

Mohawk Valley Library System

Director's Report

March, 2022

Administration & Governance

Information on the state budget started dribbling out on April 8th. We appear to be in the familiar territory of having to say “thank you” for giving libraries just enough to keep us from revolting. Construction aid was held steady at \$34 million; and library operating aid was increased by \$5.5 million to \$99.6 – a 5.8% increase. This is all OK; but it is not great. The final numbers were below both the Assembly and Senate proposals; and next year I will still be able to use my line about library operating aid being lower than the amount set in Education Law in 2011, and lower than what was actually received in 2007. I was hoping to have to come up with a new one. All the same, a 5-6% increase to our state aid lines will be quite useful.

Thank you to the Awards Committee for the work on the soon-to-be three MVLS awards. We are all set to begin publicizing the awards soon.

We have a buyer for the 2007 Honda Odyssey van. We can discuss the details at the April board meeting. I am happy to say that we have an offer that is in the price range discussed at the last meeting. I will be recommending that you accept this offer and that we go ahead with the sale.

We have a couple of additional tasks to perform to complete the change to trustee terms and meeting schedules. Under the previous calendar, the reorganizational meeting was in June. Two things ordinarily done at that meeting need official updating to get us through to the new year-end in December. First, we extended all trustee terms through December, but we never officially extended officer terms. That is particularly pertinent to our employee Treasurer.

Second, we need to officially set is the meeting schedule for July - December 2022. Our only remaining scheduled meeting is June 16, 2022. I propose we set meetings in July, September, and November 2022, and in January 2023. Of course, our annual meeting will be in late September or early October.

On the subject of the meeting schedule, but not something that we need to address right away, I would like to propose that we consider altering the overall board meeting schedule from the current monthly except for the somewhat random February, May, August and December; to a bimonthly schedule for regular board meetings (January, March, May, July, September and November) with the annual meeting in October and an annual board retreat in April. Here are a few thoughts on each of those.

The annual meeting does include some official business - election of MVLS trustees, Foundation trustees and the presentation of awards - but the more intangible benefit of the annual meeting is that it provides the best known way for MVLS to interact with member library trustees, How can we best use that opportunity for trustee training and networking? That is the question we need to consider as we plan for the first “new” MVLS annual meeting this coming October.

A proposed annual board retreat, while advantageous for MVLS, also offers opportunities for modeling effective board development for member libraries. It is a way to further the MVLS strategic plan while at the same time providing inspiration for our member library trustees.

The MVLS state annual report is complete, and is ready for your review. Your acknowledgement of a review of the report is on the agenda for the April board meeting. The report will be included with the meeting materials on the website.

Automation and Resource Sharing

The next meeting of the JA Council is scheduled for May 11. JA staff and the trainers have been working to implement the required change to our hosted service with Innovative Interfaces, the producer of the Polaris library software. There have been several extensions to the schedule, which is a testament to the thorough testing and analysis done by the JA staff. The update is now scheduled for April 26.

The JA staff has another retirement. Mary Hanley, who has been the face of on-site JA technical support for many years, is retiring in April. Determining how to replace Mary is a catalyst for implementing a JA planning process. We need to engage libraries in a detailed look at how JA can better provide the service that libraries need so we know what staff positions, and what contracted special projects, to focus on as we deal with changes in the JA staff.

We have had brief discussions on changes to Central Library funding at the past couple of meetings. Here are more details. Since the beginning of state central library funding, there have been two funding streams: Central Book Aid (CBA) and Central Library Development Aid (CLDA). In MVLS, the tradition has been for CBA to be held by the system and for CLDA to be granted to SCPL, our central library. Now that aid is all in one stream, MVLS would like to move toward having all of that aid held and spent by MVLS. Why? Two reasons. First, we know we can use the funding in ways that provide more benefits to library patrons in all libraries, including Schenectady. Second, this funding was never meant to be just another funding stream for the SCPL budget; but that is what it has become. Since the county has no understanding of what it means to serve as the system's central library, to them it is just free money. But giving the county free money just eases their responsibility for providing adequate funding for library services. For these two reasons, everyone will be better served if MVLS uses the central library funding to provide resources and services, rather than providing free money to Schenectady County.

Outreach, Adult and Youth Services

Heather and I are traveling to the Hale Creek Correctional Facility on April 19 to review the service agreement. One update to the agreement is that the facility librarian has the ability to select and order materials through Baker & Taylor. We've funded a prepaid account that the librarian can use to order at will. The library can get the titles they want in a quicker, more streamlined way. The corrections funds can also be used to purchase supplies and materials; we've purchased book ends for the facility library and a new barcode scanner. Ordering for Fulton and Montgomery County jails will begin late April; with the same timeframe for the Schenectady County jail. Heather has contacted Sheriff Stevens of Schoharie County to try to get things going there.

After a long hiatus, Heather is reactivating the Outreach Advisory Council. New members have been identified. One area of interest is serving older adults in care facilities; another is serving teens.

MVLS is again offering Mini Grants for summer reading. Applications close on 4/15. As of this writing, 13 locations have applied.

