

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday, January 26, 2021

Video Conference Call by GoToMeeting

PRESENT: Michele Bria, Chris Layden, Ald. Milele Coggs, Ald. Nik Kovac, Matt Kowalski, James Marten, Teresa Mercado, Mark Sain, Joan Johnson

EXCUSED: Dir. Larry Miller, Sup. Marcelia Nicholson, Jennifer Smith, Ald. JoCasta Zamarripa

STAFF: Eileen Force Cahill, Sam McGovern-Rowen, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Judy Pinger, Anne Rasmussen, Rebecca Schweisberger, Nathan Self

OTHERS

PRESENT: MPL Foundation: Ryan Daniels, Pat Swanson
MPL Foundation Board: Mary Sprague
Budget and Policy Division: Mason Lavey
US Bank: Wayne Sattler, Richard Romero

President Michele Bria called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:07 p.m. on November 24, 2020 with a quorum present. All Trustees participated by video conference.

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

1. **Quarterly Review of Fund Investments**. On behalf of U.S. Bank, Vice President and Relationship Manager Richard Romero thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as the investment manager. He introduced Wayne Sattler, Senior Vice President & Managing Director at U.S. Bank. Mr. Sattler referred to the Investment Review Materials and provided a market overview. The investment performance of the trust fund for the period ending December 31, 2020 was reviewed. The portfolio overview was summarized. No changes to the current allocations were recommended. The Board accepted the report. Informational item.

CONSENT AGENDA

2. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes November 24, 2020.**
3. **Committee Reports**
 - a. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes - December 2, 2020
 - b. Innovation & Strategy Committee Meeting Minutes – December 16, 2020
 - c. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – January 7, 2021
4. **Administrative Reports**
 - a. Financial Report
 - b. Library Director’s Reports
 - c. Statistics

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

5. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting.** Trustee Kovac reported on the January 25, 2021 meeting. Glendale Library pulled out of the North Shore group several months ago and may build a separate library. Bayside Library has also pulled out of the group. Per the current contract, the resignations are not immediate and the libraries have the option to remain in the group. MCFLS received an additional \$50,000 from Milwaukee County; the funds have been earmarked for improving digital access for all County residents. The Digital Advantage Account is the Milwaukee County portion of the state-run OverDrive digital library collection. OverDrive provides audio and E-books for all state residents. In 2020 the local account was underfunded and highly used due to limited access to physical materials as a result of the pandemic. To improve the service and collection, MPL contributed \$100,000 of its materials budget toward the Digital Advantage Account. As a result, the collections are more specialized and patrons have better access to materials. MPL was able to select materials at the local level and purchased many new titles with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion. The Library Directors Advisory Committee (LDAC) will continue discussions about how to use the additional funds from Milwaukee County. Informational item.

6. **MPL Foundation.** MPL Foundation (MPLF) Director Ryan provided a report on 2020 fundraising. Although 2020 was a challenging year, MPLF was able to contribute over \$100,000 more than what was requested, with a total contribution of over \$1.1M and raised over \$1.453M. The 2020 Benjamin Franklin Award Dinner was held virtually for the first time. The event was well-received and raised over \$353,000. MPLF successfully applied for a grant from Impact100. In addition to raising \$100,000 to support hot spots the grant also offers exposure to over 400 philanthropists in the Milwaukee area. In response to updated marketing and donor engagement initiatives, several previous donors significantly increased their individual donations. To date, MPLF has raised over \$76,000 in support of COVID Relief. President Bria thanked the Foundation and MPLF Board for their efforts. Informational item.

OLD BUSINESS

7. **Financial Sustainability Task Force Follow-up.** President Bria introduced MPL Foundation Board President Mary Sprague. The MPLF Board held a special meeting to discuss the *Balancing the Books* report. President Sprague read the MPLF mission statement and emphasized the Foundation's role of supplying funding for projects that compliment but do not supplant the City's responsibility for library operation. The Foundation and Friends groups fully support the library, are anxious to collaborate, and have 40 volunteers on two boards that are dedicated to the community. The MPLF Board recorded a unanimous vote not to change the Foundation's mission to cover operating costs. MPLF Executive Director Ryan Daniels shared information about how the Foundation will move forward in collaboration with MPL. The MPLF Board understands the library's need and discussions were positive. The MPLF Board has created 2 teams to identify solutions: one team will be focused on long-term solutions and the other will review how MPLF works, identify strategies for growing the donor base, reinvent the Benjamin Franklin Awards Dinner, and update marketing strategies. The Board thanked President Sprague, Director Daniels, and the MPLF Board for the work they are doing to support the library. Informational item.

8. **COVID-19 Response and Recovery.** Director Johnson provided an update on the library's ongoing response to the pandemic. MPL is taking a phased approach to ramping back up to fully funded hours. Director Johnson appreciates the Board giving her authorization to execute closures as needed. Weekly monitoring of positivity rates and data will impact implementation of the phases and services provided. Staffing levels continue to be a main priority as the library has a vacancy rate of nearly 20%. Director Johnson is meeting with the Department of Employee Relations (DER) to address the library's persistent vacancy rate. Some City employees have been eligible for vaccination as part of the State defined phases. MPL continues to work with the Milwaukee Health Department and DER on determining library staff eligibility for vaccines. Managers are prepared to mobilize their staff as soon as library staff is eligible. Informational item.

9. **State Annual Report.** Dr. Bria referred to the Statement Concerning Public Library Systems Effectiveness, which was included as Attachment B of the agenda. The statement is part of the Public Library Annual Report presented to the Department of Public Instruction. Dr. Bria thanked Trustee Kovac for representing MPL on the MCFLS Board and encouraged comments from Library Director Joan Johnson and Trustees. For several years MPL has stated MCFLS has provided leadership and met the library's needs; Director Johnson recommends indicating the same for 2020. MCFLS Director Steve Hesel and his team offered great support and leadership particularly in response to the pandemic. In 2020, MCFLS increased member library meeting frequency to enhance communication; modification of the catalog system during shutdowns; coordinating with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) on allocation of CARES Act funds; managing individual library needs and impacts to delivery; navigation of changing requirements. Trustee Kovac moved to approve the form, which will be signed by President Bria and sent to DPI as part of MPL's Annual Report. Trustee Sain seconded. Motion passed.

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of January 26, 2021 was adjourned at 5:09 p.m.
