



Date: May 21, 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 last year's attendance (-3%). This appears to be a trend that other museums in the city are experiencing too. We continue to monitor it but are not concerned at this time.

More than 18,000 people—both those staycation-ing in Milwaukee and traveling from afar—visited MPM during spring break, March 22 through 30, to learn from Educators about spring topics like migrating birds and butterflies, and become immersed in the wonderful world of bugs for our second annual Creepy Crawly Day!

MPM staff joined Native and non-Native educational professionals, academics from across the state, representatives from MPS First Nations Study Program, and many others at the Wisconsin Indian Education Association Conference in Keshena, Wisconsin, April 9-11. The annual conference addresses Native American educational issues and, this year, was held on the Menominee Reservation. Staff promoted our first annual 3 Rivers Powwow, a community powwow and artisan showcase that will be organized and hosted by the Museum on November 1, 2025.

On April 10th, MPM hosted Tribal dignitaries from Forest County Potawatomi, the Ho-Chunk Nation, and the Oneida Nation for dinner and to attend our Science on Tap lecture, which featured a lecture from Dr. Rebecca Webster of the Oneida Nation on food sovereignty and a special meal prepared by Potawatomi chef Mikaya Alloway using Indigenous foods.

On Saturday, April 26, 16 docents in period attire inhabited the *Streets of Old Milwaukee* exhibit for the fan-favorite event, *Streets Alive!* They portrayed Milwaukee residents and professionals from the early 1900s, such as a maid from the Pfister Hotel, pharmacist, tavern owner, and suffragist. More than 1,500 visitors enjoyed listening to fascinating stories and taking photos of life in Milwaukee 125 years ago.

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The new Planetarium program, *The Artistic Universe* is an original MPM production! Viewers explore the connections between art and science as they uncover the beauty and mystery around us. Adventures include entering Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* and enjoying a new twist on "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." The program will run through September

On Friday, April 11, 1,500 people attended our members-only Inside Out experience. They explored rarely seen collections items and got a deeper look into the incredible work happening at the Museum through 21 engaging presentations by our staff, students, researchers, and volunteers. During the event, the Education team had the opportunity to pilot their new school program, Museum Academies, in an informal setting.

MPM Educators attended a Professional Development workshop at UW-Milwaukee Children's Learning Center alongside the education team from America's Black Holocaust Museum (ABHM) to learn about how to apply culturally responsive teaching strategies for early learners in museums. This was part of our reciprocal relationship with ABHM educators for their help in putting together new Black History Month programming this year.

MPM joined other museums, planetariums, universities, libraries, and community-based organizations across the country for STEM Day on Saturday, May 10—a celebration of the 75th anniversary of the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF). Visitors learned about the many ways NSF's commitment to scientific innovation and education has shaped MPM, explored water-themed STEM topics throughout our exhibits. Museum staff created a temporary exhibit of 20 panels that detailed how NSF funding has supported exhibit planning and production, scientific discovery, planetarium programs, object digitization, and more.

Status of Current Facility

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

- One of the passenger elevators was out of commission for several days during the past few months due to a faulty and obsolete safety light curtain. This is the device that senses you as you walk through the opening in/out of the car; it prevents the doors from closing and keeps the car from moving. The part is obsolete, so it took 3 weeks to replace, leaving MPM with only one small passenger elevator for guests and staff. Also, on a few occasions during this time the second elevator was down, leaving guests and staff with no elevator.
- 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.

MPM Fiscal Summary -FY 2025

For the seven-month period ended March 31, 2025, MPM consolidated financial statements reported an operating surplus of \$2,360,000 compared to \$1,484,000 in income from the same period as the previous year.

Consolidated operating revenue increased to almost \$10.7M compared to about \$9.2 million 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 \$8.3 million compared to \$7.7 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 \$104,000 and a transfer to the MPM endowment of a bequest of about \$111,000.

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New Museum progress

Exhibit Progress - The process to construct and install the exhibits in the Future Museum kicked off in March with world-renowned exhibit fabricator Kubik Maltbie.

Kubik Maltbie has created exhibits for prestigious institutions, including the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, the American Museum of Natural History, the Empire State Building, and locally, the Harley-Davidson Museum. Their extensive experience in creating engaging and iconic exhibits will ensure that MPM's new Museum meets the highest standards of quality and innovation.

Using the design plans from Museum exhibition design partner, Thinc, Kubik Maltbie will build immersive scenery and display cases and platforms, produce graphics explaining collections items, and incorporate lighting and sensory components such as sound, tactile elements, visual projections, and even scents.

