



Date: November 14, 2025

To: Chairperson Willie Johnson, Jr., Committee on Finance
Vice Chairperson Steven Taylor, Committee on Finance

CC: Allyson R. Smith, 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

Attendance --The museum completed its 2025 fiscal year on August 31. Attendance picked up over the summer months, ending the year ahead of projects. We served more than 500,000 visitors during the year. This was due to greater than projected attendance in the planetarium and as well as education programs. FY2026 attendance is on-track with projections for September and October.

Programming --MPM Educators provide hands-on learning opportunities that spark curiosity and encourage further exploration through outreach programming. This past summer, there were outreach programs on bugs and butterflies at several community events including Mexican Fiesta, Nature and Forestry Fest at Greenfield Farmers Market, Harbor Fest and Bug Day at Wehr Nature Center.

MPM explored the multiethnic histories and traditions of Latin American cultures in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15. We hosted two community-driven Saturday celebrations, as well as educational opportunities on weekdays. During the month, visitors were able to enjoy cultural dance performances, take part in artistic activities led by local artisans, and learn about the Museum's vast collection of objects from various countries across the Americas.

MPM honored Indigenous Peoples' Day on Monday, October 13, with a lively celebration of Indigenous cultures throughout the Americas. México Indígena returned to MPM to showcase dance and drum rhythms native to the Aztecs, while the Ho-Chunk drum group Little Priest performed drumming and singing as dancers demonstrate different dance styles seen at Native American powwows. As part of MPM's Learn with an Expert program, schools joined a special hour-long interactive session with the performers, both onsite and virtually.

Kicking off our month-long celebration of Native Americans in November, the museum held its first annual 3 Rivers Powwow which showcased various dance styles and songs shared from different drum groups from Wisconsin. Over 100 dancers participated throughout the day. The event included a Grand Entry at noon, shop for arts and crafts by Native artisans and variety of resource tables.

Milwaukee Public Museum

Streets of Old Milwaukee took on a spooky vibe with Historic Halloween decorations. Visitors found vintage Halloween cards and posters from the Museum's collections, plus seasonal props like cornstalks, candy corn, gourds, cardboard lanterns, and crepe-paper bats and other spooky artwork incorporated into homes and businesses. A few new frightful decorations were added this year: trick-or-treaters at Granny's, 100 black crows perched on telephone poles and wires, and four black cats lurking in various spots.

The Daniel M. Soref Planetarium offered a new five-week class for adults this fall. The class explored five engaging topics in space and astronomy taught by Planetarium Director Bob Bonadurer.

Accessibility -- As we are preparing for the exciting move to the new Museum, we are piloting a few new ideas. One of the initiatives is the development of universally designed audio tours, created to benefit all visitors. To guide the project, a focus group of both blind and sighted individuals, ages 15 to 70+ was organized. Together, draft scripts were written, reviewed by curators, and tested in-gallery by the group before being finalized. With the support of a generous donor, MPM purchased audio tour devices and partnered with long-time collaborator Audio & Braille Literacy Enhancement (ABLE) to record the tours using professional audio readers. These are now being tested on the floors.

Research -- The museum's research curators continue to conduct research across the world. This past summer and fall they conducted field work in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Uganda and the states. This research was funded by grants. The Museum currently has \$954,956 in grant funding and has an additional \$1.6M in pending requests. MPM is also writing the final report on a 5-year, \$4.5M grant to digitize parasites, making them accessible to researchers who study human and agricultural diseases.

MPM research generated the first complete genome of the woolly bear, *Pyrrharctia isabella* (in collaboration with scientists at BYU), and one of the botany publications used digitized records of museum specimens from MPM and other institutions around the world to generate the first global distribution maps for the bamboos (of which there are almost 2,000 species spread across 5 continents).

