



Date: Feb 14, 2025

**To:** Chairperson Sheldon Wasserman, Jr., Committee on Parks and Culture  
Vice Chairperson Steven Taylor, Committee on Parks and Culture

CC: Janelle Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager  
Kelsey Evans, Committee Coordinator

**Subject:** P 25-51 Report from the President of the Milwaukee Public Museum, providing an informational report regarding programs and financial statements.

*The Mission of the Milwaukee Public Museum is to inspire curiosity, excite minds and increase desire to preserve and protect our world's natural and cultural diversity through exhibitions, educational programs, collections, and research.*

#### **Current Museum Activities**

Museum attendance has been tracking just slightly behind our projections but on track with last year's attendance. School groups are tracking ahead of last year but still not up to the pre-pandemic level. Access to school buses continues to be a problem.

We continue to serve the community in various ways – onsite, offsite, and virtually. Nearly 1,400 people visited the Museum on December 14 for *European Village Alive!* to learn about European holiday traditions from more than a dozen docent interpreters. On December 12, the sold-out Old Milwaukee Mixer invited 200 guests to experience *Streets of Old Milwaukee* decorated for the holidays while sampling appetizers and drink pairings and listening to seasonal tunes from the Checkmate Barbershop Quartet. After the success of our first-ever Trivia Night last winter, we brought it back this January! Museum superfans tested their wits on all things MPM on Thursday, January 16.

Our *Groundbreaking* special exhibit closed on January 19<sup>th</sup>. This exhibit traced the history of the museum and its innovation through time. About 25,000 visitors toured it during its 2.5 month run. Programming in conjunction with it highlighted what makes our collections special, including the Silurian period's unique ties to Milwaukee, stories told by plant preservation, and how a museum classifies and investigates artifacts.

MPM once again participated in VISIT Milwaukee's annual Museum Days, January 23 through February 2. The campaign highlights Milwaukee-area museums by promoting special events, exhibits, programs, and discounted rates during the 11-day stretch.

MPM was pleased to host the exhibit "Canstruction" for a second year in a row. This is a canned-food sculpture exhibition, held in collaboration with Women in Design, Wisconsin Chapter of the National

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Organization of Minority Architects (Wisco NOMA), American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the Harry & Rose Samson Family Jewish Community Center, is a charity event held in cities throughout the U.S. and the world that combines STEM concepts, artistry and a little friendly competition, all to help fight hunger. Local architecture, engineering and construction firms participated in the event, designing and building 13 sculptures made entirely out of non-perishable food items. When it was over, they were able to deliver more than 40,000 food items to the Jewish Community Pantry who then distribute the food to families in Milwaukee.

MPM celebrated Black History Month with programming that explored the experiences and contributions of Black Americans throughout different periods of US history. We hosted the Wisconsin Historical Society's *Crossing the Line* traveling display about segregation in Milwaukee, along with educator workshops. On Saturday's during the month, we highlighted African and African American history throughout MPM's three exhibit floors in a special collaboration with Museum docents, or "griots," from America's Black Holocaust Museum.

Beginning in February at no additional cost, MPM Educators debuted a brand-new Reserve an Educator program! A reserved Educator can meet field trip groups in a specified exhibit with a variety of hands-on materials and resources related to a selectable topic. Throughout February and March, Educators showed students how to use primary sources and explore local Black History from the Watson Family in the 1800s through contemporary recognition and depictions of this ongoing story.

MPM also hosted The Wisconsin Inter-Tribal Repatriation Committee (WITRC) which brings Wisconsin tribal members, museums, colleges, and universities together to move NAGPRA initiatives forward. This committee met at MPM for the first time on Tuesday, December 10th.

### Status of Current Facility

Since December, we have been dealing with a few issues with the building:

- During the below zero-degree weather in January, the museum experienced severe icing on the inside of many of the windows – some as thick as 2 inches. This is due to the lack of insulation in the windows and in the building. Staff had to take special measures to ensure that as it melted, it did not cause damage.



