Vision

MPL is an anchor institution that helps build healthy families and vibrant neighborhoods – the foundation of a strong Milwaukee.

Mission

Inspiration starts here – we help people read, learn, and connect.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, November 24, 2026
4:00 p.m.

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

HOLIDAY GIFT EXCHANGE

WELCOME & ROLL CALL
4:00 – 4:05

PUBLIC COMMENT
4:05 – 4:15

CONSENT AGENDA
4:15 – 4:20

Attachment A, page 3

1. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes, October 27, 2026**

2. **Committee Reports**
   a. Finance & Personnel Committee – October 27, 2026
   b. Services & Programs Committee – November 4, 2026
   c. Building & Development Committee – November 5, 2026
   d. Executive Committee – November 19, 2026

3. **Administrative Reports**
   a. Financial Report
   b. Library Director's Report
   c. Statistics

4. **Revised 2027 MPL Board Meeting Schedule**

REPORTS
4:20 – 4:35

5. **Milwaukee County Federated Library System (MCFLS) Board Meeting**. Trustee Neil Albrecht will report on the October 27, 2026 meeting.

MPL FOUNDATION

6. **MPL Foundation Report**. MPL Foundation Executive Director Ryan Daniels will present an update on fundraising and events.

7. **Foundation Request for Program Support**. Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns will present an update on fundraising priorities and a request for approval to allocate funding from the MPL Foundation.

8. **Fundraising Feasibility Study Follow-up**. The Board will review outcomes and recommendations from the fundraising feasibility report presented at the October meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

4:35 – 4:45

9. **2027 Final Budget Update**. Interim Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns will provide a status report regarding the Library's 2027 budget.

NEW BUSINESS

4:45 – 4:55

10. **2027 Proposed Library Hours**. The 2027 Schedule of Hours will be presented for approval.

Attachment B, page 66

CLOSING REMARKS

4:55 – 5:00

11. **Holiday Gift Exchange, Closing Remarks, and Adjournment**.

***REMINDER**: Next scheduled meetings are:*
January 7, 2027 Building & Development Committee – Virtual Meeting, 8:00 a.m
January 14, 2027 Innovation & Strategy Committee – Virtual Meeting, 8:00 a.m.
January 26, 2027 Finance & Personnel Committee – Virtual Meeting, 8:30 a.m.
January 26, 2027 Board Meeting – Central Library, 4:00 p.m.

Trustees

Michele Bria, *President*, Teresa Mercado, *Vice-President,* Michael Morgan, *Financial Secretary*, Neil Albrecht, Ald. Milele Coggs, Matthew Kowalski, Ald. Andrea Pratt, Katie Sanders, Ald. Larresa Taylor, Mary Urbina-McCarthy, Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Missy Zombor, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns, *Secretary*, Rebecca Colby, *Secretary's Assistant* (414) 286-3021

The Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees is an informed, dedicated group of citizens who represent a cross-section of the city of Milwaukee and are committed to supporting, developing, and advancing the library for the benefit of all residents of Milwaukee and others throughout Milwaukee County, the State of Wisconsin, and beyond. In their role as advocates and advisors, they serve the library's many patrons, its staff, the common good of the community, and this critical and enduring institution.

Persons engaged in lobbying as defined in s. 305-43-4 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances are required to register with the City Clerk's Office License Division. More information is available at www.milwaukee.gov/lobby or by calling (414) 286-2238.

Please be advised that members of the Milwaukee Common Council who are also members of this body may attend this meeting. In addition, Common Council members who are not members of this body may attend this meeting to participate or to gather information. A quorum of the Common Council or any of its standing committees may be present, but no formal Common Council action will be taken at this meeting.

Reasonable accommodations provided upon request. Contact the ADA Coordinator at: 414-286-3475 or adacoordinator@milwaukee.gov.

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEE

REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

Tuesday, October 27, 2026

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

PRESENT: Michele Bria, Michael Morgan, Neil Albrecht, Ald. Milele Coggs, Matthew Kowalski, Ald. Andrea Pratt, Katie Sanders, Ald. Larresa Taylor, Mary Urbina-McCarthy, Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns

EXCUSED: Teresa Mercado, Missy Zombor

STAFF: Rebecca Colby, Tim Fluhr, Jenna Harte Wisniewski, Ha Hoang, Melissa Howard, Yves LaPierre, Tammy Mays Wilder, Karli Pederson, Kelly Wochinske, Jessica Wolf

OTHER: Milwaukee Public Library Foundation: Ryan Daniels, Sam McGovern-Rowen
Changing Our World: Kevin Allan, Michael Hutchinson

President Bria called the meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees to order at 4:04 p.m. on October 27, 2026 with a quorum present. Trustees Coggs, Pratt, Urbina-McCarthy, and Vincent attended virtually.

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

1. **Introduction of New Trustee**. President Bria welcomed new Trustee Katie Sanders. Trustee Sanders shared a brief overview of her personal and professional background.

CONSENT AGENDA

2. **Regular Board Meeting Minutes September 22, 2026**

3. **Committee Reports**.
    a. Innovation & Strategy Committee Meeting – October 8, 2026

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

5. **2027 Meeting Schedule**

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 3-50 of the agenda. Hearing no objection, the Consent Agenda was approved.

REPORTS

7. **MPL Foundation Report**. MPL Foundation (MPLF) Executive Director Ryan Daniels presented an update on fundraising and disbursement to MPL, as detailed in the report attached to these minutes. The report does not include funds raised at the Ben Franklin Awards Celebration (BFAC), which was held on September 24th. To date, MPLF has raised $653,000 over the same period in 2025. This includes a one-time gift of $250,000. The 2026 BFAC raised over $700,000 thus far and Director Daniels invited the Board to view a video created for the event at https://www.supportmpl.org/franklin/. MPLF is focused in capturing remaining gifts by year-end and expects to fulfill the $1.2M contribution for 2026. Director Daniels invited the Board to review the 990 or Charity Navigator rating for additional details about MPLF financials from a non-profit standpoint. The Board requested more robust and detailed reporting on details of the MPLF staffing budget and a review of the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and reporting structure. Interim Director Meyer-Stearns will work with the Board, MPL, and MPLF staff to identify improved reporting mechanisms for future meetings. Informational item.

8. **Fundraising Feasibility Study Report.** President Bria introduced Kevin Allan and Michael Hutchinson from Changing Our World to present the findings from the fundraising feasibility study. The report is attached at the end of these minutes. The goal of the study was to determine potential support for a major campaign, recommend a strategy, and assess readiness. Recommendations for the next 15 months include: continue to support and engage mid-level and major gift prospects, strengthen donor relationships, develop a campaign pipeline, modernize the MPL and MPLF partnership by developing clear standard operating procedures aligned around shared priorities, update the memorandum of understanding, and strengthen campaign infrastructure. The Board discussed the findings and recommendations and next steps will be presented at the November Board meeting. The Board expressed appreciation to Changing Our World for their work on this project and synthesizing large amounts of complex information into clear recommendations. Informational item.

9. **Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting**. Committee Chair Michael Morgan presented the action item from the October 27, 2026 meeting. Interim Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns presented Library Administration's request to expend funds from the MPL Trust & Gift Fund in 2027. Based on Board policy, MPL can request to withdraw 4-5% of the fund each year. Unrestricted funds will be used for programming, marketing, and professional development. Restricted funds will be used for materials purchases. The 2027 request is $353,000.

   Trustee Morgan moved to approve the request to expend up to $353,000 from the MPL Trust and Gift Funds for operational support in 2027. Trustee Albrecht seconded. Motion passed.

10. **2027 Budget Update**. Interim Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns presented an update on the 2027 budget. Budget amendments will be presented later in the week. There will likely be amendments to retain the current Sunday hours at MPL. The final budget will be reported at the November Board meeting. Interim Director Meyer-Stearns thanked the Library Administration team for their leadership and support during the budget hearing process.

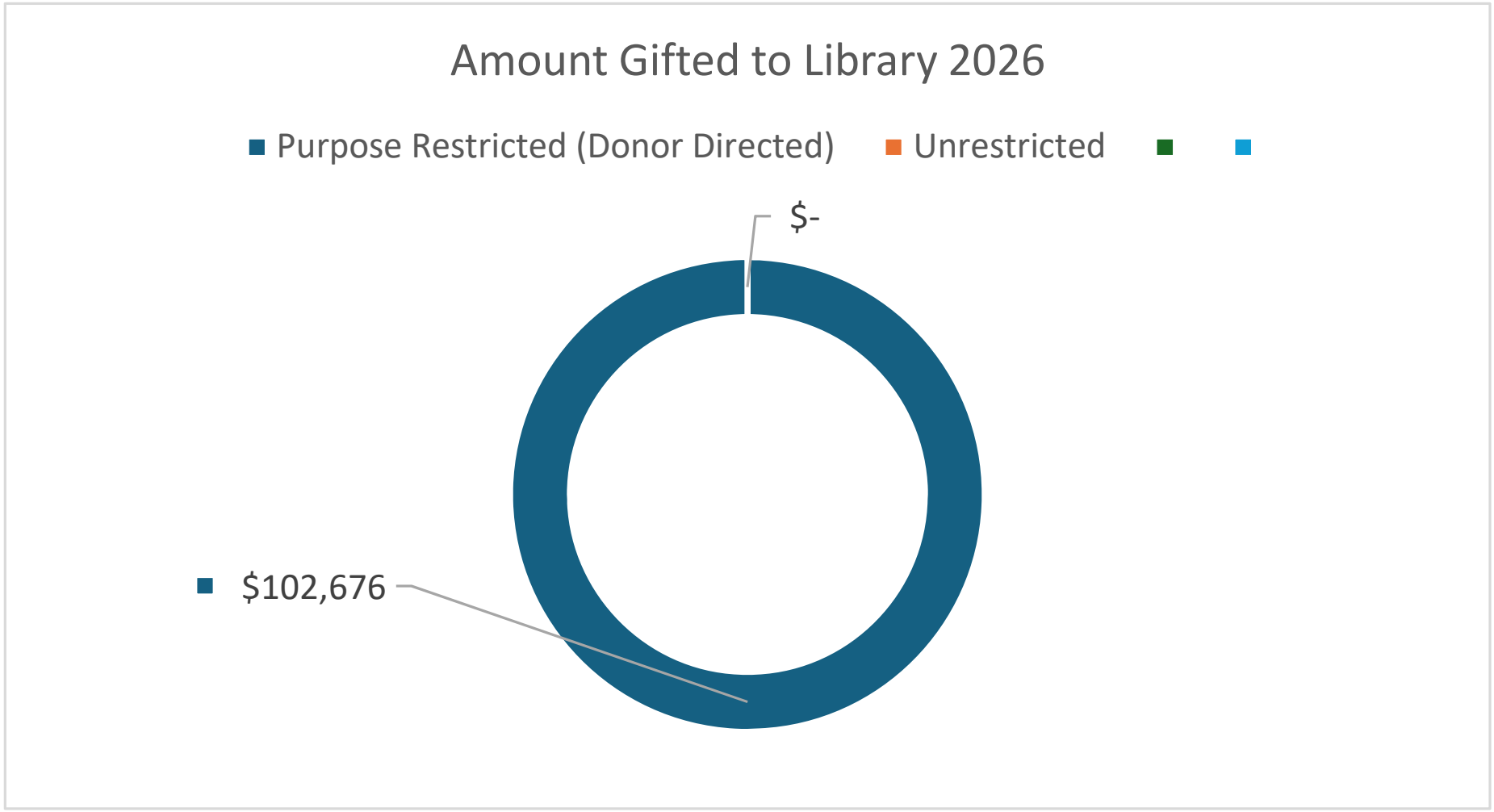
With no further business, the Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees meeting of October 27, 2026 was adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

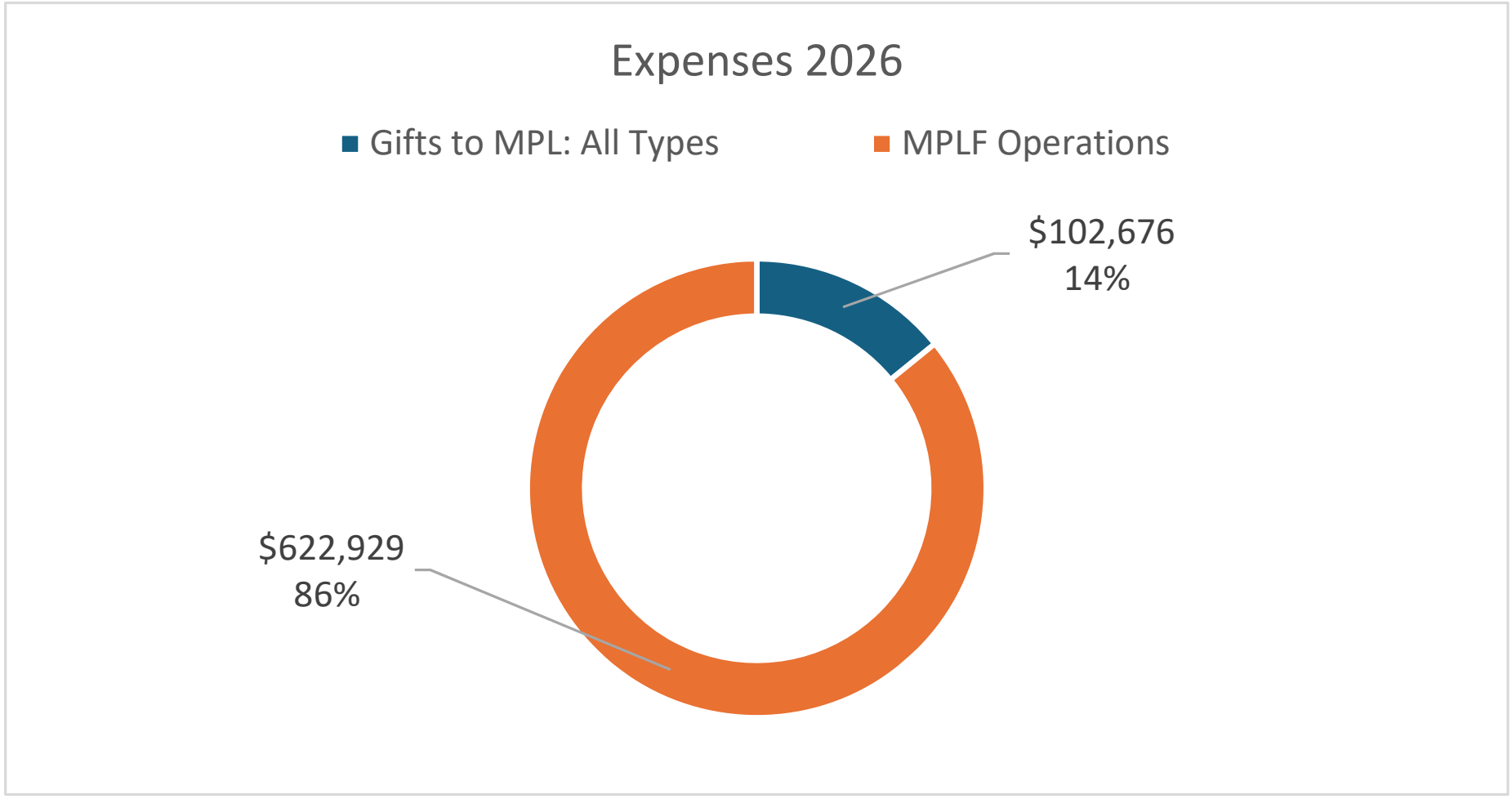
MPLF Foundation Funds Raised & Gifted
YTD Through August 2026

