

Library Director Report

October 2025

Prepared by Tana Elias, November 3, 2025



A Busy Fall for Community Engagement

Autumn is a busy time for all our staff. We tend to see increases in checkouts and visits in the fall, leaves and cold weather present new work for maintenance staff, the fall publishing cycle creates work for our technical services and collection staff, and back-to-school means welcoming students into our spaces and engaging more in outreach visits, tours, school events, and the launching of fall programming series like Teejop & Beyond and the Wisconsin Book Festival.



1 The library received a Madison Common Council Civic Recognition Award at the District 17 Town Hall at Sandburg Elementary on October 24.

Personally, I've had the pleasure of representing the library at the following community events in the last two months: a Senior Caregiving Colloquium organized by the Rennebohm and Bader Foundations, the Wisconsin Book Festival launch party and multiple festival events, Youth Voices Writing Contest award announcement & author party, outreach event at Madison Night Market, Urban League of Greater Madison's Urban Cabaret event (courtesy of the Mayor's office), Growing through Literacy (Literacy Network), MPL Foundation staff social, Left Behind dyslexia awareness event, SCLS Cornerstone Awards, Town Hall at Sandburg Elementary (where the Library received a Madison Common Council Civic Recognition Award), The Road Home annual breakfast, and Madison Metropolitan School District's Principal Experience at Sandburg Elementary. Being a principal for a morning was especially enlightening and I appreciated learning more about how the Imagination Center could serve students and families that attend Sandburg Elementary alongside co-principal for a day, Alder Madison.

Staff Highlight: Tammy Pineda

Youth Services Manager Tammy Pineda was recently highlighted by the City of Madison's Latino Community Engagement Team for her efforts at the City of Madison. Information in this report was excerpted from an email that went out to all City staff on October 2, during Latinx Heritage Month.

Tammy has served as the Youth Services Manager at Madison Public Library for nearly 11 years. She leads a passionate team dedicated to promoting literacy, coordinating year-round youth programming, and supporting the Library's strategic planning, hiring, budgeting, and community partnerships.



2 Tammy Pineda, Youth Services Manager

Literacy is what she cares about deeply, especially for youth who struggle, and she serves on the Governor's Reading Advisory Council to advance best practices in early literacy and child development. Under her leadership, the team provides professional development for educators and caregivers while fostering the joy of reading and lifelong learning for Madison's youth and families.

Q: How has your presence or work made a difference in your team, department, or community?

A: Librarianship is one of the least racially and ethnically diverse professions in the country. A 2023 survey showed 88% of librarians in the U.S. were white and only 7.7% were Latinx. This lack of representation is problematic because people can feel less inclined to use library services when they don't see their own backgrounds reflected or can't connect with staff familiar with their language and culture.

I aspire to be that welcoming presence that can understand where people are coming from. I try to let patrons know that I speak Spanish and am willing to help. I am familiar with unique cultural nuances that can help Spanish-speakers successfully navigate Library/City resources and services. I try to uplift opportunities for the library to connect with diverse community partners and to better serve our diverse and beautiful Latinx community in Madison. I am very empathetic and compassionate with others, and I think that is important when you serve the public. I also care a lot about my organization and the people I work with. I hope my presence makes a difference in small and impactful ways.

Tammy's presence makes an enormous difference at Madison Public Library, and I especially appreciate her collaborative, compassionate approach to the work we do at the library, and the care Tammy shows her community partners.

Baker & Taylor Closure Affects Libraries Nationwide

If you follow library professional news, you'll know that libraries nationwide are experiencing problems and delays in acquiring new materials after one of the largest providers of books and other collection resources announced its closure due to financial difficulties. Below is a summary of how this affects Madison Public Library from Library Collection Manager Molly Warren:

B&T was considered one of the largest distributors of print and audiovisual materials for libraries for decades and served as a primary vendor for thousands of libraries across the nation. In addition to serving as a materials vendor with a robust acquisitions platform that included curated library content, professional book reviews, and inventory services, B&T also offered shelf-ready processing services, cataloging services, and a variety of other products and services. Madison Public Library used B&T in combination with other vendors and maintained in-house processing and cataloging staff, so did not rely on B&T in the way that some libraries have.

Over the last several years, B&T had been owned by an investment group and there were several unsuccessful sales attempts. The company also suffered from cyber-attacks and had difficulty maintaining credit with publishers. This resulted in large scale backorders and cancellations of orders and many libraries started to concentrate on orders with other vendors, if this was an option.

Up until October, MPL was still placing orders with B&T in a cautiously optimistic way. We were surprised but not surprised to learn they were officially going out of business. It was something we feared for a while, each time there was a sale or potential sale. The book industry is fragile and not having robust options with competitive inventory and pricing is a concern. We hope for continued excellent service and access to new materials with our largest print vendor, Ingram, but recognize there may be delays due to stressed vendor staffing and inventory.

B&T had been in business since 1828 and were an icon in the industry. They will be missed.

Personal Updates

On November 4, I'll close on my new house in the City of Madison, fulfilling my contractual obligation to move inside the City limits within 18 months. As part of my contract, and per the City of Madison's [APM 2-1](#), I can be reimbursed for moving expenses. I will submit receipts for review and approval at the December board meeting. Once approved by the Library Board, they'll be reviewed and approved by the City's HR Director, then reimbursed from the library's budget. I'll be a resident of District 17, so you know I've got an amazing Alder, and the Imagination Center will be my closest library!



