

Mohawk Valley Library System
Board of Trustees Meeting
July 15, 2021

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rosemary Barger, Jane Borrelli, April Davies (remote), Deb Escobar, Katherine Hawkins, Susan London, Joanne Mickle, Rebecca Sokol, Felicia Spivey, Helen Thomas, Christine Witkowski, and Eric Trahan, Director

EXCUSED: Mary Salluzzo

GUESTS: Kim Zimmer (COB), Sharon O'Brien, Kate Clingan

Call to Order President Jane Borrelli called the meeting to order at 9:34am. So nice to see everyone in person!

Consideration of Minutes: Minutes from the June 17, 2021 meeting were presented.

MOTION: To accept the minutes from the June meeting as presented.

Mickle/Thomas. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

The **Director's Report** for June was distributed before the meeting. While it is great to have everyone in person, we will continue to provide a Go-To-Meeting link in case anyone would like to observe our board meetings remotely.

- We have received 90% of our CARES Act funding and have submitted forms to receive the final 10%.
- Funding from the American Rescue Plan Act will be allocated to 3Rs Councils like CDLC instead of the public library systems.
- Eric and Wade attended the Schoharie Board meeting last night (July 14). Eric feels that progress is being made. They filled two vacancies on their board and they've also appointed staff members. They are moving towards being fully functional again. Susan asks if they've expanded their hours. They have not yet, but the steps taken last night should lead to changes in the next few weeks. On a positive note, they have been able to continue their programs thanks to the hard work of their Programming Director, Jennie Mosher.
- Eric wanted to draw everyone's attention to some of the policy initiatives that NYLA put out this month:
 - Streamline & Modernize Library Program Requirements: This will effect planning and reporting for some of the aid we receive (for example: Family Literacy and Adult Literacy projects, Institutions and Corrections aid). We plan to continue these programs, this should just make the applications and paperwork less onerous and time-consuming.
 - Training for Library Trustees: This bill requires yearly training for library boards, but it has no enforcement in it and the question of who would do the training remains.

Currently, trustee training happens through library systems - Eric has done this with many of our member library boards.

- Increased Access to the Library Construction Program: This bill would make permanent the 25% match and other temporary initiatives that make these grants more accessible to libraries
- Access to E-Books: This bill is largely symbolic, but it is important to raise the issue since many people in the community don't realize the difficulty that libraries can have getting access to e-resources. Libraries pay a much higher price for these e-resources than the general public, and there are also restrictions that vary by publisher on how they can loan them.

Directors Council Report Helen Thomas reports the directors had a special meeting about the situation in Schoharie. They decided to write a letter to the Schoharie board detailing the ways in which the board's actions are affecting their neighboring libraries. Wade drafted it, the directors provided input, and then the letter was sent to each member of the Schoharie board. Helen also read the letter at their board meeting on July 7. The biggest issue for the directors is that books are going out and no one knows where they are. Chris asks, what does the Schoharie board mean when they say they have "manual circulation" of books? As far as we can tell, they are just writing patron/item bar codes down on paper. The margin of error is huge with this system and while they may not know it yet, the patrons are the ones who will suffer. The Schoharie board sees it as continuation of service, but that doesn't take into consideration the impact it has on the rest of the system. Helen thinks information is key – they just need to learn how things are supposed to run, but we need them to come to us for help. The Directors Council plans to meet again in August. Joanne asks, could this happen to other libraries in the system? Helen says as hard as it is to hear it, sometimes libraries need to shut down. Patrons can go to other libraries in the system and ultimately it is better to stop and address issues before they become bigger problems. Eric thinks it's also important for libraries to move away from the one-person-library model so that they have backup staff.

During **Privilege of the Floor**, Joanne complimented the Story Walks she's seen around. Rebecca says St Johnsville is doing a "Poets in the Park" Story Walk using poems submitted by their poetry group. They are also having an event on Friday, August 6th called "Dogs and Dips" which will feature hot dogs, ice cream, and a DJ. Katherine offered copies of a book about the history of African Americans in Schoharie County that she felt might be interesting to folks right now, as well as an interesting article about library boards. Jane reports that Northville's book sale was very successful.