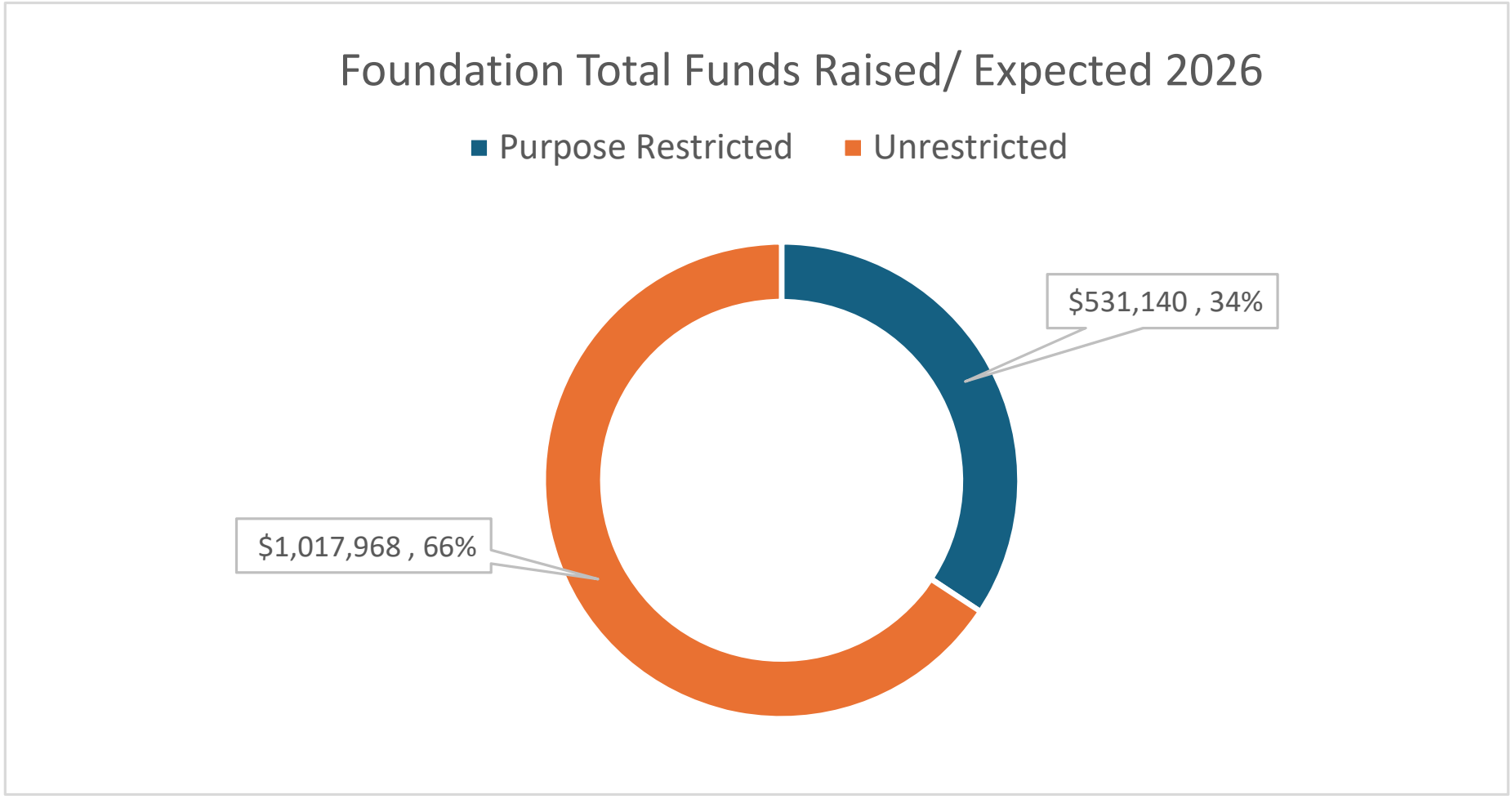
Foundation Total Funds Raised 2026 - Excluding pledges	2026 Stmt of Activities	Plus Pledge Payments	Less Pledges	Pledge payments expected current year	Foundation Total Funds Raised/ Expected 2026
Purpose Restricted	537,498	200,067	(317,100)	110,675	$ 531,140
Unrestricted	752,861	237,607	(200,100)	227,600	$ 1,017,968
In-kind	20,675				
Total Revenue per Stmt of Activities	1,311,034	437,674	(517,200)	338,275	$ 1,549,108

Amount Gifted to Library 2026	Amount Gifted to Library 2026
Purpose Restricted (Donor Directed)	$ 102,676
Unrestricted	$ -
	$ 102,676

Expenses 2026	Expenses 2026	%
Gifts to MPL: All Types	$ 102,676	14%
MPLF Operations	$ 622,929	86%
	$ 725,605	


Amount Gifted to Library 2026
Purpose Restricted (Donor Directed)
Unrestricted
$-
$102,676


Expenses 2026
Gifts to MPL: All Types
MPLF Operations
$102,676
14%
$622,929
86%


Foundation Total Funds Raised/ Expected 2026
Purpose Restricted
Unrestricted
$531,140 , 34%
$1,017,968 , 66%

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY

DRAFT

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY /// OCTOBER 2026

Campaign Planning Study Findings and Recommendations

Strengthening today's fundraising program and unlocking tomorrow's potential

PRESENTED TO THE MPL BOARD OF TRUSTEES



In Spring 2026, MPL sought to answer the question:
How can it best organize around its maximum campaign opportunity?

THE STUDY SET OUT TO

Gauge attitudes toward MPL, MPLF and a Campaign among key stakeholders.

Determine the potential support for a major Campaign, and the obstacles to it.

Recommend a strategy, goal, structure and timetable.

Assess readiness: internal capacity, the donor file and peer organizations.

20

Stakeholder Interviews

13 Library, Foundation, Friends and City leaders; 7 donors and funders

3,443

Donor behavior and capacity review

Anonymized analysis of MPLF giving behavior; wealth screening analysis

5

Comparative organizations

Library and relevant nonprofits and supporting foundations selected for review by MPL

Donor and funder interviews continue; findings will be reported when complete.

ATTACHMENT A - P. 8 of 63
MPL CONSENT AGENDA
1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes - 10/27/2026
P. 10

20 individuals and organizational representatives were engaged to inform the study process

STUDY WORKING GROUP

Dr. Michele Bria
MPL Board of Trustees President

Joan Johnson
Director and City Librarian (through August)

Jennifer Meyer-Stearns
Interim Library Director

STUDY ADVISORY GROUP

Dr. Michele Bria
MPL

Joan Johnson
MPL

Jennifer Meyer-Stearns
MPL

Michael Morgan
MPL Trustee

Robert Mlynarek
MPLF Board President

Ellen Sexton
MPLF Immediate Past President

Ryan Daniels
MPLF Executive Director

INTERNAL INTERVIEWS

Study Advisory Group (7)
all seven members

Neil Albrecht
MPL Trustee

Melissa Howard
MPL Community Relations

Sam McGovern-Rowan
MPLF Deputy Director

Laura Zahn
MPL Board Treasurer

Kristen Nelson
Friends of MPL Board President

Claire Zautke
Mayor's Office

EXTERNAL INTERVIEWS

Diane Buck
patron and donor

Cecelia Gore
Brewers Community Foundation

Art Harrington
Godfrey Kahn; former MPL and MPLF board

Rob Henken
Herzfeld Foundation

Marianne Lubar
donor; former MPLF board

Alicia Manning
Bradley Foundation

Mary Sprague
MPLF board member and donor

ATTACHMENT A - P. 9 of 63
MPL CONSENT AGENDA
1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes - 10/27/2026
P. 11

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Readiness rests on case, leadership, prospects and plan

Case

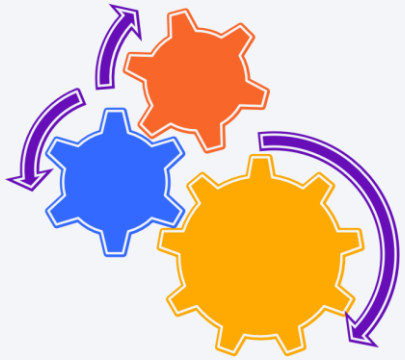
Is there, and do stakeholders perceive there is, a compelling reason to launch a Campaign?

Can the case connect a variety of prospects' interests to the priorities of the Campaign?

Structure & Plan

Are systems, processes, partnerships, and structures equipped to support a Campaign?

Are there obstacles to implementing a practical Campaign plan that stand in the way of a decision?



All fundraising organizations are in a continuous cycle of developing and connecting these prerequisites.

Leadership

Are volunteer and staff leaders in place who can and will open doors and influence philanthropy?

Will lead donors give early? And are there relationships to reach the top prospects?

Prospects

Are there enough donors with the capacity and inclination to give at the levels the goal requires?

Are the top gifts within reach, or does the goal depend on a few uncertain ones?

ATTACHMENT A - P. 10 of 63
MPL CONSENT AGENDA
1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes - 10/27/2026
P. 12

STUDY FINDINGS

Central Campaign considerations surround four themes

MPL and MPLF have a strong rationale to partner on a major Campaign.

- ✓ Public-private partnership is essential to safeguarding and advancing Milwaukee's public library system.
- ✓ Interviewees see expanded impact and infrastructure needs as able to connect to a resonant Campaign Case.

Leadership engagement can increase donor (and Campaign) potential.

- ✓ Interviewees consider the MPL Director role critical, and see onboarding as a relationship development opportunity.
- ✓ Networked Boards at both MPL and MPLF could support Campaign prospect conversion and positive momentum.

There is a loyal base, with the potential to expand, and new networks to access.

- ✓ Top donors to MPLF have expanded their giving, and for 15% of its donor file, MPLF has received a donor's largest documented gift.
- ✓ Prospect research, network mapping, and wealth screening analysis suggest there is additional capacity to realize.

A modernized partnership can ready the Campaign for a changing environment.

- ✓ MPLF's Ben Franklin Awards, Friends' Dead Bird Brewing intro, MPL's social and new programs – all indicators of possibility.
- ✓ Flat 10-year gift revenues suggest the conditions have not been supportive of higher and more sustainable growth.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

There is a strong basis for moving *toward* a Campaign

A viable prospect community underscores MPL's opportunity to engage and collaborate with MPLF and Friends of MPL on a large-scale Campaign initiative.

Case development, prospect and leadership engagement, and an increasingly aligned planning and operations context could support an effort more commensurate with the Library's opportunity.

FINDING 1 /// PROSPECTS

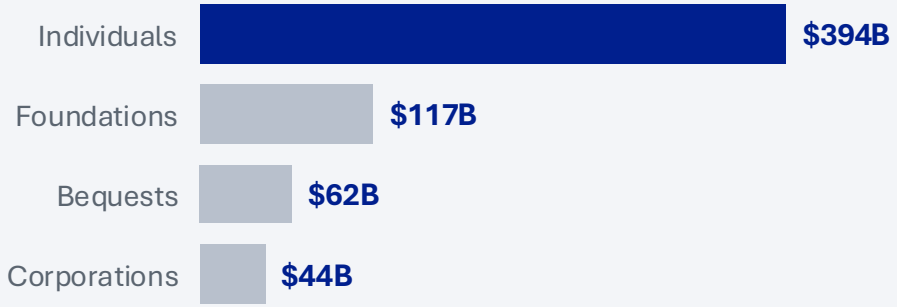
The external environment is broadly conducive, and there is a strong cadre of initial prospects for a Campaign.

Narrowing the gap between capacity and demonstrated giving through annual giving could strengthen the foundation of support in advance of a Campaign.

