

Mohawk Valley Library System
Board of Trustees Meeting
November 18, 2021

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rosemary Barger, Jane Borrelli, April Davies, Deb Escobar, Katherine Hawkins, Susan London, Joanne Mickle, Mary Salluzzo, Rebecca Sokol, Helen Thomas, Christine Witkowski and Eric Trahan, Director.

GUESTS: Sharon O'Brien, Kate Clingan, Heather Dickerson

Call to Order President Jane Borrelli called the meeting to order at 9:32am.

BUDGET HEARING

Eric Trahan presented the 2022 Proposed Budget. The proposed budget shows little change from the current approved 2021 budget, with the exception of the 2020 state aid that was received in 2021 and the CARES Act funding. The e-resources budget is increased by \$4000, an amount agreed upon by member vote. Most of the reductions on the expenses end are also due to the 2020 state aid issue, as we paid out 2020 state aid to the libraries in 2021. Salaries and Benefit expenses were increased which we will discuss in Executive Session. There is a decrease in serials due to a general decrease in demand for print magazines. We can also see small increases in insurance, etc, as well as a contractual increase in our delivery costs. While the budget hasn't changed much from 2021, we do intend to use up more of the budget doing things we were unable to do much in 2021 (programming, consultant/professional fees, etc). We also plan to be fully staffed in 2022.

MOTION: To accept the proposed 2022 budget.
Mickle/Witkowski. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Consideration of Minutes: Minutes from the October 21, 2021 meeting were distributed.

MOTION: To accept the minutes from the October meeting as presented.
Hawkins/Barger. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

The **Director's Report** for October 2021 was distributed before the meeting. Eric wanted to discuss the funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which is being allocated to 3Rs Councils (in our case, CDLC). The money we will receive at MVLS will probably be largely administrative to help libraries with implementation. This funding is for digital inclusion, and a lot of our projects will likely be focused on training library staff, as well as marketing to make folks more aware that they can use their libraries for access to the internet and ensuring that our libraries' websites are accessible for things like screen readers. There is a very short timeframe for these projects, as they must be completed by June 30th.

Katherine asks about the shutdown of 3G cell phone coverage and whether libraries have a plan for assisting patrons with that. Eric says some libraries have become a cell phone recycling station and reallocate them to folks in need.

Susan asks if we have a relationship with the Schoharie County jail. We have not had contact with them since they reopened but MVLS will be reaching out.

Sharon O'Brien attended the meeting to brief the Board on her role as Member Services Coordinator at MVLS. A big portion of her job is Polaris training and support for our members, from training frontline clerks to check in and out to training directors on new modules. She also works with libraries on ordering, weeding, and organizing their collections, as well as how to use additional third-party services like Hoopla. She, along with Jill Ryder at SALS, is responsible for cataloging all of the records that we see in the online catalogue. Sharon also wanted to give credit to her amazing employee, Library Assistant Pam Lombardi, who helps with a lot of the cataloging and accomplishes an incredible amount in the few short hours she works each week at MVLS. Sharon manages our delivery services and all of our physical rotating collections here at MVLS (DVDs, Large Print, Audio, etc) as well as the system's Overdrive collections and support. She's responsible for most of the blog content on our Facebook page and website, posting about grant opportunities, programs, and continuing education that might benefit members.

Eric notes that Sharon has been a large part of moving our libraries towards going fine-free. Currently, there are plans for three more of our libraries to go fine-free by the end of the year, leaving only three in the system still charging fines. Helen thinks her board will be reluctant to make the switch as they rely on the minimal amount that they make from fines as part of their budget. Susan asks whether eliminating fines affects wait times for reserve lists; Sharon's recommendation is that libraries wait a shorter period of time to bill patrons for missing items (three weeks instead of four weeks) as people are still responsible for lost or damaged items. Generally speaking, her feeling is that bad library users are going to be bad library users regardless of fines, but most patrons are good patrons. Eric says fines are a reason for people not to use their library when we're looking to remove those reasons. All three NYC systems have recently gone fine-free. April reports that it's the trend in academic libraries as well.

Directors Council Report Helen Thomas reports that the directors met November 4th. They were reminded about trustee training and minimum standards for hours of operation. They also discussed changes to NYCSA programming and have already started talking about summer reading. Cobleskill's construction project is moving along, they recently received \$1.2 million in funding. Schoharie had Wade come out to do a Head Start promotional video. Schenectady is in the process of preparing for their director's retirement next year.

Privilege of the Floor Katherine reports that she has tentatively scheduled a meeting with the director of the Schoharie Library on January 12th and hopes Susan and April will be able to attend with her. She saw Wade present at the Cobleskill Plan of Service meeting. Cobleskill is also having an issue with a contractor error that might cost a lot of money to pursue in court.

