

**MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES**

**Tuesday, April 22, 2025**

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

**PRESENT:** Mark Sain, Michele Bria, Teresa Mercado, Ald. Milele Coggs, Matthew Kowalski, Michael Morgan, Felicia Saffold, Ald. Scott Spiker, Ald. Larresa Taylor, Joan Johnson

**EXCUSED:** Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Venice Williams

**STAFF:** Kelly Bolter, Chantel Clark, Melissa Howard, Yves LaPierre, Tammy Mays, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Karli Pederson, Rebecca Schweisberger, Kelly Wochinske

**OTHERS**

**PRESENT:** Budget & Management Division: Nathaniel Haack  
Poet Laureate Shelly Conley

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President Mark Sain called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:06 p.m. on April 22, 2025. Trustees Coggs, Morgan, Saffold, and Spiker participated by conference phone. Meeting began without quorum; quorum was reached at 4:20 p.m.

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**BOARD DEVELOPMENT**

1. **Poet Laureate Introduction.** Kelly Bolter, Programming Librarian, introduced MPL Poet Laureate Shelly Conley. Ms. Bolter reviewed the new Poet Laureate application and selection process. Ms. Conley's term will extend through 2026. Ms. Conley gave a brief overview of her background and performed a recitation of her poem "Assassination". Informational item.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

2. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes March 25, 2025**
3. **Committee Reports**
  - a. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – April 3, 2025
4. **Administrative Reports**
  - a. Financial Report
  - b. Library Director's Reports
  - c. Statistics
5. **Revised 2025 MPL Board Meeting Schedule.**

President Sain asked the Board if any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda presented as attachment A, pages 3-26 of the agenda. Hearing no objection, the Consent Agenda was approved.

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## REPORTS

6. **Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting.** Committee Chair Teresa Mercado presented the action items from the April 22, 2024 meeting, listed as Attachment B of the agenda.
- **Financial Statements and Auditors' Review.** The Committee received the auditors' report from Brandon Panka, of Reilly, Penner, and Benton, LLP. The auditors issued an unqualified opinion with no recommendations. Trustee Mercado moved to accept the report and place it on file; Trustee Bria seconded. Motion passed.
  - **Contract Awards – Wisconsin Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) and Interlibrary Loan Service (ILS).** The Committee received a request to execute the WTBBL and ILS contracts, pending review from the City Attorney's Office. Trustee Mercado moved to approve the 2025 WTBBL and ILS contracts. Trustee Kowalski seconded. Motion passed.
  - **Check Signature Policy Update.** Deputy Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns presented the updated policy. The revisions bring the policy into alignment with current practices and clarify the process. Under the revised policy, the Library Director will be the primary check signer. The Deputy Library Director and Associate Directors are authorized to sign checks in the Director's absence. Checks in the amount up to \$15,000 may be signed by these authorized staff. Checks for an amount over \$15,000 will require a separate form to be signed by the MPL Board President or Financial Secretary. Trustee Mercado moved to approve the revised policy as presented; Trustee Bria seconded. Motion passed.
  - **Meeting Space Revenue Allocation Proposal.** Deputy Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns requested approval to hold meeting space rental income in the MPL Trust & Gift account. The funds will supplement City funding to update meeting spaces. MPL estimates revenue of \$5,000-\$6,000 per year. Trustee Mercado moved to authorize MPL to hold meeting space rental income in the MPL Trust & Gift account; Trustee Taylor seconded. Motion passed.
7. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting.** Library Director Joan Johnson reported on the April 14, 2025 meeting.
- **Library Directors Advisory Council (LDAC) Highlights:** Per Executive Order, staff at the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) were placed on administrative leave. Institutions nationwide are impacted as IMLS is not able to administer grants and other funding. The Department of Public Instruction is MPL's point of contact for IMLS. Ben Miller, Director of the DPI Library Services Team, stated the DPI is not yet directly impacted and the funding they oversee has not been rescinded. In response to the threat to libraries and funding, a new statewide marketing campaign has been created to promote the value of libraries. The campaign website is: [www.mywisconsinlibrary.org](http://www.mywisconsinlibrary.org). MCFLS Executive Director Steve Hesel is the group's chair. The campaign goal is to provide consistent messaging throughout the state. Libraries can use the campaign language and marketing for social media posts and a postcard campaign.
  - **Member retreat:** On July 17<sup>th</sup> MCFLS will host a gathering for all member directors. The retreat will begin with a formal presentation and an afternoon session will focus on staff management, budget, performance management, and working with boards.
  - **Cataloging:** – MPL staff member Emily Vieyra presented a comprehensive report on the annual cataloging audit. The report highlighted the high-level expertise that MPL staff brings to the MCFLS system.
  - **CountyCat:** As part of the Executive Orders, Library of Congress (LoC) subject headings have been changed to reflect the preferences of the current administration, including changes to Gulf of

Mexico and Mount Denali to Gulf of America and Mount McKinley, respectively. MPL and MCFLS follow the LoC subject heading guidelines. To ensure patrons are able to find items under either name, MCFLS is adding local subject headings to include Gulf of Mexico and Mount Denali.

- **Clean up patron database:** MCFLS uses an application called Patron Point to send communications to patrons. To improve the function of Patron Point and other applications, MCFLS is considering removing invalid or obsolete records from its patron database. MCFLS is seeking a legal opinion to determine whether or not the state statute of limitations on debt collection applies to library fines. Records cannot be deleted until it is determined if records with debts over 6 years old can be deleted. This item will be presented to the MCFLS Board for decision at a future meeting.
- **MPL/MCFLS lease agreement:** The MCFLS Board approved the lease agreement between MPL and MCFLS. The lease amount is \$95,000 and includes office space, the sorting room, and parking spaces in the garage.

Informational item.

8. **Urban Libraries Council (ULC) Update.** Trustee Michele Bria presented an update on the ULC Executive Board activities. In February, ULC held a 2-day retreat in La Jolla, California. The retreat was focused on the vision and growth of ULC as an organization. Much of the discussion focused on the current political climate and its effect on library services. ULC continues to advocate on behalf of libraries, highlighting the importance of libraries and their role as non-partisan resources for communities in both the U.S. and Canada. ULC equips library leaders with advocacy tools, offers staff training on pathways to library leadership, and support local boards in their role as ambassadors for the library. ULC is reviewing the membership dues model. ULC is working to identify potential national corporate partnerships to request support and create opportunities to grow library systems. Informational item.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

9. **Broadband Access Update.** Library Director Joan Johnson presented an update on the broadband access project. MPL worked with a pro bono attorney and completed the legal due diligence to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP). The RFP was issued in January 2025 and received no bids. The project was renamed and the RFP was reissued on April 3, 2025 and is due on May 1<sup>st</sup>. If an acceptable bid is received, Director Johnson will seek contract award approval at the June Board meeting. Informational item.

10. **Martin Luther King Branch Redevelopment Update.** – REMOVED FROM AGENDA

11. **Closing Remarks.** Pres. Sain reminded Trustees to contact the Library Director's Office if they are not able to attend a meeting. President Sain gave thanks to Trustee Bria for chairing meetings during his absence. MPL will host a poetry open mic on April 26<sup>th</sup> at East branch and a teen poetry open mic night will be held at Mitchell Street branch on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Director Johnson shared information about a very successful chicken-keeping program that was hosted at Atkinson branch and complimented Branch Manager Joy Zanders on offering programs that meet community needs.

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With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of April 22, 2025 was adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

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