

COMBINED ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Supervisory Structure and Classification Hierarchy

Findings, Recommendations, and Implementation Plan

Presented to the Board of Trustees, Mead Public Library

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1

SCOPE

What the assessment covered, and what it did not

Within scope

- Supervisory and managerial structure, spans of control, and reporting lines
- Authority and coverage during evenings and weekends
- Peer benchmarking against Wisconsin libraries
- The non-management classification hierarchy

Outside scope

- Evaluation of any individual employee
- Review of service quality or programming
- Grade assignment and compensation levels
- The library budget as a whole

Grade placement and compensation determinations rest with the City's classification and compensation process. They follow this report rather than appearing inside it.

2

METHOD

Four streams of evidence

01 Staff interviews

A cross-section of staff completed by February 19, 2026, spanning leadership, professional service, public-facing support, technical services, communications, and safety. Themes are reported only where repeated or independently reinforced. No comment is attributed to an individual.

02 Library records and public data

The 2026 table of organization and prior Board-approved tables, position descriptions, municipal appropriation history, and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction service data.

03 Peer survey

Distributed through the City Library Collective. Twelve peer communities were invited and six completed the survey. This is primary, self-reported evidence.

04 Published organizational charts

Charts from five additional Wisconsin libraries that were invited but did not respond. This is secondary, inference-tier evidence, and it is labeled that way throughout the report.

Findings are stated as findings. Inferences are labeled as inferences. Recommendations are calibrated proposals with their assumptions named.

3

METHOD

Two independent comparator methods

Survey respondents

Primary, self-reported

**Kenosha, La Crosse, Appleton
Superior, Fond du Lac, Waukesha**

Twelve peer communities were invited and six completed the survey. Five of the six are System Resource Libraries, which confirms that Mead's dual municipal and system role is common in the peer network rather than an exotic condition.

Organizational charts

Secondary, inference tier

**Eau Claire, Oshkosh
Racine, Manitowoc**

Beloit was invited, did not respond, and was analyzed but excluded from the ratio because its chart is a flat functional matrix that does not permit a reliable supervisory count. All five comparators are the resource or central library for their systems.

Why the comparison is normalized

Mead has moved finance and building maintenance to the City, so its staffing is now entirely library service. Most comparators still carry those functions in house. The defensible comparison therefore strips business-operations and facilities positions, and the staff reporting to them, from both sides. The adjustment makes the gap larger rather than smaller, which is exactly why the report discloses it in the methodology and again at the point the finding is presented. Counting supervisory positions requires a rule, and reasonable rules differ; the rule used here is applied identically to every library in the set.

4

METHOD

How the internal and external evidence fit together

The assessment was designed as an external comparison anchored to internal evidence. Each layer answers a question the other cannot, and the recommendations rest on both.

Internal evidence set the questions and shaped the recommendations

Staff interviews and extended discussion with library leadership established how supervision actually works at Mead, where authority is uncertain, and what the structure is absorbing. The tables of organization, position descriptions, and appropriation history supplied the documentary record behind that picture.

State data made the comparison defensible

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction service data is collected the same way for every library in the state, which makes it the sound basis for measuring Mead against its peers. It supplied the service-volume, staffing, and hours measures that internal records alone could not have made comparable across eleven libraries.

The one caveat worth stating plainly

A published organizational chart shows reporting lines, position counts, and titles. It does not show whether a titled supervisor carries real authority, and it is silent on coverage design. Those comparators are labeled secondary and inference tier throughout, and no recommendation rests on a single chart.