Katherine wishes that MVLS could organize some sort of legal team or financial fund to assist some of our smaller libraries with legal representation. Susan asks if libraries would be willing to contribute to a fund for other libraries, but likes the idea of a list of resources for reasonably-priced and qualified contractors. Eric says that strategy – a shared database of best practices, HR, contractors, legal representation, etc – is something we have been looking into. NYLA also has funds that can help libraries with things like disaster aid or legal representation.

Treasurer’s Report Eric presented the statements of Financial Position and Payment Schedule for October 2021.

Statements of Financial Position:

MOTION: To accept for audit the Statements of Financial Position for October 2021.
Salluzzo/Witkowski. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Payment Schedules:

MOTION: To approve Payment Schedule #10 for \$228,086.94.
London/Thomas. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

AUDIT AND FINANCE Nothing to report.

AWARDS We will discuss awards dates at the January meeting.

BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT Nothing to report.

COMMUNICATIONS Nothing to report.

LIBRARY SERVICES Nothing to report.

NOMINATING We still have vacancies in Fulton and Schenectady Counties.

PERSONNEL Met November 15th about 2022 Salary & Benefits package. We’ll discuss this more in Executive Session.

JOINT AUTOMATION COUNCIL Eric reports that JA has been talking about cybersecurity and making inquiries on getting cyber insurance. It’s not possible for JA to get insurance that covers the individual libraries, so they will each need to evaluate their own systems. JA is working to get coverage through SALS, which will involve cybersecurity training for all the users. JA has also been working on a plan to bring uniformity to telecommunications bills for the libraries, which will likely be libraries paying them on their own. They are working to reduce JA fees to help libraries with this potential new cost.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

REOPENING UPDATE Libraries continue to discuss what to do about programming now that outdoor is less of an option.

PLAN OF SERVICE The MVLS Plan of Service has been accepted by the state.

FOUNDATION UPDATE The Foundation is in the midst of its year-end appeal. There were not as many contributions for the Stay At Home & Read campaign as there were last year. Joanne wonders if sending those out at the same time might make people less likely to donate to both. Eric says the Stay At Home & Read date might change next year.

PLAN OF SERVICE UPDATE – STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES What's next for our plan of service: MVLS staff has continued to meet with Elissa Kane. We're working on a document to send to members on what we heard from them, and what we plan to do about it. We're looking into redoing our Mission Statement, to make it more streamlined and friendly. We're also looking at developing a Vision Statement, which is more of a big-picture, idealistic vision of how we would implement our Mission Statement. Over the next few months, Eric will communicate about the progression on our Mission Statement and we'll discuss it further at the January meeting.

TECHNOLOGY & GROWTH SPECIALIST An altered position description is in the board packets.

MOTION: To approve the new position description.
Hawkins/Mickle. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

NEW BUSINESS

HOLIDAYS 2021 & 2022 This year, Christmas falls on a Saturday. Staff recommended observing the holiday on Thursday the 23rd. In 2022, Juneteenth will be added to our holiday list.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session at 11:03am
Barger/London. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

The Business Meeting resumed at 11:35am.

MOTION: To hire Mary Carrier to fill the position of Technology & Growth Specialist at a salary of \$51,074.
Witkowski/Escobar. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

MOTION: To approve the appointment of Sharon O'Brien to the Assistant Director position (in addition to her current position of Member Services Coordinator) with an added \$3,000 to her current salary; the salary increase to be effective 1/1/2022.
Hawkins/Barger. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

MOTION: To approve a 4% salary increase for all employees January 2022.
London/Barger. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

The following edits to the Personnel Manual were discussed:

1. Add Juneteenth to the official Holiday list in Part I.E.3 on Page 9, changing from 13 to 14 Holidays.
2. Add a Section 11 to Part I.E for Tuition Reimbursements: Employees who pursue work-related higher education from a credentialed provider may request partial tuition reimbursements from MVLS for completed coursework. Reimbursements will be for no more than 50% of paid tuition, capped at \$2,000 per year for each employee. All tuition reimbursement requests must be approved by the Board of Trustees. Employees who leave employment at MVLS within one year of receiving a tuition reimbursement must return that reimbursement to MVLS.
3. Alter the Travel Reimbursements section Part I.1.2.C to read: With the approval of the Director, employees may be reimbursed for the use of personal vehicles for work-related travel at the current IRS rate for use of automobile for medical care (16 cents/mile in 2021).

MOTION: To approve the above edits to the Personnel Manual
Hawkins/Thomas. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 11:41am.
Witkowski/London. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Next Board Meeting:

Thursday, January 20, 2022

MVLS Service Center