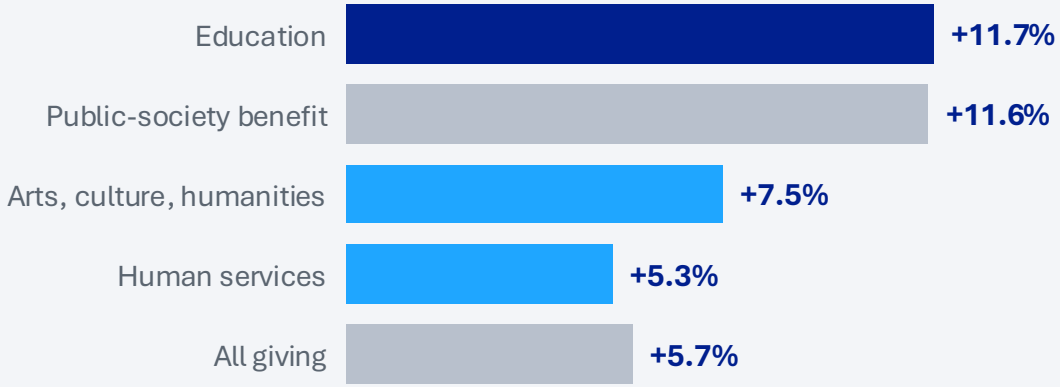
ATTACHMENT A - P. 13 of 63
MPL CONSENT AGENDA
1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes - 10/27/2026
P. 15

Americans gave $617B in 2025, mostly from individuals, and in areas aligned with the Library's core mission

2025 giving by source



Growth in giving by cause, 2025



Source: Giving USA 2026, Giving USA Foundation; Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

ATTACHMENT A - P. 14 of 63
MPL CONSENT AGENDA
1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes - 10/27/2026
P. 16

THE AVAILABILITY OF PHILANTHROPY

The Library's work aligns where Milwaukee philanthropy invests

WHAT THE LIBRARY DOES	WHERE MILWAUKEE FUNDERS INVEST
Early literacy and reading	Education and literacy
Job search and workforce programs	Workforce development
Free computers, Wi-Fi and digital help	Digital inclusion
Branches in every corner of the city	Neighborhood vitality
Culture and lifelong learning for all	Culture and civic pride

1,500

foundations domiciled in SE Wisconsin gave $630M (2024)

$2B

to charities in the state from **4,000** in-state and out-of-state institutions

40% of institutional funding focused in southeast Wisconsin (2024)



77% of Wisconsin's grantmakers support education
44% support arts, culture, and the humanities
42% support workforce development

Source: Inside Philanthropy; Wisconsin Philanthropy Network 2024 Wisconsin Gives Report in collaboration with the Center for Community and Nonprofit Studies at University of Wisconsin-Madison.

THE AVAILABILITY OF PHILANTHROPY

Significant support for the Library is made possible through institutional donors, where growth is possible, but with dependencies

CAPACITY FOR $1 MILLION OR MORE

7 **Current MPLF donors**
Gave to MPLF in the last five years, at lower levels. Engagement with the Library has been episodic.

6 **New prospects**
Identified through research, with direct alignment to a Library issue area.

CAPACITY FOR $100,000 TO $999,999

3 **Strong alignment**
Direct alignment with a Library issue area.

9 **Broad alignment**
General alignment with a Library issue area.

A Campaign may open more: corporate philanthropy and sponsorship budgets, and foundations for whom a major civic initiative matters. Campaign leadership will shape this.

24

institutions could each give $100,000 or more

Identified through prospect research

Scored on capacity (grant history) and affinity (Library issue areas). United Way appears in both $1M+ groups.

Individuals give 43% of MPLF's revenue, with room to grow

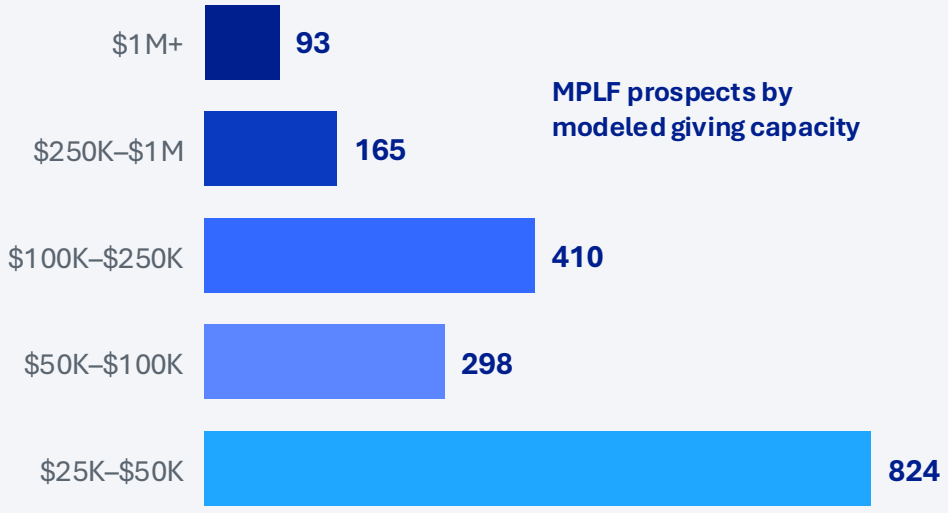
Wealth analysis shows the capacity is already in MPLF's donor file.

925
modeled major gift prospects among 3,443 donors screened

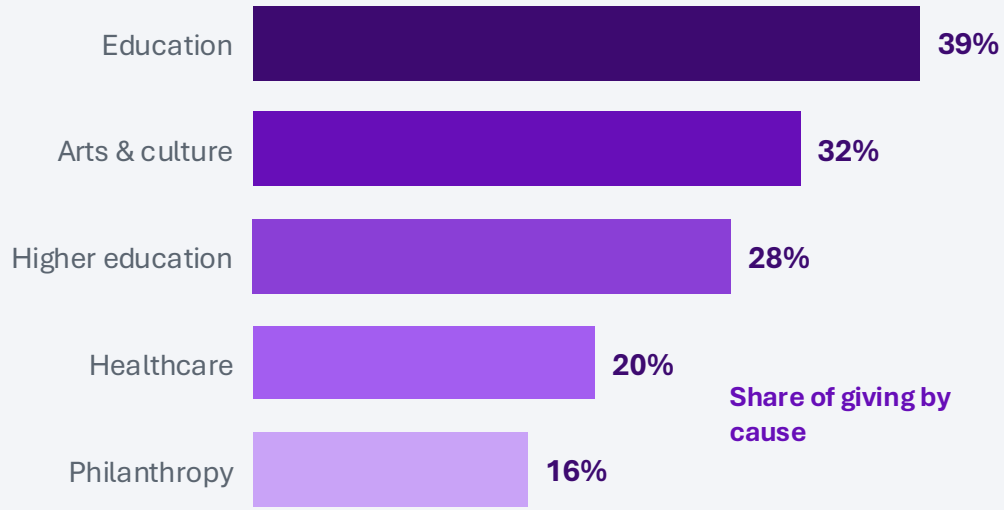
$122M
documented giving to other organizations

69%
of their giving to aligned causes stays local

Growing major gifts requires converting capacity and affinity into propensity, or giving.



MPLF prospects by modeled giving capacity

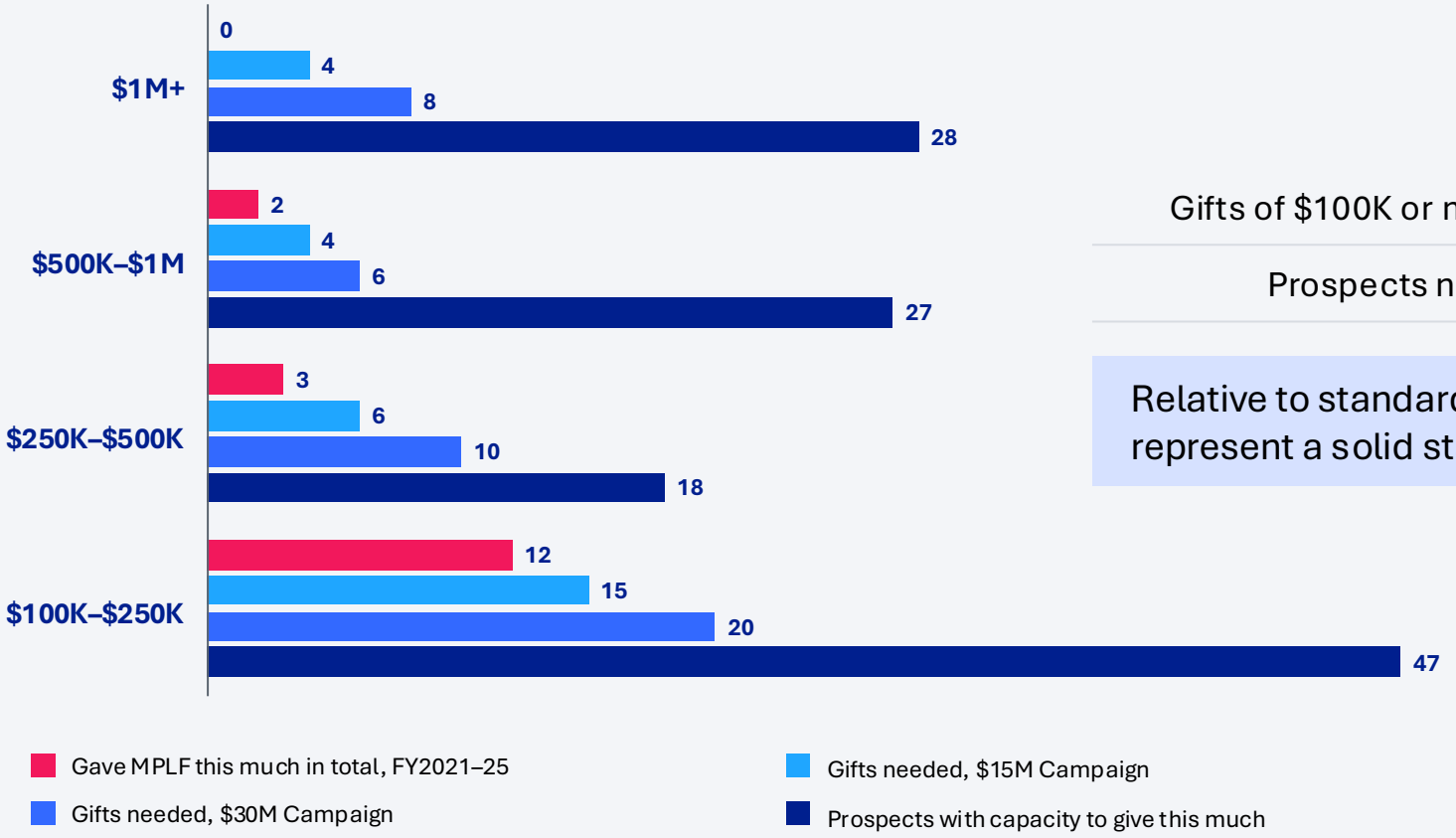


Share of giving by cause

Source: MPLF giving file (individuals and estates, FY2025); Changing Our World DonorSearch screening. Modeled prospects = DS1-1 to DS1-3.

ATTACHMENT A - P. 17 of 63
MPL CONSENT AGENDA
1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes - 10/27/2026
P. 19

120 current and former MPLF donors have the capacity for Campaign-level gifts



ILLUSTRATIVE CAMPAIGN TOTAL (PHILANTHROPY)

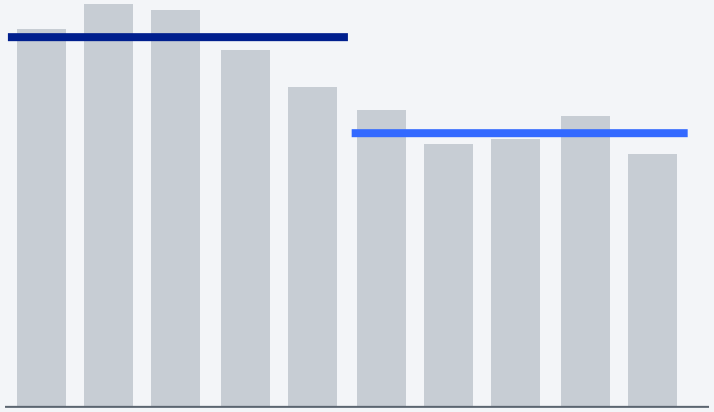
	$15M	$30M
Gifts of $100K or more needed	29	44
Prospects needed at 4:1	116	176

Relative to standards, **120 supporters**, though not yet qualified, represent a solid start in building a Campaign pipeline.

Source: DonorSearch five-year capacity, prospects who gave FY2023–25; MPLF giving FY2021–25, cash basis, each donor's five-year total; standard Campaign gift tables.