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4

5

PART ONE

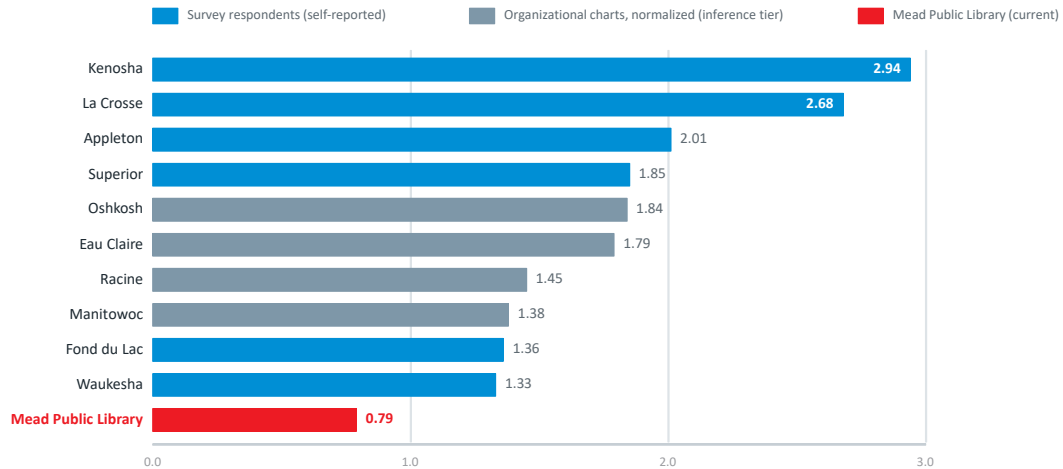
Findings

Where the structure stands today, how it compares to Wisconsin peers on a like-for-like basis, and what the thin layer costs the library now.

6

FINDING

Mead carries the leanest supervisory footprint in the comparison set



Supervisory positions per 10 library-service full-time equivalents. The two evidence tiers are distinguished by color rather than merged, and Mead falls below every comparator on both methods. The next slide tests the finding against three different counting rules.

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6

7

METHOD

The finding does not depend on how supervisors are counted

	As reported Every position each library listed, on the basis that library chose. Directors included.	Report basis Library-service supervision measured against library-service staffing.	Common counting basis Directors and positions carrying no direct reports removed.
Peer median	1.84	1.93	1.46
Leanest peer	1.33	1.33	0.81
Mead Public Library, current	0.79	0.79	0.53
Mead with three added positions	1.58	1.58	1.32

Supervisory positions per 10 full-time equivalents. Mead is computed on the 38.0 table-of-organization basis in every column.

Three counting rules, and the same conclusion under all three. Mead operates below every comparator today, and three added positions would still leave Mead below the peer median under every rule.

The third rule was developed for a separate peer-wide analysis prepared for the City Library Collective, before Mead was included in that dataset. It was not designed around this engagement. The report will be updated to present both views.

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7

8

FINDING

Two independent methods, one conclusion

0.79

Mead's supervisory positions per
10 library-service full-time
equivalents

1.93

Median among the six libraries
that reported their own structures

1.62

Median among the four
normalized organizational-chart
comparators

70%

More supervisory capacity carried
by the leanest peer in each set
than Mead carries

The typical peer operates with roughly two to two and a half times Mead's supervisory density. One method is self-reported and one is built from published charts, and they place Mead in the same position. That agreement is the strongest available evidence that the leanness is a real feature of the structure rather than an artifact of either instrument.

The leanness was produced by budget history, not by design

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. Read against that history, even the full three-position ideal restores supervisory capacity that was given up, rather than building a new administrative layer.

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8

9

FINDING

Three conditions distinguish Mead from the leanest peers

01

Building geography

Public service is delivered across three floors. Coverage of three floors during open hours is not something one supervisor can hold from a single location. Activity on a floor distant from the administrative offices goes unseen, not through neglect but as a property of a tall building with a thin supervisory layer.

02

Where the system role lands

The system role is common across the set. Five of the six survey respondents and all five chart comparators serve as the resource or central library for their systems. What distinguishes Mead is not the role but the layer absorbing it: the obligation concentrates workload in the Director, the Deputy Director, and the circulation and technical services functions already under the most supervisory pressure.

03

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 the city level. Behavioral pressure comes from adult and teen dynamics alike, and it lands on the supervisory layer first.

Ratios establish the comparison. These three conditions are the reason Mead should sit at a normal level of supervision rather than at the leanest point of the band.