3 Steel on site at the Imagination Center. Photo credit: CCI.

Imagination Center at Reindahl Park Update

Masonry is on schedule and steel has been delivered to the Imagination Center site. Masonry work consists primarily of building the walls for bathrooms and mechanical rooms, and steel will be used to frame the building. Half of the steel was delivered in the last week of October (a

few weeks behind schedule) and the other half will be delivered this week. While the delivery was behind schedule, CCI assures us they can make up the delay and will stay on schedule.

Work also continues with the process of selecting an outside art installation, guided by the Madison Arts Commission (MAC). Selected applicants have visited the site and are now working on their proposals, due in January. MAC will review all designs in the winter and select the final piece in the spring so the artist can fabricate the piece and install in summer/fall.

We applied for a \$2 million grant from the Department of Administration's Grants for Local Projects program, and will learn if we've been selected in spring of 2026. In the meantime, we've submitted two payment requests for our \$4.5 million Flexible Facilities Grant, and already received the first payment.

Monthly construction updates are available on the [Engineering Department's project page](#) and shared out through the [Library's email newsletter](#), too.

Library Budget Update

There are no major changes from last month regarding the 2026 budget. We are days away from the Council's approval of the 2026 Capital and Operating budgets. As of November 3, I've not been contacted about any amendments, so I am not anticipating any changes to our Capital or Operating budget requests at this time. A reminder that one September addition to the Library's capital budget since the Board approved it was adding the Central Library Renovation project back in to the 2026 Capital Budget as a Horizon List request with zero funding. This was in response to a request by Alder Verveer (District 4) with the intent to keep visibility for Central Library improvements as a documented need. Project scope and funding will be a consideration for 2026 and future years.

You can see the entire budget timeline and the library's capital and operating requests at <https://www.cityofmadison.com/finance/budget>.

In our own budget, you'll see on the agenda that I'm requesting approval to move \$550,000 from the library's fund balance to the Imagination Center project to cover the gap between what was originally budgeted for the library collection at Imagination Center and what the 46,000 item collection will actually cost in 2025-26. Our year end projection is showing it likely that we'll be adding \$682,300 to an already healthy fund balance of over \$2 million. The discrepancy between the initial cost estimate and the actual cost is a good use of these one-time funds and keeps us on track to spend down our fund balance until it is closer to the 5% of our total budget that is recommended by the City of Madison's Finance department. It is possible we'll need to ask for additional funds to be moved from fund balance to the project in 2026 when we get updated estimates for furniture & technology costs.

While I don't have the full history of how we got to \$300,000 as the cost for a new library collection, I know we budgeted \$250,000 when we renovated Pinney and it's possible the new budget was built on that, with an increase intended to cover cost increases. But in the case of Pinney, we were adding to an existing collection, not beginning a brand new one. It also appears that the budget may have been partially based on the number of books and materials that fit on the shelves, but as we know, the success of a good library is that many materials are checked out, which means that we always need more books than what fit on the shelves.

Library Metrics

All monthly key metrics, by month and library, from 2015 to the previous month, are available on our interactive dashboard: [MPL Monthly Metrics | Tableau Public](#).

For your calendar

Here are some dates you may want to save on your calendar:

- [Ex Libris](#), Friday, November 7, 7-10pm, Central Library
- Teejop & Beyond – [multiple events](#)
- Black Film Festival, November 13-15 at [Pinney](#), [Sequoia](#) and [Central](#) Libraries – registration required, click on library for registration links
- Imagination Center tour for Library Board members, Friday, November 21, 3-4pm (1814 Parkside Drive/1818 Portage Road) – RSVP to Isis Newman
- Library Board meeting – Thursday, December 4, 5pm, Sandburg Elementary School (4114 Donald Drive)
- 150x150 Art Opening – Friday, December 5, 7-9pm and Saturday, December 6, 10am-noon, Central Library

Press Releases & News Stories

Library Press Releases

- [Meet the Finalists Selected for Public Art at the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park](#) *posted October 2, 2025*
- [Celebrate Native Nations with the Teejop & Beyond Program at Madison Public Library Beginning October 20](#) *posted October 13*
- [After the SLAM: A Storyteller's Spotlight with Nestor Gomez and Araceli Esparza](#) *posted October 16*
- [Everyday places in Darbo-Worthington turned into points of connection through art](#) *posted October 17*
- [Black Film Festival Coming to Three Madison Public Library Locations November 13-15](#) *posted October 27*

News Coverage

- [4 finalists chosen for public art at Madison's newest library](#) (*Wisconsin State Journal*, October 3, 2025)
- [Strong Position: The Wisconsin Book Festival's Fall Celebration is full of buzzworthy articles](#) (*Isthmus*, October 3, 2025)
- [Wisconsin authors in the spotlight at the Wisconsin Book Festival's Fall Celebration](#) (*Isthmus*, October 3, 2025)
- [Madison Public Library to host events for National Voter Education Week](#) (*NBC15*, October 5, 2025)
- [Madison mayor's 2026 budget: No cuts; funding for new library, homeless shelter](#) (*Isthmus*, October 7, 2025)
- [How does the Madison Public Library pick new titles and replace books?](#) (*Wisconsin State Journal*, October 15, 2025)
- [Wisconsin Book Festival returns to Madison this weekend](#) (*NBC15*, October 20, 2025)
- [Come to the Pinney Library tonight to learn about digital journalism](#) (*Wisconsin State Journal*, October 22, 2025)
- [Wisconsin Book Festival Director Jane Rotonda Joins the Friday 8 O'Clock Buzz](#) (*WORT-FM*, October 24, 2025)