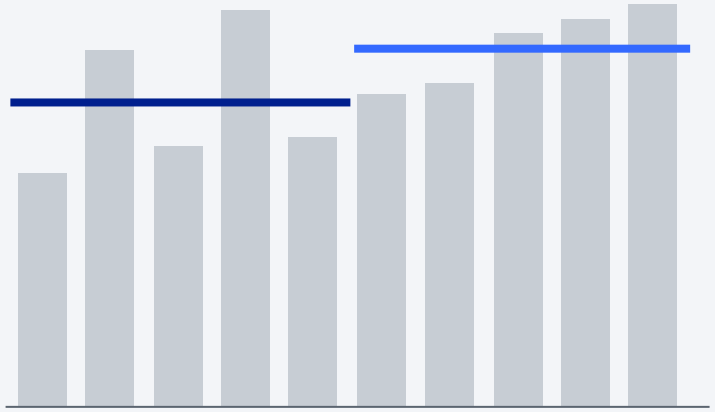
As is true across the sector, the number of active donors has declined, with a narrowing base of donors holding the revenue line

Active donors **–26%**



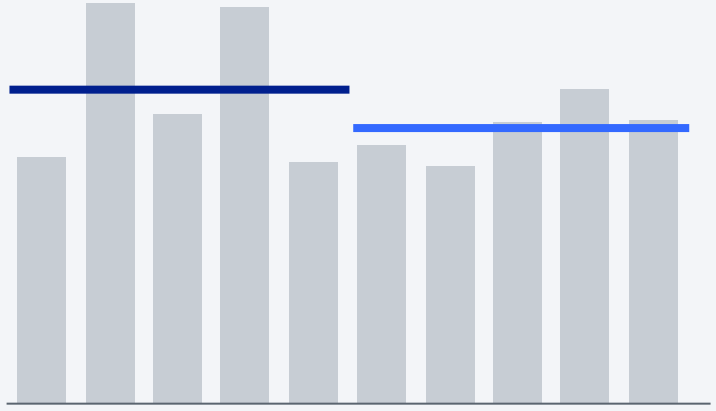
1,233 → **912**

Giving per donor **+18%**



$1,678 → **$1,981**

Total giving **–13%**

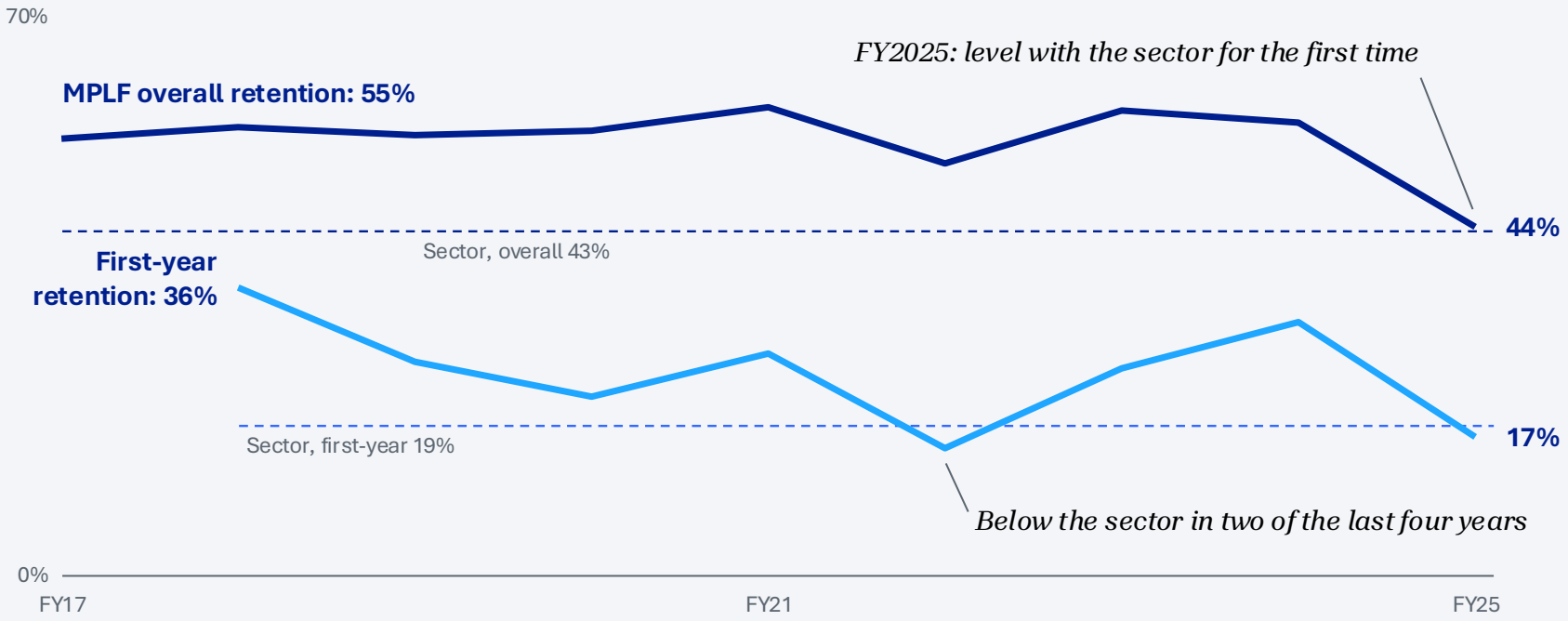


$2.07M → **$1.81M**

Five-year average, FY2016–20 | Five-year average, FY2021–25 | Each year

Source: MPLF giving file, cash receipts including pledges released. Changes compare five-year averages.

Donor retention has been an area of strength, typically beating the sector average



Retention is key to protecting and increasing current donor support.

1 in 5 new donors supports MPLF the next year. Modest first-year retention improvement can have a four-fold effect on lifetime value.

Capturing just 3% more capacity among current donors could translate to $9 million over five years.

Source: MPLF giving file; sector rates from the Fundraising Effectiveness Project, Q4 2025.

Sustainably maintaining operating and grant support at 2024 levels while preserving MPLF assets requires $300,000 in fundraising growth

- At about $0.20 to raise $1.00, MPLF's 2024 fundraising cost ratio is comparable to reviewed organizations and within industry benchmarks.
- Operating costs have risen 57% since 2021 while support to the Library has remained below pre-COVID levels.
- Historically, distributions from assets and the endowment have been necessary to meet the expected grant level.

Source: MPLF Form 990s. Operating Costs = management and general plus fundraising.

FINDING 2 /// CASE

Further case development can support converting affinity into stronger philanthropy

ATTACHMENT A - P. 22 of 63
MPL CONSENT AGENDA
1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes - 10/27/2026
P. 24

PERSPECTIVE ON THE CASE

Interviews uncovered a balance of opportunities and obstacles for Campaign success

THE VALUE OF SUPPORT

"The city provides the cake… and then [donors and MPLF are] the frosting."

"A library is the most important democratic institution that we have in the United States."

"Every neighborhood branch library is the community and civic center of that neighborhood."

"I used to think education and housing were the biggest challenge downtown, but I really think connectivity is what will help break that cycle of poverty and violence."

OBSTACLES

"There still is a pretty thin group of people who spend money in the cultural realm."

"People love their libraries. And how do you leverage that into fundraising?"

"If it's not clear who has the authority to do what and make what call, people will be very polite and take meetings, but they're not going to budge."

Clarity and coordination are essential for success in a multi-organization Campaign

Interviews uncovered areas where increased alignment will improve fundraising and donor engagement outcomes

Utilizing Library and Foundation leadership in donor engagement and experience

Improving clarity around roles, process, and coordination

Enhanced collaboration on communications, fundraising assets, and articulating the case for support

"It's hard to know who pays for what, where my money goes, and how my giving makes an impact beyond city funding."

"I can see more clearly the impact my community library makes than I can through funding MPLF."

"I get dense communications when shorter, more frequent and specific messages might be more helpful."

Further developing the continuum of needs and donor opportunities throughout the ecosystem should propel philanthropy

NEED

- Awareness and promotion of both the Library and its role in the community, and of ways to give through MPLF and Friends
- Predictable annual support of planned programs and programmatic execution
- Flexible funding supporting priority programmatic areas
- Capital investment

OPPORTUNITY

- Cadre of well-supported programs
- Branch-level opportunities
- Enhanced sales opportunities for Friends of MPL
- Revenue-generating opportunities through capital improvements

"What library product are we trying to provide for the residents of Milwaukee?"

"If resources weren't an issue, what would we do? We've never been in that position."

3

FINDING 3 /// LEADERSHIP

Board members bring networks while the MPL Director role is critical

ATTACHMENT A - P. 26 of 63
MPL CONSENT AGENDA
1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes - 10/27/2026
P. 28

Participants cited the need for an established MPL Director and identified opportunities to expand leadership engagement

- The MPL Director role is viewed as critical, both in terms of setting the objectives of the Campaign, and in advancing relationship development.
- Some interviewees expressed interest in creating greater engagement of the MPL Trustees.
- Interviewees suggested, and research affirms, the MPLF Board is well-positioned to access and engage influential leaders.
- Committed teams are in place at MPL and MPLF, though coordination rests at the top.

PERSPECTIVE ON LEADERSHIP

Participants cited the need for an established MPL Director and identified opportunities to expand leadership engagement

WHAT WE HEARD

Participants agree the new MPL Director is a key role that must be visible to donors.

- The MPL Director role is viewed as critical, both in terms of setting the objectives of the Campaign, and in advancing relationship development.
- Some interviewees expressed interest in creating greater engagement of the MPL Trustees.
- Interviewees suggested, and research affirms, the MPLF Board is well-positioned to access and engage influential leaders.
- Committed teams are in place at MPL and MPLF, though coordination rests at the top.

PERSPECTIVE ON LEADERSHIP

Operating practices are not sufficiently developed or codified, which could be limiting philanthropic growth

COORDINATION, TODAY

Organized around specific projects, grants and opportunities

Separate, largely transactional annual planning

Information sharing

Roles set by an agreement written in 1990

COLLABORATION, FOR A CAMPAIGN

Shared priorities and a case built together

Joint, multiyear planning from shared budgets

Standardized, appropriate information flow, both directions

Clear decision rights and accountability

Roles are currently defined by a 36-year-old agreement.

Summary Findings

A Campaign can scale as each prerequisite for success develops



Case

Frame facility needs within a broader impact agenda.



Prospects

Turn capacity into Campaign readiness and partner in major donor development.



Leadership

Deepen leadership engagement with donors, leveraging the talents, networks and roles of MPL and MPLF leadership.



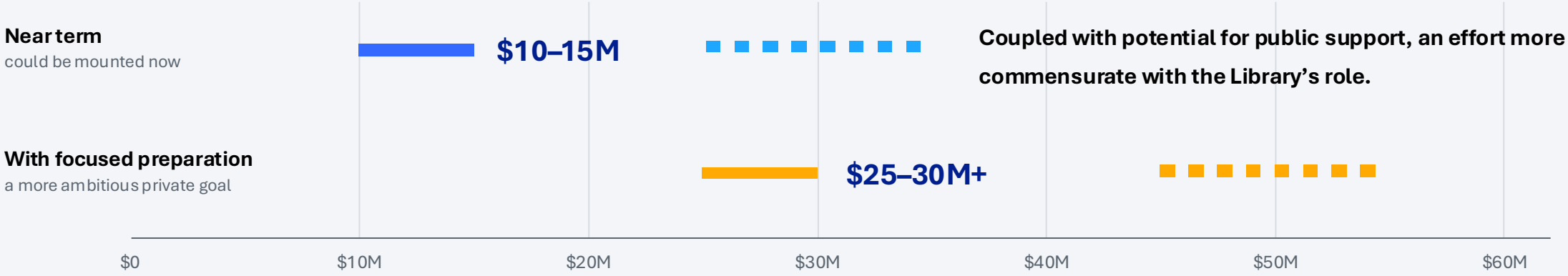
Structure & Plan

Advance the institutional relationship to effectively and efficiently collaborate for enhanced donor engagement and coordination.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Focused preparation could launch a Campaign commensurate with the opportunity

A Campaign may be possible in the near term; 15 months of relationship development and alignment could support a more ambitious private goal.

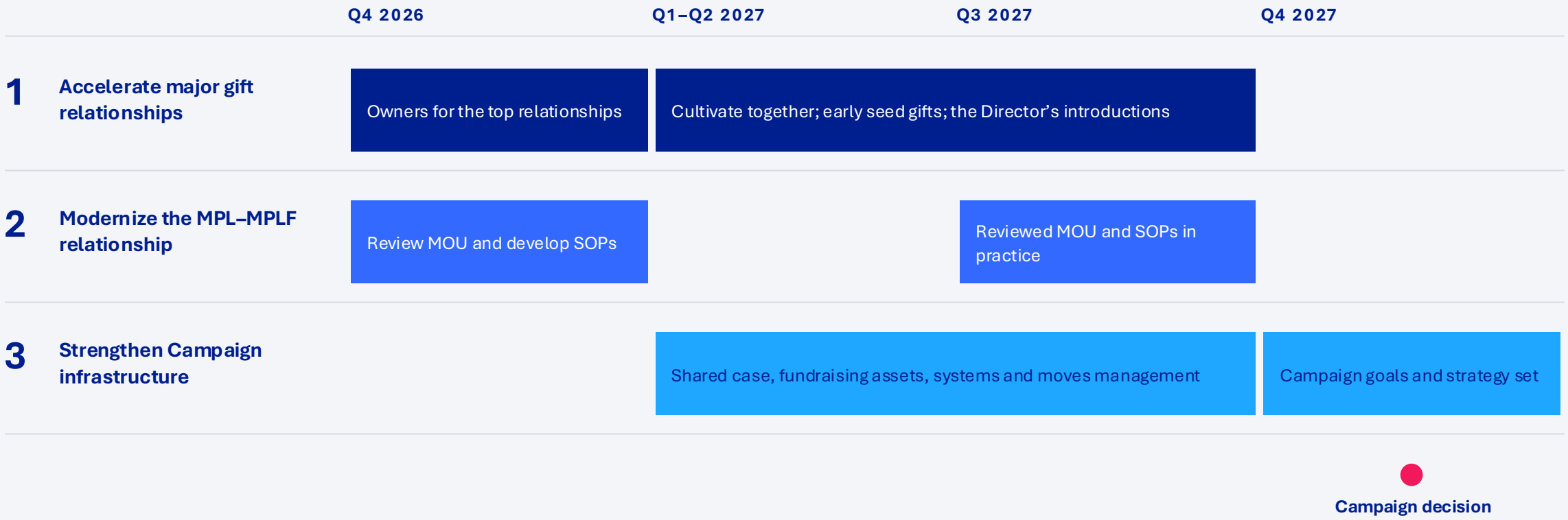


In the range of the Library's estimated $50 million need

RECOMMENDATIONS

Use the next 15 months to deepen donor engagement and strengthen how MPL and MPLF work together

Three priorities, phased toward a Campaign decision in Q4 2027 and a Campaign beginning in 2028.



Reviewing key areas and developing SOPs could support greater alignment

Annual and multiyear budgeting and planning.
Program planning to the budget envelope and formal grant request and reporting.

KPIs for regular two-way reporting.
Consistent procedures for planning, budgeting, and governance to provide leadership, Trustees, and Board members with greater visibility to support their leadership roles.

Pipeline coordination.
While donor management falls firmly within MPLF's mandate, MPL's involvement can support deeper donor engagement and provide visibility into the availability of philanthropic funding for key projects and priorities.

THE DECISION

Encourage MPL Trustees to consider the findings in this report

Review the memorandum to determine if a revision would be helpful and engage the MPLF Board.

1. **Charter a joint working group.** Agree on necessary SOPs and review the MOU by the end of Q4 2026.

2. **Agree on readiness measures.** Review them together each quarter, leading to a Campaign decision in Q4 2027.