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10

10

FINDING

What the thin layer costs the library today

- 1 After-hours authority is the most repeated concern in the interviews**
 Evenings and weekends were consistently described as the times when staff are least certain who holds authority, when escalation feels slowest, and when staff feel least supported during behavioral incidents. The current model relies on reaching a supervisor by telephone.
- 2 Senior leaders are structurally pulled into operations**
 The Director and the Deputy Director are the default point of resolution for matters a frontline supervisor should handle. The Deputy Director currently works many Saturdays in exchange for a weekday off in order to keep weekend operations covered.
- 3 An informal network is filling the vacuum**
 Staff have built a peer leadership network that keeps daily operations stable. That is a credit to the staff. Its structural consequence is inconsistent enforcement, because each informal leader operates on individual judgment without shared standards or backed authority.
- 4 Support functions carry single-point-of-failure exposure**
 Information technology, technical services and cataloging, safety and security, and communications operate with significant autonomy and depend on individual incumbents. The mitigation is cross-training and documented continuity, not redundancy in every specialty.

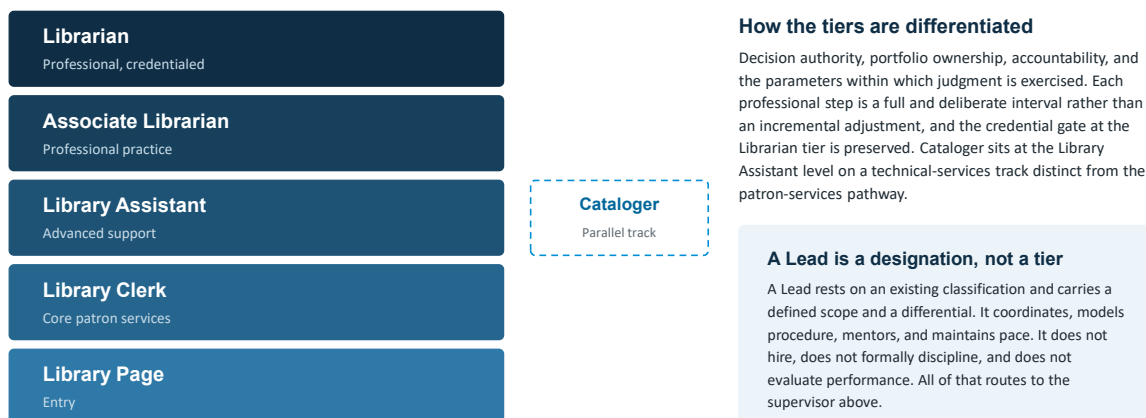
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11

11

SECTION TWO

The non-management classification hierarchy



The classification section does not assign grades, write position descriptions, or recommend compensation levels. Those follow the report and belong to the City's process and to the Board's position-description adoption.

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12

12

SECTION TWO

No peer library has solved role differentiation

What the six surveyed peers reported

- Not one of the six uses a Senior Librarian title. Zero of six.
- Not one of the six uses a Lead Librarian title. Zero of six.
- Associate Librarian is in use at three of the six, and at Mead.
- Only one of the six describes its own role differentiation as well defined. Two call it mostly clear, two mixed or inconsistent, and one minimal.
- One reports a senior or lead concept in place and one reports it under development. Four report none.

Two peers are building it anyway

Racine carries both a Lead Supervisor and a Library Associate Lead Worker as distinct titles, which puts the difference between coordinative lead work and supervisory authority into the titling itself.

Oshkosh carries a Public Service Operations Coordinator, a dedicated coordination position sitting at a librarian pay level rather than at a management level.

Both appear on published organizational charts, which makes them Wisconsin precedent rather than theory.

This is a shared unsolved problem, not a Mead deficiency. The recommended structure is early rather than unusual.

