

MEAD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Supervisory and Managerial Structure

Findings, Recommendations, and Implementation Plan

Prepared for the Mead Public Library

Section One of the Combined Organizational Assessment

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Synthesis

This section is the report's lead overview. It previews the conclusions for a reader who may not reach the body and appendices, and it is written to stand on its own for the Library Board and the Common Council. The combined report's unified executive summary, covering both the supervisory and managerial work in this section and the classification hierarchy work in the second section, will be written once both sections are stable.

Mead Public Library has an unusually thin supervisory and managerial layer for an organization of its size, with its three public service floors and its dual role as a City of Sheboygan department and the System Resource Library for the four-county Monarch Library System. Three positions hold management responsibility today: the Library Director, the Deputy Director, and a Circulation Supervisor established in the spring of 2026 (and repurposed from the former Support Services Manager position). Across roughly 38 full-time equivalents (~45 headcount) of library-service staffing, and measured against ten Wisconsin peer libraries on two independent methods, this is the leanest supervisory footprint in the comparison set.

The thinness is no longer absorbed without cost. It shows in the time spent by Director and Deputy Director resolving matters a frontline supervisor should handle, in scarce floor coverage across three distinct floors during open hours, in uncertain authority during evenings and weekends, and in supervisory attention consumed by patron behavior. The Director and the Deputy Director are stretched across several functions at once and over an atypical workweek, including project management for service, technology, and facility changes that only the senior layer can carry out. The Deputy Director, for example, currently works many Saturdays in exchange for a weekday off in order to keep weekend operations covered. After-hours authority was the most frequently cited operational concern in staff interviews. Fiscal responsibility only governs the pace at which the library closes this gap. The need itself is not in question.

The recommended response is a change to roles, reporting lines, and supervisory capacity, not the purchase of software or automation. The need for additional supervisory coverage is undisputed. The precise number of positions is a matter of calibration and judgment rather than a figure produced by a formula. **The ideal-state structure adds three supervisory positions, bringing the management layer to six**, and that number expresses comparability rather than a count derived from a rule. It is the consultant's best reasonable estimate of what it takes to bring Mead to a normal level of supervision for a library of its size and complexity. Even with all three additions, Mead would sit at the center of the normalized peer set and still below the median of the libraries that reported their own structures, not above either. Three is a conservative anchor, and the immediate recommendation is narrower still.

The near-term ask is two added supervisors, presented as a deliberate calibration to fiscal reality rather than the full measure of the need, with the third position documented so it remains available as budget capacity opens in later cycles. Whether the structure ultimately settles at two added positions or three is the open question; that the current layer needs more supervisory coverage is not. Read against the library's own history, even the full three-position ideal restores supervisory capacity that was reduced during the 2014 to 2018 appropriation freeze, rather than building a new administrative layer. The structural need is not in dispute; the open question is the pace at which the City can fund it. The case does not rest on headcount. It rests on three conditions that distinguish Mead from the leanest peers: three physical service floors that create coverage geography no single supervisor can hold; the System Resource Library obligation that loads the management layer; and a behavioral and patron-vulnerability burden that many peers do not carry, or for which other communities have other resources available.

Over the last two years, Mead moved its accounts-payable and related back-office financial work to the City, and its day-to-day building maintenance, including the maintenance staff and their oversight, to the

City's facilities maintenance department, with the maintenance transfer occurring very recently. The library has also accepted a shared wage schedule administered with the City. Wisconsin Chapter 43 vests a library board with substantial independent authority, and many Wisconsin libraries exercise it by keeping themselves separate from city operations, with the tension that separation carries. Mead would be within its rights to do the same and has instead chosen cooperation, a choice that serves the library well. The transfers moved significant portions of the work to the City, which performs it at a scale the library could not match on its own, but they did not remove the library's involvement. The library still budgets, manages patron-level financial transactions, coordinates and liaises on daily maintenance, and leads building development, remodeling, and capital projects. That residual coordination is real work resting on a thin administrative layer. No dedicated business-office or maintenance positions remain, so the library's staffing is now entirely library service, and its thinness sits on core supervision that no general-purpose City department can perform. That record is both a demonstration of lean administration for a budget-conscious reader and the foundation for the partnership in the report's request that the City convene a broader response to homelessness.

The report leads with the need and then stages the response across multiple budget cycles. The first move costs little: stabilize the recently established Circulation Supervisor position to its intended design and confirm that its span is sized correctly. Net-new capacity is what the library actually needs because it places people on the floor; therefore, the two added supervisors are recommended as net-new positions. Reclassification has a narrower role in the plan: it is the tool for the lead layer and for a supervisor-in-waiting designation that bridges a cycle in which the City permits reclassification but not a net-new position. That bridge positions leadership at low marginal cost, but it does not add floor capacity, and granting it without accounting for the work the person continues to carry shifts that work onto the remaining staff. The new supervisory positions sit above the professional Librarian level and at or above the Circulation Supervisor level. Their cost appears in this report only as a planning estimate, because final grade placement will depend on the City's own classification evaluation.

Evening and weekend coverage now relies on the two senior supervisors' availability for phone calls. A Person-in-Charge arrangement could bridge that gap in the interim, assigned when a supervisor is not scheduled or available, rather than fixed every evening and weekend, and only where it carries real authority and training, not a pay differential alone. A defined lead role can serve as a durable, permanent coordination layer when a genuine need exists. However, the structural endgame is enough supervisory positions to staff a sustainable evening and weekend rotation across several roles, so that coverage does not rest permanently on one or two people.

Homelessness appears throughout this report as a structural input that loads supervisory capacity, not as a program for the library to own. The report documents the operational impact and invites a City-convened, multi-stakeholder response. The structural recommendations hold regardless of what happens upstream, because the three-floor coverage geography and the after-hours authority gap are independent of it.

1. Engagement Scope and Methodology

1.1 Engagement and library profile

BoldPath Consulting was engaged by the Mead Public Library to assess the library's classification hierarchy and its supervisory and managerial structure, including coverage models and peer benchmarking. This section addresses the supervisory and managerial structure. The classification hierarchy is the subject of the second section of the combined report.

Mead is a single-site municipal library serving roughly 50,000 city residents and a wider service population of over 64,000. The building has three public service floors and a basement. Circulation and access services occupy the first floor, adult and public services the second, and youth services the third. The basement houses the Director, administrative staff, and the Friends of the Library archives. Mead also serves as the System Resource Library for the four-county Monarch Library System under Wisconsin Chapter 43. The library is the sponsor of this engagement, and the Library Board of Trustees, which governs the library, is the ultimate recipient of the work. The City Administrator, Mayor, and the Common Council hold primary budgetary authority. The library also draws on additional funding sources, including governmental sources such as the library system, the county, and the state, and it is supported by an active and generous donor base and Friends group whose contributions have helped the library maintain infrastructure it could not have sustained on city or system funds alone.

1.2 Functional footprint

Within the last two years, with the maintenance transfer very recent, the library moved its accounts-payable and related back-office financial work to the City, and its day-to-day building maintenance, including the maintenance employees and their oversight, to the City's facilities maintenance department. The library reports satisfaction with both transfers and is not seeking to reverse them. The Board attached a one-year review of maintenance service metrics as a condition of the transfer, so the satisfaction reported here is paired with a deliberate checkpoint rather than a settled assumption. The transfers were partial rather than total. The library retains its budgeting responsibility and patron-level financial transactions, and continues to coordinate daily maintenance and lead building development, remodeling, and capital projects in concert with the City and other stakeholders. What changed was the staffing: the library now has no business manager or business-office positions and no facilities manager or maintenance employees, so its current staffing is dedicated to library service.

The divestiture shifted the bulk of daily operations to the City without eliminating the library's involvement. The City performs that work with the time and scale to do it efficiently, and it can deploy maintenance staff to the library for a large project and redeploy them otherwise. The arrangement is a positive one. The residual coordination, liaison, and capital-project responsibility the library retains is uncounted work resting on a thin administrative layer.

This cooperative posture extends beyond the two transfers. The library also operates on a wage schedule shared with the City. Not every library accepts that arrangement; some boards insist on retaining the full breadth of duties, including setting compensation, which leaves a recurring source of tension. Mead's acceptance of a shared schedule removes that tension. Taken together, the finance transfer, the maintenance transfer, and the shared wage schedule reflect a degree of cooperation between a library and its city that is uncommon. Wisconsin Chapter 43 gives a library board substantial independent authority, including exclusive control of library operations under Wis. Stat. s. 43.58, and many Wisconsin libraries exercise that independence and remain separate from city operations, with the friction that separation carries. Mead would be within its rights to maintain that independence. **It has instead chosen a cooperative direction, and the library is well served by it.**

This footprint matters to the analysis for three reasons.

- First, **peer comparisons require normalization**, because most comparator libraries carry finance and facilities positions inside their staffing totals and their supervisor counts while Mead does not. The defensible comparison strips finance and facilities from both sides and compares library-service supervision to library-service supervision.

- Second, **the normalization sharpens rather than softens the central finding**, because Mead's remaining thinness sits on core library-service supervision that cannot be divested or shared with a general-purpose City department.
- Third, **the divestiture is a demonstrated record of cooperation between the library and the City**, which the report treats both as evidence of lean administration and as the foundation for the homelessness request in Appendix B.

