

REPORT OF THE BOARD'S DELEGATE TO THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

October 27, 2022

Submitted by Director Siemsen

**MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACTIVITIES OF SEPTEMBER 2022 REGULAR MEETING**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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

EXCUSED: Chris Layden

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Budget and Policy Division: Mason Lavey

MPL Foundation: Ryan Daniels, Pat Swanson, Antoine Carter

President Mark Sain called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:07 p.m. on September 27, 2022 with a quorum present. Trustee Coggs participated by conference phone.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Alderwoman Marina Dimitrijevic submitted a statement to be read into the record. The statement is attached at the end of these minutes.

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

1. Introduction of New Trustee. President Sain introduced new Trustee Dr. Felicia Saffold. Dr. Saffold shared a brief overview of her professional background and experience. Informational item.
2. Introduction of New MPL Staff. Library Director Joan Johnson introduced staff who joined Library Administration since the last in-person meetings. Milwaukee Public Library Foundation Executive Director introduced Antoine Carter. Informational item.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Regular Board Meeting Minutes July 26, 2022.
4. Committee Reports
 - a. Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes – July 26, 2022
 - b. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – September 1, 2022
5. Administrative Reports
 - a. Financial Report
 - b. Library Director's Reports
 - c. Statistics
6. Committee Assignments.

REPORTS

7. Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting. Trustee Erika Siemsen reported on the September 12, 2022 meeting. The new CountyCat mobile app allows for self-checkout and has been well-received by patrons. MCFLS vendor Innovative is migrating to cloud hosting on November 9th. Member libraries will not have access to Sierra software that day. MCFLS is adding 'Diversity' to subject headings and category searches to help broaden search results. Informational item.

8. MPL Staff Scholarship Committee Meeting. Library Director Joan Johnson reported on the spring and fall 2022 committee meetings. The joint MPL Staff Scholarship Committee was formed over 11 years ago and was the first committee comprised of MPL Board Trustees, MPL Foundation Board Trustees, and MPL Friends Board Trustees. The committee meets twice per year to review staff applications for the spring and fall semesters. Through the MPL Foundation, MPL was able to grant \$16,000 in scholarships

to 7 employees in 2022. Recipients reported that the funds helped alleviate financial stress of pursuing their goals. Director Johnson thanked Trustee Kowalski for his committee service and noted one more MPL Board Trustee is needed for the committee. Informational item.

OLD BUSINESS

9. *Circle Keeping Initiative (IMLS) Grant Contract Approval.* Dr. Tammy Mays, Public Services Area Manager (Branch Libraries), presented a request to award the Circle Keeping Initiative contract for 2022-2023. Circle Keeping is a restorative practice tool intended to help support civic literacy and relationship building, including respectful, productive communication. Circle Keeping work will be done at all branch libraries, with specific focus on teens at Atkinson, Center Street, Martin Luther King, and Washington Park branch libraries. If approved, the consultants will begin onboard training in October 2022.

In March 2022 the MPL Board approved the original Circle Keeping Initiative contract award. That recipient resigned in July 2022. A second Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued on August 3, 2022 and 4 qualified proposals were received. A staff committee evaluated the proposals and recommends awarding the contract to Angela Harris and D'shaunta Stewart. Trustee Morgan moved to approve award of the Circle Keeping Initiative contract to Angela Harris and D'shaunta Stewart. Trustee Kowalski seconded. Motion passed.

10. *2023 Budget.* Library Director Joan Johnson presented a status report on the proposed 2023 MPL budget. The Library's portion of the City's budget is \$25.97M. This represents a reduction of 6.9 % (\$1.9M, including fringes) from the cost to continue budget. MPL has been working closely with Budget Director Nik Kovac and Budget & Management Special Assistant Mason Lavey on the budget allocation. The Library's budget hearing will be held on October 6, 2022.

In recent years, MPL has responded to reductions by applying the same service changes at every branch which resulted in severe cuts for all and fewer service hours for the community. In addition, staffing levels have decreased while community needs remain the same or even increase.

Director Johnson shared a map showing all MPL locations geographically. * MPL branch libraries are divided into 3 geographic clusters: North, Central, and South. The current, traditional service model for all MPL locations includes: circulation, account services, materials hold and pickup, programs, community room use, computer and wi-fi use, and outreach.

Previous budget reductions led to staffing challenges that have made providing these services much more difficult. As a result of the 2023 budget, MPL will take a different approach to retain solvency of service. The service plan goal is to continue providing quality services to the public while remaining a place staff feel proud to work. The 2023 service plan will include a mix of different service models in each branch cluster:

- Expanded Service Model:

- o Open 48 hours per week, Monday - Saturday
- o (1) Librarian will be added to the current staffing level
- o Will enhance programming and outreach
- o Provide support to nearby branches that experience reductions

- Maintained Service Model:

- o Open 48 hours per week, Monday - Saturday
- o Maintain current service and staffing levels

- Limited Service Model:

- o Open 37.5 hours per week, Monday - Friday
- o Staff reduced by about 50%
- o No programming

- Closure

o The proposed budget includes closing a branch library in the Central service cluster.

- Virtual MPL

o MPL has seen an increase in virtual engagement and will continue enhancing www.mpl.org to retain the new audience and provide virtual or recorded programming.

The proposed branch cluster models are:

- North Cluster –

- o 1 Expanded Service Model
- o 1 Maintained Service Model
- o 2 Limited Service Model

- Central Cluster –

- o 1 Branch Closed
- o 1 Expanded Service Model
- o 2 Maintained Service Model

- South Cluster –

- o 1 Expanded Service Model
- o 1 Maintained Service Model
- o 2 Limited Service Model

Central Library is unto itself, supports the entire system, is the Resource Library for MCFLS, and provides services to patrons throughout the state.

Director Johnson shared a chart showing criteria that will be used to determine the service model for each location. * Criteria include: recent capital investments, grant funding obligations and subsequent programming impacts, racial equity goals, and library usage. The service model changes will minimize the number of branches with reduced hours and will allow MPL to continue working strategically with community partners.

Discussion ensued about the proposed service model. The Board thanked MPL staff for proposing a unique and innovative solution to an extremely challenging budget. Trustee Coggs stated her intention to request restoration of funding to allow a limited service model at Martin Luther King branch library during construction. Trustees offered suggestions for exploring different staffing models, building a framework to use in the future, defining criteria for decision making, and possible scenarios for each cluster. Library Administration will continue to review service model options and will present recommendations at the October 25, 2022 meeting.

CLOSING REMARKS

President Sain noted the October 25, 2022 meeting will be held in person at Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room. Committee meetings will continue to be held virtually.

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of September 27, 2022 was adjourned at 6:18 p.m.