

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Video Conference Call via GoToMeeting

PRESENT: Michele Bria, Chris Layden, Ald. Milele Coggs, Ald. Nik Kovac, Teresa Mercado, Michael Morgan, Sup. Marcelia Nicholson, Mark Sain, Ald. JoCasta Zamarripa, Joan Johnson

EXCUSED: Matthew Kowalski, Erika Siemsen, Jennifer Smith

STAFF: Maria Burke, Greg Comly, Eileen Force Cahill, Enid Gruszka, Bob Jaeger, Tammy Mays, Amanda McGillivray, Sam McGovern-Rowen, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Anne Rasmussen, Victoria Robertson, Marian Royal, Rebecca Schweisberger, Jennifer Webb, Kelly Wochinske, Dana Zurek

OTHERS

PRESENT: Budget and Policy Division: Mason Lavey
MPL Foundation: Ryan Daniels, Mary Sprague

President Michele Bria called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:07 p.m. on September 28, 2021 with a quorum present. All Trustees participated by video conference.

Anne Rasmussen, Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives and Public Services, introduced new Public Service Area Managers Marian Royal and Dr. Tammy Mays. Ms. Royal and Dr. Mays introduced themselves and shared brief overviews of their experience and backgrounds. Library Director Joan Johnson introduced new Library Branch Managers Amanda McGillivray (Villard Square) and Maria Burke (Mitchell Street) and interim Library Branch Manager Greg Comly (Center Street). Informational item.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes July 27, 2021.**
2. **Committee Reports**
 - a. Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes – July 27, 2021
 - b. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – September 2, 2021
3. **Administrative Reports**
 - a. Financial Report
 - b. Library Director's Reports
 - c. Statistics
4. **Letter of Thanks for Additional Funds to Overdrive Advantage.**

NEW BUSINESS

5. **Deaccessioning MPL Express Library.** Director Johnson gave a brief overview of the MPL Express Library (MPLX) history and partnership agreement with the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM). MPLX was installed and opened to the public in 2014 in coordination with the HACM development at Westlawn. The unit was installed to provide an alternative service option for the community in place of a branch building. Based on service levels from comparable models, circulation was anticipated to be at least 300 items per month. MPL held programs and training onsite to increase public usage. Circulation averaged 168 items per month (in 2019) and usage has been declining. Low usage coupled with maintenance costs means the price of each circulation is approximately \$40.00. The unit is sensitive to the Milwaukee climate, which has led to mechanical failure, and it has been targeted for vandalism multiple times. As a result, MPLX has been out of service an average of 10% of the time over the last 3 years. Repair and maintenance costs are rising and the machine has reached the end of its useful life. Retiring MPLX will help MPL offset budget reductions for 2022. MPL and HACM continue to identify new ways to engage the community and discussions will include other community organizations. MPL and HACM recently submitted an application for funding through the American Rescue Plan, under the Emergency Connectivity Fund, for installing a wireless hot spot in the Westlawn community garden. The hot spot could be used for MPL and HACM programming in the community. The Library is also exploring options for providing deposit collections to Westlawn through the MPL van delivery service. Villard Square is the nearest branch and staff will engage with residents in the Westlawn community. Trustee Sain moved to approve deaccessioning MPL Express Library; Trustee Morgan seconded. Motion passed.

REPORTS

6. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting.** Director Johnson reported on the September 20, 2021 meeting. The Library Directors Advisory Committee (LDAC) submitted proposals for the use of additional funds from state. Suburban libraries support funding for a network security consultant, technology support to members, and support for additional electronic resources available to all Milwaukee County residents. A portion of the additional state funding will be used for MCFLS marketing. The Board discussed a proposed amendment to the West Milwaukee agreement. The amendment will allow West Milwaukee residents to access electronic resources. Director Hesel sought approval for legal counsel review of the draft agreement and the Board approved. A network outage last month was investigated and determined to have originated with AT&T not MCFLS. The Board discussed a letter from Oak Creek Library regarding expansion of fee card services to include access to materials at all MCFLS locations. No action was taken on this request and the Board will discuss at a future meeting. Informational item.
7. **Balancing the Books Committee Meeting.** Dr. Bria gave a brief overview of the committee goals and offered thanks to the MPL Trustees who serve on the committee. Milwaukee Public Library Foundation (MPLF) Executive Director Ryan Daniels provided an update of the committee's work. The joint committee is comprised of Trustees from the MPL Board, Library Friends Board, and MPLF Board. The committee is pursuing engagement with a broader community for long term sustainability of the library. The committee has met several times and discussion included exploration of opportunities to influence federal spending on libraries. Director Daniels requested Trustees advocate for MPL during the City budget process. The City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) will receive additional funding as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). MPL and MPS are aligned in efforts to help children learn, which could present a