1.3 Evidence base

This assessment draws on a cross-section of staff interviews completed by February 19, 2026, spanning leadership, professional service, public-facing support, technical services, communications, and safety roles. It draws on the current 2026 table of organization, as well as the subsequent management change that established the Circulation Supervisor position. The historical appropriation and staffing figures cited in the findings are drawn from Board-approved Tables of Organization and from Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction municipal appropriation data, provided through the library. That position is filled, and the library is still acclimating the new supervisor; the promotion that filled it created a downstream vacancy to be backfilled.

Peer benchmarking rests on two sources.

- The first is a **survey distributed through the City Library Collective peer network**. Of the twelve peer communities invited, six completed the survey: Kenosha, Appleton, Fond du Lac, La Crosse, Superior, and Waukesha. Mead is the thirteenth library in the set. The library extended a generous completion window. A collective of this kind depends on its members exchanging information for shared learning, and the aggregated results were to be returned to participating members for their own use, so a response from roughly half of those invited is worth recording plainly. Even at that rate, the responses received support reasonable conclusions, and the analysis does not reach beyond what they will bear. This primary, self-reported evidence is presented in Part 1 of Appendix A.
- The second source is **an analysis of the organizational charts of five additional Wisconsin libraries** that were invited but did not respond: Beloit, Eau Claire, Manitowoc, Oshkosh, and Racine. Those charts were provided by Mead and are considered the most recent available. This secondary, inference-tier evidence is presented in Part 2 of Appendix A.

1.4 Methodological commitments

Findings in this report are observed facts and patterns supported by interview, document review, peer comparison, or operational summary, and they are stated with confidence and without hedging; inferences are labeled as inferences with their support visible, and recommendations are calibrated proposals with named assumptions and tradeoffs. The doctrine is data-informed rather than data-driven: the evidence shapes the recommendations without dictating a single mechanical answer where judgment is required. Two commitments follow from that doctrine. Peer comparisons are normalized to library-service functions, disclosed openly here and again where the leanness finding is presented, because disclosure strengthens the analysis. And the deliverable supports appropriate classification differentiation under the City's existing job evaluation framework without assigning specific grades, so the structural logic stays visible while the grading determination remains with the City.

1.5 Limitations

Two limitations bound this analysis. Mead's internal operational data, including multi-year incident logs, staffing time series, and overtime and compensatory-time patterns, was not available for this work, so where the analysis would benefit from it the report notes the absence rather than substituting inference for

measurement. And the organizational charts used for the non-respondent comparators show reporting lines, position counts, and titles, but not whether a titled supervisor carries real supervisory authority, and they are silent on coverage and Person-in-Charge design, which is why the org-chart comparators are labeled secondary and inference-tier throughout.

2. Findings on Supervisory and Managerial Structure

The findings below establish where the structure stands today, how it compares to Wisconsin peers on a like-for-like basis, and what conditions distinguish Mead from the leanest of those peers. They proceed from the current management layer and its spans, through the peer comparison, to the operating conditions that the structure must accommodate.

2.1 The current management layer

Mead operates with three management positions. The Library Director sits at the top of the structure and connects with the Board, the Common Council, the City Administrator, community groups, and the broader community. Together, the Director and the Deputy Director carry cross-functional oversight, professional staff development, and obligations related to the System Resource Library, with the Deputy Director holding the day-to-day coordination responsibilities. The Circulation Supervisor, established in the spring of 2026, oversees the circulation and access-services workforce.¹ The administration team also includes a Marketing Specialist, an Administrative Assistant, and an Information Technology Specialist, none of whom carries supervisory responsibility for staff.

The current distribution of staff across the three teams is as follows. Administration carries 4.0 full-time equivalents. Public Services, reporting to the Deputy Director, carries approximately 19.5 full-time equivalents, including the professional Librarian and Associate Librarian cohort, Library Assistants, the Public Safety Specialist, the Library Security Monitor, and the non-circulation technical services cluster of Catalogers and an Associate Librarian that previously sat under the former Support Services unit. Circulation, reporting to the Circulation Supervisor, carries approximately 14.5 full-time equivalents composed of Library Assistants and Library Clerks. The total is approximately 38 full-time equivalents across ~45 staff.

2.2 Spans of the two managers below the Director

A supervisor's job is to supervise the employees, not only the work. Treating the role as oversight of daily tasks alone ignores the broader obligations a supervisor owes to staff: performance management and measurement, day-to-day supervision, talent development, and ensuring that people have the resources, tools, and training they need to do the work well. Development is critical, but it is not the whole of the obligation. The spans below should be read with that full standard in mind.

The Deputy Director's span is the primary evidence for the leanness finding. Under the current interim structure, the Deputy oversees approximately 19 staff, on the order of 17.5 to 18.5 full-time equivalents, spanning a wide-ranging mix that includes professional Librarians, Associate Librarians, Library Assistants in the public services area, the Public Safety Specialist, the Library Security Monitor, and the technical services cluster. A small number of specialist individual contributors reporting to the Deputy would not be a structural fault. The faultline is that the Deputy serves as the catch-all first-line supervisor for a large and

¹ The Circulation Supervisor position was repurposed from the former Support Services Manager position rather than being created new.

varied group while simultaneously holding cross-functional oversight and the System Resource Library load. Those responsibilities compete for the same hours.

The Circulation Supervisor's span is approximately 13.5 full-time equivalents across roughly 20 staff members, comprising Library Assistants and a predominantly part-time Library Clerk tier. Scheduling and shift coordination for a workforce of this size and part-time intensity is a material management burden in its own right, independent of coaching and performance work. The circulation operation also carries an equipment dimension that adds to the management load. The automated returns system, the locker and drive-through pickup system, and the pest-treatment room built to address infestations are essential circulation equipment, not technical services. Whether the Circulation Supervisor, the Deputy Director, or the Director attends to them, and whether through direct work or vendor coordination, they add a layer of management attention to the circulation operation. The point is the added load, not a claim that the Circulation Supervisor must own the equipment.

Regular one-on-one check-ins are the baseline of supervision, not its substance. They sit beneath the larger obligations of coaching, mentoring, oversight, and development, and they are the floor every supervisor should clear rather than the measure of a supervisor's work. They matter because they are the most basic vehicle through which a supervisor meets the development obligation owed to staff. The Deputy Director has worked to engage staff in one-on-one check-ins, and staff described these as a positive in interviews. Because staff have seen the benefit, the practice should become a defined expectation of every supervisory role rather than the initiative of one person. A once-a-year cadence does not meet that baseline, especially for professional staff and others carrying specific goals; any cadence more frequent than annual is progress, and quarterly is the minimum the structure should hold.

2.3 The Circulation Supervisor in transition

The Circulation Supervisor position warrants a specific note because it is in a transitional state that should not be mistaken for its intended design. The position was filled in early May 2026 through internal promotion from an Associate Librarian role in the former Support Services unit, and it was repurposed from that unit's Support Services Manager position rather than being created anew. The incumbent is currently working a limited number of hours each week on the public desk to backfill the vacancy created by that promotion, in addition to supervisory duties. The position is reasonably presumed to be on track to stabilize once the downstream vacancy is backfilled and the supervisor moves out of temporary desk coverage. The position is a supervisory role with a full supervisory portfolio, moved down from the broader Support Services Manager scope to a Circulation Supervisor scope because the role is narrow and focused. At steady state, the incumbent will have a full plate supervising the division rather than backfilling a desk, though there will be times the role requires working-supervisor effort, rolling up sleeves during a shortage or an overload. The findings that follow distinguish the transitional reality from the intended design, and the recommendations in Section 3 treat confirming this position's span as the first sequenced move.

2.4 Peer benchmarking: Mead carries the leanest supervisory footprint in the set

Two independent comparator methods converge on the same conclusion. The first is the City Library Collective survey, in which six Wisconsin libraries self-reported their structures, normalized here to library-service supervision. The second is a normalized reading of published organizational charts from five non-respondent libraries, detailed in Appendix A, Part 2. Both place Mead below every comparator. Mead's current leanness was imposed by budget history. The municipal appropriation was frozen at \$2,305,741 for five consecutive years from 2014 through 2018; management positions were reduced relative to direct-service positions during that period in order to preserve programming and public service, and the appropriation increases in 2023 and 2024 followed roughly a decade of constrained funding.

The supervisor ratio is supervisory positions per ten full-time equivalents, computed for Mead on the table-of-organization basis of approximately 38 full-time equivalents. That basis is the correct denominator because it already reflects the library-service-only footprint required by the comparison. The roughly four-position gap between the table of organization at 38 and the Department of Public Instruction's reported total of 42 is due to the finance and maintenance staff who moved to the City. Counting the Director through the supervisory tier, Mead's three management positions produce a ratio of approximately 0.79.

The two sets are shown in separate tables so that primary self-reported data and secondary chart inference are not read as a single ranked list. Both are normalized to library-service supervision. The survey set is normalized relative to each library's reported values, and the org-chart set is normalized relative to published charts, with the normalization mechanics and the excluded fifth library detailed in Appendix A, Part 2. Mead's 0.79 anchors both tables.

