

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

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

PRESENT: Michele Bria, Teresa Mercado, Neil Albrecht, Ald. Milele Coggs, Matthew Kowalski, Michael Morgan, Ald. Andrea Pratt, Ald. Larresa Taylor, Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Joan Johnson

EXCUSED: Darryl Jackson, Felicia Saffold, Venice Williams

STAFF: Kelly Bolter, Aisha Coursen, Tim Fluhr, Melissa Howard, Yves LaPierre, Tammy Mays Wilder, Amanda McGillivray, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Karli Pederson, Rebecca Schweisberger, Kelly Wochinske, Jessica Wolf

OTHER: Budget & Management Division: Nathaniel Haack
PFM Asset Management LLC: Wayne Sattler

President Bria called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:04 p.m. on January 27, 2026. Trustees Mercado, Coggs, and Vincent participated by phone/virtual conference.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Library Director Joan Johnson read written public comment from Curtisha Shenise Scott Haynes.

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

President Bria welcomed new Trustees Neil Albrecht and Ald. Andrea Pratt.

1. **Annual Review of Fund Investments**. Mr. Wayne Sattler, Senior Vice President & Managing Director at US Bancorp Asset Management, reviewed the account investment materials and provided a market overview. The investment performance of the trust fund for the period ending December 31, 2025 was reviewed. Mr. Sattler noted MPL's investment portfolio is well-positioned for long-term investment and no changes are recommended to the investment policy at this time. Informational item.

CONSENT AGENDA

2. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes November 25, 2025**
3. **Committee Reports**
 - a. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – January 8, 2026
 - b. Innovation & Strategy Committee – January 15, 2026

4. **Administrative Reports**

- a. Financial Report
- b. Library Director's Reports
- c. Statistics

5. **Revised MPL Board Meeting Schedule.**6. **Updated MPL Board Committee Assignments.**

Chair Bria removed item 6 from the Consent Agenda. The Board unanimously voted to approve temporary Board Officer assignments, which will be in effect until regular voting is held at the annual meeting in May. Library Director Joan Johnson thanked Trustee Taylor for accepting the role of Vice-Chair on the Building & Development Committee and Trustee Vincent for her service on the MCFLS Board. Chair Bria asked the Board if any other items should be removed from the Consent Agenda, presented as attachment A, pages 4-58 of the agenda. Hearing no objection, the Consent Agenda was approved.

REPORTS

7. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting.** Library Director Joan Johnson reported on the January 6, 2026 meeting. MCFLS is reviewing public PC software security for member libraries. MCFLS provided transportation and support for Library Legislative Day on February 10th. The Inclusive Services Committee is developing opportunities for members to work together. Public Services Area Manager Tammy Mays Wilder is MPL representative on the Committee and she is also the Committee's liaison with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The 2026 System Director Goals were presented by Executive Director Steve Hesel and approved by the MCFLS Board. As part of the goals, the system is proposing termination of the subscription to Gale Courses. MCFLS will collect data on patron satisfaction with the system services and identify strategies for connecting with lapsed, inactive, or non-users. The findings will be shared with member libraries. Director Hesel shared a progress report from the 2025 MCFLS strategic plan, including policy updates and contract renewals. System-level policy documents are being translated into foreign languages. Director Hesel reported on the statewide advocacy work to help restore IMLS funding. MCFLS supports members with preparing annual DPI reports and provides a large portion of the data. The MCFLS Board approved the purchase of library materials for the Vel R. Phillips school. MPL prepares the materials and MCFLS manages delivery to the school. The MPL Outreach team visits the school, as well. Informational item.
8. **Urban Libraries Council (ULC) Executive Committee.** Trustee Michele Bria reported on ULC meetings and activities. President Bria chairs the ULC Development Committee, which is focused on creating a culture of national and local philanthropy. The Committee will work on advocacy for national grants that can help at local levels, such as raising resources to create a scholarship fund for library staff training. As part of this work, ULC received a \$1M grant from the Carnegie Corporation for the Civics Labs for Youth pilot program. The program is a youth-led program that equips librarians to serve as civic learning facilitators, and empowers young adults ages 18-24 to be active contributors to their communities. ULC continues to advocate for providing Microsoft licensing at low to no cost. ULC continues to share stories, lending voices to national efforts, and reinforcing the value of and promote stable federal investment in libraries. The ULC Data Hive Library Insights Survey has been completed and the report was released mid-December. Members can use the data to help with planning and budget preparation. The ULC Academy offers a variety of courses for staff training and help with career pathways. Informational item.

OLD BUSINESS

9. **Revised 2026 Proposed Library Hours.** Library Director Joan Johnson presented updated proposed library hours for 2026. In November 2025, the Board approved Sunday public service hours of 1:00-5:00 p.m. at Central Library, Mitchell Street Branch, and Good Hope Branch. Upon review of the new staff scheduling model, the library recommended updating the Sunday public service hours to 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. If approved, the hours will be updated in print and electronic formats. Trustee Taylor moved to approve the revised hours and Trustee Morgan seconded. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

10. **State Annual Report – System Effectiveness Form.** President Bria referred to the Statement Concerning Public Library Systems Effectiveness, which was included as Attachment D of the agenda. The statement is part of the Public Library Annual Report presented to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Each year, MPL is required to report on the leadership of Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS). Library Director Joan Johnson recommended the Board signify that MCFLS did provide effective leadership and adequately met the needs of the library. The Board unanimously agreed and expressed appreciation for the great work of the MCFLS team.

Trustee Morgan moved and Trustee Albrecht seconded a motion to approve the statement, which will be signed by President Bria and sent to DPI as part of MPL’s Annual Report. Motion passed.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

11. **Black History Month Program Series.** Kelly Bolter, Library Services Manager – Coordinator of Adult Programming & Events, shared information about upcoming programs to celebrate Black History Month. MPL has a robust calendar of events and has launched a landing page dedicated to Black History Month programs. The page includes links to programs, resources, games, and activities. The Black History Month Reading Challenge returns for the third year. Participants of all ages can engage by completing activities on a bingo board or completing the reading challenge on Beanstack. Each completed board counts as an entry submission for a prize drawing. All residents of the City of Milwaukee are encouraged to participate. Ms. Bolter highlighted an upcoming program to celebrate Architect Alonzo Robinson’s prolific 40-year career. Robinson made notable and important contributions to Milwaukee’s Black community and the city as a whole. Informational item.
12. **Closing Remarks.** The MPL Board will recess in February. Chair Bria reminded Building & Development Committee members of the upcoming, hybrid meeting to review architect proposals for the Capitol branch redevelopment. Informational item.

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of January 27, 2026 was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.
