

**MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**Tuesday, April 25, 2023**

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

**PRESENT:** Mark Sain, Chris Layden, Teresa Mercado, Michele Bria, Matthew Kowalski, Michael Morgan, Felicia Saffold, Erika Siemsen, Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Joan Johnson

**EXCUSED:** Ald. Milele Coggs, Ald. Scott Spiker

**STAFF:** Neil Albrecht, Chantel Clark, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Joseph Moretz, Karli Pederson, Marian Royal, Rebecca Schweisberger, Kelly Wochinske

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President Mark Sain called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:07 p.m. on April 25, 2023 with a quorum present. Trustee Kowalski and Trustee Vincent participated by conference phone.

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**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes March 28, 2023**
2. **Committee Reports**
  - a. Innovation & Strategy Committee Meeting Minutes – April 4, 2023
  - b. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – April 6, 2023
3. **Administrative Reports**
  - a. Financial Report
  - b. Library Director’s Reports
  - c. Statistics

President Sain asked the Board if any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda presented as attachment A, pages 3-16 of the agenda. Trustee Layden moved to accept the consent agenda; Trustee Morgan seconded. Motion passed.

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**REPORTS**

4. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting.** Trustee Siemsen and Karli Pederson, Associate Library Director - Library Information Technology and Technical Services, reported on the April 17, 2023 meeting. The MCFLS marketing team is exploring opportunities to reach a diverse audience, including placing radio ads on local stations. In order to increase accessibility to library materials and resources, the ‘money owed’ block threshold was increased from \$5.01 to \$10.01. The change will be effective for all member libraries on July 1, 2023. The Library Director’s Advisory Council (LDAC) discussed best practices and incentives for summer reading programs. The LDAC discussed methods for handling challenges to library materials and members shared current policies and processes. Automatic library card renewal through the Patron Point software was introduced and will be discussed at a future meeting. The LDAC subcommittee

workgroup is evaluating MCFLS member library committees to identify efficiencies and ways to support all member libraries. LDAC made a recommendation to the MCFLS Board to replace the current public catalog, Encore, with a new platform called Aspen. The Board approved the recommendation. The change, including implementation cost, will be supported in the 2024 budget. Preliminary catalog testing will begin in Quarter 4 2023 with a goal for full implementation by June 2024. The Board moved into Executive Session to discuss the System Director evaluation. Informational item.

5. **Urban Libraries Council (ULC) Executive Board.** Trustee Bria presented an update on the work of the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) Board. Trustee Bria attended the April meeting, held in Nashville, TN. The ULC has developed a Declaration of Democracy, which describes public libraries as cornerstones of democracy and focuses on preserving intellectual freedom. To date, 89 US libraries and 16 international libraries have signed the declaration. The document will be forwarded to the Board for review and possible action at a future meeting. Member libraries, including MPL, were surveyed to help inform ongoing strategic planning. According to the survey results, threats to intellectual freedom and politicization of libraries are considered the foremost challenges that will have the greatest impact on urban library communities in the next 3-5 years. Social service needs were also identified as an area of significant need in public libraries. ULC has engaged a government relations agency to advocate as a united voice for member libraries. Their work will focus on securing federal funding from various agencies in addition to the funding libraries receive through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). ULC can also assist with grant applications. ULC will launch a new CEO roundtable in spring 2024. ULC has produced several white papers which have received national media attention. The Board discussed opportunities for Trustees to advocate on behalf of MPL. Informational item.

#### **BOARD DEVELOPMENT**

6. **Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library.** Zarina Mohd Shah, Library Services Manager, shared information about Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL) services. WTBBL is a regional network library of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS). Every state in the country has a regional and/or sub-regional talking book program. The program is funded through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and is administered through MPL. WTBBL has been located in Central Library since 1961 and is staffed by 10 full-time employees. Service is provided to over 6,000 patrons and nearly 500 institutions statewide. The free library service is available to all Wisconsin residents with a physical disability, vision impairment, or reading disabilities. WTBBL provides audio books and equipment, audio-described DVDs, and Braille materials. All materials are sent and returned at no charge through the United States Postal Service (USPS). The materials have no due date and there are no overdue fines. Patrons also have access to newspapers, books, and magazines through a Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) app on personal devices or digital talking book player. The Newline service provides telephone access to 500 national newspapers as well as 15 local newspapers. WTBBL works closely with the non-profit organization Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement (ABLE) to produce recorded and/or Braille materials, including books for the Wisconsin collection, the WTBBL newsletter, Milwaukee Magazine, and the Milwaukee Brewers game schedules. Staff facilitate winter and summer reading programs, a bi-monthly book club that meets by phone, and WTBBL sponsors the annual Braille games held at the Milwaukee Public Museum. WTBBL has an active outreach program that includes onsite visits, exhibition attendance, and online presentations. Library Director Joan Johnson acknowledged Mrs. Mohd Shah's great leadership and WTBBL staff for their excellent work. Informational item.

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With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of April 25, 2023 was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

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