Survey respondents (self-reported, normalized to library-service supervision):

Library	Supervisors per 10 FTE
Kenosha	2.94
La Crosse	2.68
Appleton	2.01
Superior	1.85
Fond du Lac	1.36
Waukesha	1.33
Mead (current)	0.79

Org-chart comparators, normalized to library-service supervision:

Library	Supervisors per 10 FTE
Oshkosh	1.84
Eau Claire	1.79
Racine	1.45
Manitowoc	1.38
Mead (current)	0.79

Read together, the tables establish the central finding of this report. Mead's 0.79 falls below every comparator in both methods, not merely below the center but below the leanest peer in each set. The lowest comparators, Waukesha at 1.33 and Manitowoc at 1.38, each carry roughly 70% more supervisory capacity per 10 staff than Mead does. Measured against the midpoint of each method, the gap is wider. The respondent median is approximately 1.93, and the mean is approximately 2.03; the normalized comparator median is 1.62. The typical peer therefore operates with between roughly two and two and a half times Mead's supervisory density. The two methods are independent, one self-reported and one normalized from published charts, and they place Mead in the same position, which is the strongest available evidence that the leanness is a real feature of Mead's structure rather than an artifact of either instrument.

The table below shows how additional supervisory positions move Mead up the scale, on the settled 38 full-time-equivalent basis.

Configuration	Supervisory positions	Supervisors per 10 FTE
Mead current	3	0.79
Plus one	4	1.05

Configuration	Supervisory positions	Supervisors per 10 FTE
Plus two (recommended)	5	1.32
Plus three (ideal)	6	1.58

Three additions move Mead to 1.58. That sits below the survey median of approximately 1.93 and at the center of the normalized org-chart set, above Manitowoc and Racine and below Oshkosh and Eau Claire. Against the more apples-to-apples normalized set, three additions rank in the middle of the pack rather than at the top. The honest reading is that three additions lift Mead from the bottom of both comparator sets, where it sits below every peer, to the center of the normalized comparators and still below the survey median. **Three is a conservative anchor.** It is an understatement of the need, not an overreach. This is not a race to the top, and the recommendation does not aim to place Mead among the most heavily supervised libraries in the state. The aim is simply that Mead not remain mired at the bottom.

The number expresses comparability, not a calculation. Neither two nor three comes from a formula that produces a required figure. Three is the consultant's best reasonable estimate, drawn from a wide collection of evidence, of what brings Mead to a normal, comparable level of supervision for a library of its size and complexity.

Both comparator sets are normalized to library-service supervision on the same basis, which is what makes the comparison defensible. For each set, supervisory positions tied to business operations or facilities and maintenance are excluded from the count, and the staff reporting to them are excluded from the full-time-equivalent denominator, leaving library-service supervision measured against library-service staffing. These are the same functions Mead has divested to the City. In the survey set, this adjustment was possible for the three libraries whose responses identified a separable business or facilities function with its own supervisor and staff; the other three reported no such function, so their figures stand as reported. Normalizing in this way raised the survey median and mean rather than lowering them because the removed functions were heavier among staff than among supervisors, and Mead still sits below every comparator in both sets. The leanness finding therefore holds on a like-for-like basis, and normalization sharpens it rather than softening it.

The System Resource Library role is common across this comparison. Five of the six survey respondents are System Resource Libraries, and all five non-respondent comparators are the system resource or central library for their systems. Eau Claire serves as the System Resource Library for the Indianhead Federated Library System (IFLS), which makes it Mead's closest structural analog in the set. At a normalized ratio near 1.79, Eau Claire is a useful target reference, though it is larger than Mead.

2.5 Three conditions distinguish Mead from the leanest peers

Raw ratios are not the sole basis for the recommendation. The basis is three operating conditions that justify Mead landing at a normal level of supervision rather than at the leanest point of the band.

- The first is **building geography**. Mead delivers public service across three physical floors. Coverage of three floors during open hours is not something a single supervisor can manage from one location, and it is a structural requirement rather than a management practice gap. Floor coverage is currently scarce across all three floors during standard operating hours and is effectively absent in the evenings and on weekends, except for the improvised coverage arrangement described in Section 2.7. A related dynamic compounds this: activity on a floor distant from the administrative offices is out of sight and therefore out of mind, not through any deliberate neglect but as a structural property of a tall building with a thin supervisory layer.
- The second is the **System Resource Library obligation**. Mead's role as the System Resource Library for the Monarch Library System places additional workload on the Director, the Deputy Director, and

the circulation and technical services functions, which are already under supervisory pressure. The compensation the library receives for the function is on the order of \$100,000 annually. Of that amount, approximately \$10,000 supports staff compensation, and the remainder is allocated to collection development and other system resources. That staff-compensation share is modest relative to the workload the role concentrates in the management layer. This is a finding about workload concentration. It is not a claim that Mead's system participation burden is categorically heavier than that of peer member libraries, a claim that would require comparative data the engagement did not collect.

- The third is **patron behavior and vulnerability**. The building's use as a daytime refuge is unofficial. The library never asked for the role, and it was never part of any planning at the library or city level. Behavioral pressure does not come only from patrons experiencing homelessness. The city has seen rising acuity in teenage behavior as well, to the point of bus-access denials and the curtailment of some programs, and the library has worked to monitor and address both teen behavior and the needs of patrons experiencing homelessness. Over time, the pattern has shifted toward adult behavioral challenges tied to regional socioeconomic and mental health vulnerabilities, but juvenile behavior remains an ongoing issue rather than a closed chapter. Routine floor-level de-escalation fluctuates seasonally and correlates with the building's use as a daytime refuge during severe weather months. Formal long-term patron exclusions remain statistically rare relative to monthly visitor volume, which indicates that the burden is concentrated in routine de-escalation and supervisory presence rather than in formal disciplinary action. Library administration has worked to mitigate the pressure within its own control.

The community's shelter infrastructure often treats the library as a primary daytime warm space, to the point that the Sheboygan County Warming Center has adjusted its hours to align with the library's. That coordination, and the scale of the population it reflects, are documented in Appendix B. The burden consumes supervisory capacity that not all the leanest peers possess, and Appendix B details its sources.

2.6 The Director and Deputy Director are structurally pulled into operations

Both the Director and the Deputy Director serve as default points of resolution for matters that should be handled at a supervisory layer below them. This operational involvement is forced by insufficient supervisory capacity, not chosen by design. Because portions of the finance and facilities duties now sit with the City, the Director has no direct reports in business or facilities, so the absorption falls specifically on library-service supervision.

On the City's own scale, the Director of Mead Library holds the same grade as the City's other department directors, including Public Works, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, and Planning. A department head of equal rank is being pulled into operational supervision, a role the position should not have to carry. The police and fire departments are the closer analogs for the structural point, because their layered, hierarchical commands are built precisely to manage span of control and to keep senior leaders out of routine first-line supervision. The comparison is to that structural logic, not to the stakes of the work; it does not suggest the library's decisions are more consequential than those of public safety. Additional supervisory capacity below the Director is what allows the Director's operational time to be set deliberately rather than dictated by the gaps below.

2.7 After-hours authority is the most repeated operational concern

Across the interview set, evenings and weekends were consistently described as times when staff are least certain about who holds authority, when escalation feels slowest or most ambiguous, and when staff feel least supported during behavioral incidents. The current model often relies on being able to reach a supervisor by telephone. That arrangement keeps operations relatively stable in the short term, but it is not

a sustainable permanent design, and the staff experience of it is the clearest single signal in the qualitative evidence that the structure has thinned past the point of comfortable absorption.

One current arrangement illustrates both the strain and the need. The Deputy Director works many Saturdays and exchanges them for a weekday off, which keeps weekend operations covered through individual initiative. That initiative deserves credit, but it is not a sound standing structure, and it points to the need for additional supervisory or Person-in-Charge bench strength that would give the senior staff genuine reprieve. The arrangement also carries an offsetting cost. The library loses some of the benefit of having the Deputy Director on-site for a full standard workweek, even as the weekend presence helps the Deputy observe operations firsthand and tailor programming. A structure that depends on a senior leader trading away weekdays to hold weekends together is evidence that the supervisory bench is too thin.

2.8 An informal leadership network is filling the supervisory vacuum

Staff has developed an informal peer leadership and support network that keeps daily operations relatively stable. This is a credit to the staff, not necessarily a personnel problem. Its structural consequence is enforcement inconsistency. Each informal leader operates on individual judgment without shared standards or backed authority, which produces differences in how policies are applied across floors and shifts and differences in confidence handling patron behavior. There is a further caution: staff who step up to fill the vacuum do so without the training a supervisory or quasi-supervisory role requires. The point is not to discourage staff from helping, which is holding the operation together, but that leadership should be intentional, uniform, and held by someone trained for escalating complexity. The structural response is to formalize the better elements of that network through defined lead roles where the structure warrants them, not to suppress the network.

2.9 Committee and meeting load competes with supervisory time

Committee and meeting load at Mead is dual-natured. On one side, it is democratizing and participatory, and staff value inclusion and transparency and genuinely appreciate working groups on matters of consequence. On the other side, it displaces supervisory observation, coaching, and floor presence, which are the activities that improve consistency and culture.

Staff also expressed a clear frustration: that decisions are not always made as efficiently as they could be. Extensive communication, committee meetings, and consultation become a source of frustration when, in some cases, staff believe a decision should be made and then communicated clearly through a more reliable channel than a single messaging application.

The finding is not that staff want less consultation; many described the working groups as a strength. It is that staff are hungry for more streamlined decision-making and clearer lines between decisions that belong to management and those that belong to a group. The over-democratization of routine management decisions is worth a gentle caution rather than a directive to end consultation, which would be equally damaging. This connects directly to the communication-governance recommendation in Section 4.5. This report does not make a standalone recommendation on committee governance, which sits outside the engagement's scope. It records the load and the decision-making frustration as findings because they directly reduce the supervisory time the structure has available and shape what staff need from the supervisory layer.