13

PART TWO

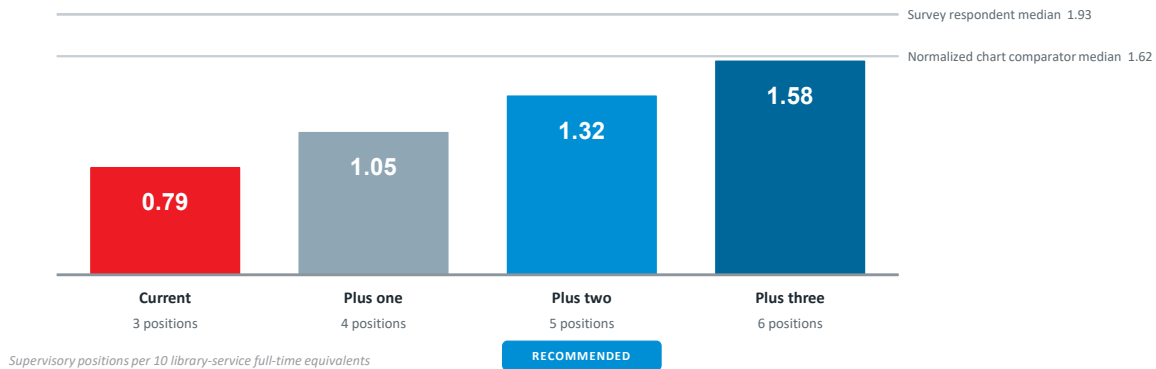
Recommendations

The need first, then the staged response. The pace is governed by fiscal capacity. The need itself is not in question.

14

RECOMMENDATION

The ideal state adds three positions. The near-term ask is two.



Even at the full three-position ideal, Mead lands at the center of the normalized comparator set and remains below the median of the libraries that reported their own structures. The near-term recommendation of two is a deliberate calibration to fiscal reality, with the third documented so it stays available as capacity opens in a later cycle.

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15

15

RECOMMENDATION

The order of the moves

STAGE ONE

Low or no marginal cost

- Size the Circulation Supervisor span now that the position is established and contributing, and build from that base
- Establish a defined lead role in Circulation for Clerk-tier scheduling and coordination
- Stand up a Person-in-Charge model with real authority, training, and a differential
- Place technical services under a lead worker reporting to the Deputy Director
- Establish one-on-one check-ins at a minimum quarterly cadence
- Clarify decision rights and establish a governed source of truth for procedures

STAGE TWO

Net-new supervisory capacity

- Two added supervisors as net-new full-time positions, in priority order across budget cycles
- Recommended form is a population split: a Public Services or Adult supervisor paired with a Youth Services supervisor
- Each is on the order of \$105,000 to \$110,000 fully loaded, a 2026 planning estimate
- Reclassification redistributes capacity; only a net-new position places a person on the floor
- Peer supervisors are working positions: 40 to 100 percent carry scheduled desk or floor coverage

STAGE THREE

Documented and available later

- The third supervisory position stays documented as the upper end of the need, available as budget capacity opens
- Convert the interim Person-in-Charge stopgap into a sustainable evening and weekend rotation across supervisory and lead roles
- Retain a permanent lead layer only where a genuine coordination need is demonstrated

This is a long-term roadmap sequenced across budget cycles, not a single budget request. It shows plainly where the recommended path stops short of the ideal and why.

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16

16

RECOMMENDATION

Coverage: a bridge, and a destination

THE BRIDGE

Person-in-Charge

Assigned when a supervisor is not scheduled or available, rather than fixed on every evening and weekend. It is worth adopting only where it carries genuine decision authority over a defined set of situations, backed by real training, supporting procedures, a clear escalation threshold, and a premium differential attached to the duty in operational policy.

Two predictable failures

- A differential attached to a title with no training behind it
- A designation that must escalate every consequential matter, which adds process without adding resolution

THE DESTINATION

A sustainable supervisory rotation

Enough supervisory positions that evenings and weekends draw a real supervisor on a rotation across three or four roles, rather than one or two people carrying every night and every weekend. The added positions are what make the rotation possible; until they are in place, the Person-in-Charge model carries the gap.

Two problems the design must avoid

- Supervisors who leave their roles because they are constantly assigned evenings and weekends
- Staff who have no resource available when a consequential issue arises

Peer practice grants the person in charge a narrow, specific authority set. Among the five peers that designate one, all five may exclude a patron and contact emergency services, four may send a staff member home, and only one may close the building. The common gap is preparation rather than authority: only two of the five train to it. A voluntary sign-up rotation lets staff match coverage to their own scheduling preferences.

