

**MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REGULAR MEETING**

*August 28, 2021*

*Submitted by Director Siemsen*

**Tuesday, June 22, 2021**

**Video Conference Call via GoToMeeting**

**PRESENT:** Michele Bria, Ald. Milele Coggs, Ald. Nik Kovac, Matt Kowalski, Chris Layden, Teresa Mercado, Michael Morgan, Mark Sain, Jennifer Smith, Ald. JoCasta Zamarripa, Joan Johnson

**EXCUSED:** Sup. Marcelia Nicholson, Ald. JoCasta Zamarripa

**STAFF:** Eileen Force Cahill, Sam McGovern-Rowen, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Judy Pinger, Anne Rasmussen, Rebecca Schweisberger, Kelly Wochinske

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Budget and Policy Division: Mason Lavey MPL Foundation: Ryan Daniels

President Michele Bria called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:03 p.m. on June 22, 2021 with a quorum present. All Trustees participated by video conference.

**SPECIAL COMMUNICATION**

1. Introduction of New Trustee. President Bria introduced Erika Siemsen, designee of MPS Board President Bob Peterson. Trustee Siemsen is pleased to be part of the Board. Informational item.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

2. Regular Board Meeting Minutes May 25, 2021.
3. Committee Reports
  - a. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – June 3, 2021
  - b. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – June 16, 2021
4. Administrative Reports
  - a. Financial Report
  - b. Library Director's Reports
  - c. Statistics
5. Updated Committee Assignments.

President Bria asked the Board if any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda presented as Attachment A, pages 4-21 of the agenda. Hearing no objection, the Consent Agenda was approved.

**REPORTS**

6. Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting. Trustee Kovac reported on the June 21, 2021 meeting. MCFLS is in the process of filling the part-time marketing position. State legislators are reviewing recommendations regarding the Public Library System Redesign (PLSR) funding analysis formula. The current formula has been in place for approximately 30 years and a bid has been issued for a consultant to identify options for reconstructing the formula. MCFLS Director Steve Heser is closely monitoring the process and ensuring all MCFLS members remain informed. A proposed increase in the biennial library systems budget remains intact and, if adopted, there will be increases to MCFLS and all member libraries as well as MPL for Resource Library funding. Informational item.

7. Innovation & Strategy Committee Meeting. Chair Kowalski reported on the June 9, 2021 meeting. The committee moved to approve Library Administration's recommendation to award the contract

for a Racial Equity Consultant to P3 Development. The contract total is \$131,000, spread over two budget years, with work beginning in July 2021 and completing in spring 2022. Trustee Morgan seconded. Motion passed.

8. MPL Foundation Report. MPL Foundation Executive Director Ryan Daniels provided an update on fundraising activities. To date, the Foundation has raised \$300,000, including over \$17,000 raised at the Literary Luncheon in May. Fundraising is a dynamic environment as donors adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects. The Foundation continues to explore options and support for combining federal funding and private donations. The MPLF Board has formed several task forces in response to the Balancing the Books report and members remain engaged. The MPL Friends revenue streams have been impacted by the pandemic; however, book donations are still being received and processed for sale online. The 2021 annual Benjamin Franklin Award celebration will honor former MPL and MPLF Board Trustees Dr. Joan Prince and Arthur Harrington, Esq. The event will be held on September 23, 2021 at the Wisconsin Club. All Trustees are invited to attend and share with their networks. Informational item.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

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9. Martin Luther King Branch Architect Contract Award. Deputy Library Director

Jennifer Meyer-Stearns presented a request to approve the contract for architectural services for the Martin Luther King branch to Moody Nolan. There were no changes to the standard City language. If approved, MPL and the development team will move forward with architectural drawings. Trustee Coggs moved to approve; Trustee Sain seconded. Motion passed.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

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10. COVID-19 Response and Recovery. Library Director Joan Johnson updated the Board on the Library's ongoing response to the pandemic. MPL is working toward restoring library services and hours. On June 7th stacks were reopened for browsing in branch libraries and managers are preparing for reopening stacks at Central Library. Reopened browsing areas increased usable square footage which doubled capacity limits in the branches. The materials quarantine has been rescinded which allows items to be quickly re-shelved and available for circulation. On August 2nd MPL will move to the next phase of hours in the branch libraries, from 36 hours per week to 42 hours per week. Central library will continue at 48 hours per week with the goal to restore all hours at the end of the year or early in 2022. Restoration of full hours is contingent on lowering the staff vacancy rate and approval of the cost to continue budget. Masks are still required in all City buildings. Frequently asked questions (FAQs) about services and requirements have been shared with the public on [www.mpl.org](http://www.mpl.org). President Bria thanked Director Johnson and the MPL team for their work, shifting services online, and continuing to be an important community resource. Informational item.

## **BOARD EDUCATION**

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11. MPL Court Partnership. Anne Rasmussen, Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives and Public Services, briefed the Board on a unique and innovative partnership between MPL and Milwaukee County Courts. The partnership developed following a conversation between MPL, Milwaukee County Courts, Legal Aid Society, and Bader Philanthropies. The initiative offers patrons the option to attend court hearings virtually. The initiative began in February 2021 when the courts were closed to the public during the COVID-19 pandemic and is ongoing. MPL offers a dedicated laptop, a private space, and trained, welcoming staff for walk-in service at Atkinson, Center Street, M.L. King, and Mitchell Street branches. Information about this option and a secure password is printed on the court summons, which patrons must present in order to access the room. Three courtrooms – evictions, small claims, and family court – are participating in the program. The MPL and courts Information Technology departments developed a mechanism which allows the courts move all MPL-identified cases to the top of the queue. MPL staff ensures privacy and safety of the room, cleaning per pandemic protocols between uses, and assists with technology set-up before leaving the room. To date, 28 patrons have used the service and have expressed their gratitude for this option. MPL and the courts are working with Legal Aid Society to promote the service. Informational item.

President Bria noted the Board meetings will remain virtual through the end of 2021.

Director Johnson has been selected as a 2021 Business Journal Women of Influence and invited all Trustees to attend the virtual award ceremony on July 15th. Dr. Bria and the Board congratulated Director Johnson on the well-deserved award.

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of June 22, 2021 was adjourned at 4:42 p.m.