

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

Tuesday, July 22, 2025

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

PRESENT: Mark Sain, Michele Bria, Teresa Mercado, Ald. Milele Coggs, Michael Morgan, Ald. Scott Spiker, Ald. Larresa Taylor, Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Venice Williams, Joan Johnson

EXCUSED: Matthew Kowalski, Felicia Saffold

STAFF: Heather Berg, Maria Burke, Chantel Clark, Kristina Gomez, Beth Henika, Melissa Howard, Dan Keeley, Bryson King, Mary Lopez, Tammy Mays Wilder, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Joe Moretz, Karli Pederson, Alyssa Rockey, Rebecca Schweisberger, Heather Smith, Kelly Wochinske, Jessica Wolf

OTHER: Budget & Management Division: Nathaniel Haack
MPL Foundation: Ryan Daniels
MPS Board: Darryl Jackson

President Sain called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:07 p.m. on July 22, 2025. Trustees Mercado, Coggs, Vincent, and Williams participated by phone/virtual conference. The agenda items were taken out of order; however, these minutes are presented in numerical sequence.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Heather Berg, MPL Office Assistant IV, introduced Bryson King, Earn and Learn Summer Youth Intern assigned to MPL Administration, and gave an overview of some tasks and projects he is responsible for. This is the second year that Mr. King has participated in the Earn and Learn Summer Youth Intern program. Mr. King introduced himself and shared a brief overview of his background and plans for the future. Informational item.

Library Director Joan Johnson announced the departure of Chantel Clark, Associate Library Director, Strategic Initiatives and Public Services. Director Johnson and the Board thanked Associate Director Clark for her excellent leadership and phenomenal service at MPL.

BOARD EDUCATION

1. **Databases and Electronic Resources.** Beth Henika, Library Services Manager – Acquisitions and Serials, and Karli Pederson, Associate Library Director – Library Information Technology & Technical Services, shared an overview of MPL's electronic resources. The presentation is attached to the end of these minutes. MPL Technical Services continually curates electronic resources with guidance from department managers for subject-specific resources. The electronic resources are divided into four categories: Databases, E-Collections, E-Learning, and E-Newspapers. Databases are digital resources that provide searchable access to credible sources and information. E-Collections are digital editions

of MPL's collection, including e-books, graphic novels, and movies. E-Learning are platforms that provide structured and/or self-guided learning, language learning, tutoring, academic and professional test preparation, and technology training. E-Newspapers offer digital access to newspapers and magazines, accessible via website or proprietary platform. Patrons also have access to additional resources through MCFLS. MPL staff utilize their professional expertise and stay apprised of peer library collection spending to negotiate pricing with vendors. MPL conducts regular reviews of electronic resources and makes continuous improvements to current offerings and potential products. Associate Director Pederson commended Ms. Henika's leadership, stewardship of the collections, and negotiating skills which led to improved rates on current products. Informational item.

CONSENT AGENDA

2. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes June 24, 2025**
3. **Committee Reports**
 - a. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – July 10, 2025
4. **Administrative Reports**
 - a. Financial Report
 - b. Library Director's Reports
 - c. Statistics
5. **Revised MPL Board Meeting Schedule.**

President Sain asked the Board if any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda presented as attachment A, pages 3-50 of the agenda. Hearing no objection, the Consent Agenda was approved.

REPORTS

6. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting.** Trustee Vincent reported on the July 14, 2025 meeting. The 2026 County budget request for \$75,000 was submitted. In 2024, system-wide digital checkouts reached 1 million for the first time. The Board discussed funding to support services to the Community Reintegration Center (CRC), Vel Phillips Juvenile Justice Center, and Milwaukee County Jail. MCFLS Executive Director Steve Hesser will meet with staff from MPL and CRC to discuss next steps. IMLS funding for 2026 is still uncertain until the budget is approved by Congress. MCFLS has been heavily involved in advocacy campaigns to support IMLS. The State budget includes a \$178,000 increase to MCFLS in 2026 and \$356,000 in 2027. Informational item.
7. **MPL Foundation Report.** MPL Foundation (MPLF) Executive Director Ryan Daniels presented an update on fundraising activities and events. The financial report is attached to the end of these minutes.

Total funds raised excludes investment income of over \$105,000, a Greater Milwaukee Fund distribution of over \$22,000, and an in-kind contribution of approximately \$5,000. MPLF has committed to gift \$1.12M to MPL in 2025. In previous years, MPL invoiced MPLF throughout the year and received timely support. In 2025, MPL will receive one annual gift which will be made in December. The Board requested copies of an existing report from MPL that includes 10-year historical data.

MPLF is accepting donations for the new Martin Luther King branch, and donors who give between \$100 to \$5000 will be listed on the donor wall. Donors are invited to a preview event on August 28th.

The Ben Franklin Awards Celebration will be held on September 25th. The 2025 awardees are JoAnne Anton and Judge Derek Mosely. All Trustees are invited to the VIP reception before the event.

Informational item.

8. **Services & Programs Committee.** Trustee Morgan presented the action item from the July 9, 2025 meeting. Library Director Joan Johnson reviewed the Welcome Card pilot program and how it aligns with MPL's strategic goals by reducing barriers to access. Trustee Morgan moved to approve implementation of the Welcome Card Pilot Project. Trustee Bria seconded. Motion passed.
9. **Finance & Personnel Committee.** Trustee Mercado reported on the July 22, 2025 meeting. The Committee received the quarterly review of trust fund investments, the quarterly report of internal controls, an update on the results of an audit by the Comptroller's Office, and an update on an upcoming city-wide technology audit. As the committee did not have quorum, approval of the minutes from the April meeting was held for the October meeting.

The other action item was an artwork Loan to the Grohmann Museum. Deputy Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns presented a request to the full Board to loan MPL-owned artwork to the Grohmann Museum. The memo is attached to the end of these minutes. Trustee Bria moved to approve the loan of two paintings, Edmund Fitzgerald and Three Sterns, to the Milwaukee School of Engineering Grohmann Museum as recommended. Trustee Mercado seconded. Motion passed.

10. **Closing Remarks.** President Sain reminded the Board of the recess in August. Library Director Joan Johnson shared details on upcoming events:
 - Central Library Job Fair - August 7th, 1:00-3:00 pm
 - Art and Soul Signature Event at East Branch - August 9th, 10:00 am -2:00 pm
 - Fall in Love with Books Festival and Fair with Poet Laureate Shelley Conley – August 23rd, 1:00- 4:00 pm

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of July 22, 2025 was adjourned at 5:19 p.m.