3. **Plan for MPL Director onboarding.** Include both internal Foundation planning activities and external relationship development in partnership with MPLF.

4. **Support staff in developing SOPs.** Give MPL and MPLF staff the time and guidance to document shared procedures.

ATTACHMENT A - P. 35 of 63
MPL CONSENT AGENDA
1. Regular Board Meeting Minutes - 10/27/2026
P. 37

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY /// CAMPAIGN PLANNING STUDY

Thank you

Questions and discussion

CHANGING OUR WORLD



MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Tuesday, October 27, 2026

Video Conference via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT: Michael Morgan, Ald. Milele Coggs Neil Albrecht, Ald. Andrea Pratt, Katie Sanders, Ald. Larresa Taylor, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns

OTHERS PRESENT: MPL: Rebecca Colby, Tim Fluhr, Ha Hoang, Melissa Howard, Dan Keeley, Sarah Leszczynski, Karli Pederson, Jessica Wolf
PFM Asset Management: Richard Romero, Wayne Sattler

Chair Michael Morgan called the meeting of the Board of Trustees Finance & Personnel Committee to order at 8:34 a.m. on Tuesday, October 27, 2026. All Trustees and presenters participated by video or audio conference.

1. **Committee Meeting Minutes Review**. The Committee reviewed the minutes from the April 28, 2026 and July 28, 2026 meetings. Trustee Albrecht moved to approve the minutes; Trustee Pratt seconded. Motion passed.

2. **Quarterly Review of Fund Investments**. On behalf of U.S. Bank, Vice President and Senior Relationship Manager Richard Romero thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as the investment manager. Wayne Sattler, Senior Vice President & Managing Director with PFM Asset Management LLC (a subsidiary of U.S. Bancorp Asset Management / U.S. Bank N.A.) presented an update on the quarterly investment reports. Investment fund managers are monitoring global and domestic inflation concerns. Factors to consider over the next 6-12 months include interest-rate volatility and fiscal challenges due to conflict with Iran and ongoing geopolitical uncertainty. At this time, no changes are recommended to MPL's current asset allocation. Informational item.

3. **Quarterly Library Report of the Internal Control of the MPL Trust and Gift Funds**. The Internal Controls memo for third quarter 2026 was listed as Attachment B of the agenda. Interim Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns reported all internal controls processes were followed and there were no accounting issues. Informational item.

4. **2027 Library Trust & Gift Fund Expenditure Request**. Interim Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns presented Library Administration's request to expend funds from the MPL investment fund in 2027 as described in the memo listed as Attachment C of the agenda. Per Board policy, MPL may request to withdraw 4-5% of the fund each year. Unrestricted funds will be used for programming, marketing, and professional development. Restricted funds will be used for materials purchases. The 2027 request is $353,000. The request is based on the average balance over the past 12 months. Future Trust & Gift fund memos will include these balances for reference. Trustee Sanders moved to approve the request to expend up to $353,000 from the MPL Trust and Gift Funds for operational support in 2027. Trustee Albrecht seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting of the Library Board's Finance & Personnel Committee was adjourned at 9:20 a.m. on Tuesday, October 27, 2026.

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SERVICES & PROGRAMS COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Wednesday, November 4, 2026

Video Conference via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT: Ald. Milele Coggs, Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Larresa Taylor, Missy Zombor, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns

EXCUSED: Mary Urbina-McCarthy

STAFF: MPL: Kelly Bolter, Rebecca Colby, Tim Fluhr, Ha Hoang, Melissa Howard, Carlos Lopez, Tammy Mays Wilder, Karli Pederson, Kelly Wochinske, Jessica Wolf

Chair Milele Coggs called the MPL Board of Trustees Services and Programs Committee meeting to order at 4:08 p.m. on Wednesday, November 4, 2026. All Trustees and presenters participated by video or audio conference.

1. **Committee Meeting Minutes Review**. Chair Coggs entertained a motion to accept the minutes from the July 1, 2026 meeting. Trustee Zombor moved approval of the minutes. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

2. **Safety Report**. Library Security Manager Carlos Lopez reported on security incidents in the third quarter of 2026. Overall, incidents have increased by 94% over the same time period in 2025. The majority of security incidents were related to alcohol/drugs, general disruptions, loitering, theft, and verbal altercations. Security incidents decreased at Tippecanoe Branch. Mr. Lopez noted the incidents listed between midnight and 7:00 a.m. were due to data entry error. The security report will be updated to remove that data. Informational item.

3. **Patron Ban Appeal Hearing**. Patron Sandra Moore was not in attendance. The Committee dismissed this item from the agenda with no action taken.

4. **Upcoming Events and Programs**. Adult Programming Coordinator Kelly Bolter shared a list of upcoming programs through the end of the year.

    - November 7th: The 3rd Annual Unity in the Community event at Mitchell Street Branch will celebrate the diverse cultures that make Milwaukee special. The event will include music, dance performances, arts & crafts for all ages, hands-on maker space, Cargill Community kitchen activities, food trucks, and more.
    - November 9th: In collaboration with Boswell Book Company, MPL welcomes author Thomas Schlesser to discuss his bestselling novel *Mona's Eyes*.
    - November 10th: MPL will host author, activist, and forager Robin Greenfield. Mr. Greenfield will present on food sovereignty and natural medicine.
    - November 13th: Celebrating America Recycles Day at Martin Luther King Branch. MPL is collaborating with Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), the Department of Public Works, and Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful for the reception and unveiling of a student art gallery. MPS students created art using items commonly mistaken as recyclable. The gallery will be on display for one month.
    - November 15th: MPL will collaborate with the Wisconsin Marine Historical Society and the Milwaukee Community Sailing Center to welcome Dr. Steve Ackerman for a presentation

on the wreck of the Rouse Simmons. The event will feature artifacts from the Rouse Simmons, which are part of MPL's Special Collections and Archives.

- December 23rd: 2nd Annual Community Gathering Event at Atkinson Branch. The gathering welcomes patrons and community members to engage with neighbors, learn about library resources, and help build a more connected community.
- November 17th and December 15th: 5th Annual Holiday Community Meals at Mitchell Street Branch. The meals provide a place to connect and commune over holiday food designed and prepared by Chef Sharrie Agee.

Informational item.

5. **Milwaukee Poet Laureate Update**. Adult Programming Coordinator Kelly Bolter shared details about the upcoming Milwaukee Poet Laureate Program. For over 20 years, the Milwaukee Poet Laureate Program has amplified and uplifted local poetry. Each Poet Laureate serves as an ambassador of poetry, helping promote poetry as art and inspiring new audiences throughout the community. The Poet Laureate is selected by a committee to serve a 2-year term. The 2027-28 selection committee will be chaired by Public Services Area Manager (Central Library) Tim Fluhr, who shared information about the committee and selection process. The selection committee is a diverse group of community members with ties to the Milwaukee cultural and arts scene. The application will remain open through November 22nd. Trustees were invited to share the application with their networks. Application review and interviews will be held in December and selection will be finalized mid-January 2027. The inaugural event will be held in April to coincide with National Poetry Month. Informational item.

6. **Programs & Services Highlight: Food & Nutrition**. Associate Library Director Ha Hoang presented an overview of nutrition programs and services at the library. The presentation is attached at the end of these minutes. As part of the Community Health and Wellbeing strategic directive, MPL has expanded food-related programming and nutritional education. The goal of this work is to offer accessible, welcoming opportunities to build food knowledge, cooking skills, and connection to community resources. In addition to the Cargill Community Kitchen at Mitchell Street Branch, MPL also offers mobile kitchens called Charlie Carts at Martin Luther King Branch, Good Hope Branch, and Central Library. Charlie Carts allow staff to offer cooking demos, hands-on cooking instruction, and programming related to food and nutrition. Through a partnership with Feeding America, MPL was able to create 5 'Kitchen-In-A-Box' kits. The kits include various cooking equipment and utensils for programming and cooking demonstrations. MPL offers seed libraries at East, Good Hope, Tippecanoe, Zablocki Branches and will expand to additional locations in 2027. Programming at these locations will incorporate the seed libraries, various aspects of home gardening, food preservation, sustainability, and community partnerships. Informational item.

The meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board's Services & Programs Committee was adjourned at 4:46 p.m. on November 4, 2026.

Snack Hacks, Community Meals, and More

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY







Mobile Kitchens: Charlie Carts & Kitchen-in-a-Box







Growing MPL's Seed Libraries









MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
BUILDING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Thursday, November 5, 2026

Video Conference via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT: Michael Morgan, Ald. Larresa Taylor, Matt Kowalski, Teresa Mercado, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns

EXCUSED: Ald. Andrea Pratt

STAFF: Rebecca Colby, Tim Fluhr, Ha Hoang, Melissa Howard, Dan Keeley, Yves LaPierre, Tammy Mays Wilder, Karli Pederson, Chris Schabel, PJ Woboril

Chair Michael Morgan called the MPL Board of Trustees Building and Development Committee meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. on November 5, 2026 with a quorum present.

1. **Approval of the Minutes**. Chair Morgan entertained a motion to accept the minutes from the September 3, 2026 meeting. Trustee Kowalski moved approval of the minutes and Trustee Mercado seconded. Motion passed.

2. **Facilities Projects Update**. Library Facilities Manager PJ Woboril presented and update on the fire alarm system and masonry projects. MPL is working with Johnson Controls to upgrade the badge/alarm system to C-Cure 9000. The project is about 95% complete, with all physical hardware upgrades done and remaining firmware/server upgrades in progress. The Central Library fire alarm upgrade is ongoing and final inspection is expected to be completed by the end of 2026. Work may continue into early 2027 to remove the old systems. MPL is in the early stages of updates to the Metasys HVAC system at Central Library. Work is expected to be completed by spring 2027. As part of Phase 1 of the masonry restoration at Central Library, the eagles from Central Library will be removed and transported to the contractor's workshop for repairs. Future projects for 2027 include Phase 2 of the masonry restoration and Central Library terrace repair. Informational item.

3. **Midtown Update**. Library Construction Projects Manager Yves LaPierre shared an update on the Midtown project. The presentation is attached at the end of these minutes. MPL and Engberg Anderson Architects completed a walk-thru and assessment of the former Walmart space and Engberg Anderson is working on initial space planning. On November 10th, MPL will host a community listening session at Capitol Branch to gauge community expectations for a new library and unique needs of the service area. The Department of Public Works (DPW) has engaged an engineering firm to complete an assessment which will be shared with MPL and the building owner. Other potential tenants, including City departments, are not confirmed at this time. Gorman & Co. will begin work on the housing phase, with groundbreaking expected to begin before the end of the year. Informational item.

4. **LEED Gold Standard Certification**. Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns shared the City of Milwaukee achieved LEED Gold Standard Certification status for its sustainability projects. MPL was recognized for implementing green infrastructure on building projects and upgrades. Informational item.

The meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board's Building & Development Committee was adjourned at 8:39 a.m. on November 5, 2026.

Building and Development Committee – November 5, 2026

- Engberg Anderson Architects
  - Inspect former Walmart
  - Community Meeting on November 10, 6pm
  - Create Workplan
  - Schematic Designs
- DPW Building Condition Assessment – Nov. 2026
- Nothing stopping library from building out space.
- Lease Option in Place
- Determine what repairs landlord will do – roof etc.
- Lease finalized by summer 2027 – before construction.
- Co-Tenant ongoing discussion but not likely until 2028
- Developer Housing Construction Fall 2026
- Winter/Spring 2027 Final Library Plans and Construction Pricing
- Summer/Fall 2027 –Construction bidding and groundbreaking



CAPITOL/MIDTOWN BRANCH REDEVELOPMENT

Building and Development Committee – November 5, 2026

Midtown Branch Community Meeting



Tuesday, November 10
6-7:30 p.m.

Milwaukee Public Library
Capitol Branch
3969 N. 74th St.

The Milwaukee Public Library and Engberg Anderson Architects will be hosting a Listening Session to learn what you want to see in the new Midtown Branch Library.

Free and open to all. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. Contact the City of Milwaukee ADA Coordinator, 414-286-3475 or adacoordinator@milwaukee.gov no later than 72 hours before the scheduled event. 2026

MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC LIBRARY

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Thursday, November 19, 2026

Virtual via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT: Michele Bria, Teresa Mercado, Michael Morgan, Jennifer Meyer-Stearns

OTHERS PRESENT: MPL: Rebecca Colby, Ha Hoang
Budget & Policy Division: Nathaniel Haack

Chair Bria called the MPL Board of Trustees Executive Committee meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. on November 19, 2026. All Trustees participated by video conference.

---

1. **Approval of the Minutes**. Chair Bria entertained a motion to accept the minutes from the June 11, 2025 meeting. Trustee Morgan moved to approve the minutes and Trustee Mercado seconded. Motion passed.

2. **2026 Summary and 2027 Visioning** Interim Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns presented an overview of MPL's 2026 accomplishments and activities.

   2026 accomplishments and activities include:
   - Over 3,800 programs and events systemwide as well as many outreach programs. Successful and well-attended programs include: Zine Fest, which had over 5,000 attendees; Central Library hosted PBS for the Be My Neighbor Day; 3rd annual Unity in the Community event at Mitchell Street Branch, which had nearly 500 attendees.
   - Continued outstanding social media engagement.
   - Maintenance of Sunday hours at 4 locations. MPL Administration and managers are adjusting staffing models and formulations to enhance programs and services.
   - Connecting resource need with strategic priorities and strengthening partnerships to extend community impact.
   - Civic participation and learning opportunities; several MPL staff worked as volunteers on election day.
   - In partnership with the Department of Public Works and Milwaukee Public Schools, MPL hosted the 3rd annual celebration of America Recycles Day at Martin Luther King Branch.
   - In partnership with the Mayor's Office and UW-Milwaukee, MPL hosted a community assembly on housing in Milwaukee. Library staff helped facilitate discussions about the City's future housing investments.
   - MPL continues to work closely with the MPL Foundation to share information and aligning fundraising support with MPL's goals and strategic priorities.