- We continue to deal with humidity issues in the basement collection areas. This is due to moisture infiltration through the concrete block, which has no moisture barrier.

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## MPM Fiscal Summary

FY 2025

For the four-month period ended December 31, 2024, MPM consolidated financial statements reported an operating surplus of \$1,049,000 compared to \$1,200,000 in income from the same period as the previous year.

Consolidated operating revenue increased to almost \$6M compared to about \$5.5 million in the in the previous year. This increase was mainly due to timing of net assets released from restrictions relating to endowment contributions.

Consolidated operating expenditures were \$4.9 million compared to \$4.3 million in the prior year. This includes expenditures of donated funds for equipment that will be used to for collections storage.

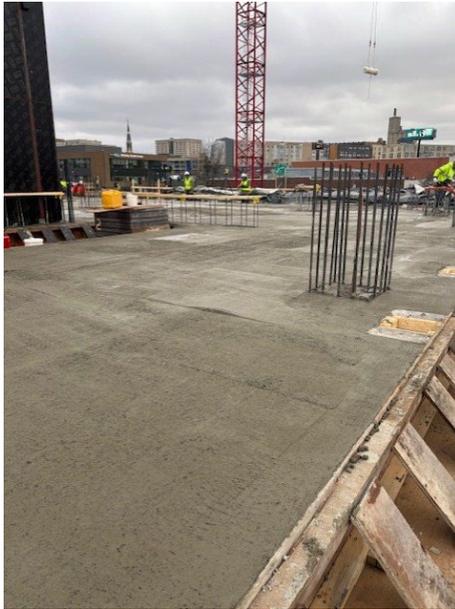
In other non-operating activity, MPM and the Endowment investments reported an investment gain of about \$25,000 and a transfer to the MPM endowment of a bequest of about \$27,000.

## New Museum progress

**Fundraising progress** – We are excited to announce that at the end of the year (our biggest giving season), we had raised \$105M from donors. When coupled with public funding, we are now at \$191M toward our goal. As a reminder, this campaign has always been planned to run throughout the planning and construction process all the way to opening. Thus, we have another 2+ years to raise the remaining amount.

**6<sup>th</sup> and McKinley Site progress** – Amazing progress is being made on the building. Between October and the end of the year, the building started to rise from the ground, with floor decks on the first and second level completed, along with the columns, elevator shafts, etc. In January and February, the concrete decking for the third floor was poured. The concrete decking uses an innovative process to reduce the amount of concrete in each deck while retaining the weight-bearing capacity. Recycled plastic from kayaks is formed into balls and placed in rebar “cages” (see photos). Concrete is then poured encasing the balls, thus reducing the amount of concrete in these 17-inch-thick floors. By reducing the volume of concrete and weight of the building, this innovation also reduces the structural steel required to support the building, and the carbon footprint. The shape of the building has also emerged with the curved walls, canted levels, entrances and light well becoming defined (see photos).

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**Exhibit Progress** – In January, exhibit fabrication began. The exhibit fabrication process starts with shop drawings and leads to the physical construction of scenic elements, built environments and cases that showcase and house collections, which are then installed in the building. It also includes the production of media elements, creation of interactives, integration of media, A/V and lighting components, development and licensing of images and graphics and copywriting of thousands of labels.

These are long and intensive processes. For instance, graphic labelling began with copy-writing instructions that define what information the label should convey along with the style of writing. Once that was completed, labels are being written in batches and reviewed several times. Along with labels, graphics and images are decided and they are either created or identified from existing sources. We have five floors of exhibits labels to complete and that will take us through most of the year.