Treasurer's Report Eric presented the statements of Financial Position and Payment Schedule for June 2021. He notes that budget amendments haven't been done yet, so we should expect to discuss those in September. Rosemary thinks that the PPP loan should be listed as income in last year's statement, which would better reflect our financial position. The State Annual Report requires that loans show as income when they are forgiven (which, in this case, was in 2021),

rather than when they are received (2020). MVLS be working with our auditor from T.M. Byxbee over the next couple of month to figure out how this will work out.

Statements of Financial Position:

MOTION: To accept for audit the Statements of Financial Position for June 2021. Escobar/Barger. Ayes - All. Nays – None.

Payment Schedules:

MOTION: To approve Payment Schedule #6 for June 2021 in the amount of \$110,831.57. Witkowski/London. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

AUDIT AND FINANCE Meeting September 16 to begin budget planning for 2022.

AWARDS No report

BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT Katherine asked about the old tree and the sign out front. Eric reports we have talked to a sign company to put “MVLS” and the address on the sign. The tree doesn’t belong to us, we believe that land is owned by the company that owns the Pilot station, so we are fairly limited in what actions we can take.

COMMUNICATIONS No report.

LIBRARY SERVICES Meeting to be scheduled in September.

NOMINATING No report

PERSONNEL No report

JOINT AUTOMATION COUNCIL The JA Council met in-person July 13. They discussed the possibility of getting data breach insurance, which is complicated because of our shared database. There was also a discussion about hiring a service for email marketing so that the system and member libraries could reach out to more patrons about services that we offer.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

FOUNDATION UPDATE The Foundation has two upcoming golf tournament on July 26th and September 17th. There is a Foundation board meeting tomorrow on July 16th. The Foundation also received summer advocacy grant applications from Sharon Springs Free Library and Amsterdam Free Library.

MOTION: To approve the summer advocacy grants for Sharon Springs Free Library and Amsterdam Free Library. Hawkins/Mickle. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

PLAN OF SERVICE 5 years ago we changed how we surveyed, moving beyond directors to support staff and boards. In general, directors tend to be more aware of what services we offer/help with, whereas other staff members and trustees don’t have as much interaction with the system. We need to be communicating more with our libraries and with library staff. Among our libraries,

Schenectady is very different from all of the others in terms of size. Because of their size, we don't interact with much of the staff, which can lead to them thinking of MVLS as superfluous, and we need to do a better job at addressing that. Communicating accurate information internally is the key takeaway from this.

Another takeaway from the surveys is that there is some desire among our members for MVLS to provide some "referral services" for our members for things like retirement services or health insurance.

We are also recognizing the value in MVLS board members having a relationship with their home library boards in order to increase awareness of MVLS services. MVLS Board members can work on becoming more visible in their communities, perhaps even moving beyond the library boards. Discussion ensued about putting together a flyer or a series of talking points that MVLS board members could bring to library board meetings to present once or twice a year. Library trustees need to be made more aware of what the system does for them and MVLS trustees could become a sounding board for them.

NEW BUSINESS

BYLAWS AMENDMENTS AND RESOLUTION TO EXTEND TERMS Eric put together proposed language for the MVLS Bylaws amendments. Terms that would be set to expire in June of any given year would be extended to that December (extending terms by roughly 6 months). This would apply to both officer terms and trustee terms. The amendments would also cover moving the Annual Meeting to the fall.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS We are working to develop the committee list for 2021-2022. Trustees noted which committees they would be interested in being on and an updated committee list will be provided upon completion.

ALTERNATE AUDITOR

MOTION: To appoint Jane Borrelli as the MVLS Alternate Auditor.
Mickle/Escobar. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

On a sad note, Felicia is moving out of Schenectady County so she has tendered her resignation from the board. We appreciate all the help she has given during her time on the board. We will have a new vacancy in Schenectady County.

TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCEMENT CONSULTANT Eric provided a draft job description for the new position. We need provisional approval so that we can post it and start receiving applications.

MOTION: To approve the draft Technology and Advancement Consultant job description.
Thomas/Sokol. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

ADJOURNMENT With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:13am

Next Regular Board Meeting:

Thursday, September 16, 2021

MVLS Service Center