2.10 Critical support functions carry single-point-of-failure exposure

Several support functions, including information technology, technical services and cataloging, safety and security, and communications, are essential to service quality and operate with significant autonomy. They do not require heavy supervision. They require workload boundaries, cross-training, documented continuity, and supporting standard operating procedures and protocols, because the library currently

depends on individual incumbents in ways that create abrupt operational risk if a position turns over or a vendor relationship fails.

- **A single point of failure is not always avoidable.** In a small operation, a single point of failure in a specialized function such as information technology or marketing is often unavoidable, because the organization does not have, and does not need, a second position in that specialty. The information technology function is the clearest case: a single Information Technology Specialist is already a single point of failure, which directly bears on the placement question in Section 3.4. The mitigation is cross-training, documented continuity and procedures, and vendor-relationship resilience, not redundancy in every specialty. Section 4.5 treats the cross-training and documentation practices in one place.
- **The safety and security function carries a specific continuity exposure.** The function depends on its incumbent, who brings a rare and desirable blend of skills to the role. A blend of that kind is difficult, if not impossible, to find in the marketplace, and that rarity, rather than any single credential, is the source of the continuity exposure. The function is well established rather than improvised, having appeared in the table of organization since 2019, which makes its dependence on a single incumbent a longer-standing exposure rather than a transitional one. The library will eventually need to define the function's primary focus and the skill profile it will recruit for, recognizing that the current blend is unlikely to be replicated. The operating direction is clear enough to state: the role's center of gravity is enforcement of the code of conduct, emergency and disaster preparedness, staff training and coaching on de-escalation, and liaison with law enforcement and community partners, rather than direct social services delivery, a distinction Appendix B develops. The library is also moving to a single patron-incident system that routes flagged incidents to the safety function and the supervisory layer for review and any exclusion decisions, thereby concentrating consistency in trained hands. Defining the skill profile the library will recruit for and treating continuity as a succession matter managed before a transition rather than after one follow from that focus. This connects to the coordinated-response discussion in Appendix B.

2.11 Project and change leadership consumes management capacity

Beyond first-line supervision, the Director and Deputy Director carry the project management of organizational change: new services, technologies, and processes, and the planning and execution of facility build-outs and capital projects. This work sits with the management layer because it requires authority, cross-functional coordination, and continuity that a floor supervisor cannot hold, and it is how the library keeps pace with community service demands. It is legitimate work at this level, not work to be pushed down, and it competes directly for the hours that the same two people owe to supervision. Added supervisory capacity below them is what makes this load sustainable, freeing senior time for the change leadership that only the senior layer can carry rather than forcing a choice between moving the library forward and supervising its staff.

3. Recommendations on Structure

The recommendations in this section lead with the need and then stage the response. They open with the ideal-state structure, establish the order of moves, address the one design decision that remains genuinely open, and close with the funding posture and a set of considerations the recommendation should be tested against.

3.1 The ideal-state structure adds three supervisory positions

The need for additional supervisory oversight is immediate. The precise number of positions that meets it is a matter of judgment rather than a figure a formula produces, and reasonable readers can debate two against three. **What is not debatable is that the current three-position layer is too thin for the library's size and conditions.** The ideal-state structure adds three supervisory positions to that layer, producing six management positions in total. As established in Section 2.4, three additions move Mead to a supervisor ratio of approximately 1.58, which sits at the center of the normalized peer set and still below the survey-respondent median. **The number expresses comparability rather than a formula.** There is no magic number for spans or for supervisory density.

The management literature on span of control offers ranges rather than a rule. Traditional guidance clustered around five to seven direct reports, later research widened the workable range, and the figures commonly cited today, on the order of a handful of reports for complex or developmental work and up to roughly fifteen to twenty for routine and standardized work, are explicitly contingent on the nature of the work, the experience of the staff, the degree of coordination required, and how much coaching and development the supervisor is expected to provide. A wider span is defensible only where the work is routine, and the staff is seasoned, and it narrows wherever the work is volatile, developmental, or spread across locations. Applied to Mead, the circulation span sits at or beyond the upper edge of that range while the work carries scheduling complexity, behavioral exposure, and a talent-development obligation, which is the combination the research says should pull the number down rather than up. The research therefore informs judgment rather than dictating a count. Three is the consultant's best reasonable estimate of what brings Mead to a normal, comparable level of supervision, and it is a conservative anchor rather than an overreach.

A supervisory position is justified by the combination of span, coverage geography, programmatic depth, and the responsibilities the role carries beyond direct headcount, not by headcount alone. A span of four direct reports does not, by itself, justify a supervisory position, and a span of fifteen is not ideal either. Neither number settles the question alone. A small span can justify a supervisor when the work is highly volatile, when the positions deal with acute situations, or when the responsibilities carry complexity beyond headcount. Programmatic knowledge matters as well: a supervisor needs enough domain knowledge to guide and develop the staff they oversee. The case for additional supervision is therefore not only about reducing a span to a manageable number, but about segmenting supervisors by domain so that each can confidently develop their people. The three recommended positions are justified by the spans documented in Section 2.2, the three-floor coverage geography, the after-hours authority gap, and the professional-oversight gap identified in the interviews.

3.2 Sequence the moves: stabilize before adding

The first move is not an addition. It is to confirm the Circulation Supervisor position at its intended steady-state design and to verify whether its span is appropriately sized, once the position is out of its transitional desk-backfill state. This is a confirmation of sizing, not a rescue of a position in difficulty. The most probable conclusion is that the Circulation headcount is heavy but that a Circulation Lead at the Library Assistant level, described in Section 3.5, can absorb the Clerk-tier scheduling load (and similar duties) and make the span manageable.

The new supervisory positions are filled in sequence across budget cycles, as described in Section 3.6. Sequencing them is the correct order of operations, not a concession. The library should not staff around a Circulation Supervisor span that has not yet settled, and it should not add the more expensive net-new positions before the inexpensive structural moves have been made and their effects observed. The pace is governed by fiscal responsibility; the need is not in question.

3.3 Form of the second-tier supervision

The form the additional supervision takes is the central remaining design decision, and it belongs to the library's leadership. The data-informed recommendation is a population split. A Public Services or Adult Services supervisor is paired with a Youth Services supervisor, and the technical services cluster is coordinated by a lead worker reporting to the Deputy Director rather than by a supervisor. Three considerations support this path. The Adult and Youth division is the single most common structural choice in the comparator set, appearing at Eau Claire, Oshkosh, Manitowoc, and Racine. It satisfies the stated greatest need: professional oversight of professional staff distributed across the three floors. It also delivers the floor-level supervisory presence the leadership team has prioritized: because the adult and youth populations occupy different floors, a population split places a supervisor in proximity to each main service area rather than concentrating oversight in one location, which is the practical effect of a supervisor-per-floor model without committing the library to a literal floor-by-floor count that the staffing math does not support. And it clarifies the lead-librarian question: once supervisors are placed across populations and floors, a separate permanent lead librarian layer is no longer needed to fill an oversight gap, though a lead layer may still be retained as a durable coordination function where a genuine need exists, as described in Section 3.5.

The library may, of course, develop its own alternative. A functional split that pairs a public services supervisor with a technical services supervisor is one possibility the library could explore, though it would require considerably more conversation and mapping than this engagement undertook, because a defensible technical services supervisor span would have to bundle cataloging, system coordination, and potentially other functions. It is noted here as a path the library may consider, not as a co-equal documented plan. Absent a deliberate decision to develop it, the population split is the cleaner and better-supported choice.

This report uses "supervisor" as a working term for the second-tier positions it recommends. It does not fix whether each is ultimately titled a supervisor or a manager. That title should follow the defined scope of the role when the classification is created and should reflect what the position is actually expected to carry.

3.4 Technical services and information technology placement

The working recommendation is that the technical services cluster is coordinated by a lead worker reporting to the Deputy Director rather than by a supervisor. This is the less costly and more coherent treatment, and it fits the cluster's direct interface with the system library. It is reasonable, and within the spirit of the engagement, to recommend that certain positions currently reporting directly to the Director be relocated into this functionally coherent team, so that the cluster operates with a shared vision and a single coordinative point rather than as scattered reporting lines. This is the leadership team's call.

Information technology is the exception, and its placement is an open question. A single Information Technology Specialist who is already a single point of failure should not report into a non-supervisory lead. The function should therefore stay with the Director or move to the Deputy Director directly. Either placement is defensible; the choice between them is a judgment for leadership about where the function is best supported and least exposed. What the design rules out is placing information technology under the technical services lead worker.

3.5 The lead layer

A Circulation Lead at the Library Assistant level is warranted regardless of the decision in Section 3.3. Its purpose is broader than scheduling. The role relieves the Clerk-tier scheduling and shift-coordination burden beneath the Circulation Supervisor, which is the specific load that makes the Circulation span heavy, and it carries training, guidance, mentoring, pace control, and the continuity of work during evening and weekend shifts when the supervisor is not present. The distinction worth holding in the design is

between owning the schedule and running it. Final scheduling authority, including approving time off and resolving competing requests, remains a supervisory decision, while the lead maintains the day-to-day shift coordination, documentation, and coverage continuity within that frame. Drawing the line there answers the practical concern that a lead who simply absorbs scheduling becomes a supervisor in all but name and pay; the lead coordinates and sustains the work, and the supervisor retains the authority that defines the supervisory role. Some libraries would call this a Circulation Coordinator; this report uses Lead. It remains a lead role, not a supervisory one. It coordinates, models, and maintains pace, and it does not carry hiring, formal discipline, or formal performance-evaluation authority, all of which route to the Circulation Supervisor.