The new museum's exhibits are being designed to rotate collections on and off display so that more of the items can be enjoyed by the community and we can better care for the collections. All collection objects that will be on display when we open have been chosen. In addition, collection objects that will be rotated onto display for the first few years have been chosen. Some of those collection objects are ones that are currently on display and others are objects that come from the collections not on display. Also, all props (=non-collection object) that will be repurposed for display in the new museum have been chosen. For those objects on display, we are currently working through a schedule of when they will

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need to be removed from display, cleaned and repaired (if needed), and made ready for the new museum. We are also working with the county on a plan for those props that will not be repurposed.

**Collections Move** – We continue to inventory and pack collections for the move. We have hired an additional 15 staff to help with the process and have made good progress.

We are happy to take questions during our appearance before the Committee.

Sincerely,



Ellen Censky, PhD  
President/CEO  
Milwaukee Public Museum



Thomas M. Oechler  
VP Finance and Operations  
Milwaukee Public Museum

**MPM Consolidated Statement of Activities for the Four Months Ended 12/31/24**

	<b>YTD</b>	<b>YTD</b>		<b>Prior Year</b>	<b>Prior Year</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Dev</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Revenue:</b>					
Contributions	1,189,136	1,095,836	93,301	1,304,054	(114,917)
Membership	473,786	416,741	57,045	462,409	11,377
Special Event Revenue	728,549	750,700	(22,151)	704,288	24,260
Public Support	1,167,245	1,175,589	(8,344)	1,166,667	578
Admissions	614,673	792,281	(177,609)	682,146	(67,474)
Theatre/Planetarium	48,059	61,470	(13,411)	67,584	(19,525)
Programs	45,979	28,211	17,768	37,590	8,389
Contributed Services	0	0	0	0	0
Restaurant and Facility Rental	66,751	59,210	7,541	42,744	24,007
Retail	247,777	225,850	21,927	229,706	18,071
Other income	44,670	102,324	(57,654)	42,416	2,254
Net Assets released from restrictions	1,346,350	212,792	1,133,558	800,359	545,992
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>5,972,974</b>	<b>4,921,003</b>	<b>1,051,971</b>	<b>5,539,962</b>	<b>433,012</b>
<b>Operating Expenses:</b>					
Cost of Goods Sold	109,441	96,295	13,146	100,843	8,598
Supplies	279,127	409,051	(129,924)	307,575	(28,447)
Salaries and Wages	2,441,138	2,521,554	(80,416)	2,387,467	53,672
Benefits	465,512	526,153	(60,641)	499,379	(33,867)
Travel	17,862	37,590	(19,728)	26,077	(8,215)
Insurance	24,629	24,374	255	23,577	1,052
Marketing/Public Relations	239,112	302,018	(62,906)	209,353	29,759
Member/Donor Development	21,106	41,995	(20,889)	25,209	(4,102)
Subscriptions/Memberships	24,724	20,846	3,878	20,475	4,249
Maintenance	267,459	225,333	42,127	181,975	85,485
Utilities	370,856	354,988	15,868	365,744	5,112
Professional Fees	599,489	164,061	435,428	130,201	469,288
Interest Expense	1,476	1,882	(406)	1,995	(518)
Miscellaneous	58,116	61,557	(3,441)	56,884	1,231
Tax Expense	4,016	3,500	516	3,144	872
Contributed Services	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>4,924,064</b>	<b>4,791,196</b>	<b>132,868</b>	<b>4,339,896</b>	<b>584,168</b>
Inc/(dec) from Net Assets in Operating Activities	1,048,910	129,806	919,104	1,200,066	(151,156)
<b>Non-Operating Items:</b>					
Investment Earnings (Loss)	25,146	48,000	(22,854)	341,982	(316,837)
Transfer to Endowment	(27,389)	0	(27,389)	0	(27,389)
Pension & Post Retirement Expenses	(120,000)	(120,000)	0	(120,000)	0
Depreciation & Amortization	(516,538)	(509,216)	(7,323)	(400,888)	(115,650)
Non-Operating Income - Covid Related	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Non-Operating Items</b>	<b>(638,782)</b>	<b>(581,216)</b>	<b>(57,566)</b>	<b>(178,906)</b>	<b>(459,876)</b>
<b>Inc/(dec) in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>410,129</b>	<b>(451,409)</b>	<b>861,538</b>	<b>1,021,160</b>	<b>(611,032)</b>
<b>Changes in With Donor Restricted Net Assets:</b>					
Contributions	1,327,064	87,500	1,239,564	1,138,494	188,570
Investment Earnings	(31,963)	0	(31,963)	289,864	(321,828)
Net Assets released from restrictions for operations	(1,346,350)	(212,792)	(1,133,558)	(800,359)	(545,992)
Inc/(dec) in With Donor Restricted Net Assets	(51,250)	(125,292)	74,042	628,000	(679,249)
<b>Inc/(dec) in Net Assets</b>	<b>358,879</b>	<b>(576,701)</b>	<b>935,580</b>	<b>1,649,160</b>	<b>(1,290,281)</b>
<b>Total Net Assets at Beginning of Period</b>	<b>30,889,986</b>	<b>9,576,481</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25,996,445</b>	<b>4,893,541</b>
<b>Total Net Assets at End of Period</b>	<b>31,248,865</b>	<b>8,999,780</b>	<b>935,580</b>	<b>27,645,605</b>	<b>3,603,260</b>