Status of Current Facility

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

- Elevator/Escalator:
 - Escalator 2 fl. to 1 fl. down, 1 week outage— Handrail, drive chain, and belt (left side) failed/replaced.
 - East Passenger Elevator, 2-day outage – Safeties failed/replaced.
 - East Passenger Elevator, 3-day outage – Car Controller (relay) failed/replaced.
 - East Passenger Elevator, 2-week outage – Hoistway ropes replaced, door lock & bell crank (mechanical) failed/replaced.
 - Escalator 1 fl. to G fl. down, 2-day outage – Tension device failed/replaced.
- 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 Final/FY2026 To 9/30

For the fiscal year ended August 31, 2025, MPM consolidated financial statements reported an operating surplus of \$2,254,000 compared to a \$1,216,000 surplus in the same period as the previous year. For the one-month period ending September 30, 2025, MPM reported an operating loss of \$81,000 compared to a loss of \$195,000 in the same period as the previous year.

Milwaukee Public Museum

Consolidated operating revenue during the fiscal year ended August 31, 2025 increased to \$16.4M from \$15.4 million in the previous year. This increase was mainly due to timing of net assets released from restrictions relating to endowment contributions. For the one-month period ending September 30, 2025, MPM reported consolidated operating revenue of \$967,000 compared to \$911,000 in the same period as the previous year.

Consolidated operating expenditures during the fiscal year ended August 31, 2025 were \$14.2 million compared to \$13.2 million in the prior year. This includes expenditures of donated funds for equipment that will be used for collections storage. For the one-month period ended September 30, 2025, MPM reported consolidated operating expenditures of \$1.0M compared to \$1.1M in the same period as the previous year.

New Museum Progress

Exhibit Progress – Fabrication has begun on the exhibits. This includes building scenic elements such as rock walls, grasses, trees, buildings, and diorama backdrop paintings. Prototyping of the interactives is taking place with testing happening over the last few months and the next few months. We have also begun to remove objects from exhibits that will go on exhibit in the new museum. The reason for this is that they will need to be cleaned and conserved in preparation for display in the new facility. We have also been working on labels and graphics for the future museum exhibits. We are about 70% complete on that. And we have begun to develop the media elements for the new museum.

Coordination between the exhibit team and the construction team continues as we make sure the base building electricals meet the exhibit requirements. Exhibit hangers for large objects and speakers, projectors, etc. are also being installed in coordination with the base building construction.

6th and McKinley Site - Construction continues to move along on-pace. Since last June (when we last reported), the building reached its full height and was topped off. Shortly after that the building started to be enclosed with precast panels. That process continued through October. Work on the inside – mechanical, electrical and plumbing has ramped up. In addition, studs for walls are being installed. In September and October, the parking garage was completely constructed. Work will continue inside through the winter and into summer. We are happy to report that 55% of the workforce onsite at the construction site resides in Milwaukee County. We expect that to grow as the work inside the building ramps up.

Collections Move – We have added 23 staff to the team to help inventory, barcode and pack the collections. Nearly one million objects have been packed to date, including textiles, ancient history, glass ceramics, birds, mammals, fossils. In addition, offsite storage has been upgraded to meet museum standards and storage equipment is being installed. As storage is installed, collections are being moved. As an aside – we are happy to report that offsite storage did not have any leaks or damage during the 1000-year flood event in August. This was a great test of the facility prior to any collections being stored on-site.

Fundraising – fundraising continues on-pace, with **1.5 years left in the campaign**. We will provide an update early next year – after the end-of-year giving season concludes.

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

Milwaukee Public Museum

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellen Censky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Ellen Censky, PhD
President/CEO

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas M. Oechler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Thomas M. Oechler
VP Finance and Operations

