

Mohawk Valley Library System

Director's Report

March, 2020

Administration & Governance

Since the March meeting was cancelled, please review the information on the web for the March meeting. At the April virtual meeting, we will be reviewing information from both the March and April meetings.

MVLS and all member libraries are physically closed. All libraries and MVLS ceased physical services sometime in the week of March 16. In the case of MVLS, professional staff has been successful in transitioning to working from home. Kathy, Joe and I are coming in to MVLS a few hours each week to take care of essential tasks and to check in on the building. This is also the case in all of our member libraries

Meetings and consultations are happening online. Here is the information for our April 16 Board meeting, which will be held via the virtual platform GoToMeeting at 9:30. Using a computer with speakers and a microphone, access the meeting by clicking this link:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/986376869> ; or by using this phone number and access code from any telephone: Dial [1 \(669\) 224-3412](tel:16692243412) and enter this access code when prompted: 986-376-869

The State Budget was passed on April 3. Our advocacy efforts were targeted at reversing the Governor's \$5 million cut to library operating aid and \$20 million cut to public library construction aid. With the drastic reductions in state revenue projections, library systems were braced for substantial cuts to library funding. The approved budget cuts library operating aid by \$2 million and maintains the Governor's proposal for public library construction at \$14 million. Given the state income projections, the approved budget is a real victory for libraries. But we are not home-free yet. The way the budget is written, funding can be further cut at several occasions during the year, and the payment schedule will almost certainly be later than usual. We are fortunate that MVLS is well placed to weather a temporary financial downturn.

We have suspended our search to fill the Public Engagement and Education Consultant position until New York is off "Pause" and until we have a clearer picture of our financial future. The next step of the search is to interview the two leading candidates. Both candidates understand our position and are awaiting the resumption of our search process.

Automation & Resource Sharing

The March JA Council meeting was cancelled. The next JA meeting is scheduled for May 18 at SALS. It may end up being a virtual meeting.

Many changes have taken place in resource sharing, not least of which is a suspension of all physical library borrowing and delivery service. We have worked out an agreement with Arnoff whereby we are paying them \$1,200 per week to be on standby. Our usual fee is about \$2,850 per week.

JA staff and Sharon O'Brien have been working to get users the access they need to work from home and to keep library materials available and safe. All due dates are extended until libraries reopen, and all fines have been set to 0, so, as long as library items are eventually returned, there will be no financial ramifications to patrons for libraries being closed.

Much effort is going into helping libraries continue to provide access to information. MVLS has provided and is actively promoting a variety of free resources for library users, and we are putting much emphasis on the e-resources that are still available. Use of these resources continues to increase. We have implemented a way for anyone to get access to Overdrive resources even if they do not have an existing library card or if their card has issues that prevent borrowing.

One of the next things that JA staff will be working to implement is E-card, a system that will allow individuals to apply for a library card online. We also have scheduled an update to the Polaris software planned for May/June.

Outreach & Adult Services

The early planned NYSCA book discussion programs have been cancelled or postponed. We are hoping to reschedule most of them. Doing the programs virtually may be an option – we have several libraries who are having success with keeping programs going using virtual platforms.

We are waiting to schedule the writing program aspect of the NYSCA project. Libraries have the information and we are working to gauge interest.

Scheduling may also be an issue for the ongoing Adult Literacy programs. That project has an end date of June 30. As with the NYSCA writing programs, it is hard to get new things started when everyone is working from home.

Youth Services

Daily emails have been going out to youth services staff to keep them engaged while libraries are closed. Libraries are provided with suggested resource links to support members with best practices re: working during this time, virtual continuing education, how to's: online storytime etc., links to educational sites for members to use on their social media pages, as well as being available for general support. Kathy has updated the MVLS website with new links, and set up Resource pages.

We have received Stewart's Holiday Match funding, which goes toward maintaining and updating the graphic novel rotating collections. Orders have been placed for new materials,

Much effort is going in to preparing for the 2020 Summer Reading Program. Our libraries will be using new tracking software this year, moving from Beanstack to READsquared. Sue is working with libraries to bring them onboard. Other aspects of the program, including the Read it Forward initiative, are going forward with the assumption that libraries will be able to have programming this summer.

Staff Meeting, 3/2; Field Visit, FTP, 3/4; Field Visit, FON, 3/5; Baby Sensory Play Workshop, SALS, 3/10; FLLS Workshop Planning Meeting, 3/10; Barnes and Noble STEM Meeting, 3/11; Staff Meeting, 3/16;

Work from home beginning 3/17; Daily Governor's Update; Know & Go Webinar, 3/20; READsquared Webinars, 3/25; Libraries Stepping Up Mini Conference, 4 sections, 3/26; READsquared Planning Meeting with Jack Scott (SALS), 3/27; 3/29; 3/30; 3/31; RIF Planning Meeting with Mary Fellows (UHLS), 3/27

Member Services

There have never been so many emails and other communications from MVLS to member libraries. Our libraries are doing a good job with continuing to stay engaged with users via social media and websites. There are many resources available for free during this time. We also have libraries doing virtual programming via Zoom or Facebook.

MVLS has surveyed libraries about how they are dealing with working from home and continuing to pay staff. All libraries are continuing to pay full-time staff, and most are also paying part-time staff. Everyone is having staff work from home, with staff spending very limited time in library buildings.

Advocacy & Awareness

Advocacy works! I am pleased with how our legislators have responded to our advocacy efforts. NYLA was understandably reluctant to do its usual all-out advocacy efforts, but I was confident that our representatives would be open to my reminding them that library funding was important, and I was very pleased to receive personal, supportive and thoughtful replies from a few of them. They were genuinely listening and concerned about the effect of the shutdown on libraries. I think that validates our emphasis on communicating the real impact of libraries. We weren't going to them begging for money; we were providing information on how libraries are continuing to serve the community.

We are looking into CARES Act funding that could be useful to MVLS. The Payroll Protection Plan money is relevant, and we are exploring the application process. Many sources are not optimistic about this money. We will keep working on it.

Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

- 3/2/2020 Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development
MVLS Staff
- 3/3/2020 Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library
Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library
Edward Asselin, SUNY Cobleskill
- 3/4/2020 Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library
Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
- 3/5/2020 Deb Escobar
Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
- 3/6/2020 Kathryn McCary, Law Office of Kathryn McCary
Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
- 3/13/2020 Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
MVLS Board of Trustees
Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library
Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
Kim Zimmer, The Community Library

3/16/2020 MVLS Board of Trustees
MVLS Member Library Directors
PULISDO

3/17/2020 William P. Leitch
Nicole Hauser, Gloversville Public Library
Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
MVLS Board of Trustees
MVLS Member Library Directors
Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library

3/18/2020 Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
Nicole Hauser, Gloversville Public Library
Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
MVLS Member Library Directors

3/19/2020 Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council
MVLS Board of Trustees
MVLS Member Library Directors
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Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library

3/20/2020 Capital District Library Council
MVLS Member Library Directors

3/23/2020 Ken Hotopp

3/23/2020 Nicole Hauser, Gloversville Public Library
Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
MVLS Member Library Directors

3/24/2020 Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
MVLS Member Library Directors
Kim Zimmer, The Community Library

3/25/2020 MVLS Member Library Directors

3/26/2020 MVLS Member Library Directors
Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library
Kim Zimmer, The Community Library

3/27/2020 Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council
MVLS Member Library Directors

3/28/2020 Kim Zimmer, The Community Library

3/30/2020 Nicole Hauser, Gloversville Public Library
MVLS Member Library Directors