrated in the attached spreadsheet~~ should be adopted and implemented beginning in 2011.

The wording under The Board accordingly recommends to the Library Director, the Mayor, and the Common Council that:

A. The ~~alternative~~ approach, outlined above, be adopted and implemented, starting with the 2011 City Budget; and B. The Library Director, after consultation with the **Library Board of Trustees**, Mayor, ...

President Riemer made the motion. Trustee Thompson seconded the motion. Trustee Kovac suggested amending the motion such that the number of neighborhood libraries under 2015-2020 be listed as 2 – 4, changing the total to 11 – 15.

Discussion ensued regarding cost savings, the model as an example, and a general motion without the specifics. Concern was expressed regarding cutting back rather than exploring ways of expanding perhaps at the same costs that the motion may result in.

The wording was further changed:

under The Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees ~~believes~~ **recognizes** that the: B. An approach (as illustrated in the attached spreadsheets, **or an alternative approach that meets the goals of quality service and equivalent cost savings**), calculated with the assistance of both Library Administration and the City Budget Office to cost no more than what the *status quo* would cost as projected into the future, should be adopted and implemented beginning in 2011.

President Riemer stated that the change in wording strikes a balance between providing detailed specifics without locking Library Administration and the Board to the numbers. Trustee Harrington stated that the purpose of getting input on facilities from the MPL Foundation, and the community was to advance the discussion for long-term planning as opposed to just reacting to a budget.

President Riemer withdrew his original motion. Trustee Thompson withdrew his second. President Riemer moved and Trustee Thompson seconded the motion as amended with the wording changes above. The motion passed unanimously. The redrafted motion will be sent to the Board, the Mayor, the Common Council and the MPL Foundation Board. The revised motion as approved by the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees at their February 23, 2010 meeting is attached at the end of these minutes.

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With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of February 23, 2010 was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

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