partnership opportunity. MPL and MPLF staff met with MPS Administration to discuss how MPL services, specifically the Summer Reading, LibraryNOW, and Teen ConnectED Learning programs, meet the goals of ESSER III funding. ESSER III, the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund grant program authorized under ARPA, provides additional money for local educational agencies to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. The Library Friends and MPLF Boards sent letters of support to the MPS Board to express how expansion of MPL programs is mutually beneficial for all children in Milwaukee. MPL and MPLF have requested a total of \$7.9M in ESSER III funding to support the programs through 2024. As the ESSER III funds can only be used to support MPS students, the Foundation will raise funds to cover program costs for other students in Milwaukee. The MPS Board is expected to take action on this request by mid-October. Director Daniels invited Trustees to submit their support of this partnership with the MPS Board. Informational item.

8. **MPL Staff Scholarship Joint Committee Meeting.** Director Johnson shared information about the MPL Staff Scholarship funds and awards. The joint MPL Staff Scholarship Committee was formed over 10 years ago and was the first to be comprised of members from the MPL Board, Library Friends Board, and MPLF Board. The committee reviews staff applications and identifies recipients of Foundation funding designated for staff development. This year, a total of \$16,000 was awarded to 15 employees over the spring and fall grant cycles. Most awardees will use the funds to cover costs associated with pursuit of a Master in Library Science degree, though other educational pursuits are eligible as well. Several awardees have shared the grant has alleviated financial stress and all are very appreciative of the investment and support they received. Director Johnson thanked all committee members, and especially Trustees Kowalski and Nicholson, for their service. Informational item.

OLD BUSINESS

9. **2022 Budget.** Library Director Joan Johnson introduced Deputy Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns to provide an update on the 2022 budget. Budget changes include:
 - Reclassification of public service and support positions
 - In 2021, 290 employees were reclassified following a market rate study of positions. New salaries are reflected in the 2022 budget.
 - Library hours will be made consistent across the branches and reduced by 2 hours at Central Library to meet budget targets.
 - There will be no changes to core library services.
 - Hours changes will ease scheduling pressure.
 - The proposed hours will be presented to the Board in November.
 - Adjustments were made to the supplies and materials budget due to continued COVID safety protocols.
 - MPL Express Library and related maintenance agreement costs were removed.
 - The Martin Luther King branch will have reduced service at a temporary location during construction of the new building.
 - The capital budget includes maintenance of Central Library and the branches.
 - The Mayor's budget proposes partial funding of the Martin Luther King branch construction costs through the City's ARPA allocation.
 - Sunday hours will be available only at Central Library (October-April).

Informational item.

10. **Racial Equity & Inclusion (REI) Action Plan.** Anne Rasmussen, Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives and Public Services, shared an update on MPL's Racial Equity & Inclusion Action Plan. MPL is examining the library structure and workplace culture to address any potential harm and

create a cohesive plan to move forward. The City of Milwaukee formed a Racial Equity & Inclusion Leadership Team and issued a directive to all departments to create a REI action plan. Libraries also received recommendations from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the American Library Association (ALA) to prioritize equity and inclusivity. The focus of the Library's initiative is racial equity. Earlier this year MPL issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a racial equity consultant and the contract was awarded to P3 Group. The work with P3 Group will include assessments, an action plan, and identifying metrics for accountability. Surveys will be sent to MPL staff, Board members, and long term contract workers as well as the MPL Foundation and Friends Boards. Surveys will be anonymous and P3 Group will collect, compile, and analyze the data. Focus groups, interviews, and patron surveys will follow. The final results will inform the creation of MPL's action plan. MPL staff will collaborate with the Board to finalize the plan. P3 Group will present more information about the survey results at an upcoming MPL Board meeting.

Informational item.

BOARD EDUCATION

10. **AEON Workflow Management Software.** Deputy Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns presented information about new software designed to streamline MPL's special collections management and implement best practices for processing patron requests. The project began in 2019 and closures during 2020-2021 gave staff the unique opportunity to review collection management and workflows while the collections were closed. Rachel Arndt, former Public Services Area Manager of Central Library, managed the project before her departure from MPL and has worked as a consultant to complete implementation. AEON Workflow Management Software will replace paper forms with digital requests, standardize handling across departments, track materials use, and provide robust analytical reporting. A 'soft launch' of the software is scheduled to begin in mid to late October. Deputy Director Meyer-Stearns introduced Bob Jaeger, Library Services Manager for Special Collections and Archives, who worked on implementation of the software. Mr. Jaeger shared a summary of the MPL Collections that will be managed with AEON. Deputy Director Meyer-Stearns offered thanks to the MPL staff (current and former) who have worked on this project.

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of September 28, 2021 was adjourned at 5:54 p.m.
