

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

Atkinson Branch
Community Room
1960 W. Atkinson Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53209

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

EXCUSED: Matthew Kowalski, Teresa Mercado, Mark Sain, Erika Siemsen

STAFF: Dan Keeley, Yves LaPierre, Tammy Mays, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Amelia Osterud, Karli Pederson, Marian Royal, Rebecca Schweisberger, Kelly Wochinske, Joy Zanders

OTHERS

PRESENT: Budget & Policy Division: Nathaniel Haack
City Attorney's Office: Alex Carson

Vice-President Michele Bria called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:13 p.m. on March 26, 2024; a quorum was reached at 4:22. Trustees Coggs, Vincent, and Williams participated by conference phone. Agenda items were taken out of order but are presented here in numerical sequence.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

1. **Atkinson Branch Introduction.** Library Services Manager Joy Zanders presented a brief overview of Atkinson branch, highlighting building history, popular collections, and unique programs. Atkinson branch opened in January 1961 and prominent building design features include cathedral ceilings, wooden beams, and stained glass. Major renovations were completed in 1994 and Ms. Zanders referenced a letter, dated exactly 31 years ago to the day, from Atkinson's branch manager to the Board, inviting Trustees to visit the updated space. Currently, Atkinson serves as a vibrant community hub for patrons and program attendance has increased 142% over the previous year. Ongoing activities include job fairs, technology training, LibraryCorps tutoring, and Atkinson is the home of the Garden Homes Chess Club. Informational item.

CONSENT AGENDA

2. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes January 28, 2025**
3. **Committee Reports**
 - a. Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes – January 28, 2025
 - b. Services & Programs Committee Meeting Minutes – March 5, 2025
4. **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 4-22 of the agenda. Hearing no objection, the Consent Agenda was approved.

REPORTS

5. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting.** Trustee Kathleen Vincent reported on the March 10, 2025 meeting. The Library Director's Advisory Council discussed the library's role in offering parental control over attendance at youth programs. It has been determined that recent outages in Sierra and CountyCat were caused by malicious bot traffic. The Great Library Treasure Hunt has been a successful marketing campaign and received coverage in local media. The MCFLS Board approved updates to the language in 3 job descriptions. The System Director's evaluation was held until the April meeting. Marian Royal presented MPL's 2024 Resource Library report. Informational item.
6. **MPL Foundation Report.** MPL Foundation Executive Director Ryan Daniels presented an update on fundraising and events. In 2024, the total funds raised (excluding pledges) was \$1,853,424. Of that, \$684,000 are purpose-restricted and \$1.16M are unrestricted. The total funds transferred to the library from MPLF (excluding AmeriCorps funding) were \$778,000. The fundraising target for 2025 is \$2.3M, with \$1.2M committed for MPL. MPLF has moved its workspace from Central Library to a hybrid co-working environment at the Wisconsin Club. The Friends Spring Literary Lunch will be held at the Wisconsin Club on May 15th with author Nancy Johnson. The Ben Franklin Awards Ceremony will be held on September 25th. The 2025 awardees are Judge Derek Mosley and JoAnne Anton. Trustees will receive invitations to both events. Informational item.
7. **Building & Development Committee Meeting.** Trustee Morgan presented the action items from the March 6, 2025 meeting.
 - **Contract Award Recommendation – Good Hope Parking Lot Improvements.** The Committee received a contract award recommendation for parking lot, landscaping, and stormwater improvements at the Good Hope branch. Trustee Morgan moved to award the contract to Property Solutions Contracting LLC for a total of \$169,000. Trustee Spiker seconded. Motion passed.
 - **Contract Award Recommendation – Central Library 4T Renovation.** The Committee received a contract award recommendation for the renovation of offices located on the 4T level of Central Library. Trustee Morgan moved to award the contract to VJS Construction Services for a total of \$611,300. Trustee Taylor seconded. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

8. **Contract Award Recommendation.** Library Construction Projects Manager Yves LaPierre presented a contract award request for repairs to the roof at Zablocki branch, listed as Attachment C of the agenda. Trustee Morgan moved to approve awarding the contract to JRT Top Notch Roofs, LLC. for a total of \$93,993. Trustee Saffold seconded. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

9. **State Annual Report.** MPL prepared and submitted the annual report, listed as Attachment D of the agenda, to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). President Sain viewed and approved the

report and Chair Bria entertained a motion for the Board to ratify his approval. Trustee Taylor moved to approve; Trustee Vincent seconded. Motion passed.

10. **Martin Luther King Branch Redevelopment – Lease Agreement.** Chair Bria moved into closed session pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes sec. 19.85(1)(e), for the purpose of deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session,” for the purpose of discussing the Martin Luther King branch redevelopment. Roll was called and unanimously passed. Library Director Johnson, Deputy Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, Library Construction Projects Manager Yves LaPierre, Administrative Assistant Rebecca Schweisberger, and Assistant City Attorney Alex Carson remained in the meeting. The Board reconvened in open session at the conclusion of its closed session. Chair Bria moved to approve the second amendment to the Martin Luther King branch lease agreement as presented, with the addition of allowing a final finish completion date of the bump-out to be added and including name(s) of arbiter(s) in the second lease amendment. Trustee Morgan seconded. Motion passed.
11. **Closing Remarks.** Chair Bria shared that Trustee Venice Williams will participate in the upcoming program “An Evening with Jeanne Theoharis” on April 7th. Trustee Williams will interview Ms. Theoharis about her new book, *King of the North: Martin Luther King Jr.’s Life of Struggle Outside the South*. Library Director Joan Johnson thanked Trustee Morgan for helping to facilitate and participating in the author event “An Evening with Christian Cooper” on March 13th.

With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of March 25, 2025 was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.
