

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

October 31, 2024

Submitted by Director Siemsen

## SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 REGULAR MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

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

**EXCUSED:** Matthew Kowalski, Erika Siemsen

**STAFF:** Kelly Bolter, Nicholas Censoprano, Chantel Clark, Dawn Gardner, Melissa Howard, Dan Keeley, Yves LaPierre, Dan Lee, Tammy Mays, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Amelia Osterud, Karli Pederson, Marian Royal, Rebecca Schweisberger, Heather Smith, Kelly Wochinske, Jennifer Wright

### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Milwaukee County Federated Library System: Steve Heser

Penguin Random House: Rosie Stewart

President Mark Sain called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:27 p.m. on September 24, 2024. Trustees Coggs and Saffold participated by phone.

### UPDATE ON THE BANNED WAGON EVENT

Kelly Bolter, Coordinator of Adult Programming and Events, Nick Censoprano, Librarian Associate, and Chantel Clark, Associate Library Director, shared an update about the Banned Wagon event, held earlier at Central Library. The Banned Wagon is stopping at bookstores and libraries in nine American communities across the Midwest and South to promote literacy and connect people with titles that have been banned or challenged. MPL partnered with Penguin Random House to host it in Milwaukee. The event was attended by over 1,200 people and included: a panel discussion, a display about historic censorship, book giveaways, and food trucks. Library Director Joan Johnson introduced Rosie Stewart, Senior Manager for Public Policy at Penguin Random House. Ms. Stewart was in Milwaukee to support the Banned Wagon event. Informational item.

### CONSENT AGENDA

1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes, July 23, 2024
2. Special Board Meeting Minutes, August 14, 2024
3. Committee Reports
  - a. Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes – July 17, 2024
  - b. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – September 5, 2024
4. Administrative Reports
  - a. Financial Report
  - b. Library Director's Reports
  - c. Statistics

### REPORTS

#### *Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting.*

Trustee Vincent reported on the September 19, 2024 meeting. The MCFLS Board reviewed member agreements and a discussion about the rising costs of Hoopla. MCFLS is working on the library collection

at the Community Reintegration Center and is in discussion with the director about adding library card registration and information about library resources to the reintegration process. Informational item.

### *Urban Libraries Council (ULC) Executive Committee*

Trustee Bria presented an update on the work of the Urban Libraries Council Board. The July ULC meeting was hosted at the Stanley A. Milner Library in Edmonton, Canada. Dr. Bria shared details about the unique features of that recently renovated location and the funding model of Canada's public libraries. The ULC Executive Committee discussed various topics including: supporting urban library leaders and advocacy for increased federal funding to libraries. Director Johnson noted as part of MPL's ULC membership, many staff members participate in peer-to-peer groups relevant to their everyday work. Informational item.

## **SPECIAL COMMUNICATION**

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### *Board Photo*

The board took a brief recess to participate in the annual photo. Informational item.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

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### *Contract Award – Staffing Study*

Deputy Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns referred to the memo listed as Attachment B of the agenda. MPL issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for consultants to review and assess schedules and staffing levels. The goal of the study is to ensure MPL is using the best staffing models for current service levels and operations. The consultant will review the staffing structures, roles, responsibilities, and best practices. Three complete and responsive bids were received. MPL Administration recommends awarding the contract to Moss Adams, as they have experience reviewing staffing models at other libraries. Trustee Vincent moved to award the contract to Moss Adams for the amount of \$78,500 and to use funds designated from the Steve Przybylowski Strategic Initiatives account held by the MPL Foundation. Trustee Morgan seconded. Motion passed.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

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### *2025 Budget*

Library Director Joan Johnson and Deputy Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns provided a summary of the Mayor's proposed budget for MPL. The total proposed budget for MPL is \$33.8M, which is a 15% increase over 2024. The majority of the increase is due to city-wide pay increases, which have been deferred for over 10 years. In the proposed budget, MPL will take a 3% cut, which will allow Administration to implement reductions with the least impact on public services. Full funding will be restored for the Martin Luther King branch, which will reopen in 2025. MPL will hire security staff as employees to replace the contracted security guards. MPL will retain all branch hours, including Sunday service, and will switch to a one-shift model at Central Library. There will be fewer service points at Central Library and the Ready Reference phone service will be de-centralized. The new library hours will be presented for Board approval in November. MPL's budget hearing will be held on October 15, 2024. The Common Council will have the opportunity to make amendments in late October and the budget will be finalized in early November. Director Johnson thanked the Board for the valuable discussion and planning which was presented for the Mayor's consideration. President Sain thanked all MPL staff and Trustees for their work on preparing for the 2025 budget. Informational item.

### *MCFLS Contracts and Agreement Update*

Library Director Joan Johnson, Associate Director Karli Peterson, and Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Executive Director Steve Hesel presented an update on changes to the MCFLS contracts and member agreement. The current contracts and agreement were listed as Attachment C of the agenda.

- Resource Library: The state of Wisconsin uses a formula to determine how much shared revenue funding goes to each library system. MCFLS receives the funding and distributes it among member libraries. As the system Resource Library, MPL receives 6.25% of the funding to MCFLS. Currently, MPL receives \$245,000 annually; under the new contract, that amount will increase to \$267,613. The revised contract will reflect this change and document the additional services that MPL provides, including serving as a liaison between MCFLS members and the state and service on multiple statewide committees.
- Cataloging Contract: MPL is working with Mr. Heser and the MCFLS Board for an increase to the contract cost. The change is the result of salary increases at MPL and the cost will be \$641,830.
- ILS Resource Sharing and Technology Agreement: All MCFLS members will be asked to share the agreement with their respective Boards and request approval to sign. The revised agreement proposes 2 options to the reciprocal borrowing arrangement:
  - Option 1 - Maintain the current reciprocal borrowing formula. Currently, 35% of State funding is divided among MCFLS member libraries. The total amount received by each member will be higher, as State funding has increased. With the current formula structure, MPL does not receive any reciprocal borrowing funds.
  - Option 2 - Reimagine how the payments could be divided among members. Members would be incentivized with collection development grants. This formula would use 75% of reciprocal borrowing for net positive transactions and a 25% earmarked for adding items to physical collections each year. This would reward net lenders and libraries that contribute to overall collection development for the whole system. Under this option, MPL would realize a \$52,000 gain.

Another component of this agreement is the costs assumed by MCFLS for shared resources and digital content. Specifically, Hoopla has become cost prohibitive. Under the new agreement, the Hoopla subscription cost will be shifted to each member library. Members would make independent decisions about keeping digital content services and parameters for usage. To offset these costs, MCFLS would take on more infrastructure costs. Cataloging and Inter-library Loan Service (ILS) would be paid for by MCFLS.

The MCFLS Board is also seeking feedback related to changing language in the agreement regarding maintenance of effort and a systemwide fee card. MCFLS is considering adding a maintenance of effort clause, which would require members to maintain investments in their collections. The fee card would be system-wide and allow access to all physical collections in the county and owning libraries would be reimbursed for use of their materials.

The MCFLS Board will vote on the contracts and agreement at their October 14th meeting. The final documents will be presented to member libraries, who will have until December to sign. Informational item.

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

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With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of September 24, 2024 was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.