Leads should be created deliberately and only where a demonstrated need exists, and a lead designation should never be granted haphazardly or as a convenience. Where the library is granted latitude to reclassify positions into leads in a budget cycle that will not fund a net-new supervisor, that latitude should be exercised against the same test of demonstrated need, documented justification, and a benchmark check, so that the lead layer remains a disciplined bridge rather than an expanding tier. The structure should not be peppered with lead titles, particularly where supervision is already thin or a supervisor's span is already wide, because a proliferation of leads can blur authority and substitute for the supervision the structure actually needs. The Circulation Lead is warranted by the specific scheduling and coordination burden documented in Section 2.2. Any further lead, including a permanent lead librarian layer beyond Circulation, should be adopted only against the same test of demonstrated need and tested against the benchmarks before adoption. A lead created without clear objectives, backed authority, and a compensation differential will be perceived as cosmetic and will fail, and it will not substitute for genuine supervision where supervision is required. The classification mechanics for these roles, including how lead duties relate to the underlying classifications, belong to the Phase 1 classification report and are kept light here so the two reports remain consistent.

Wisconsin practice supports disciplined use of these titles. Racine distinguishes a Lead Supervisor, which carries supervisory authority, from a Library Associate Lead Worker, which carries coordinative responsibility without it, and Eau Claire reserves the Supervisor title for Circulation only and uses Coordinator elsewhere. Both are inference-tier observations from published charts.

3.6 Funding pathway

- **Net-new capacity is what the library needs.** A net-new position is the only path that adds people where the floor coverage and professional-oversight gap actually exists, so the two added supervisors are recommended as net-new positions rather than reclassifications of existing staff. Because these positions add capacity rather than redistribute existing staff, the sequencing in Section 5 matters as much as the recommendation itself.
- **Reclassification has a proper, limited place in this plan,** and stating it plainly avoids a predictable misunderstanding. Reclassification is the tool for the lead layer and for a supervisor-in-waiting designation, not for creating the two supervisors themselves. The reason is that promoting a contributor into supervision converts a producer into an overseer: if a Librarian is reclassified and the vacated Librarian role is not backfilled, the remaining Librarians absorb that work, which can degrade programming and the services the library is expected to deliver. Reclassification redistributes capacity; it does not add it. That property is exactly why it suits a bridging designation and not the core capacity addition the structure needs.
- **There is a legitimate use of this bridge and a poor one, and the difference matters.** The designation is informal and aspirational by design. It is a way to give a capable lead exposure to higher-level duties and to keep development moving, not a formal track that automatically

advances to supervisor. The legitimate use applies when a budget cycle permits reclassification but not a net-new position. The library may then designate a supervisor-in-waiting at the lead tier, carrying coordination responsibility and a measure of higher-level exposure, with a sincere assessment of the workload the person continues to carry and a genuine plan to backfill or adjust if the combined load proves too heavy. Used that way, the designation is a sound human-resources tool that keeps progress moving across cycles. Two cautions bound it. The poor use treats the designation as a finished substitute for the supervisor, grants it from existing headcount with no regard for overburden or contingency, and assumes the work will simply be absorbed, which is a recipe for failure. The second caution is that neither the library nor the City should ask a supervisor-in-waiting to perform supervisory work, such as hiring, formal discipline, or performance evaluation, without the formal supervisory designation and the pay that accompanies it. The designation should be held to the same demonstrated-need test that governs all lead designations rather than granted as a matter of course.

- **Peer staffing levels also warrant caution when read as a target.** Some peers operate more than one building, and a multi-branch operation raises staffing and supervisory needs in ways a single three-floor building does not. Part of any peer's higher count can reflect that community's choice to run separate sites, including the demands of holding consistent protocols across them, rather than a like-for-like structural comparison with Mead. The leanness finding survives this caution, because Mead sits below even the single-site and normalized comparators, but the point keeps the comparison honest.
- **The cost figures use the City of Sheboygan 2026 non-represented wage scale and the established supervisory level, which is the Circulation Supervisor.** That level sits above the professional Librarian on the City scale. The two new supervisors are modeled at the Circulation Supervisor level for consistency and for planning convenience, because a position supervising professional librarians should not fall below the established supervisory level, which is the Circulation Supervisor, and it normally sits above it.
 - The City's job evaluation system weighs factors such as a position's impact on the organization, the education required for the role, and its problem-solving and decision-making demands. Applied to a role supervising credentialed professional staff rather than the paraprofessional or administrative circulation workforce, that evaluation could reasonably place the position above the Circulation Supervisor level, and whether the role is built to manage or to supervise will further influence where it lands. The report makes no assertion that the evaluation will reach that result; the placement is untested and rests with the City's classification and compensation process.
 - The principle that holds regardless of the resulting level is that there must be sufficient separation to avoid compression: the classification must sit far enough above the staff it supervises to make promotion into it worthwhile and to keep a supervisor from earning only marginally more than the highest-paid person reporting to them.
 - In fully loaded terms, wages and benefits together at a benefit load of 25 to 30 percent, a net-new supervisor at this level exceeds \$100,000 annually. The figure marks the scale of the investment and the budgetary prioritization it will require across cycles rather than a precise placement, which will follow the City's classification evaluation and, for several of these moves, a future budget year rather than 2026.
 - A supervisor-in-waiting designation, by contrast, is a lead-tier coordination differential rather than a move to the supervisory level, and it carries only the marginal cost of a single

lead step, on the order of \$7,000 as a placeholder estimate pending confirmation against the current scale. It positions a candidate without adding the floor capacity a funded supervisor provides.

- **These are planning estimates only, and the final placement and cost will depend on a future classification evaluation conducted by the City or the City's compensation consultant.** Consistent with the standing approach in this report, the cost basis is expressed in dollars and in relational terms, a supervisor positioned above the professional Librarian level and at or above the existing Circulation Supervisor, rather than by grade number.

3.7 Considerations and challenges the recommendation should answer

A recommendation to add supervisory capacity is stronger when tested against the cases for not adding it, and when honest about the challenges it must manage. Five considerations are addressed here. The analysis is kept because visible counter-analysis is what makes the recommendation durable under a skeptical reading, but the intent is a candid discussion rather than a contest.

- **Could committee triage and clarity of decision rights free up enough capacity without adding positions?** Partly, but not enough. Reducing the meeting load and clarifying which decisions are management decisions would return real time to existing managers, and the report recommends pursuing this. It does not fill the structural deficit, because the deficit is not primarily a time-allocation problem. It is a wide and varied Deputy span, a three-floor coverage geography, and an after-hours authority gap, none of which a leaner meeting calendar resolves.
- **Could a well-designed Person-in-Charge model solve the after-hours gap as a sufficient first step?** As an interim measure, yes, and Section 4 recommends exactly that. As a permanent answer, no. A Person-in-Charge is assigned when a supervisor is not scheduled or available; it is not meant to be a fixture on every evening and weekend. A Person-in-Charge who must continually escalate to a supervisor becomes a middle layer that adds process and bureaucracy without adding resolution, and the model fails when it becomes a pay differential attached to a title without the authority and training that are supposed to accompany it.
- **Could the lead librarian layer serve as a substitute for a supervisor?** No. Leads coordinate; they do not supervise. A lead cannot hire, formally discipline, or formally evaluate, and performance-management questions route past the lead to the supervisor above. A permanent lead layer is a legitimate durable element of the structure where a need exists, but substituting a lead for a needed supervisor recreates the authority gap the structure is trying to close, under a title that implies more authority than the role carries. The distinction is reinforced by training: a supervisor must carry management training, either on entry or through a development plan that mentors and prepares the person for the new responsibilities. A lead is not a substitute for a trained supervisor.
- **Is the leanness finding real, or is the peer set simply overstructured?** The peer set is structurally diverse rather than uniformly heavy, so the question is fair. Layering ranges widely across the comparators, and no single model dominates. Manitowoc is a useful test of the leanest end. It is also a multi-floor building, which makes the comparison fair on geography, and it runs flat at roughly 31.5 full-time equivalents, with public services and youth services reporting to an executive director over a materials function and no deputy. That is a reasonable structure for an organization roughly ten full-time equivalents lighter than Mead. Manitowoc demonstrates that a lean, multi-floor structure is workable at a smaller scale; it does not show that Mead should adopt it, because Mead is larger and carries the full combination of three conditions in Section 2.5, of which building geography is only one. The normalized comparator data reinforces the point: on independently

normalized org-chart ratios, Mead at 0.79 sits below every comparator, and even three additions reach only the center of that set. That is the opposite of an overstructured ask.

- **Could upstream work on homelessness remove the structural pressure?** It would relieve a meaningful share of the supervisory load, which is precisely why Appendix B presses for a coordinated community response. It would not remove the structural case. The three-floor coverage geography and the after-hours authority gap exist independently of homelessness, and the recommended structure holds regardless of what happens upstream.

Two further design points belong to this discussion. The three-floor geography is a real management challenge, but it is a bounded one. It is one building reachable by stairs or elevator, not a multi-branch system with a bookmobile, so the coverage problem is serious without being catastrophic. And leads should be considered for the eventual coverage rotation: a voluntary sign-up rotation for evening and weekend coverage lets staff match coverage to their own scheduling preferences, while ensuring daytime hours remain covered, and it avoids a design that drives people out through involuntary weekend assignment.

