

**Library Director's Report
October 2020**

RESTORATION OF SERVICES and REOPENING LIBRARY BUILDINGS

The Library Management Team has worked on a plan and schedule to expand on our current services to be more inclusive of community organizations and make our libraries more available to our patrons. The plans are being developed utilizing data collected from our current services, including the call center, curbside delivery, and public computing. We are also aligning the plan with our current staff capacity and looking for an adjustment to more effective hours of operations based on the data and staff input. At this time, we are still restricted to the number of hours we can provide these services based on our staffing capacity. And we still need to adhere to occupancy limits under Public Health guidelines.

As part of our safety precautions, I will be sending our plans to the City Emergency Operations Center, Public Health, and the City's Funding and Recovery group to vet the plans and get feedback on how we can implement safely and in alignment with other City operations that are also opening for more access by the public. I will also continue to monitor and reach out to other national and local libraries to review and discuss their best practices.

It has been seven months since we first closed our buildings to the public. We have been very intentional in how and what we have restored for services and access to our resources, but there remain tremendous needs in the community. Utilizing our equity lens we will need to find ways to continue to extent our resources. I know we have the creativity and innovation, coupled with a dedicated staff that will make this happen.

We are making plans to work with more community groups, specific populations, and help fill other needs within the community. We have been working closely with MMSD to address virtual learning needs of students, especially hoping to assist families of students experiencing homelessness. DANeNet will begin offering computer literacy classes at Central Library, providing participants with their own devices they can keep if they complete the program. And I continue to meet with City IT and MMSD about digital inclusion solutions for students and the community to gain access to adequate broadband.

IMAGINATION CENTER

A team of reviewers composed of staff from Purchasing, Engineering, Civil Rights, Parks and MPL have been reviewing the proposals submitted by designers on the RFP for preliminary design and estimation work on the Imagination Center project. The proposals have been creative and extensive with a strong lineup of qualified designers. Every proposal is individually scored by each reviewer and then the scores are combined to determine which firms best address the merits of the project. We have met twice to discuss and share some of the elements that guided our choices. It was also the first time we included a request for the designer's approach and ways for how they will include racial equity in their design process. The scoring among all entries has been close. The quality of the proposals has been exceptional. As always, it will be a difficult decision, but the process for vetting the proposals and scoring on the merits and capabilities of the designers has been vetted by Purchasing to be fair for everyone. After extensive review and scoring, the list has been shortened to the top 4 scorers, and we will be moving on to interviews of each company before a final decision is made and a contract is offered

CITY PILOT & COVID SAFETY UPDATES

In September I reported that MPL would be conducting a pilot for a Symptom Check Station at MPL facilities for staff to monitor for COVID symptoms, combined with a self-administered temperature check at home just prior to leaving for the workplace or at work with a thermometer we provide at the station. The stations were tested at Pinney and Central libraries. Both pilots worked very well for staff and MPL was able to contribute to the policy being developed for city-wide deployment. Based on this successful trial, we will be expanding to all MPL locations.

Our Health and Safety team has been working on guidance for staff as to how we address a mandatory mask requirement for the public while in MPL facilities. After a few wordsmithing sessions with City Legal we were able to finish the guidelines that met the requirements of the Public Health order and City Legal. The main issue was that if a patron cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition, we can ask that they not enter the building if we can make an accommodation that meets their need. Examples: If we begin to offer self-servicing of hold pick-ups, we can ask that they wait at the door and we will retrieve the items for them. If an individual needs to use public computing and cannot tolerate a mask for medical reasons, we can ask them to do so in an enclosed study room. We can also ask the person if they would like a face shield while they are directed to the study room. If a person refuses to wear a mask not based on a medical reason we may refuse them entrance to our facilities, or once inside, if a patron does not maintain a properly worn mask they will be asked to leave.

All guidelines meet the requirements of the most recent Public Health orders, but most importantly it maintains a safer space for staff and the public.

BUDGET 2021

As I updated in a recent post to the Board, there were no major amendments impacting MPL offered at the Oct. 26 Finance Committee. Amendments from alders can still be added for consideration from now until the budget approval session begins, and amendments can always occur during the budget session itself. I have asked Alder McKinney to sponsor and submit an amendment for MPL to adjust our budget for a recently received completed lease for Hawthorne Library. Within the new lease is a credit for interior improvements that will require a slight adjustment to our budget. Final approval of the 2021 Capital and Operating budgets will be made by Common Council, Nov 10-13.

