

## **Library Director Report March 2021**

### **President Request**

Update on Fine Free

The MPL team working to manually waive overdue fines has completed its work. In total, 33,503 patron records were cleared. Within that total, 3,478 patrons no longer have their accounts blocked, and among that group, 1,885 can immediately use their account without needing to renew or update information. \$282,084 in fines have been forgiven.

### **RESTORATION OF SERVICES and REOPENING LIBRARY BUILDINGS**

At the April meeting, the Library Board will be considering a proposal to approve the Service Expansion Plan (SEP). Details of the plan will be discussed at that time, but I would like to acknowledge the work of the entire Management Team with leadership from Krissy Wick, and the input from many frontline staff in developing this plan. There remain several challenges to our restoration of services and this is a major step in expanding in-person access to our libraries.

### **COVID UPDATES**

MPL was fortunate to be included in a March 26, 2021 mass clinic in Waunakee. Special thanks to Waunakee Public Library, Waunakee Area EMS, and SSM Health for making the arrangements. Erick Plumb, Library Director at Waunakee PL, was instrumental in helping to arrange for all eligible Dane County library workers to be included. I do not have a count of MPL staff who have registered, we do not solicit or have access to that information, but in aggregate it was reported over 200 Dane County library workers registered for this clinic.

Many MPL staff remain on the Public Health standby list, but hopefully with increased supply, they will be more opportunities for making an appointment soon. Wisconsin is currently at the start of the 1C phase, beginning with anyone with a qualifying medical condition. This group does represent approximately 2 million Wisconsin residents, but many within this group have previously qualified in earlier phases, so it may move quicker especially with more vaccine. Library workers were an identified group in 1C, so we will wait to see if that group will be activated soon, and hopefully prior to the May 1<sup>st</sup> open access to all residents.

Even with vaccinations reaching over 30% of Dane County residents with at least one dose, it is still not time to begin to relax our safety practices with proper mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing. Staff and the public's safety is our top priority, and we will continue to remain in compliance with public health orders.

## **LIBRARY BOARD MEETINGS**

City IT recently announced how they will be able to support or not support future BBC meetings. All Type 2 BBCs, of which the Library Board belongs, can remain completely virtual or return to all in-person. There is no hybrid option currently. That may change in the future, but it will require some reworking of City ordinance and improved technical support. City It does control the Zoom license that is used for Type 2 BBC meetings, it is not controlled by the library. Part of the reason for this is to make sure public record requirements are maintained.

## **AMERICAN RECOVERY PLAN ACT (ARPA)**

This topic may become a regular in the Director's report as we begin to learn more about what funds will become available and if we will qualify for them. I have been involved in discussions at national, state, and local levels trying to have MPL prepared to take advantage of as much as we can. There is tremendous potential to advance some of our objectives, like digital inclusion, expand current programs, or perhaps even have some infrastructure funded within our buildings.

## **NEW PILOT PROGRAM**

Annie Weatherby-Flowers and I have been meeting with the City's CDA and IT Departments to explore a digital inclusion project that has already received commitment from the MPL Foundation for funding. We are looking to develop a proof of concept for a sustainable digital inclusion model, expanding broadband access to the residence and eliminating several barriers to access. We are planning for a holistic library program approach that includes City and community partnerships along with working with a commercial provider. We have been in discussion with Charter's Spectrum Community Solutions team. There has been a slight pause as we will need to explore the new options for broadband access coming out of the FCC and including funds from the ARPA.

## **BUDGET 2022**

Yes 2022, it is not a typo. Capital budget kickoff has been scheduled for April 13, 2021 and the Operating Budget kickoff will be May 24, 2021. I anticipate this will be another difficult year. Additionally, it will be even more difficult to gauge needs while being in transition from COVID to post-COVID.