4. Recommendations on Coverage and Operational Practice

Structure determines who supervises during the core of the day. Coverage determines who holds authority, and who provides leadership presence, when the senior staff are not present. The two are connected: the coverage problem is severe today precisely because the supervisory layer is thin, and it eases as that layer is built out. This section recommends an interim coverage mechanism, the structural endgame that should replace it, and the operational practices that make supervision effective regardless of structure.

4.1 The coverage problem

Floor coverage is scarce across the three public service floors during open hours and is effectively absent in the evenings and on weekends, beyond the improvised arrangement now in place. The gap is not only one of supervisory authority but of leadership presence: during many off-hours, no one on site holds either the authority to resolve a consequential matter or the standing to provide direction. The current reliance on telephone reachability to the two main supervisors is the weakest point in the operating model, as Section 2.7 establishes. A coverage solution is therefore not optional. The question is one of design quality: the scope of authority granted, the training that backs it, the documentation that supports it, and the escalation path behind it.

4.2 Person-in-Charge as an interim stopgap

A Person-in-Charge model is recommended as a stopgap, suited to covering shifts when a supervisor is not scheduled or available, not as a permanent design element. It is the more fragile of the two coverage tools and is harder to sustain than a genuine supervisory rotation. Two predictable ways it breaks should be designed against. The first is the Person-in-Charge designation that becomes a compensation differential attached to a title without the training that is supposed to accompany the authority. The second is the Person-in-Charge who must continually escalate to a supervisor, which turns the designation into a middle layer that adds process without adding resolution.

The model is therefore worth adopting only if it carries genuine decision authority over a defined set of situations and only if it is backed by real training rather than a differential alone. Defined authority, supported by standard operating procedures, protocols, and training, lets a Person-in-Charge decide the routine behavioral and operational matters that arise on evening and weekend shifts without escalation,

with a clear escalation threshold for the consequential situations that genuinely require a supervisor. The common error is to stop at the designation and a small differential and call the work done. That is not success. Training, the right skills, and clear expectations are what make the role effective. Person-in-Charge authority belongs in operational policy with a premium pay differential attached to the duty, not embedded in the classification structure, and it cannot be name-only. Section 4.5 treats the supporting procedures and documentation in one place.

4.3 The structural endgame: a sustainable supervisory rotation

The Person-in-Charge mechanism is a bridge, not a destination. The structural endgame is enough supervisory positions that evenings and weekends draw a real supervisor on a sustainable rotation across three or four supervisory roles, rather than one or two people carrying every night and weekend. The design must avoid two predictable problems that follow from too few supervisors covering too much. The first is supervisors who do not want to remain in their roles because they are constantly assigned evenings and weekends. The second is staff who feel they have no resource available when a consequential issue arises. The new positions recommended in Section 3 are what make a sustainable rotation possible; until they are in place, the interim Person-in-Charge model could carry the gap.

4.4 A standing coordinator as an alternative to a rotation

If a standing coverage position proves cleaner in practice than spreading evening and weekend duty across supervisors, Oshkosh offers a named precedent. Oshkosh staffs a Public Service Operations Coordinator within its Circulation department whose title indicates responsibility for coordinating public service operations across the building, including coverage scheduling and Person-in-Charge designation. This is an inference-tier observation from a published organizational chart and would benefit from direct confirmation of the position's scope and authority through the peer network before it is relied on as a model. It sits at the librarian pay level on the chart and does not appear to be a management position, which is why it does not count toward the supervisory ratio in Appendix A. It is presented as an alternative to a rotation, to be activated if the rotation proves difficult to sustain, not as a competing primary recommendation.

4.5 Operational practices that make supervision effective

Three operational practices bear directly on supervisory effectiveness and should accompany the structural changes. None requires new positions.

- First, **communication should be governed by purpose rather than by platform**, and this is the direct answer to the frustration with decision-making and communication recorded in Section 2.9. The interviews described abundant communication with uneven reinforcement: heavy use of digital channels, channel overload, missed updates, and decisions made without the downstream workflow owners looped in, alongside frustration that decisions are consulted on but not made and communicated. This is a governance problem, not a tooling problem, and switching platforms will not solve it. The remedy is that management decisions are made and then communicated clearly, with a designated source of truth for procedures, a defined expectation of which messages require acknowledgment, and a deliberate mechanism to reinforce procedural changes with off-shift staff through a more reliable channel than a single messaging application. The aim is not to communicate less. It is also worth considering the different ways staff receive and absorb role-relevant information. A frequently asked questions resource or internal wiki, and modern approaches such as short explainer videos or brief audio produced with generative tools, can make internal communications more engaging, with information segmented so that staff can find what

they need. Communication should be governed by purpose and also be considerate of how staff prefer to receive and absorb it.

- Second, **shared standards should be attached to the lead and supervisory roles** so that the staff self-sufficiency culture, which is a genuine strength, produces consistency rather than divergence. The informal leadership network described in Section 2.8 currently operates on individual judgment. Formalizing the better elements of it through defined lead roles, and reinforcing shared standards through the supervisory layer, converts peer reliance into reliable practice.
- Third, **cross-training should be treated as a planned and periodically refreshed expectation** rather than as informal management practice. This protects against the single-point-of-failure exposures identified in Section 2.10 and gives the coverage model the depth it needs to function when key individuals are absent. The same discipline supports the documentation the operation relies on. Not everything reduces to a standardized form, but to the extent that it does, standard operating procedures, protocols, and reference material give staff a reliable place to turn, and generative tools can streamline the creation of that material for staff stepping into new or infrequent roles such as Person-in-Charge.

5. Implementation Plan

The need for additional supervisory oversight is immediate, and the plan below moves toward the three-position ideal as fiscal capacity allows. Budget priority decisions do not rest with any single office. They involve the City Administrator, the Mayor, the Common Council, and the Library Board, and even a supportive Board may choose to invest in community services or programming ahead of supervisory capacity in a given cycle. The plan is therefore paced realistically across multiple budget cycles. Each tier leads with the need and then states the cost. The early moves are low-cost or no-cost structural changes; the funded positions follow in later cycles in priority order. All figures are expressed in 2026 dollars and will rise over time with wage and benefit growth. The plan is a long-term roadmap, not a single budget request, and it shows plainly where the recommended path stops short of the ideal and why.

5.1 Immediate moves (low or no marginal cost)

The following moves can be made without a net-new position and should precede any funded addition. They stabilize the existing structure and establish the operating practices the later additions depend on.

- Confirm the Circulation Supervisor position at its intended steady-state design by completing the circulation staffing that currently requires desk backfill, then verify whether the span is appropriately sized.
- Establish a Circulation Lead at the Library Assistant level to relieve the Clerk-tier scheduling and shift-coordination burden beneath the Circulation Supervisor, with training, guidance, mentoring, pace control, and continuity of work during evening and weekend shifts, while final scheduling authority remains with the Circulation Supervisor. The role is defined and trained rather than name-only.
- Stand up an interim Person-in-Charge model for evenings and weekends, with defined decision authority, a clear escalation threshold, real training, supporting procedures, and a premium pay differential attached to the duty in operational policy.

- Relocate the technical services cluster under a lead worker reporting to the Deputy Director, and settle whether information technology stays with the Director or moves to the Deputy Director directly, keeping it out of the technical services lead's line.
- Establish regular one-on-one check-ins as an expectation of every supervisory role, at a minimum quarterly cadence.
- Clarify decision rights and escalation thresholds, and establish a governed source of truth for procedures, so that supervisory time is protected for observation and coaching and so that decisions are made and communicated rather than only consulted on.

The span point is worth making concrete. A single supervisor responsible for roughly 20 bodies across the Associate Librarian and Library Clerk classifications is very likely to have an overburdened span of control. The full-time-equivalent figure falls quickly once part-time staff is counted, but each body still requires scheduling, guidance, coordination, and training, and some require coaching or discipline. A Circulation Lead at the Library Assistant level is a strong consideration to relieve this burden, and, as Section 3.5 describes, the lead carries more than just scheduling and shift coordination.

The check-in expectation includes a workload dimension that itself warrants adequate supervisory staffing. With roughly fifteen direct reports and monthly check-ins, even thirty-minute meetings, plus the thirty minutes of preparation and follow-up that a real check-in requires, consume a large share of a supervisor's month. Proper check-ins are not free, and the capacity to do them well is part of the case for adding supervisory positions.

These low-cost moves should be stated with appropriate confidence: they genuinely help, and they should be made first. They are not, however, a replacement for the supervisory capacity the structure needs, and many moving pieces remain to be worked through as the structure is built out.

5.2 Building toward the ideal: net-new supervisory capacity

The need is for net-new supervisory capacity, because that is what adds people on the floor and closes the professional-oversight and coverage gaps. The near-term ask is two added supervisors, presented as a deliberate calibration to fiscal reality, with the third documented in this plan as the upper end of the need so it remains available as capacity opens in a later cycle. Whether the structure settles at two or three is a judgment the City and the Board can make as budgets allow; that the current layer needs more than it has is settled. Add the supervisory positions as net-new full-time roles in priority order across budget cycles, leading toward the three-position ideal. Each net-new supervisor at the established supervisory level exceeds \$100,000 fully loaded as a planning estimate, with several of these moves falling in a future budget year rather than 2026. Lead each cycle's request with the specific gap the position closes before stating its cost.