Most exhibit components will be fabricated offsite and then transported and installed in the Future Museum in 2026 when construction manager Mortenson completes interior work on the building.

In preparation for the future exhibits, the *Asia* gallery on the Third Floor is **temporarily closed** to the public through late summer. Staff are using the space as a staging area while they deinstall a small percentage of items on exhibit throughout the Museum. The objects being removed will then be cleaned, repaired, prepped, wrapped, and staged for eventual transport to the new building, where they will be on display in the Living in a Dynamic World gallery. This is being used as a test to help us understand how long the process will take.

6th and McKinley Site

Construction continues to move along on pace. The building should reach it's full height by the end of June. Once that is completed, the pre-cast panels that will clad the building will start to be installed. The panels are being made in Germantown by StoneCast Products with material from three local quarries. There will be 640 total panels on the building. Some of them are 40 ft x 35 ft and weigh up to 56,000 pounds. Each panel needs to be placed perfectly to create the striations that mimic the Mill Bluff formation that inspired the building.



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Collections Move – We continue to inventory and pack collections for the move. All of the ancient history collections have been packed into crates. This is significant because these collections were stored in a room that was vulnerable to flooding. There have been more than 90 crates packed containing more than 250,000 objects.

All objects are being barcoded and carefully packed to insure they remain safe during this whole process and to insure that we know exactly where they are at any time.



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Name Change and Logo Reveal – On May 6th, we announced that once we move into our new building in 2027, we will be known as the Nature & Culture Museum of Wisconsin, and we will have a new logo. The new name clearly identifies what we are—a museum that shares stories about the natural and cultural wonders of our world. And as the most visited museum in the state, having Wisconsin in our name identifies us as a statewide institution—one that draws more than 500,000 visitors every year, with half of those visitors coming from outside of Milwaukee County.

As part of this announcement, we also shared that the entire complex at 6th and McKinley will be known as the **Milwaukee Museum Center**. The Milwaukee Museum Center includes the Nature & Culture Museum of Wisconsin and its numerous amenities, including the Daniel M. Soref Planetarium, *Puelicher Butterfly Vivarium*, Bucyrus Rooftop Terrace, a café, parking structure, as well as the outdoor commons area called the Plaza. The Center is also where the Milwaukee County collections will be cared for and prominently featured in the Museum’s exhibits. The name “Milwaukee Museum Center” will be etched into the stone facade of the building and will also be featured prominently on interior signage along with “Milwaukee County Collections.”

Here is a link to a video that shares some of our history and reasoning (<https://youtu.be/tKYu6Y3uZ8M>).

