

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

**Capitol Branch – Community Room
3969 N. 74th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53216**

PRESENT: Michele Bria, Teresa Mercado, Ald. Milele Coggs, Matthew Kowalski, Michael Morgan, Felicia Saffold, Erika Siemsen, Ald. Scott Spiker, Ald. Larresa Taylor, Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Venice Williams, Joan Johnson

EXCUSED: Mark Sain

STAFF: Chantel Clark, Melissa Howard, Yves LaPierre, Tammy Mays, Amanda McGillivray, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Amelia Osterud, Karli Pederson, Marian Royal, Chris Schabel, Rebecca Schweisberger, Kelly Wochinske

OTHERS

PRESENT: Budget & Management Division: Nik Kovac, Nathaniel Haack

Vice-President Michele Bria called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:12 p.m. on April 23, 2024. Trustees Coggs and Siemsen participated by conference phone.

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

1. **Budget Outlook.** Vice-President Bria introduced Budget & Management Director Nik Kovac to present an update on the 2025 budget. In the 2024 budget, \$110M of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding was used to offset budget gaps. The Budget Office anticipates another large deficit in 2025 and will need to explore different options as ARPA funding has expired. Per State law, all City departments must prepare a budget with a 5% cut relative to prior year funding. For MPL, additional staffing, salary adjustments, and job reclassifications occurred after the 2024 budget passed. As such, a 5% cut (based on the 2024 budget) will be significantly greater when these factors are taken into consideration. All City departments are also required to provide a cost to continue budget proposal. The Budget Office is hopeful that sales tax revenue and changes to the pension obligation will allow for cost to continue budgets in future years. Informational item.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

2. **Capitol Branch Introduction.** Library Services Manager Chris Schabel presented a brief overview of Capitol branch, which celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2024. Ms. Schabel shared a presentation which included history of the building and surrounding area, building updates, and unique features. The presentation is attached at the end of these minutes. Capitol branch is celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2024. The building was renovated in 1994-95, which included creation of the new main entrance and addition of the conference room, Young Adult area, and Manager's Office. Informational item.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes March 26, 2024**
4. **Committee Reports**
 - a. Innovation & Strategy Committee Meeting Minutes – April 2, 2024
 - b. Building & Development Committee Meeting Minutes – April 4, 2024
5. **Administrative Reports**
 - a. Financial Report
 - b. Library Director's Reports
 - c. Statistics

Chair Bria asked the Board if any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda presented as attachment A, pages 3-19 of the agenda. Hearing no objection, the Consent Agenda was approved.

REPORTS

6. **MPL Board Nominating Committee Meeting.** Committee Chair Michael Morgan presented the draft slate of officers, listed as Attachment B of the agenda. The Committee reviewed the achievements of the current officers and reached a unanimous decision to recommend their re-election. The slate will be presented for vote at the May 28, 2024 meeting. Library Director Joan Johnson informed the Board other nominations can be made at the May meeting. Informational item.
7. **Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting.** Committee Chair Teresa Mercado presented the action items from the April 23, 2024 meeting.
 - **Financial Statements and Auditors' Review.**

The Committee received the auditors' report from Reilly, Penner, and Benton, LLP. The auditors issued an unqualified opinion with no recommendations. Trustee Kowalski moved to accept the report and place it on file; Trustee Morgan seconded. Motion passed.
 - **Contract Award – Central Library Roof Construction Contract Award.**

The Committee received a request to award the construction contract for repairs to the Central Library roof. These are critical repairs over the oldest section of the building and around the dome. Trustee Morgan moved to award the contract to JRT Top Notch Roofs, LLC. for a total of \$683,735.00. Trustee Saffold seconded. Motion passed.
8. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting.** Trustee Kathleen Vincent reported on the April 18, 2024 meeting. The patron satisfaction survey results were reviewed and the MCFLS system showed improvement in all categories. The Board issued a vote of confidence for MCFLS Director Steve Hesser and authorized a 3% salary increase. The 2025-2028 contract renegotiation timeline was reviewed and approved. MCFLS member agreement drafts will be introduced at the June MPL Board meeting and presented for approval at the October Board meeting. Informational item.
9. **Urban Libraries Council (ULC) Update.** Vice-President Michele Bria presented an update on the ULC Executive Board activities. In January, the Board held its first strategic retreat and is focused on strengthening public libraries and the essential role they play in innovation, equity, and opportunity. ULC has 173 members in 39 states and combined they serve 86 million residents.

Member libraries face similar opportunities and challenges, including local emerging issues that are not core to the library mission but impact libraries and staff. The ULC Board also considered drivers of future public library change, including technological advances as well as political, social, and economic issues. Additional topics of discussion included supporting libraries as they adapt to external pressures and developing a workforce pipeline for future library leadership. The ULC vision for success is to help public libraries with programs, research, and data to ensure public trust, be an essential 'third space', and advance their ongoing role in economic opportunity, equitable access, and multiple literacies. ULC is advocating for innovative federal funding from sources not historically allocated to libraries. ULC presented a case study on how technology, such as Placer AI, can help track the impact of library visitors on the local economy and how library closures could negatively affect local businesses. Library Director Joan Johnson has scheduled a Placer AI demonstration for the Innovation & Strategy Committee and some MPL staff will attend an online webinar on April 25th. Informational item.

10. **Closing Remarks.** Trustee Venice Williams shared her extremely positive experience at the MPL Zine Fest program on April 20th. Zine Fest was held at Central Library and hosted 122 tables, which included national and international vendors and artists. Informational item.

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of April 23, 2024 was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.
