

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: February 10, 2021

TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services, Economic Development Division
Dr. Ellen Censky, President & Chief Executive Officer, Milwaukee Public Museum

SUBJECT: AN ACTION REPORT REQUESTING AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE A REVISED MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM COLLECTIONS POLICY

REQUEST

Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) is requesting the review and approval of the revised collections policy.

PREVIOUS LEGISLATION

File 13-598 – Action Report – Authorization to Execute a Lease and Management Agreement with MPM

File 16-180 – Action Report – Authorization to Execute a revised Collections Policy, pursuant to Section 5.5 of the Lease and Management Agreement between Milwaukee County and MPM

REPORT

As part of the review process for reaccreditation, MPM was asked to add or clarify a few items in its Collection Management Policy to bring the policy into compliance with the most recent updates and best practices for museums. Those items are redlined on the document attached to this file. MPM is seeking approval from the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors for these revisions.

The goal of the revision is to ensure that museum policies and procedures reflect current best practices in the museum field, reflect current ethical standards, are legally compliant and up-to-date. This revised policy based on said process was unanimously approved by the Milwaukee Public Museum Board of Directors on November 12, 2020. A collections policy delineates how the museum acquires objects or specimens for the collection (known as accessioning), cares for and protects them, removes objects from the collection (known as deaccessioning), keeps accurate records and inventories, loans objects to other institutions, treats intellectual property created by MPM staff based on research of museum collections, and hews to ethical practices in the museum field. MPM's collections policy was last updated in 2016.

As stated in the Lease and Management Agreement (LMA) between Milwaukee County and MPM, MPM has “...full and complete control and discretion in the management and operation of the Site, the building, the Personal Property, and the Artifacts...” including the right and duty “to

determine and carry out all policies relating to the acquisition, maintenance, loan, exchange, lease, sale, disposal, accession and deaccession of the Artifacts.” Section 5.5 of the LMA notes that “The Milwaukee Public Museum shall adopt a formal written policy regarding the accession and deaccession of artifacts in compliance with Federal and State law. Upon its adoption and upon any amendment thereof, a copy of such policy or amended policy, as the case may be, shall be submitted to the County Board of Supervisors for approval, which shall not be unreasonably withheld.”

RECOMMENDATION

Due to its reaccreditation process, MPM has requested its Collections Policy be revised to address updated best practices. Based on this information, the DAS recommends accepting the revisions.

FISCAL IMPACT

MPM staff have reviewed all necessary policies and procedures to ensure the updated collections policy reflects the current best practices in the museum field. There are no restrictions that would prevent an update to the MPM collections policy.



Aaron Hertzberg
Economic Development Director

Dr. Ellen Censky
President & CEO, Milwaukee Public Museum

Cc: David Crowley, County Executive
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Supervisor Sheldon Wasserman, Chairman, Parks, Energy and Environment Committee
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