**MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**REGULAR MEETING**
**MINUTES**

**Tuesday, September 22, 2026**

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

**PRESENT**: Michele Bria, Michael Morgan, Ald. Milele Coggs, Matthew Kowalski, Ald. Andrea Pratt, Ald. Larresa Taylor, Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Missy Zombor, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns

**EXCUSED:** Teresa Mercado, Neil Albrecht, Mary Urbina-McCarthy

**STAFF**: Maria Burke, Gregory Diaz, Tim Fluhr, Jenna Harte Wisniewski, Ha Hoang, Melissa Howard, Dan Keeley, Yves LaPierre, Sarah Leszczynski, Tammy Mays Wilder, Karli Pederson, Rebecca Schweisberger, Kelly Wochinske, Jessica Wolf, Joy Zanders

**OTHER**: Budget & Policy Division: Nathaniel Haack
Milwaukee Public Library Foundation: Sam McGovern-Rowen

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President Bria called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:02 p.m. on September 22, 2026 with a quorum present. Trustees Morgan, Coggs, and Vincent attended virtually. Agenda items were taken out of order but are presented here in numerical sequence.

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**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes July 28, 2026**

2. **Committee Reports**.
    a. Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting – July 28, 2026
    b. Building & Development Committee Meeting – September 3, 2026

3. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting, July 7, 2026.**

4. **Administrative Reports**
    a. Financial Report
    b. Programs Report
    c. Statistics

5. **Revised MPL Board Roster and Meeting Schedule**

Chair Bria asked the Board if any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda, presented as attachment A, pages 3-45 of the agenda. Hearing no objection, the Consent Agenda was approved.

**OLD BUSINESS**

6. **2026 YTD Budget Update**. Business Finance Manager Sarah Leszczynski presented a year-to-date update on the operating budget through August 31, 2026. The presentation is attached at the end

of these minutes. YTD salaries expenditures are higher than previous years due to lower vacancy rates and two City-wide salary increases. The salary increases totaled $772,000 and were not included in MPL's 2026 budget. Funding for the salary increases will be issued by the wages supplement fund. Supplies and services accounts are also tracking ahead, as several large service contracts were paid earlier in the year. Year-end predictions indicate an over-expenditure of salaries by $367,000 and supplies/services by $268,000. MPL will seek Common Council approval to reallocate funds from the salaries account to supplies/services, as some of those accounts cannot be in the negative. Informational item.

7. **2027 Budget**. Interim Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns shared an update on the 2027 budget process. The Mayor's proposed budget was released earlier in the day. The proposed budget for MPL is just over $35M, which is an increase of nearly $1.5M over the 2026 adopted budget. Service levels and hours will be maintained at all locations; however, Sunday hours will be reduced to 12:00-5:00 p.m. The MPL Foundation (MPLF) will provide funding for one Education and Outreach Services (EOS) position. The requested budget also includes funding hotspots, which were previously funded through MPLF. Drive-up service will be closed due to construction on the nearby deck and tiers; it will reopen for materials return only. The library's budget hearing will be held on October 13th, public listening sessions will be held at various MPL locations, and the budget will be finalized in November. Informational only.

**REPORTS**

8. **Library Director's Report**. Interim Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns reported on recent Director's activities. The Library Director recruitment process continues; additional information will be shared with the Board as available. MPL staff and leadership have done an excellent job maintaining continuity of operations and services. The results from the fundraising feasibility study will be presented at the October MPL Board meeting. Security remains a priority and MPL staff is assessing the impacts of adding security staff as MPL positions. Kudos to Associate Library Director Ha Hoang and Public Services Area Managers Tim Fluhr and Tammy Mays-Wilder, who lead the implementation of the new public services scheduling system, TeleStaff. The City is consolidating several resource management systems into the Workday platform. Staff training is ongoing and Workday will be implemented by the end of the year. MPL recently held several highly successful partner events. In partnership with MPL and The Friends of the Milwaukee Public Library, Dead Bird Brewery produced Bücherwurm, a limited-edition German fest bier. MPL partnered with local performers and content creators to host The Library Show in the Central Library Grand Rotunda. The event allowed MPL to engage with the community in a fun and innovative way. Central Library hosted the Big Family Playdate, in partnership with Reach Out and Read Wisconsin. This event was designed as a 'big event for little kids' ages 5 and younger, though older siblings are welcome, too. President Bria commended Director Meyer-Stearns for a seamless transition period and great work as acting Director. Informational item.

9. **System and Resource Library Administrators' Association of Wisconsin (SRLAAW) Update.** Interim Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns shared an update on SRLAAW activity. For many years, MPL has acted as the state resource library and has been working with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to seeking official designation. In August, the DPI informed SRLAAW of a proposal to rename and consolidate the 3 contracts that MPL is providing statewide under one line in the budget as State Resource Library Contracts. This change will likely take several years to implement and the MPL Board will receive updates as needed. Informational item.

10. **2026 Summer Reading Program Update**. Public Services Area Manager (EOS and CLCR) Kelly Wochinske presented a report on the 2026 Summer Reading Program. Approximately 22,000

patrons participated in the challenge and enjoyed summer with MPL. Over 25,000 books were donated through the program. MPL offered open time in the makerspace, with a facilitator, at 4 locations. Teen-focused programs were held twice per week and 10 Teen Interns were hired by MPL to assist in the makerspaces. MPL hosted Summer Youth Interns and hosted an education day at Central Library. Outreach teams set up reading nooks and hands-on activities once a week at 3 playgrounds, with over 450 participants. MPL participated in the United Neighborhood Centers of Milwaukee's Wellness Walk at Journey House and held story times at Alice's Gardens. Outreach staff also participated in several other events, including Juneteenth Day, National Nights Out, and various festivals, including Mexican Fiesta. Informational item.

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With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of September 29, 2026 was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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