

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 28, 2026

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

- PRESENT:** Michele Bria, Teresa Mercado, Michael Morgan, Neil Albrecht, Ald. Milele Coggs, Matthew Kowalski, Ald. Larresa Taylor, Mary Urbina-McCarthy, Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Missy Zombor, Joan Johnson
- EXCUSED:** Ald. Andrea Pratt
- STAFF:** Heather Berg, Maria Burke, Amanda McGillivray, Tim Fluhr, Ha Hoang, Christin Johnstone-Buer, Yves LaPierre, Kimberly Luedke, Mary Lopez, Tammy Mays Wilder, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Rebecca Schweisberger, Fawn Siemsen-Fuchs, Ben Tiedge, PJ Woboril, Kelly Wochinske, Jessica Wolf
- OTHER:** Graef Engineering: Tim Einwalter
Concord Group: Sareena Daniel

President Bria called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:03 p.m. on July 28, 2026 with a quorum present. Trustees Coggs, Mercado, and Taylor attended virtually.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Heather Berg, MPL Office Assistant IV, introduced Ben Tiedge, the Earn and Learn Summer Youth Intern assigned to MPL Administration.

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

1. **Introduction of New Trustee.** President Bria introduced new Trustee Mary Urbina-McCarthy. Trustee Urbina-McCarthy shared a brief overview of her professional background and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the MPL Board. Informational item.
2. **Retirement of Library Director Joan Johnson.** President Bria announced that Library Director Joan Johnson is retiring from MPL after more than 19 years of service. President Bria presented a retirement resolution and gift; a copy of the resolution is attached at these minutes. The Board thanked Director Johnson for her dedication and leadership. Director Johnson said she considers her work at MPL to be the pinnacle of her career. She appreciates the care, commitment, and spirit of the MPL staff and Board. Trustees shared congratulations and thanks for Director Johnson's contributions to the City of Milwaukee. Informational item.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes June 23, 2026**
4. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting. Julv 7. 2026.**

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MPL CONSENT AGENDA

2. Regular Board Meeting Minutes - 07/28/2026

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5. **Administrative Reports**

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

6. **Revised MPL Board Committee Assignments.**

Chair Bria asked the Board if any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda, presented as attachment A, pages 3-36 of the agenda. Hearing no objection, the Consent Agenda was approved.

REPORTS

7. **Services & Programs Committee.** Committee Vice-Chair Kathleen Vincent presented action items from the July 1, 2026 meeting. The meeting minutes were approved and the Committee received the safety report.

Revised MPL Policy Approval Request. Communications and Community Engagement Director Melissa Howard shared a revised policy related to public posting of community flyers. MPL has an existing procedure that outlines the process for posting flyers to community boards. This policy will compliment that procedure and provides clarity about submission criteria, posting priorities, guidance for processing requests, and confirms posting does not imply endorsement. Posting guidelines list the types of materials that are acceptable and prioritization when space is limited. The policy also states that distribution of literature and petition circulation are not permitted inside the library or on library property, but are admissible on adjacent sidewalks. Trustee Vincent moved to approve the policy as presented. Trustee Kowalski seconded. Motion passed.

8. **Urban Libraries Council (ULC) Update.** President Bria shared an update from the Urban Libraries Council Executive Board. The Executive Board recently met in Seattle, where there is currently a surplus budget, which highlighted how different funding structures and budgets can vary significantly among member libraries. ULC hired a lobbyist group to advocate for E-Rate funding and communicating how loss of this funding would impact libraries nationwide. The Executive Board discussed the impacts and challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how libraries can support this evolving digital literacy. Informational item.

NEW BUSINESS

9. **FCC-Proposed Rulemaking for the E-Rate Program.** Library Director Joan Johnson shared a summary of proposed regulatory changes to E-Rate funding and recommended a response from MPL. The E-Rate program provides funding toward the cost of broadband, internet, and internal network services for schools and libraries. On June 25th, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) posted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to ensure "E-Rate funded networks and services are being used responsibly and for an educational purpose, as statutorily required." Additional language in the NPRM proposes terminating or restricting the E-Rate program. Despite opposition from the Schools, Health, and Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB), the language remains in the NPRM. A public comment period will open after the NPRM is published in the Federal Register; however, comments can be submitted now and SHLB is facilitating participation by posting resources at [Save Our E-Rate - Schools Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition](#). Director Johnson recommended MPL submit a comment focusing on the value and return on investment E-rate funding brings to the patrons, staff, and larger communities served by MPL's high-speed broadband resources, and the negative impacts that would result from termination of the program. Comments can be filed by individuals and organizations; Director Johnson encouraged the Board to comment and share SHLB's

advocacy website with others. Director Johnson will draft a comment for Board review, approval, and submission. Informational item.

9. **Contract Award Recommendation – Central Library Masonry Repair.** Deputy Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns shared information about the masonry restoration at Central Library and requested a contract award for the first phase. This phase includes restoration of parapet section as well as removal and restoration of the eagle statues flanking the dome. In June, MPL issued a Request for Proposals for Phase 1 and three proposals were received. Library Administration recommends awarding the contract to the lowest bidder, Building Restoration Corporation of Wisconsin. Library Facilities Manager PJ Woboril introduced Tim Einwalter of Graef Engineering and Sareena Daniel of Concord Group, who shared information about the structure of the eagles, damaged areas, and plan for restoration. Trustee Albrecht moved to award the Central Library Masonry Restoration Phase 1 contract to Building Restoration Corporation of Wisconsin for a total of \$439,292.00 and to authorize MPL to negotiate the contract. Trustee Vincent seconded. Motion passed.

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of July 28, 2026 was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.