## MPM Consolidated Statement of Financial Position as of 12/31/24

	<u>12/31/24</u>	<u>12/31/23</u>	<u>Change</u>
<b>Assets:</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	3,025,124	5,014,539	(1,080,938)
Investments	4,289,594	2,843,636	575,418
Accounts Receivable	132,936	78,830	97,686
Note Receivable	0	0	0
Contributions Receivable -Current	2,451,966	953,105	951,814
Due From Other Funds/Entities	0	0	0
Inventories, net	84,620	81,402	15,527
Prepaid Expenses	307,539	53,722	211,169
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>10,291,779</b>	<b>9,025,234</b>	<b>770,676</b>
<b>Other Assets:</b>			
Cash and investments held for endowment	15,222,300	12,160,971	545,284
Contributions Receivable - Long Term	4,646,350	4,822,487	(492,235)
<b>Total Other Assets</b>	<b>19,868,650</b>	<b>16,983,458</b>	<b>53,049</b>
<b>Property &amp; Equipment:</b>			
CIP	0	59,226	0
Building Additions	19,875,741	19,875,741	(0)
Furniture, equipment and other improvements	13,177,078	13,067,262	(2)
Right to Use Asset	65,637	65,637	(0)
<b>Gross Property &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>33,118,455</b>	<b>33,067,865</b>	<b>(3)</b>
Less-Accumulated depreciation & amortiization	(27,495,210)	(25,925,017)	(516,539)
<b>Net Property &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>5,623,245</b>	<b>7,142,848</b>	<b>(516,542)</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>35,783,674</b>	<b>33,151,540</b>	<b>307,183</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets:</b>			
Accounts Payable	421,787	331,002	96,349
Accrued Payroll & Benefits	839,021	807,167	208,081
Deferred Revenue	808,481	994,778	(390,583)
Lease Payable - Current	13,056	12,506	0
Current Portion of Post Retirement Benefits	235,626	168,132	0
Line of Credit	0	0	0
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>2,317,971</b>	<b>2,313,585</b>	<b>(86,153)</b>
Accrued Postretirement Benefits	2,192,058	3,154,328	38,751
Due to Other Funds/Entities	0	0	0
Lease Payable	24,784	38,022	(4,290)
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>4,534,813</b>	<b>5,505,935</b>	<b>(51,692)</b>
<b>Net Assets:</b>			
Without Donor Restrictions	16,124,962	14,199,877	2,410,124
With Donor Restrictions	15,123,898	13,445,728	(51,250)
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>31,248,860</b>	<b>27,645,605</b>	<b>2,358,874</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>35,783,674</b>	<b>33,151,540</b>	<b>2,307,182</b>