5.3 The supervisor-in-waiting bridge

Where a budget cycle permits reclassification but cannot yet support a net-new position, the library can designate a supervisor-in-waiting rather than leave the development gap idle. This is an informal, aspirational lead-tier designation, not a formal track to supervisor. It carries coordination responsibility and gives a capable candidate exposure to some higher-level duties at the marginal cost of a single lead step, on the order of \$7,000 as a placeholder planning estimate pending confirmation against the current scale. It is a lead differential expressed relationally, above the base professional level and below the supervisory level, not a placement at the supervisory level.

The designation must be paired with a genuine accounting of the work the candidate continues to carry, through backfill or an explicit decision about what the library will stop doing, because layering coordination

duties onto an existing role without that accounting shifts work onto the remaining professional staff and can degrade programming and services. It must also stay within the lead tier in practice: neither the library nor the City should assign supervisory work, such as hiring, formal discipline, or performance evaluation, to a supervisor-in-waiting without the formal supervisory designation and the pay that accompanies it. Used with a sincere workload assessment and a real contingency, as described in Section 3.6, the designation is a sound tool that keeps progress moving across cycles. It redistributes and positions capacity; it does not add it. The plan should make plain that this step stops short of the net-new capacity the structure ultimately needs, and the designation should be held to the same demonstrated-need test that governs all lead designations rather than granted as a matter of course.

5.4 Ongoing: convert interim coverage to a sustainable rotation

As the new positions come online, convert the interim Person-in-Charge stopgap into a sustainable evening and weekend rotation across the supervisory and lead roles. The primary expectation should be supervisory coverage in as many off-hours situations as possible. Supervisory coverage will sometimes be impossible because of illness, training, or other obligations, and the Person-in-Charge role remains available for those gaps. Evaluate the standing-coordinator alternative described in Section 4.4 if the rotation proves difficult to sustain. Retain or test a permanent lead layer as a durable coordination function, where a genuine need exists, as described in Section 3.5, defined and trained rather than name-only.

5.5 Rough-order cost summary

The figures below are planning estimates, not definitive costs, expressed in 2026 dollars. They use the City's 2026 non-represented wage scale, a band around the control point, and a benefit load in the range of 25 to 30 percent. They are expressed in annual, fully loaded terms and in relational terms rather than by grade number, and the final grade placement will depend on a future classification evaluation conducted by the City or the City's compensation consultant.

Move	Method	Rough-order annual cost (all-in)
Circulation Lead (Library Assistant level)	Reclassification or internal designation; modest differential	Low; differential plus load
Interim Person-in-Charge differential	Premium pay differential attached to duty in policy	Low; differential plus training
Supervisor-in-waiting (informal lead-tier bridge, only when a net-new position is deferred)	Lead-tier coordination differential, above the base professional level and below the supervisory level	About \$7,000 at the margin (placeholder, pending confirmation)
Supervisor by reclassification (existing professional elevated to the supervisory level)	Reclassification to the established supervisory level; redistributes capacity rather than adding it (see Section 3.6)	About \$14,000 to \$15,000 at the margin (placeholder, pending confirmation)
Supervisor by net-new position (adds floor capacity)	Net-new full-time position at or above the established supervisory level; adds floor capacity	In excess of \$100,000 all-in (fully loaded)

The established supervisory level is the Circulation Supervisor level, which sits above the professional Librarian level on the City's scale. A supervisor of professional librarians is normally placed above it, a determination that is made through the City's classification and compensation process. The three supervisory cost points above describe different mechanisms rather than competing prices for the same role. The lead-tier bridge of roughly \$7,000 positions a candidate at a coordination level below that of a supervisor without adding capacity. Carrying that same professional the rest of the way to the supervisory level brings the marginal cost to roughly \$14,000 to \$15,000 above the base professional level, so the

bridge is the first increment of that move rather than money spent and lost; either path is a reclassification, and a reclassification redistributes capacity rather than adding it. A net-new position in excess of \$100,000 fully loaded is the only path that places a new body on the floor, which is why Section 3.6 recommends net-new for the two added supervisors and confines reclassification to the bridge. The \$7,000 and the \$14,000-to-\$15,000 figures are placeholders pending confirmation, and all of these figures should be refined against the current scale and the City's classification evaluation before they are presented as budget numbers.

5.6 Configuration decisions for the leadership team

Three configuration decisions shape the final structure and should be settled by the library's leadership as the plan is adopted. Each can be resolved without reopening the core finding that additional supervisory capacity is warranted.

- The form of the additional supervision: the recommended population split, with a Public Services or Adult supervisor and a Youth Services supervisor, and technical services held by a lead worker. Because the adult and youth populations occupy different floors, this split also delivers the floor-level supervisory presence the leadership team has prioritized. The library may instead choose to develop a functional split, which would require additional mapping as described in Section 3.3. Titling each second-tier position as a supervisor or a manager is part of this decision and should follow the position's defined scope rather than precede it.
- Whether a permanent lead librarian layer beyond the Circulation Lead is retained as a durable coordination function, adopted only against a demonstrated need and tested against the benchmarks.
- Whether information technology reports to the Director or to the Deputy Director, given that it should not report to the technical services lead worker.

Appendix A: Peer Benchmarking Summary

This appendix presents the peer benchmarking evidence in two clearly separated parts. Part 1 reports the six libraries that completed the City Library Collective peer survey; this is primary, self-reported evidence. Part 2 reports five additional libraries analyzed from their organizational charts; this is secondary, inference-tier evidence. The two are kept separate to preserve the distinction between what libraries reported about themselves and what can be read from a chart. No recommendation rests on a single chart. Individual survey responses are treated as confidential and are presented here by library rather than by respondent.

A.1 Survey respondents (primary, self-reported)

The table below reports the core structural indicators for the six respondents. Supervisor counts and ratios are self-reported and then normalized to library-service supervision. Positions tied to business operations or facilities and maintenance, along with the staff reporting to them, are excluded from both the supervisor count and the full-time-equivalent total. This adjustment was possible for the three libraries whose responses identified a separable business or facilities function; for the other three, no such function was reported, so their total and library-service figures coincide. The full-time-equivalent denominators are as reported by each library, because the survey did not break out finance and facilities staffing to remove. The final column records whether the library operates from a single building or from a central library plus branches.

Library	FTE	Library Service FTE	Library Service Sups	Sups/10 FTE	PIC	SRL	Sites
Kenosha	73.2	61.2	18	2.94	Always	Yes	Multi-site
La Crosse	49.8	44.8	12	2.68	Always	Yes	Single-site
Appleton	54.8	44.8	9	2.01	Never	Yes	Single-site
Superior	16.2	16.2	3	1.85	Never	Yes	Multi-site
Fond du Lac	36.9	36.9	5	1.36	Always	No	Multi-site
Waukesha	45.0	45.0	6	1.33	Never	Yes	Single-site

The respondent median ratio is approximately 1.93, and the mean is approximately 2.03. Three patterns bear on Mead. Five of the six respondents are System Resource Libraries, confirming that the dual municipal and system role is common in the peer network and not an exotic condition unique to Mead. The Person-in-Charge practice is evenly split: three respondents always designate a Person-in-Charge and three never do, indicating that there is no single dominant model for after-hours authority and that Mead's interim Person-in-Charge stopgap is within accepted practice. And three of the six respondents, including Kenosha at the top of the set, operate a central library plus one or more branches. Multi-branch operation raises both staffing and supervisory needs because each building requires its own coverage, and the system requires consistent protocols across sites. Kenosha's self-reported count of twenty supervisors, the highest in the set, includes branch managers and branch librarians that a single-building library would not carry. Part of a peer's higher supervisor count can therefore reflect a community's decision to operate more than one building rather than a like-for-like comparison with Mead's single three-floor structure. Reported security models vary across the set, from no dedicated security function to in-house and contracted security staff, and reported incident frequency ranges from a few incidents per week to more

than twenty, which underscores that behavioral load is real and variable across Wisconsin libraries of comparable size.

A.2 Org-chart comparators, normalized (secondary, inference tier)

The five libraries listed below were invited to participate in the survey but did not respond. Each maintains an organizational chart that the library produced and published itself. These charts are authoritative for what they show, including reporting lines, position counts, and titles, and they are silent on what they do not show, including whether a titled supervisor carries true supervisory authority and how coverage is handled outside core hours. All figures in this part are inference tier.

This part presents a second, independent comparator method built on these charts and normalized to library-service supervision. A position is counted as supervisory only where it carries actual supervision of staff, as determined by direct reports and supervisory functions rather than by title. Finance, business-office, and facilities supervisory positions are stripped from the count, and the corresponding finance and facilities full-time equivalents are stripped from the denominator, so the comparison is library-service supervision against library-service staffing. This matches Mead, which has divested finance and facilities and whose staffing is therefore entirely library-service. The Director or Executive Director is counted, consistent with the Mead count of three.

Library	Total FTE	Library-service FTE	Library-service supervisors	Sups per 10 lib-service FTE
Eau Claire	50.2	~50.2	9	1.79
Manitowoc	31.5	29.05	4	1.38
Oshkosh	39.5	38.0	7	1.84
Racine	44.35	~41.35	6	1.45
Beloit	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Chart insufficient

The median of the four computable comparators is approximately 1.62. Mead at 0.79 on the table-of-organization basis is below every comparator. Three additions reach 1.58, which lands at the center of this normalized set, above Manitowoc and Racine and below Oshkosh and Eau Claire, and below the survey respondent median of approximately 1.93. The two comparator methods triangulate: the leanness finding holds for both self-reported survey data and independently normalized org-chart data.