MPM Consolidated Statement of Activities for the Year Ended 8/31/25

	YTD	YTD		Prior Year	Prior Year
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Dev</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Change</u>
Revenue:					
Contributions	3,894,274	2,793,198	1,101,076	3,811,585	82,689
Membership	1,237,157	1,201,697	35,459	1,251,612	(14,455)
Special Event Revenue	1,043,785	966,350	77,435	914,389	129,395
Public Support	3,508,922	3,508,922	0	3,572,168	(63,246)
Admissions	2,395,991	2,621,126	(225,135)	2,308,022	87,969
Theatre/Planetarium	154,100	168,088	(13,988)	215,970	(61,870)
Programs	95,577	80,296	15,281	153,344	(57,767)
Contributed Services	0	0	0	0	0
Restaurant and Facility Rental	196,431	164,940	31,491	129,740	66,691
Retail	896,546	831,950	64,596	803,406	93,140
Other income	133,838	390,933	(257,095)	118,132	15,705
Net Assets released from restrictions	2,863,670	826,045	2,037,625	2,152,588	711,082
Total Operating Revenue	16,420,291	13,553,545	2,866,746	15,430,957	989,334
Operating Expenses:					
Cost of Goods Sold	386,999	355,345	31,654	351,970	35,029
Supplies	745,843	870,476	(124,633)	806,549	(60,706)
Salaries and Wages	7,380,247	7,733,860	(353,613)	7,293,581	86,666
Benefits	1,761,637	1,786,946	(25,309)	1,524,706	236,931
Travel	79,986	113,125	(33,140)	149,459	(69,474)
Insurance	76,227	74,174	2,053	71,507	4,720
Marketing/Public Relations	616,515	586,683	29,833	563,877	52,638
Member/Donor Development	101,160	130,195	(29,035)	101,694	(535)
Subscriptions/Memberships	52,958	63,584	(10,626)	53,291	(333)
Maintenance	685,010	639,823	45,186	605,297	79,713
Utilities	1,180,734	1,105,344	75,390	1,075,772	104,962
Professional Fees	914,896	705,434	209,462	416,577	498,319
Interest Expense	2,454	2,860	(406)	3,342	(888)
Miscellaneous	177,820	190,703	(12,883)	193,805	(15,986)
Tax Expense	4,016	3,500	516	3,144	872
Contributed Services	0	0	0	0	0
Total Operating Expenses	14,166,501	14,362,052	(195,551)	13,214,570	951,931
Inc/(dec) from Net Assets in Operating Activities	2,253,791	(808,506)	3,062,297	2,216,387	37,404
Non-Operating Items:					
Investment Earnings (Loss)	1,249,696	144,000	1,105,696	1,206,110	43,585
Transfer to Endowment	0	0	0	0	0
Pension & Post Retirement Expenses	623,872	(360,000)	983,872	568,161	55,712
Depreciation & Amoritization	(1,548,111)	(1,526,148)	(21,964)	(1,454,543)	(93,569)
Non-Operating Income - Covid Related	0	0	0	0	0
Total Non-Operating Items	325,457	(1,742,148)	2,067,605	319,729	5,729
Inc/(dec) in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	2,579,248	(2,550,654)	5,129,902	2,536,116	43,132
Changes in With Donor Restricted Net Assets:					
Contributions	2,685,880	465,000	2,220,880	3,535,677	(849,798)
Investment Earnings	748,777	0	748,777	974,331	(225,554)
Net Assets released from restrictions for operations	(2,863,670)	(826,045)	(2,037,625)	(2,152,588)	(711,082)
Inc/(dec) in With Donor Restricted Net Assets	570,986	(361,045)	932,031	2,357,420	(1,786,434)
Inc/(dec) in Net Assets	3,150,234	(2,911,699)	6,061,933	4,893,535	(1,743,301)
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	34,040,220	6,664,782	6,061,933	30,889,980	3,150,240