STAFFING LEVELS

Due to the level of operating funding expected in 2021 and based on our 2020 personnel savings, we have started to ask the Mayor to approve some hiring requests. We just recently filled a librarian position at Goodman South Library and have received approval to hire 3 more librarians. All of these positions had been funded in the 2020 budget but left vacant when COVID hit in March. We are also beginning to fill some of our hourly staff needs.

LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERSHIP

By the time we meet for the November meeting, I will have met with Deputy Mayor Dr. Linda Vakunta to review the Library Board applications on file. Due to the recent resignation, there are now two open seats to fill, but we do have sufficient applicants for the Mayor to make her choices from the pool of candidates.

MEETING WITH MAYOR

To be in alignment with HR's request for all City Departments to conduct individual check-ins with their staff, the Mayor has a team working on a process for her to have an annual check-in with all Department and Division heads. It will be conducted in conjunction with a gathering of information by Finance and Human Resources on the performance of each agency on items like hiring practices, or budget utilization as examples. It will also be an opportunity for the Mayor and Department head to have one-on-one time to share visions and goals. I was part of the interview process for the team putting together the check-in process. I welcome the chance to have this level of check-in that compares with the one-on-one discussion I was able to have with Mayor Satya prior to her election to office.

MAYOR'S MANAGEMENT TEAM

Mayor Satya has been trying to add more educational/informational sessions to her management team meetings. Over the course of the last 3 meetings, dept/div heads have received presentations by the NiNA Collective, followed by small breakout groups, on the topic of white supremacy and its presence in City policies and operations. It has been extremely informative of how much white supremacy does impact our services, and our operations. The small break out groups have been beneficial to gain a City-wide view of the consequences of white supremacy. I could see in the future the possibility of the NiNA Collective doing some work with MPL at a staff day or providing some online training for staff. If you want to check out their organization. <https://www.ninacollective.com/> Most of their team have strong ties to Madison and know City operations firsthand.

STAFF RECOGNITION

Many of our library locations are being utilized by the City Clerk for In-Person Absentee Voting. Due to the limitations of COVID conditions we could not stage the poll workers with the long lines within our buildings and maintain occupancy requirements. To accommodate for this limitation, the voting is happening outdoors along the fronts of our libraries. This configuration led to some urgent calls to library administration in the early hours of Oct. 22nd while severe rainstorms settled in over the city. The conditions would not permit for workers and electronic equipment to perform outside in the wet environment. Could MPL move operations indoors for the day was the request. After reviewing possibilities, Jane Jorgenson, supervisor at Pjnnery and Hawthorne, and Yesianne Ramirez, supervisor at Meadowridge were contacted to see if they could accommodate the request. They both accepted the challenge and provided leadership to staff coupled with staff contributions to make it work at all three locations for the day. It was their quick thinking and ability to pivot under the conditions to make it happen. It is also a great example for MPL that we remain flexible and innovative in addressing urgent needs in the community. We might not have been able to make this happen at all the voting locations, but the City Clerk was extremely grateful we could at least make it work at three of our locations. A huge thank you to Jane, Yesianne, and the staff at Hawthorne, Meadowridge, and Pinney. Terrific work.

A quick note about voting numbers. As of Oct 26, in a break from the traditional numbers we usually see for MPL locations, Meadowridge Library is in the lead for the number of voters using a library location.

UPDATE ON MEETINGS, COMMITTEES, & TEAMS

City

Mayor's Management Team
Mayor's Human Service Committee
Performance Excellence Transition Team
Racial Equity & Social Justice Strategic Planning
Deputy Mayor Check-in
Digital Inclusion Team
Funding and Recovery – Government Services Team:
Co-sponsor of the Policies Team and the
Communications Team

MPL

Library Management Team
Administration and Communications Check-in
All Staff Town Hall
Budget Convenings

External

South Central Library System Library Directors
Dane County Directors
Wisconsin Resource Library Directors with DPI
Urban Libraries Council Directors