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

Sincerely,

Ellen Censky, PhD
President/CEO

Thomas M. Oechler
VP Finance and Operations

MPM Consolidated Statement of Activities for the Seven Months Ended 3/31/25

	YTD	YTD		Prior Year	Prior Year
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Dev</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Change</u>
Revenue:					
Contributions	2,301,795	1,591,804	709,991	1,987,672	314,123
Membership	842,853	743,633	99,220	832,722	10,132
Special Event Revenue	986,785	966,350	20,435	885,989	100,795
Public Support	2,043,621	2,050,589	(6,968)	2,113,835	(70,213)
Admissions	1,436,166	1,620,833	(184,668)	1,445,524	(9,359)
Theatre/Planetarium	100,009	111,905	(11,896)	148,022	(48,013)
Programs	67,266	47,785	19,481	60,087	7,179
Contributed Services	0	0	0	0	0
Restaurant and Facility Rental	147,995	99,960	48,035	67,914	80,081
Retail	536,728	500,000	36,728	482,083	54,645
Other income	88,537	207,085	(118,548)	81,741	6,796
Net Assets released from restrictions	2,126,698	473,657	1,653,040	1,092,225	1,034,473
Total Operating Revenue	10,678,452	8,413,602	2,264,850	9,197,813	1,480,639
Operating Expenses:					
Cost of Goods Sold	232,930	213,197	19,733	208,783	24,147
Supplies	443,679	577,593	(133,914)	555,509	(111,830)
Salaries and Wages	4,277,540	4,471,223	(193,682)	4,235,560	41,980
Benefits	934,424	1,012,890	(78,466)	883,027	51,397
Travel	33,925	58,770	(24,845)	44,980	(11,055)
Insurance	43,967	43,049	918	41,660	2,307
Marketing/Public Relations	397,391	424,667	(27,276)	378,198	19,193
Member/Donor Development	33,263	88,295	(55,032)	34,952	(1,688)
Subscriptions/Memberships	32,971	40,501	(7,530)	32,772	199
Maintenance	418,800	384,555	34,245	312,671	106,129
Utilities	687,026	646,534	40,492	639,901	47,125
Professional Fees	665,929	354,423	311,506	225,383	440,546
Interest Expense	1,873	2,279	(406)	2,528	(656)
Miscellaneous	111,025	124,902	(13,877)	114,344	(3,318)
Tax Expense	4,016	3,500	516	3,144	872
Contributed Services	0	0	0	0	0
Total Operating Expenses	8,318,761	8,446,378	(127,618)	7,713,412	605,348
Inc/(dec) from Net Assets in Operating Activities	2,359,691	(32,777)	2,392,468	1,484,401	875,291
Non-Operating Items:					
Investment Earnings (Loss)	104,474	84,000	20,474	655,073	(550,599)
Transfer to Endowment	(111,389)	0	(111,389)	0	(111,389)
Pension & Post Retirement Expenses	(210,000)	(210,000)	0	(210,000)	0
Depreciation & Amortization	(903,579)	(890,767)	(12,812)	(798,453)	(105,127)
Non-Operating Income - Covid Related	0	0	0	0	0
Total Non-Operating Items	(1,120,495)	(1,016,767)	(103,728)	(353,380)	(767,115)
Inc/(dec) in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	1,239,196	(1,049,543)	2,288,740	1,131,021	108,176
Changes in With Donor Restricted Net Assets:					
Contributions	2,084,597	400,000	1,684,597	2,475,532	(390,935)
Investment Earnings	6,048	0	6,048	560,107	(554,059)
Net Assets released from restrictions for operations	(2,126,698)	(473,657)	(1,653,040)	(1,092,225)	(1,034,473)
Inc/(dec) in With Donor Restricted Net Assets	(36,053)	(73,657)	37,604	1,943,414	(1,979,467)
Inc/(dec) in Net Assets	1,203,143	(1,123,201)	2,326,344	3,074,435	(1,871,292)
Total Net Assets at Beginning of Period	30,889,986	9,576,481	0	25,996,445	4,893,541
Total Net Assets at End of Period	32,093,129	8,453,280	2,326,344	29,070,880	3,022,249

MPM Consolidated Statement of Financial Position as of 3/31/25

	<u>3/31/25</u>	<u>3/31/24</u>	<u>Change</u>
Assets:			
Cash and cash equivalents	2,992,576	5,384,778	(1,113,486)
Investments	4,434,350	3,429,447	720,174
Accounts Receivable	249,487	86,511	214,237
Note Receivable	0	0	0
Contributions Receivable -Current	1,084,266	912,271	(415,886)
Due From Other Funds/Entities	0	0	0
Inventories, net	84,337	90,410	15,244
Prepaid Expenses	49,745	75,302	(46,625)
Total Current Assets	8,894,759	9,978,718	(626,344)
Other Assets:			
Cash and investments held for endowment	16,844,344	13,112,957	2,167,328
Contributions Receivable - Long Term	5,524,212	5,516,237	385,627
Total Other Assets	22,368,556	18,629,194	2,552,955
Property & Equipment:			
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)
Gross Property & Equipment	33,118,455	33,067,865	(3)
Less-Accumulated depreciation & amortiization	(27,882,251)	(26,322,582)	(903,580)
Net Property & Equipment	5,236,204	6,745,283	(903,583)
Total Assets	36,499,520	35,353,195	1,023,029
Liabilities and Net Assets:			
Accounts Payable	404,947	399,341	79,509
Accrued Payroll & Benefits	674,209	672,776	43,269
Deferred Revenue	757,479	1,816,116	(441,585)
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
Total Current Liabilities	2,085,316	3,068,871	(318,808)
Accrued Postretirement Benefits	2,211,614	3,178,544	58,307
Due to Other Funds/Entities	0	0	0
Annuity Payment Liability	87,934	0	87,934
Lease Payable	21,526	34,901	(7,548)
Total Liabilities	4,406,391	6,282,315	(180,114)
Net Assets:			
Without Donor Restrictions	16,954,034	14,309,738	3,239,196
With Donor Restrictions	15,139,095	14,761,142	(36,053)
Total Net Assets	32,093,129	29,070,880	3,203,143
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	36,499,520	35,353,195	3,023,029