   Associate Library Director, Patron Experience & Strategy, Ha Hoang presented details on 2027 priorities and strategic initiatives. The presentation is attached at the end of these minutes. MPL's core services remain unchanged but have been reimagined. In 2027, library priorities are:
   - Food access and nutrition
   - Continuing to be a welcoming and inclusive 3rd space
   - Library service innovation

- Virtual services and access
- Strengthening early literacy and learning services
- Teen/young adult career pathways

To meet these priorities, MPL core services will focus on:

- Continued and new programming related to food access and nutrition literacy
- Piloting a sensory-friendly space at Central Library and accessibility kits for adults and children
- Helping teens find their voices through makerspace activities, teen services, and peer connections
- Expanding digital access and skills, including increases to the hotspot lending program.
- Helping connect community members to economic opportunity and work force development
- Strengthening neighborhood connections; understanding the unique neighborhoods and community needs throughout the MPL system
- Continued investment in community room upgrades
- Expanded outreach services
- Using emerging technology to enhance library work and make collections more accessible
- Providing exceptional internal and external customer service through the OneMPL model; offering virtual reference services and access;
- Literacy Hubs initiative, which are collections of decodable books that help enhance early literacy
- Teen and young adult workforce development

Informational item.

3. **Fundraising Feasibility Study Update**. Interim Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns met with several Trustees to address follow up questions from the report that was presented at the October Board meeting. There is unanimous interest in reviewing the recommendations and approving recommendations for action. Next steps include chartering a working group to align standard operating procedures, reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding, creating readiness measures for a major campaign, and identifying priorities for the first quarter in 2027. A recommendation for creating the working group will be presented at the November Board meeting. Informational item.

4. **2027 Fundraising Request to MPL Foundation (MPLF)**. Interim Library Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns shared a draft of the 2027 funding request to MPLF. The current funding and request structure pose challenges to MPL's funding request forecasting. The request may need to be updated if additional funds are received from MPLF in 2026. The request will be presented to the Board at the November meeting. Informational item.

5. **MPL Board Committee Revision**. Interim Director Jennifer Meyer-Stearns proposed combining the MPL Board Innovation & Strategy Committee and Library Services & Programs Committee. The Executive Committee is supportive of this change. Director Meyer-Stearns will contact the committee chairs to discuss. Informational item.

6. **Board Education**. The Committee discussed topics for Board education in 2026. MPL staff will present details and examples of the MPL Core Services outlined in the presentation by Associate Director Hoang. In January, Associate Director Hoang will present information about MPL Literacy Hubs. Informational item.

The meeting of the Milwaukee Public Library Board's Executive Committee was adjourned at 5:02 p.m**.** on November 19, 2026.

MPL Looking Ahead: 2027 Priorities

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Food access and nutrition

- Enhanced food programming & initiatives
- Nutrition education
- Health resources

Welcoming inclusive spaces

- Explore sensory-friendly spaces and accessibility needs
- Central Library pilot

Library service innovation

- AI and emerging technology exploration to enhance collection discovery and workflows
- Self-service access models

Virtual services and access

- Expanded digital collections
- Virtual reference and programs
- Expanded weekend phone services

Strengthen early literacy and learning

- Pilot early literacy hubs
- Decodable book collections
- Staff training in science of reading

Teen/young adult career pathways

- Skill building programs
- Career exploration
- Connection to employment opportunities









Organizational Shifts: Implement customer service model systemwide that will direct how MPL internally realizes its mission and fulfills our promise to the community

Milwaukee Public Library Core Services

Open doors to lifelong learning

- Books & digital content
- Trusted information
- Programs & classes
- Research assistance

Build strong foundations for children

- Early literacy support
- School readiness
- School-age learning
- Caregiver resources

Help teens find their voice

- Safe & welcoming spaces
- Peer connections
- Hands-on learning
- Skill & confidence development

Expand digital access & skills

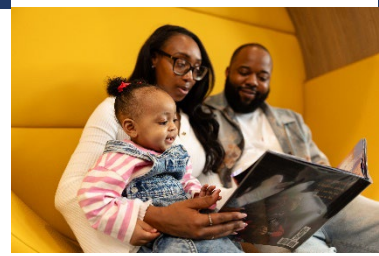
- Access to technology devices
- Free high-speed Wi-Fi
- Digital literacy programming

Connect people to economic opportunity

- Job search assistance
- Resume support
- Workforce resources

Strengthen neighborhood connections

- 13 locations across Milwaukee
- Community rooms
- Outreach services









Milwaukee Public Library
Financial Report
October 31, 2026

City Revenues

	2026 Budget	2026 Received to date	2026 % Received	2025 Budget	2025 Received to date	2025 % Received
Additional City Appropriation	$ 32,698,143	$ 27,416,650	83.8%	$ 32,920,741	$ 25,136,941	76.4%
Fines	$ 92,000	$ 68,461	74.4%	$ 94,000	$ 64,595	68.7%
Lost Materials, etc.	$ 46,000	$ 42,061	91.4%	$ 50,000	$ 45,404	90.8%
MCFLS Contracts	$ 1,028,000	$ 817,408	79.5%	$ 927,000	$ 773,019	83.4%
Total City Appropriation	**$ 33,864,143**	**$ 28,344,580**	**83.7%**	**$ 33,991,741**	**$ 26,019,959**	**76.5%**

City Expenses

Salaries & Benefits

	2026 Budget	2026 Spent to date	2026 % Spent	2025 Budget	2025 Spent to date	2025 % Spent
Salaries	$ 19,412,775	$ 16,664,153	85.8%	$ 18,849,425	$ 15,350,240	81.4%
Fringe Benefits	$ 8,735,750	$ 7,227,064	82.7%	$ 8,792,742	$ 6,021,064	68.5%
Total	**$ 28,148,525**	**$ 23,891,217**	**84.9%**	**$ 27,642,167**	**$ 21,371,304**	**77.3%**

Supplies & Services

	2026 Budget	2026 Spent to date	2026 % Spent	2025 Budget	2025 Spent to date	2025 % Spent
General Office Expense	$ 116,550	$ 75,227	64.5%	$ 115,700	$ 79,884	69.0%
Construction Supplies	$ 27,133	$ 19,831	73.1%	$ 18,000	$ 14,845	82.5%
Energy	$ 913,744	$ 808,756	88.5%	$ 886,500	$ 626,372	70.7%
Other Operating Supplies	$ 348,084	$ 276,703	79.5%	$ 278,956	$ 158,930	57.0%
Vehicle Rental	$ 9,530	$ 10,244	107.5%	$ 9,200	$ 4,229	46.0%
Non-Vehicle Equipment Rental	$ 13,200	$ 9,532	72.2%	$ 13,200	$ 7,640	57.9%
Professional Services	$ 119,342	$ 69,453	58.2%	$ 86,600	$ 74,241	85.7%
Information Technology Services	$ 394,200	$ 363,092	92.1%	$ 357,920	$ 315,300	88.1%
Property Services	$ 688,500	$ 763,115	110.8%	$ 1,476,520	$ 1,486,861	100.7%
Infrastructure Services	$ 125,000	$ 146,491	117.2%	$ 121,000	$ 100,634	83.2%
Other Operating Services	$ 151,874	$ 116,342	76.6%	$ 152,112	$ 73,329	48.2%
Reimburse Other Departments	$ 120,916	$ 101,836	84.2%	$ 111,900	$ 35,912	32.1%
Total	**$ 3,028,073**	**$ 2,760,622**	**91.2%**	**$ 3,627,608**	**$ 2,978,177**	**82.1%**

Equipment

	2026 Budget	2026 Spent to date	2026 % Spent	2025 Budget	2025 Spent to date	2025 % Spent
Library Materials	$ 1,946,000	$ 1,402,338	72.1%	$ 1,885,500	$ 1,212,551	64.3%
IT Equipment	$ 359,534	$ 93,320	26.0%	$ 220,824	$ 72,794	33.0%
Other	$ 148,311	$ 35,068	23.6%	$ 337,042	$ 167,966	49.8%
Total	**$ 2,453,845**	**$ 1,530,726**	**62.4%**	**$ 2,443,366**	**$ 1,453,311**	**59.5%**

Other Departmental Appropriation

	2026 Budget	2026 Spent to date	2026 % Spent	2025 Budget	2025 Spent to date	2025 % Spent
Villard Square Property Payment	$ 12,000	$ -	0.0%	$ 11,600	$ 9,216	0.0%
East Property Payment	$ 11,000	$ 9,504	86.4%	$ 9,133	$ 9,133	0.0%
Mitchell Street Property Payment	$ 23,000	$ -	0.0%	$ 76,000	$ 59,942	78.9%
MLK Property Payment	$ 23,000	$ 10,858	47.2%	$ -	$ -	0.0%
Good Hope Property Payment	$ 23,000	$ -	0.0%	$ 42,967	$ -	0.0%
Contingent Energy Financing	$ 141,700	$ 141,653	100.0%	$ 138,900	$ 138,876	100.0%
Total	**$ 233,700**	**$ 162,015**	**69.3%**	**$ 278,600**	**$ 217,167**	**77.9%**

Total City Expenses	**$ 33,864,143**	**$ 28,344,580**	**83.7%**	**$ 33,991,741**	**$ 26,019,959**	**76.5%**

Milwaukee Public Library
Financial Report
October 31, 2026

Additional Funding Sources

Grants

	2026 Budget	2026 Spent to date	2026 % Spent	2025 Budget	2025 Spent to date	2025 % Spent
WTBBL Jul '26 - Jun '27	$ 1,214,000	$ 422,235	34.8%	$ 1,178,700	$ 333,924	28.3%
ILL Jul '26 - Jun '27	$ 271,050	$ 86,100	31.8%	$ 263,150	$ 64,363	24.5%
Total	**$ 1,485,050**	**$ 508,335**	**34.2%**	**$ 1,441,850**	**$ 398,287**	**27.6%**

Trust Funds

	2026 Budget	2026 Spent to date	2026 % Spent	2025 Budget	2025 Spent to date	2025 % Spent
Materials	$ 172,000	$ 124,688	72.5%	$ 167,000	$ 166,945	100.0%
Programming	$ 75,000	$ 35,150	46.9%	$ 53,000	$ 26,409	49.8%
Training	$ 27,000	$ 7,106	26.3%	$ 26,000	$ 23,014	88.5%
*Marketing**	$ 91,000	$ 14,684	16.1%	$ 45,000	$ 454	1.0%
Contingency	$ 4,000	$ 217	5.4%	$ 5,000	$ 500	10.0%
Board Development	$ 3,000	$ -	0.0%	$ 5,000	$ 384	7.7%
Strehlow 50+	$ 8,000	$ 998	12.5%	$ 8,000	$ 2,341	29.3%
*Fundraising Feasibility Study***	$ 86,000	$ 82,141	95.5%	$ -	$ -	100.0%
Hot Spots	$ -	$ -	100.0%	$ 295,000	$ -	0.0%
4T Renovation	$ -	$ -	100.0%	$ 689,773	$ -	0.0%
Total	**$ 466,000**	**$ 264,984**	**56.9%**	**$ 1,293,773**	**$ 220,047**	**17.0%**

**2026 Trust - Marketing budget includes $45,000 in carryover*

***Funded by proceeds from sale of former Forest Home Branch Library*

Foundation Contributions

	2026 Budget	2026 Spent to date	2026 % Spent	2025 Budget	2025 Spent to date	2025 % Spent
Materials	$ 358,716	$ 98,045	27.3%	$ 281,497	$ 23,828	8.5%
Programming	$ 1,315,914	$ 456,020	34.7%	$ 1,692,109	$ 1,208,986	71.4%
Total	**$ 1,674,630**	**$ 554,065**	**33.1%**	**$ 1,973,606**	**$ 1,232,814**	**62.5%**

Investments

U.S. Bank National Assoc. Commercial Paper (rated A1) confirmation #327157881 dated 10/07/26 and maturing 11/06/26 at a rate of 1.50%...$275,000

Director's Report
November 2026

November's work focused on preparing MPL for the year ahead, connecting resource needs with strategic priorities and strengthening partnerships that extend the library's community impact. Budget work continued in collaboration with the Mayor's Office and Common Council. These discussions provided opportunities to highlight the library's value to the community, communicate service priorities and resource needs, and respond to questions about the year ahead.

Ongoing City partnerships connected residents with civic participation and learning opportunities. Interim Library Director Meyer-Stearns supported the Milwaukee Election Commission's Election Day efforts, alongside staff who volunteered and library locations that served as voting sites. Now in its third year, the America Recycles Day collaboration with the Department of Public Works and Milwaukee Public Schools showcased student artwork made from recycled materials. The library also hosted a Community Assembly on Housing in partnership with the Mayor's Office and UW–Madison, with library staff helping facilitate discussions among 30 residents about the City's future housing investments.

Planning for next year included working with staff to organize funding needs around shared strategic priorities. This approach connects individual requests to broader goals and provides a clearer framework for considering investments and communicating their value.

Work with the fundraising feasibility study consultants continued, with attention to next steps and building a shared understanding of MPL's future needs. These conversations are helping align fundraising planning and support with the library's strategic priorities and long-term sustainability. Staff received an update on MPL's refreshed Strategic Directions, which clearly articulate the library's priorities and provide a shared guide for planning and decision-making. Related work to strengthen MPL's brand continued, supporting a consistent, recognizable identity that reflects the library's mission and helps residents connect with its services.

As the year closes, leadership's focus will turn to translating these priorities into achievable plans for 2027.