MPM Consolidated Statement of Financial Position as of 8/31/25

	<u>Consolidated</u> <u>8/31/25</u>	<u>Consolidated</u> <u>8/31/24</u>	<u>Change</u>
Assets:			
Cash and cash equivalents	2,251,823	4,113,764	(1,854,239)
Investments	4,511,559	3,706,473	797,383
Accounts Receivable	99,162	35,250	63,912
Note Receivable	0	0	0
Contributions Receivable -Current	2,785,866	1,500,152	1,285,714
Due From Other Funds/Entities	0	0	0
Inventories, net	68,543	69,093	(550)
Prepaid Expenses	70,350	96,370	(26,020)
Total Current Assets	9,787,302	9,521,103	266,199
Other Assets:			
Cash and investments held for endowment	19,590,082	14,677,016	4,913,066
Contributions Receivable - Long Term	3,732,820	5,138,585	(1,405,765)
Pension Benefit Asset	184,404	0	184,404
Total Other Assets	23,507,306	19,815,601	3,691,705
Property & Equipment:			
CIP	0	0	0
Building Additions	19,875,741	19,875,741	(0)
Furniture, equipment and other improvements	13,177,078	13,177,077	(2)
Right to Use Asset	65,637	65,637	(0)
Gross Property & Equipment	33,118,455	33,118,454	(3)
Less-Accumulated depreciation & amortization	(28,526,783)	(26,978,672)	(1,548,112)
Net Property & Equipment	4,591,673	6,139,783	(1,548,114)
Total Assets	37,886,281	35,476,487	2,409,790
Liabilities and Net Assets:			
Accounts Payable	362,492	325,439	37,054
Accrued Payroll & Benefits	734,147	630,940	103,207
Deferred Revenue	1,003,587	1,199,065	(195,477)
Lease Payable - Current	13,630	13,056	574
Current Portion of Post Retirement Benefits	149,526	235,626	(86,100)
Line of Credit	0	0	0
Total Current Liabilities	2,263,382	2,404,125	(140,742)
Accrued Postretirement Benefits	1,479,301	2,153,307	(674,006)
Due to Other Funds/Entities	0	0	0
Annuity Payment Liability	87,934	0	87,934
Lease Payable	15,444	29,074	(13,630)
Total Liabilities	3,846,061	4,586,506	(740,444)
Net Assets:			
Without Donor Restrictions	18,294,086	15,714,833	4,579,248
With Donor Restrictions	15,746,134	15,175,148	570,986
Total Net Assets	34,040,220	30,889,980	5,150,234
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	37,886,281	35,476,487	4,409,790

MPM Consolidated Statement of Activities for the One Month Ended 9/30/25

	YTD	YTD		Prior Year	Prior Year
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Dev</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Change</u>
Revenue:					
Contributions	53,784	307,414	(253,630)	113,023	(59,240)
Membership	85,401	61,354	24,047	85,006	395
Special Event Revenue	0	0	0	115,000	(115,000)
Public Support	291,667	291,667	(0)	292,245	(578)
Admissions	93,753	94,220	(467)	93,945	(192)
Theatre/Planetarium	4,162	6,758	(2,596)	6,725	(2,563)
Programs	7,982	6,816	1,166	2,666	5,316
Contributed Services	0	0	0	0	0
Restaurant and Facility Rental	19,666	16,150	3,516	17,518	2,148
Retail	37,018	40,835	(3,817)	40,480	(3,462)
Other income	20,161	26,315	(6,154)	23,471	(3,310)
Net Assets released from restrictions	352,915	22,167	330,748	121,043	231,872
Total Operating Revenue	966,509	873,696	92,813	911,122	55,387
Operating Expenses:					
Cost of Goods Sold	16,027	17,201	(1,173)	17,494	(1,467)
Supplies	40,759	76,835	(36,076)	81,424	(40,665)
Salaries and Wages	597,926	618,229	(20,303)	590,001	7,925
Benefits	127,972	136,160	(8,188)	105,132	22,841
Travel	7,473	4,917	2,556	250	7,222
Insurance	6,456	6,501	(45)	6,161	294
Marketing/Public Relations	10,375	24,319	(13,944)	84,474	(74,099)
Member/Donor Development	8,909	8,779	131	2,091	6,818
Subscriptions/Memberships	5,191	7,848	(2,657)	4,624	567
Maintenance	34,479	38,075	(3,597)	72,511	(38,032)
Utilities	84,912	82,259	2,653	88,617	(3,705)
Professional Fees	95,314	34,151	61,164	41,280	54,035
Interest Expense	994	1,404	(411)	1,045	(52)
Miscellaneous	10,449	15,964	(5,514)	10,715	(266)
Tax Expense	0	0	0	0	0
Contributed Services	0	0	0	0	0
Total Operating Expenses	1,047,237	1,072,642	(25,405)	1,105,821	(58,584)
Inc/(dec) from Net Assets in Operating Activities	(80,728)	(198,946)	118,218	(194,699)	113,971
Non-Operating Items:					
Investment Earnings (Loss)	260,542	17,000	243,542	154,399	106,144
Transfer to Endowment	0	0	0	0	0
Pension & Post Retirement Expenses	(30,000)	(30,000)	0	(30,000)	0
Depreciation & Amortization	(128,883)	(128,776)	(107)	(129,162)	278
Non-Operating Income - Covid Related	0	0	0	0	0
Total Non-Operating Items	101,659	(141,776)	243,435	(4,763)	106,422
Inc/(dec) in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	20,931	(340,722)	361,653	(199,461)	220,393
Changes in With Donor Restricted Net Assets:					
Contributions	120,262	0	120,262	88,413	31,849
Investment Earnings	164,515	0	164,515	121,583	42,932
Net Assets released from restrictions for operations	(352,915)	(22,167)	(330,748)	(121,043)	(231,872)
Inc/(dec) in With Donor Restricted Net Assets	(68,138)	(22,167)	(45,971)	88,954	(157,092)
Inc/(dec) in Net Assets	(47,207)	(362,889)	315,682	(110,508)	63,301
Total Net Assets at Beginning of Period	34,040,221	8,416,285	0	30,889,986	3,150,235
Total Net Assets at End of Period	33,993,014	8,053,396	315,682	30,779,478	3,213,536