YS Meetups this month were unique. Sarah Carbone, from the Amsterdam Free Library, made a presentation about the fantastic library scavenger hunt/swap program they've organized. Amsterdam

invited other libraries to participate in the event and promote inter-system visiting and collaboration. So far, there are six other libraries participating in the program, and the numbers are growing.

Heather and Mary have planned an MVLS Playdate on May 4. System library staff are invited to MVLS for hands-on STEM and Start with Science Kit exploration. We'll unveil some of our newly updated kits and the materials that go with them, like our STEM conversation starter cards. MVLS will also host a special YS Meetup with special guest Joyce Laiosa, who will share some of her favorite book recommendations and suggestions for using them in library programs.

Mary Carrier was a YSS Spring Conference presenter, giving a one-hour presentation titled Spark Creativity with Google's Applied Digital Skills - over 190 lessons for school age to adults using Google Suite – Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Drawings.

Jennie Mosher from Schoharie has handed off administration of the Tech Savvy program to Mary Carrier. Mary will teach 2 classes this month - Are You Ready to Cut the Cable Cord? - 4/12 and Understanding Dropbox & Cloud Storage – 4/25.

Both Heather and Mary continue to spend time in direct contact with member library staff, including in-person and virtual contacts.

Member Services

MVLS has a new communications vehicle – a newsletter that will be distributed to all member library staff contacts and member library trustees. The first issue is on the MVLS website at: <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/MVLS-Newsletter-2022-Issue-1-Higher-Quality.pdf> One new initiative introduced in the newsletter is the Library Superstars awards. Do you know a library staff member that does a great job? Nominate them to receive Library Superstar recognition!

The May 4 playdate and May 23 program with Joyce Laiosa mark the beginning of reinvigorated continuing education for member libraries. The plan is to have regular virtual and in-person gatherings to share resources and information in a format that encourages networking and collaboration.

It is Annual Report season for member libraries as well as for MVLS. As of today, all libraries except Schenectady have filed their annual reports.

Much effort over the last month has gone into assisting the Schenectady library with the implementation of fine-free borrowing and the closing and reopening of branches for construction. The Polaris system makes things mostly seamless for libraries; but these kinds of changes require a lot of implementation by JA staff and Sharon O'Brien.

Senator Sean Ryan, chair of the Senate Library Committee, developed a program to honor an Outstanding Librarian in each of the state's ten economic development regions. After hearing that they wanted more nominations in the Capital District and Mohawk Valley regions, I nominated two of our librarians. I am happy to announce that Karen Bradley was selected as the Outstanding Librarian of the Capital region.

Trustee training continues: in the last month I have met with trustees from Sharon Springs and Northville.

Advocacy & Awareness

Thank you to all who contributed to the advocacy effort. Although we don't get everything we wish for, state representatives are always very complimentary of the library advocacy effort.

Several libraries are interested in working with Wade and MVLS on community engagement projects. Gloversville and Schoharie are getting ready to begin planning efforts, and several other libraries have expressed interest.

The CDLC ARPA grant project is finally getting underway. There are two aspects to the project. One provides assistance with library websites, and the other is a marketing project designed to boost public knowledge of digital resources available in public libraries. Mary and Sharon are working with the website design part of the project.

Library Giving Day was April 6. The Foundation's effort was similar to our initial participation last year. I will give an update at the board meeting. The Foundation has fundraising golf tournaments scheduled for July 25 in Canajoharie and for September 26 at the VanPatten Golf Club.

Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

3/1/2022	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/2/2022	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library MVLS Awards Committee Robert Smullen, New York State Assembly Phil Steck, New York State Assembly Chris Tague, New York State Assembly Mary Beth Walsh, New York State Assembly Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/3/2022	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library MVLS Board of Trustees MVLS Member Library Directors Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library
3/4/2022	Carol Ann Desch, Division of Library Development MVLS Member Library Directors
3/7/2022	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Capital District Library Council
3/8/2022	Paul O'Brien Capital District Library Council Frank Reese, Division of Library Development Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library PULISDO Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/9/2022	Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council Division of Library Development, NYSED

	Foundation Event Committee
	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
	Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
	Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
3/10/2022	Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library
	MVLS Awards Committee
3/11/2022	Foundation Event Committee
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/14/2022	Carol Ann Desch, Division of Library Development
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/15/2022	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library
3/16/2022	Foundation Event Committee
	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
	JA Council
	MVLS Awards Committee
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Jennie Mosher, Schoharie Free Library
3/17/2022	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
3/18/2022	Capital District Library Council
	Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council
	Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
	Linda Conroy, Gloversville Public Library
	Matthew Ossenfort, Montgomery County Executive
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/21/2022	Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/22/2022	Deb Escobar
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Terry Pavoldi, Middleburgh Public Library
3/23/2022	Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library
3/24/2022	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
3/25/2022	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library

3/28/2022 Don LaPlant, The Community Library
Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
Deb Escobar
Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library
Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library
Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System

3/29/2022 Deb Escobar
Capital District Library Council
Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library

3/30/2022 MVLS Staff

3/31/2022 Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library