RECOMMENDATION

The lead layer, and a note on the position being created

What a lead is, and what it is not

A lead coordinates, models procedure, mentors, and maintains pace and continuity within a defined scope. The authority ceiling is deliberate. A lead does not hire, does not carry formal discipline, and does not conduct performance evaluations. All of that routes to the supervisor above.

Leads must be created against a demonstrated operational need and never as a way to recognize or retain an individual employee. That pathway is how lead titles proliferate without underlying differentiation, and the architecture is built to prevent it. A lead created without clear objectives, backed authority, and a differential will be read as cosmetic and will fail.

A lead never substitutes for genuine supervision where supervision is required.

A NOTE ON THE CIRCULATION LEAD

Where the report and the request differ

The report recommends a Circulation Lead resting on the Library Assistant classification, scoped to relieve the Clerk-tier scheduling and shift-coordination load beneath the Circulation Supervisor.

The position the library is creating is a Lead Clerk, resting on the Library Clerk classification and scoped exclusively to coordinating Clerk-to-Clerk workflow. That narrower scope is structurally defensible, and the authority ceiling is unchanged.

The difference is recorded here so that it is visible and explained rather than left as an unexplained gap between the report and the budget request.

CONTEXT

Homelessness is a structural input, not a library program

The pattern

The library sits at the center of downtown and functions as a de facto daytime refuge during open hours, most heavily in winter. The county warming center has adjusted its hours around the library's hours, which shows how far the daytime burden has settled on the library by default.

Where the load lands

The pressure concentrates at the entry and on the first floor, where staff in the ordinary course of their work are least prepared for acute incidents. It falls on the supervisory layer, which this report has already identified as the thinnest part of the structure.

What the library controls

Standards written to observable conduct rather than to any patron's circumstances, applied consistently, documented, and backed by training. That approach is both fairer and more defensible, and it works only when staff have someone with real authority to escalate to, which is what the coverage recommendation provides.

What the library cannot own

The report documents the operational impact and invites a City-convened, multi-stakeholder response. The library is a daytime partner in that effort, not the owner of it, and the structural recommendations hold regardless of what happens upstream.

Every library in the peer set reports the same patron populations requiring regular staff attention. Six of seven report that community partnerships are not adequate to what staff face. Four of seven have some form of social work access, employed directly or through a partner agency. Mead has none.

Appendix B draws a distinction about the building's function, not about any population.

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19

19

NEXT

What comes next

Decisions for the leadership team

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 pairs a Public Services or Adult supervisor with a Youth Services supervisor, with technical services held by a lead worker.
- Whether a permanent lead librarian layer beyond Circulation is retained as a durable coordination function, adopted only against a demonstrated need.
- Whether information technology reports to the Director or to the Deputy Director. The design rules out placing it under the technical services lead worker.

Work already under way

The report is delivered. Several pieces continue past it.

- Position description drafting for the recommended and revised roles, running alongside the City's broader review of its descriptions.
- Grade placement and compensation determinations, which rest with the City's classification and compensation process and follow this report.
- Aggregated peer survey results returned to the participating City Library Collective libraries, which is the exchange the collective depends on.

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20

20

IN CLOSING

Three things worth carrying forward

1 The need is settled. The pace is the open question.

Two independent comparator methods place Mead below every peer in the set. What remains open is how quickly the City can fund the response, and the plan is built to be used across several budget cycles rather than in one.

2 The plan starts with the moves that cost little.

Stabilize the existing structure, define the lead role, stand up bounded after-hours authority, and establish the operating practices. Those come first on the merits. They help, and they do not replace the capacity the structure needs.

3 Even the full ideal keeps Mead lean.

Three added positions bring the library to the center of the normalized comparator set and still below the median of the libraries that reported their own structures. Measured against the library's own history, that restores capacity given up during the appropriation freeze rather than building something new.

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