MPM Consolidated Statement of Financial Position as of 9/30/25

	<u>9/30/25</u>	<u>8/31/25</u>	<u>Change</u>
Assets:			
Cash and cash equivalents	1,964,084	2,251,823	(287,739)
Investments	4,426,461	4,511,559	(85,098)
Accounts Receivable	136,051	99,162	36,889
Note Receivable	0	0	0
Contributions Receivable -Current	2,560,838	2,785,866	(225,028)
Due From Other Funds/Entities	0	0	0
Inventories, net	78,865	68,542	10,323
Prepaid Expenses	60,864	70,350	(9,486)
Total Current Assets	9,227,163	9,787,302	(560,139)
Other Assets:			
Cash and investments held for endowment	20,209,364	19,590,082	619,282
Contributions Receivable - Long Term	3,577,507	3,732,820	(155,313)
Pension Benefit Asset	169,404	184,404	(15,000)
Total Other Assets	23,956,275	23,507,306	448,969
Property & Equipment:			
CIP	0	0	0
Building Additions	19,875,741	19,875,741	(0)
Furniture, equipment and other improvements	13,183,528	13,177,078	6,450
Right to Use Asset	65,637	65,637	(0)
Gross Property & Equipment	33,124,905	33,118,456	6,449
Less-Accumulated depreciation & amortization	(28,655,666)	(28,526,783)	(128,883)
Net Property & Equipment	4,469,239	4,591,673	(122,434)
Total Assets	37,652,678	37,886,281	(233,603)
Liabilities and Net Assets:			
Accounts Payable	414,821	362,492	52,329
Accrued Payroll & Benefits	745,096	734,147	10,949
Deferred Revenue	738,423	1,003,587	(265,164)
Lease Payable - Current	13,630	13,630	0
Current Portion of Post Retirement Benefits	149,526	149,526	0
Line of Credit	0	0	0
Total Current Liabilities	2,061,496	2,263,382	(201,886)
Accrued Postretirement Benefits	1,495,905	1,479,301	16,604
Due to Other Funds/Entities	0	0	0
Annuity Payment Liability	87,934	87,934	0
Lease Payable	14,330	15,444	(1,114)
Total Liabilities	3,659,665	3,846,061	(186,396)
Net Assets:			
Without Donor Restrictions	18,315,017	18,294,086	20,931
With Donor Restrictions	15,677,996	15,746,134	(68,138)
Total Net Assets	33,993,013	34,040,220	(47,207)
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	37,652,678	37,886,281	(233,603)