Summary of Virtual and In-person Programs
October 2026

MPL HELPS PEOPLE READ

An Evening with Historian Craig Fehrman. Milwaukee Public Library and Boswell Book Company welcomed Craig Fehrman to share a fresh account of one of the most important episodes in American history, the Lewis and Clark expedition. In his new book, *This Vast Enterprise*, Fehrman spent five years visiting more than thirty archives, interviewing more than a hundred sources, and collecting oral history passed down over centuries. He came to see that the success of Lewis and Clark depended on much more than just Lewis and Clark. Attendance: 54

No Prophets Book Tour: Representative Jared Huffman in Conversation. Milwaukee Public Library and Boswell Book Company welcome Congressman Jared Huffman in conversation to discuss his bestselling book, *No Prophets: the Fight to Save Democracy from Christian Nationalism*, and the perils facing democracy in the united States, and around the world. Books were for sale from Boswell Book Company, and an audience Q&A following the presentation Attendance: 16

MPL HELPS PEOPLE LEARN

Haunted Histories - Paranormal Investigators of Milwaukee & The Whatnot Museum. On Halloween, Central Library celebrated all things ghostly with our Haunted Histories event. Central Library's Special Collections Librarian Casey Lapworth exhibited archived photos and documents about rumored hauntings at Central Library and other historic buildings in our downtown community. The Paranormal Investigators of Milwaukee presented about local ghost investigations, in our Rare Books Room. Rare Books Librarian Tim Rush displayed our purportedly haunted Book of Autographs, as well as a selection of horror rarities from Arkham Press. Attendance: 63 (plus many local ghosts joined us in spirit)

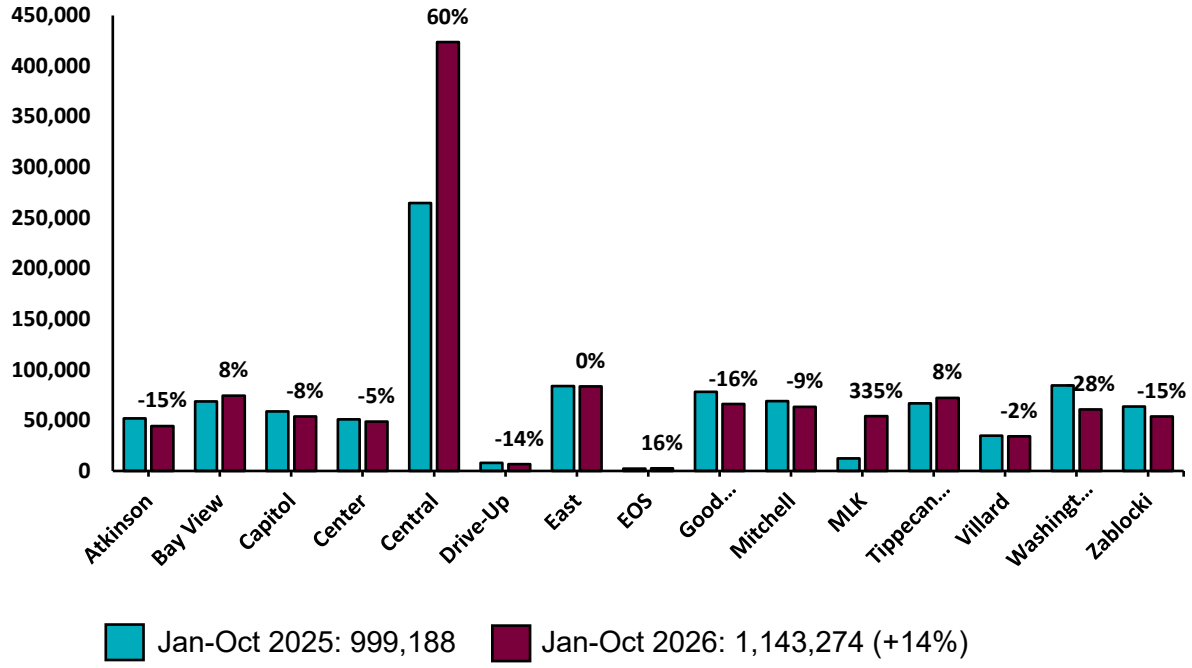
MPL HELPS PEOPLE CONNECT

DIY Tortilla Program. The DIY Tortilla Program at Mitchell Street on October 10th was a blast! We had 29 patrons of all ages, and all were great participants. Most people came for the program from all over the city! Thank you to Kyle Eklund for sharing such wonderful stories about his abuela and mom, for sharing family recipes, and leading the program. We had a fun time celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month this year, and patrons were very happy with all of the programming that happened all month. Attendance: 29

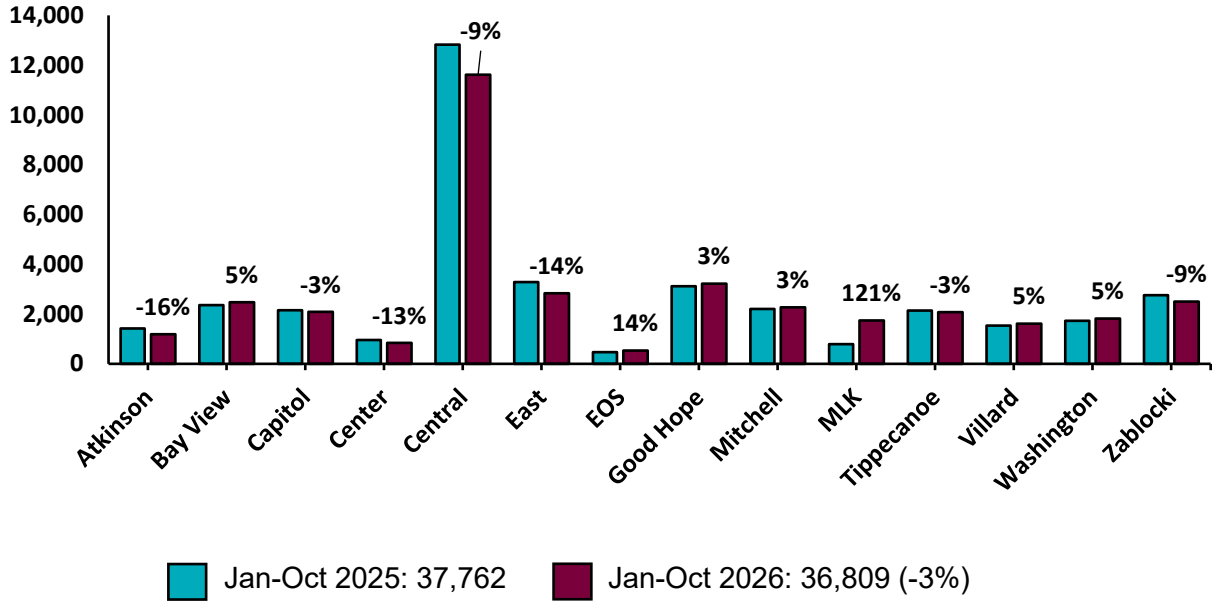
Songs From the Stacks: Featuring The Hissy Kits. "Central Library librarians Anna Donovan and Kimberly Luedke hosted our feline friends, The Hissy Kits Oct 27th for a music performance, De-Composers & Other Hoity-Toity Music, which was a purr-anormal concert at the library featuring eerie originals, vintage jazz, dark opera, Theremin, piano, vocals, and Feline Expressionism® 107 people attended, with much applause and meows of approval." Attendance: 107