All five comparators are the system resource or central library for their respective systems, confirming that Mead's system role is common rather than exotic. Eau Claire is the System Resource Library for the Indianhead Federated Library System, making it Mead's closest structural analog, useful as a target reference at a normalized ratio near 1.79, though larger than Mead. Eau Claire serves Indianhead, Oshkosh serves Winnefox, Manitowoc serves Manitowoc-Calumet, and Racine and Beloit serve Prairie Lakes.

The per-library judgment calls are summarized here rather than reproduced in full. Beloit is excluded because its chart is a flat functional matrix that does not permit a reliable supervisory count and does not state total full-time equivalents. Eau Claire counts the Director, two Deputy Directors, five Managers, and the Circulation Supervisor as nine, excluding the Technology Manager, who has no direct reports, and the various Coordinators, who read as senior individual contributors or lead workers on the chart. Manitowoc counts the Director and three Managers as four, stripping the Facilities Manager and the part-time Business Office Coordinator and reducing the denominator accordingly. Oshkosh counts the Director, five Heads, and the Circulation Operations Manager as seven, stripping the Maintenance Engineer and facilities, keeping Library Development as library service, and excluding the Public Service Operations Coordinator, which sits at the librarian pay level and does not appear to be a management position. Racine counts the Executive Director, the Deputy Director, and four operational unit leads as six, stripping the combined finance-and-facilities Business Manager role and its associated full-time equivalents, and

excluding the Library Associate Lead Worker, which is coordinative rather than supervisory, the Social Worker, a clinical and liaison role supervising only an intern, and the two non-operational heads of Business Development and of Digital Services and Innovation.

The dominant pattern across the full set is structural diversity rather than a single best model. Layering ranges from three reporting levels at Manitowoc to six at Eau Claire, and supervisory counts vary widely once normalized. The implication is that Mead should not mimic any single peer. It should select the specific structural choices that address Mead's specific conditions, which is what the recommendations in Section 3 do.

Appendix B: The Library's Role in Addressing Homelessness

This appendix is written from the library's perspective and from the operational impact homelessness has on the library's capacity to operate. It is not a proposal for the library to own the community response. It documents the pattern, states the impact, identifies the need for designated leadership outside the library, and extends an invitation to a coordinated community effort. The structural recommendations in the body of this report hold regardless of what happens on the matters in this appendix; the appendix exists because addressing those matters upstream would relieve a load the library now absorbs.

B.1 The pattern

The library sits at the center of downtown, in a central and accessible location. That location draws congregation regardless of intent, because the building is a warm, public, no-cost indoor space at the heart of the city. During open hours, and especially during the winter months and other periods of severe weather, the library functions as a de facto daytime refuge for people experiencing homelessness and for individuals experiencing behavioral health and substance-related challenges. This is a predictable seasonal pattern rather than an occasional occurrence. The incident pattern described in Section 2.5 has shifted over time toward adult behavioral challenges tied to regional socioeconomic and mental health vulnerabilities, and routine floor-level de-escalation rises during the colder months in correlation with this use of the building. Juvenile behavior remains an ongoing issue alongside this pattern, not a closed phase. Teenagers and even younger patrons present their own behavioral challenges, and the pressures associated with homelessness amplify the overall pressure on staff.

B.2 The impact on the library

The operational impact falls on supervisory and floor capacity. Routine de-escalation, monitoring of the entry zone and public floors, and support for staff during behavioral incidents consume time that would otherwise be allocated to coaching, programming, and service. The burden focuses on the supervisory layer, which this report has already identified as the thinnest part of the structure. It also falls on the first floor. The entry and first floor are where this use of the building is most concentrated: it is where individuals enter, where some congregate, where some seek to rest in periods of severe weather, and, in the more serious instances, where drug-related activity has occurred in the restrooms, including a fatal overdose on the premises in 2019. The staff stationed at the entry and on the first floor, in the ordinary course of their work, are among the least prepared to handle situations of that kind, which strengthens the case for trained supervisory presence near the point of entry. There is also a patron-experience and attendance dimension: entry-zone conditions and perceptions of the building affect some patrons' willingness to enter and use in-building services. Formal long-term exclusions remain statistically rare relative to monthly visitor volume, which suggests that the cost is borne through continuous low-level supervisory presence rather than through formal action.

The library is meant to be a place where people of all economic backgrounds, races, sexes, and genders can gather and use it for its intended purposes. There is a difference between that use and the building's use as a shelter. The distinction the report draws is on the function and the building's capacity to serve its purpose, not on any population. The community's shelter infrastructure already treats the library as a primary daytime warm space. The Sheboygan County Warming Center has adjusted its hours to align with the library's, remaining open until the library opens, closing while the library is open, reopening when the library closes, and operating around the clock on days the library is closed, serving roughly 60 people on

one such day.² That coordination demonstrates the scale of the population overlapping with the library's daytime hours and the extent to which the daytime burden has settled on the library by default.

B.3 The need for designated leadership outside the library

The conditions presenting at the library are a community-level matter that exceeds what library policy and staffing can or should resolve. The library can and should strengthen what is within its control, including incident protocols, the coverage and Person-in-Charge model recommended in Section 4, environment management, and staff training. The library is also moving from a more permissive posture toward clearer behavioral expectations.

The earlier approach relied on targeted social resource programming as a proactive mitigation measure, which was appropriate within the library's control but never a substitute for a coordinated community response. Moving to clearer expectations and a more assertive stance is a significant change that requires time, consistent reinforcement, and proper support, possibly including external support, and it carries an employee-relations and procedural-justice dimension: a tightening of behavioral expectations should be documented, applied consistently, and communicated clearly so that enforcement is fair and defensible.

The library considered and set aside a social-work service model for sound operational reasons, and naming them strengthens the case for leadership outside the library. Referral-based help proved difficult to deliver from within the library: privacy constraints limit what library staff can appropriately learn and act on, the volume of completed referrals was low relative to the effort, and the receiving agencies are themselves stretched thin and in some cases losing funding, so the library spent time pursuing contacts and callbacks for little throughput.

The library refers patrons to services at a basic level, as any public institution does, but it is not positioned to act as a case manager or clinical provider, and attempting to do so would divert scarce capacity from library services without resolving the underlying need. Sustainable improvement therefore requires designated leadership outside the library to own the broader response, because the underlying drivers of housing instability, behavioral health, and crisis response sit with agencies whose missions are built for them, including the county health, human services, public health, veterans services, and aging and disability functions that carry the professional staff and the mandate for this work.

B.4 An invitation to a coordinated effort

The request is for a coordinated, multi-stakeholder effort convened at the City level. Someone at the level of city leadership, whether the Mayor, the City Administrator, or the Common Council acting as a body, should take charge and direct that the issue be addressed. The framing is a shared community responsibility rather than assigning blame to any single office, and it builds on the demonstrated record of cooperation between the library and the City, as reflected in the finance and facilities transfers. A coordinated response is necessary, not optional, because the underlying need does not disappear if the library narrows or loses its role as a daytime space. People who rely on the building for daytime warmth and a place to be will still need somewhere to go, and that need will surface elsewhere in the community rather than resolve on its own. Deliberate planning for it is more effective and more humane than letting it go unaddressed. The library's role is to serve as the daytime recipient of the impact and as a partner, not to

² WHBL, Kevin Zimmermann, "First Arctic Blast Reveals Degree of Demand for Shelter Services in Sheboygan," December 15, 2025, <https://whbl.com/2025/12/15/first-arctic-blast-reveals-degree-of-demand-for-shelter-services-in-sheboygan/>, together with the Warming Center's public communications.

lead the effort or to staff the community's response from its own budget. Stakeholders whose missions touch this work include, but are not limited to, the following.

- City leadership as convener: the Mayor, the City Administrator, or the Common Council acting as a body.
- Applicable county departments or agencies, such as health and human services, public health, veterans services, the aging and disability resource center, and similar bodies.
- Law enforcement, including the city police department and the county sheriff's office, as appropriate and applicable, especially relevant where people experiencing homelessness are transported into the city from outlying communities because the city holds the resources.
- Organizations or departments dealing with housing, which would be viable participants and stakeholders in the effort.
- Local shelters and community organizations, including the Sheboygan County Warming Center.
- The library, as the daytime recipient of the impact and a partner at the table.

The library also carries a continuity exposure relevant to this work. As noted in Section 2.10, the safety and security function depends on an incumbent whose skill set is difficult to replicate. The library should plan deliberately to ensure the continuity of that function, because the coordinated effort described here will depend, in part, on the library retaining its specialized capacity.

B.5 A contingency, not a recommendation

If a coordinated multi-stakeholder effort does not materialize, one Wisconsin peer offers a contingency model. Racine staffs a one full-time-equivalent Social Worker who reports directly to its Executive Director and supervises a Social Worker intern, with duties including direct social services assistance, staff consultation, and community organization liaison. This is genuine Wisconsin precedent, and it is recorded here only as a reluctant contingency. Staffing the function internally is the opposite of pushing ownership upstream and runs counter to the operational reasons the library set aside a social-work model in the first place, as Section B.3 describes. It should be considered only if the coordinated community response does not form, and even then with clear eyes about the privacy, throughput, and capacity limits that make an internal model a poor substitute for the agencies whose mission this work is. The funding source, credentialing requirements, and operational scope of the Racine position are not visible on its organizational chart and would need to be confirmed before the model could be evaluated for Mead.