## **IMAGINATION CENTER**

JLA, the awarded designer for the Imagination Center's pre-design, needs to finalize its paperwork with the City before we can meet. We are currently scheduled for a first meeting on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

Update on Library Planner: Interviews will be completed with our finalists by April 1, 2021, and hopefully I will be announcing our new Library Planner at the board meeting. We have been fortunate to have some strong candidates. I do want to acknowledge Mark Benno for his leadership in coordinating the hire, and his contributions on the hiring panel. HUGE thanks to Ericka Brown, Community Schools Resource Coordinator at Hawthorne Elementary School, who found the time in her busy schedule to sit on our hiring panel. Ericka had worked with Kevin Englebert, our previous planner, and is a stakeholder in the Imagination Center project. And to Isis Newman, for juggling schedules getting interviews arranged and for her coordination with HR throughout the process.

## **PINNEY LIBRARY**

Oddly enough due to the pandemic, it is difficult to realize that the new Pinney Library is now 1 year old already. The new Pinney Library had opened just four days prior to having to close its doors to the public with the Safer in Place public health orders. Despite not being able to fully utilize the space, it also marks the end of our 1 year warranty, that typically covers those items that fail within the first year. Unfortunately, many items of furniture, equipment, and more were not exposed to the normal wear and tear it would have under normal conditions. We did review with City Engineering some areas of concern about materials and design that have shown challenges in the first year. We may need to make some corrections and changes, which is common with most new buildings. Due to the pandemic, we do have an extension to spend out the remaining capital funds to address some of these issues. I'm hoping for redo on the grand opening once we can safely bring everyone back into the new library.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

ODC has completed its ODC-led focus groups with staff throughout our system. We continue to receive updated reports and remain in discussion with ODC including our management team. We are learning a lot about our organization and this will lead to continuous improvement to address areas to improve and build on our strengths. Management team is currently reading Leading in the Global Matrix. MPL functions as a matrix organization, which is one that decentralized operations and has an emphasis on cross-functional teams. As we grow and improve from what we are learning, we will increase our collaborative work within the matrix structure. I have already started to see areas of improvement with more staff involvement exemplified in the recent SEP.

## **INTRODUCTIONS WITH NEW LEADERS IN CITY AND COMMUNITY**

I have upcoming meetings with Kristy Kumar, the City's new Equity and Social Justice Manager, and with the new MPD Police Chief Shon Barnes. I wanted to offer MPL's assistance in anyway we could with their respective agencies, and to introduce both who are new to Madison, to the library's services and collaborative work with their agencies.

The Downtown Arts & Culture group had been meeting monthly prior to the pandemic. Unfortunately, since our last meeting in early 2020, Sandra Gajic, director of Overture, loss her battle with cancer, and Steve Fleishman, director of MMOCA retired. Part of the reason to reunite the group was to welcome the new director of MMOCA, and to reconnect with the Overture's interim leadership. It was also decided to expand the group to include Madison Opera, and the Madison Children's Museum. In our first meeting we received presentations about the new plans for the Wisconsin History Museum and the expansion of the Madison Children's Museum. We also discussed plans for reengaging the public to the arts.

## **MEETINGS, COMMITTEES, TEAMS & MORE**

### **City**

Mayor's Management Team  
Mayor's Human Service Committee  
Racial Equity & Social Justice Strategic Planning  
Deputy Mayor Check-in  
Digital Inclusion Team  
Funding and Recovery – Government Services Team: Policies Team and Communications Team  
Funding and Recovery-City Vaccine Team  
Subtle Acts of Exclusion Team  
TeamCity Change Leadership  
Common Council  
Emergency Broadband Funding Outreach meeting with City IT  
Meeting with Kristy Kumar  
Meeting MPD Chief Barnes

### **MPL**

Library Management Team  
Administration and Communications Check-in  
All Staff Town Hall  
ODC consultant meetings  
Family Connect (Digital Inclusion pilot)  
IMLS Grant Meeting  
Library Planner Interviews  
Joint Foundation meeting with B-Cycle  
Pinney Post Warranty

### **External**

South Central Library System Library Directors  
Dane County Directors  
Wisconsin Resource Library Directors with DPI  
Urban Libraries Council Directors  
District 9 Candidate forum  
Downtown Arts and Culture Core