Total attendance for 183 programs: 1,241

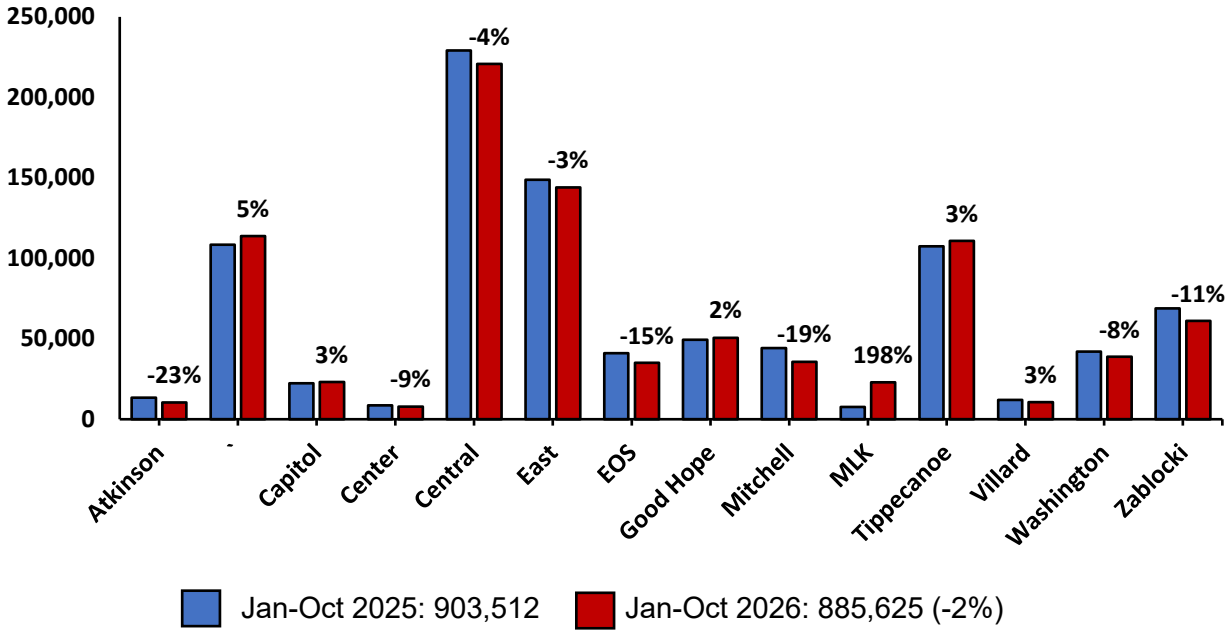
Patron Visits



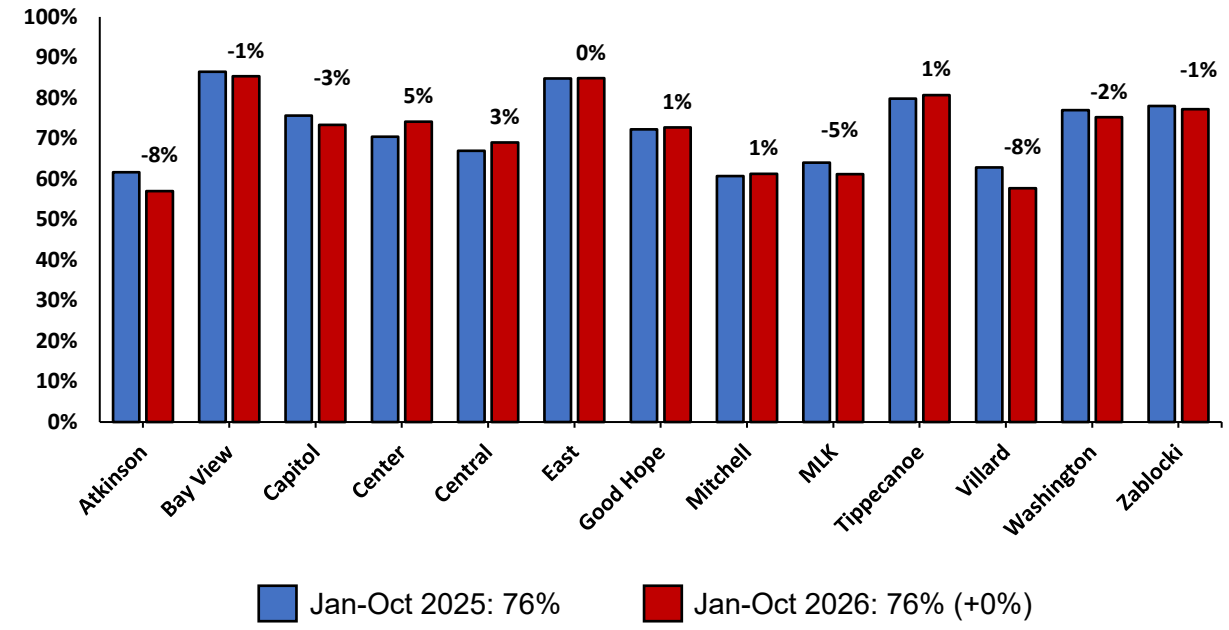
Registration



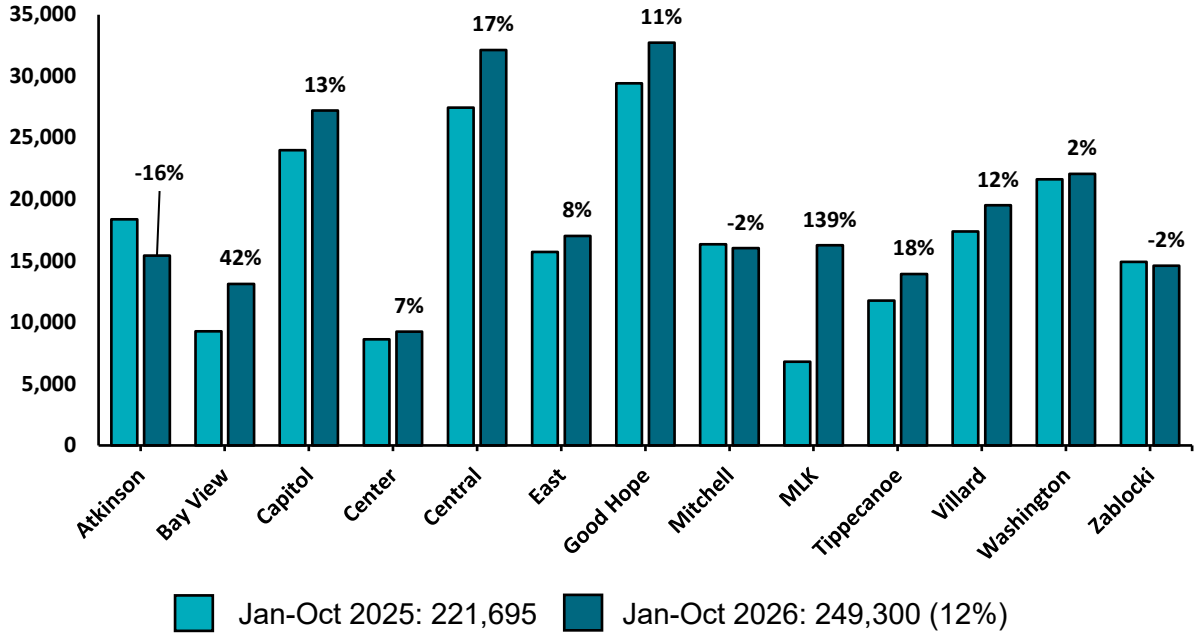
Traditional Circulation



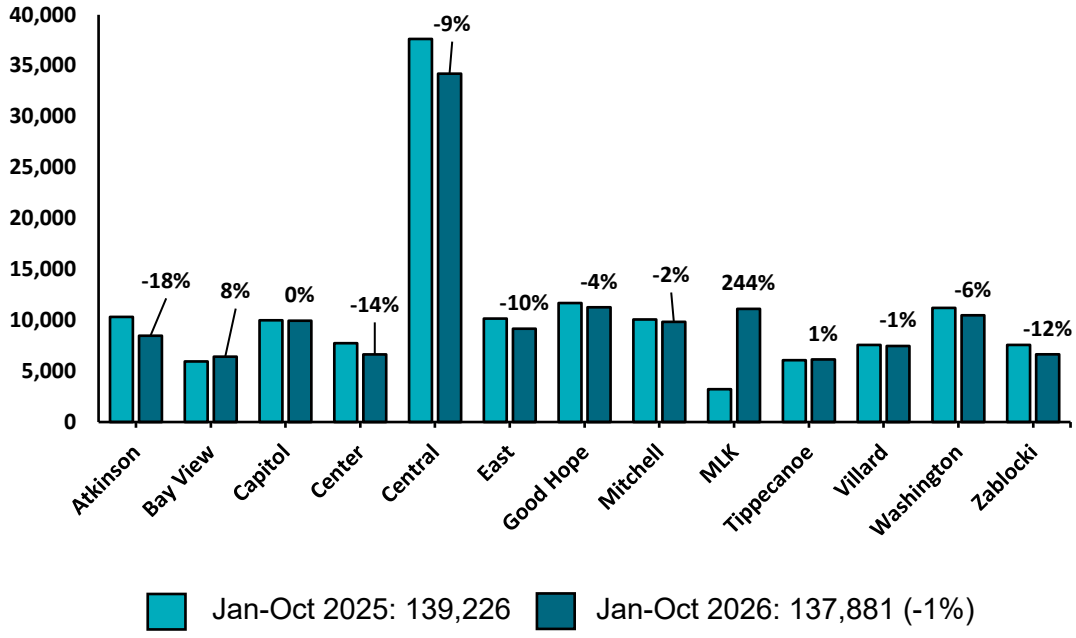
Self-Checkout



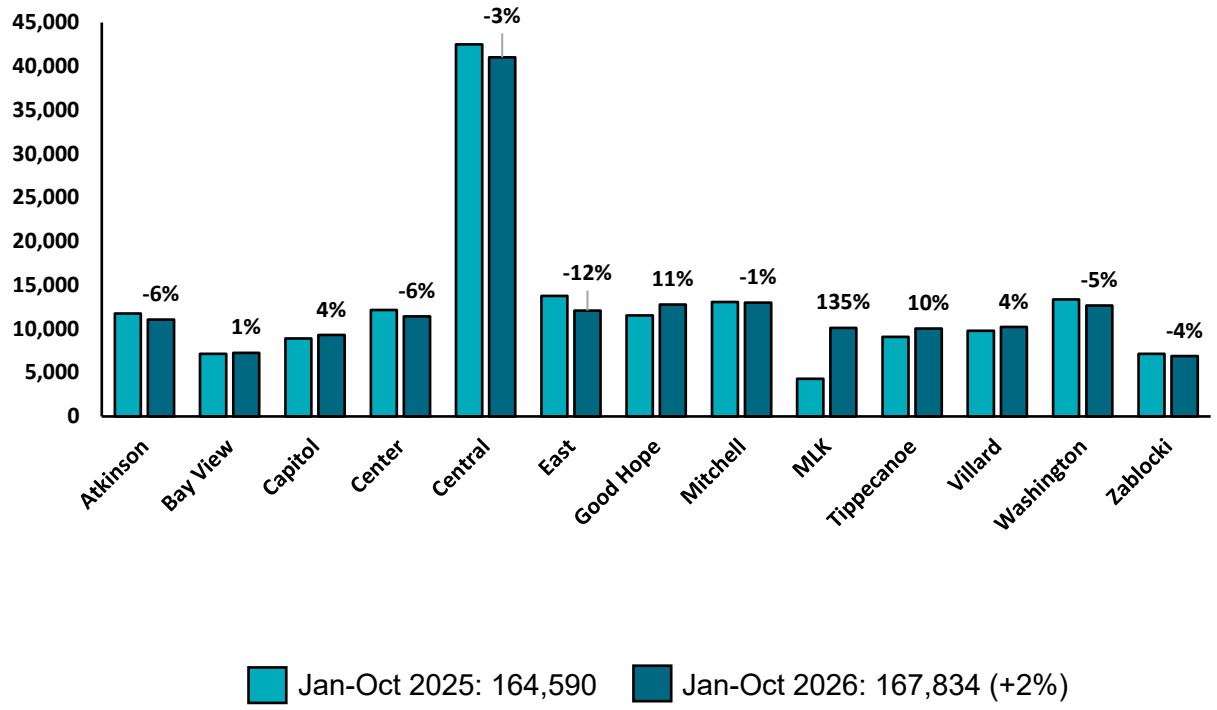
Print/Copy/Fax/Scan Jobs



Public Computer Sessions



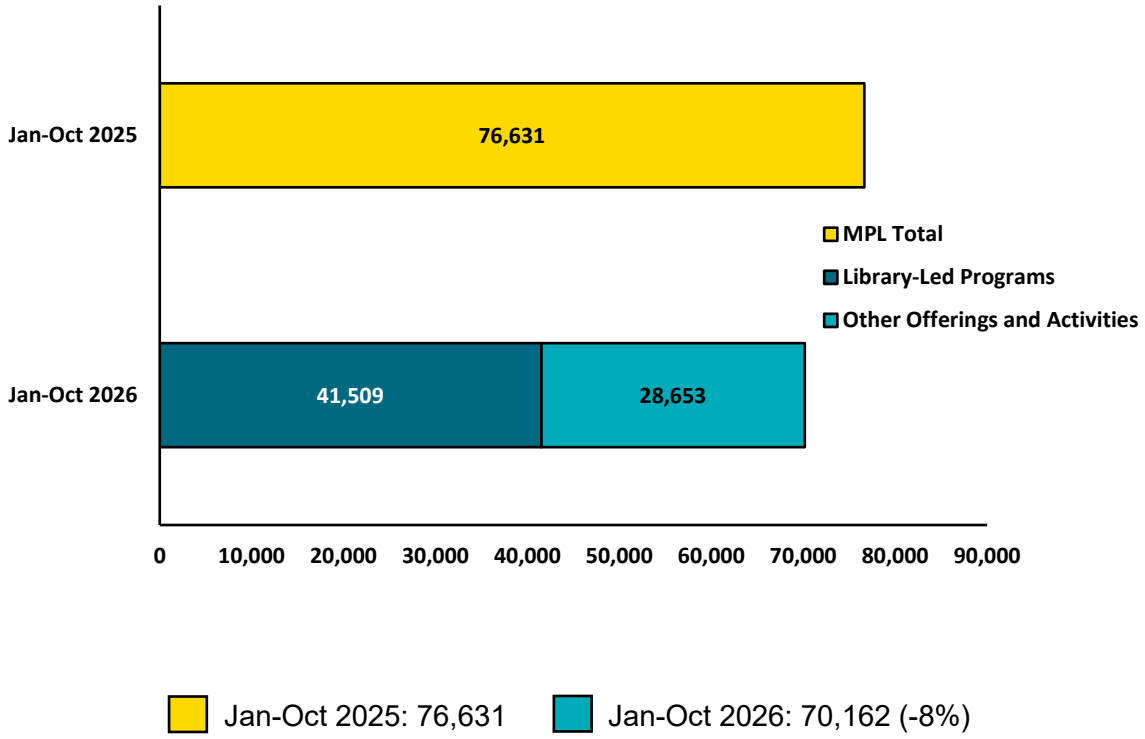
Wi-Fi Unique Users



eCirculation

Platform	Jan-Oct 2025	Jan-Oct 2026	Change
Freegal Music	226,543	493,912	+118%
Hoopla Digital	54,423	57,880	+6%
Kanopy	31,481	33,630	+7%
OverDrive	430,188	483,994	+13%
Total	**742,636**	**1,069,416**	**+44%**

Program Attendance*



*On January 1st, 2026, MPL changed how programs are reported and counted to closer match definitions provided by the WI Department of Public Instruction. Due to this change, comparative statistics will be different as we continue to collect updated and accurate statistics throughout the remainder of the year.

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY

ilwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees
2027 Schedule of Meetings (by Committee)

RECESS: February, August, December

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD

4th Tuesday of the month, except recess months

Date	Day	Time	Location
January 26, 2027	Tuesday	4:00 p.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room
March 23, 2027	Tuesday	4:00 p.m.	Branch?
April 27, 2027	Tuesday	4:00 p.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room
May 25, 2027	Tuesday	4:00 p.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room
June 22, 2027	Tuesday	4:00 p.m.	Branch?
July 27, 2027	Tuesday	4:00 p.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room
September 28, 2027	Tuesday	4:00 p.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room
October 26, 2027	Tuesday	4:00 p.m.	Branch?
November 23, 2027	Tuesday	4:00 p.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room

LIBRARY BUILDING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1st Thursday of the month, except January (New Year holiday) and recess months

Date	Day	Time	Location
January 7, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
March 4, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
April 1, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
May 6, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
June 3, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
July 1, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
September 2, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
October 7, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
November 4, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2nd Thursday in June and 3rd Thursday in November

Date	Day	Time	Location
June 10, 2027	Thursday	4:00 p.m.	Virtual Meeting
November 18, 2027	Thursday	4:00 p.m.	Virtual Meeting

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees
2027 Schedule of Meetings (by Committee)

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Quarterly – 4th Tuesday of the month in January, April, July, and October

Date	Day	Time	Location
January 26, 2027	Tuesday	8:30 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
April 27, 2027	Tuesday	8:30 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
July 27, 2027	Tuesday	8:30 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
October 26, 2027	Tuesday	8:30 a.m.	Virtual Meeting

INNOVATION & STRATEGY COMMITTEE

Quarterly – 2nd Thursday of the month, except January (due to conflict with B&D Committee), April, June, October

Date	Day	Time	Location
January 14, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
April 8, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
June 10, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
October 14, 2027	Thursday	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting

LIBRARY SERVICES & PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Quarterly – 1st Wednesday of the month March, May, July, November

Date	Day	Time	Location
March 3, 2027	Wednesday	4:00 p.m.	Virtual Meeting
May 5, 2027	Wednesday	4:00 p.m.	Virtual Meeting
July 7, 2027	Wednesday	4:00 p.m.	Virtual Meeting
November 3, 2027	Wednesday	4:00 p.m.	Virtual Meeting

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees
2027 Schedule of Meetings (by date)

January 2027			
January 7	Building & Development Committee	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
January 14	Innovation & Strategy Committee	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
January 26	Finance & Personnel Committee	8:30 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
January 26	Board Meeting	4:00 p.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room

March 2027			
March 3	Library Services & Programs Committee	4:00 p.m.	Virtual Meeting
March 4	Building & Development Committee	8:00 a.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room
March 23	Board Meeting	4:00 p.m.	**TBD**

April 2027			
April 1	Building & Development Committee	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
April 8	Innovation & Strategy Committee	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
April 27	Finance & Personnel Committee	8:30 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
April 27	Board Meeting	4:00 p.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room

May 2027			
May 5	Library Services & Programs Committee	4:00 p.m.	Virtual Meeting
May 6	Building & Development Committee	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
May 25	Board Meeting	4:00 p.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room

June 2027			
June 3	Building & Development Committee	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
June 10	Innovation & Strategy Committee	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
June 10	Executive Committee	4:00 p.m.	Virtual Meeting
June 22	Board Meeting	4:00 p.m.	**TBD**

July 2027			
July 1	Building & Development Committee	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
July 7	Library Services & Programs Committee	4:00 p.m.	Virtual Meeting
July 27	Finance & Personnel Committee	8:30 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
July 27	Board Meeting	4:00 p.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees
2027 Schedule of Meetings (by date)

September 2027			
September 2	Building & Development Committee	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
September 28	Board Meeting	4:00 p.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room

October 2027			
October 7	Building & Development Committee	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
October 14	Innovation & Strategy Committee	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
October 26	Finance & Personnel Committee	8:30 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
October 26	Board Meeting	4:00 p.m.	**TBD**

November 2027			
November 3	Library Services & Programs Committee	4:00 p.m.	Virtual Meeting
November 4	Building & Development Committee	8:00 a.m.	Virtual Meeting
November 18	Executive Committee	4:00 p.m.	Virtual Meeting
November 23	Board Meeting	4:00 p.m.	Central Library, Rotary Club of Milwaukee Community Room

MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC LIBRARY

2027 *Proposed* Public Service Hours

Central Library

			Frank P. Zeidler Humanities Room	
Monday	10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.		Monday	10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.		Tuesday	10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday	10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.		Wednesday	10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Thursday	10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.		Thursday	10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Friday	10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.		Friday	10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.		Saturday	9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday	1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.		Sunday	Closed
54 hrs/wk			***50 hrs/wk***	

Branch Libraries

Monday	12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday	12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Wednesday	10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Thursday	10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Friday	10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday Good Hope, Martin Luther King, Mitchell Street, and Tippecanoe	1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

48 hrs/wk and 52 hrs/wk (for 4 branches)

Sunday Hours: Central: (Year-round) 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Good Hope, Martin Luther King, Mitchell Street, and Tippecanoe: 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.