

## **Library Director Report**

**June 2021**

### **REOPENING LIBRARY BUILDINGS**

Reopening of all MPL libraries was May 24, 2021. I have not received any major reports of issues coupled with our reopening and the ending of Public Health orders. My conversations with staff and the public share a common message that it is great to be back, and especially from our patrons how much they have missed MPL staff and full access to our resources. It will take some time to recover and to reengage with our patrons. We have not been able to restore our programming to come close to our pre-COVID levels, and since programming does take extensive planning and we had no idea where we might be regarding public safety when the planning was taking place, it will take some time to expand our programming. We will begin reopening our community rooms to the public soon and the reopening of other areas that were closed off during the initial opening have been restored.

Nationally I have been hearing similar accounts of a slower return of the public. Libraries are seeing the return of patrons is coupled with people getting used to being in a public space again, and coming back to in-person services from the virtual services is a real transition for the public. It may represent some shifts on how we may modify our previous delivery of services. It will also depend on the operating budget and the resources we will have to work with to make changes.

### **BUDGET 2022**

My presentation of the Capital budget to the Mayor and the City budget team went well. There were few questions or challenges to the changes that were made, including the slight increase to the collections budget.

The approved Operating Budget will be submitted to Finance by July 9<sup>th</sup>. In the meantime, I will begin my discussion with City leadership to advocate for minimizing any reductions. If we can keep reductions less than 2% we should be able to maintain our current operations and program expectations with some assistance from the Foundation. If we get into deeper reductions, we face some major equity issues due to loss of staff that we could not maintain our level of support for other City agencies and community organizations. MPL is relied upon to help support and facilitate many of the City's initiatives and any loss of staff would take away that capacity.

### **FEDERAL FUNDS**

Federal programs directing funds to schools and libraries are beginning to open. There continues to be major discussion and clarification of "the how's and what for's" the funds can be used and by whom. There are some major requirements that need to be resolved for qualifying for the funding and how the application process will work. I will continue to monitor and attend workshops to gain a better understanding of how MPL may be able to receive some funding. It is also being discussed at the State and Systems levels about collaborating for improving funding opportunities. One of the major funding programs, the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF), has a direct connection with public libraries but it is more restrictive on how the funds can be used.

## **IMAGINATION CENTER**

We continue our conversation and exercises with the JLA design team. We are hoping to begin to see some translation of those ideas into a start to the programming of the space. We did have a major bump with the unexpected departure of the JLA's Project Manager on the project. Currently City Engineering and I are vetting the replacement Project Manager that JLA has introduced to the team. The Project Manager does have a critical role in keeping the project organized and moving forward. It is somewhat unfortunate that this key role is changing but on the fortunate side it is happening exceedingly early in the design process and will have a lesser impact. This does remain a concern for the City and the situation will be closely monitored.

In the meantime, the community engagement part of the process has been establishing plans and a schedule for renewed meetings with key stakeholders. Our last internal meeting showed tremendous promise for gaining more input on co-location of City agencies and services. We also discussed including East Town mall since it is going through some major planning and the Imagination Center's impact should be part of that planning.

## **BCycle AT PINNEY LIBRARY**

The Royster Condo Association approved the plans to add a BCycle station next to the bike pavilion outside of Pinney Library. This will allow BCycle to begin a pilot program to provide fobs for accessing free BCycles by checking them out from MPL libraries. The fobs can be checked out just like any other materials and will include a helmet if needed. This program has been deployed in other BCycle cities and Pinney will be the first location in Madison.

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

### **City**

Mayor's Management Team  
Mayor's Human Service Committee  
Racial Equity & Social Justice Strategic Planning  
Deputy Mayor Check-in  
Human Service Funding & Recovery Team  
Meeting

Digital Inclusion Team  
Subtle Acts of Exclusion Team  
TeamCity Change Leadership  
Common Council  
Emergency Broadband Funding

### **MPL**

Library Management Team  
Administration & Communications Check-in  
All Staff Town Hall  
Family Connect (Digital Inclusion pilot)  
Joint Foundation meeting with B-Cycle  
Budget Team meetings

### **External**

Dane County Directors  
Wisconsin Resource Library Directors  
Urban Libraries Council Directors  
SHLB directors meeting  
Ribbon Cutting for new Fleet Services facility  
FCC Webinar