

Mohawk Valley Library System

Director's Report

January - February, 2022

Administration & Governance

A more detailed advocacy report is included below, but from a budgeting standpoint, things look good for a more than token increase in state aid for libraries. It is the best opportunity we have had in years for a substantial increase to the MVLS budget.

And we have ways to use a bigger budget. It is great to have MVLS fully staffed with motivated, knowledgeable and effective library champions. We will, on staff, have an eventful non-event about the time of the March board meeting. Joe Sherry is retiring; but we will immediately re-hire him and he will continue serving as the MVLS Financial Manager. We marked the occasion with a new business office computer and updated QuickBooks software.

At the March board meeting we will be welcoming Mary VanPatten as a new MVLS trustee representing Schenectady County.

The Awards Committee meets on March 10. We are editing the existing awards guidelines and application forms; and developing documents for the new Outstanding Library Staff award. The edits are an attempt to keep the awards consistent, set all award amounts at \$500, clarify the application process, and encourage more participation.

We have had a couple of instances of meltwater flowing into the garage where the delivery sorting takes place. This has happened before, and is partly just a fact of the way our building sits on the site of this bog that we own. We dealt with it with sandbags and sweat: thanks to Heather and Kate who jumped right in to help minimize that surprise. We will look into some re-grading, curbs, and a change to the way snow is plowed to try to prevent a recurrence next spring.

The changes that we made to the mileage reimbursement last November need one more tweak. We would like to add one more subsection "d" to part I.2. Travel Allowance, page 19, as follows:

- d. mileage for trips to member libraries during business hours or to other regular destinations will be paid based on either the standard mileage from MVLS to those locations, or the miles actually driven, whichever is less. Other trips will be based on actual miles driven.

The Personnel Manual can be found online at: <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Personnel-Manual-Official-November-2021.pdf>

The "planning" part of the planning process is over. The documents approved at the January meeting have been sent to MVLS stakeholders and have been added to our website. The few comments received back were all positive: I think our mission, vision and goals do a good job of capturing what MVLS is and will strive to be in the next five years.

Automation and Resource Sharing

The E-card system is finally live! This allows people to sign up for a library card online. To keep the card active, they must visit a library to complete the registration within 90 days. This truly brings our libraries

into the 21st century. Sharon O'Brien and the JA staff did a tremendous amount to work to make this happen.

The JA Council meets on March 16. JA is now working on implementing a change to our hosted service. New initiatives include an emphasis on security training, hiring a consultant to help the systems and libraries make better use of Office 365, and possibly beginning a planning process to chart a future for JA services in MVLS and SALS.

As was briefly covered at our last meeting, the recent state change to the way central library funding is allocated has us looking for ways to use that funding in ways that will bring more benefits to all of our libraries, including Schenectady. There will be more details in coming months.

Outreach, Adult and Youth Services

Much effort is going into getting library services restarted at the Hale Creek Correctional Facility. They have a new librarian and a new deputy superintendent for programs. The next steps are a new annual service agreement and visiting the library.

Thanks to Katherine Hawkins for providing information about the new Schoharie County Jail. MVLS will send the Sheriff's office a formal letter to request a meeting to discuss library services. The Community Library has also expressed an interest in supporting library services at the jail.

Heather was successful in getting MVLS selected to receive an [Inclusive Financial Education Programming Kit](#) from ALA and the FINRA Foundation. We look forward to books and materials arriving later this month, and sharing them with our member libraries for financial literacy programs for families and youth.

We are in "Planning for Summer Reading" Season. The first ever state-wide pilot Children's Summer Reading workshop on 2/16 had 265 attendees; the workshop recording has had over 130 views. The Teen workshop will be held on 3/10; so far 256 library staff have registered. MVLS was well represented at the children's workshop and registration for teen workshop indicates the same, with 13 of our 14 libraries having registered. Evaluations of the Children's workshop were overall positive.

MVLS will once again offer mini-grants to member libraries to support their summer programs. In 2021, libraries used these funds to purchase materials for take & make crafts, host kick off/end of summer parties, and pay for outside performers/presenters.

Mary and Heather are working together to revamp the Start with Science and STEM Kits in an effort to boost circulation and use. Libraries are increasing their in person programs, so it's a great time to remind members of the great materials we have for them to use.

MVLS hosted two librarians new to the Youth Services Staff at SCPL for a tour. The YS Meetups this month were themed around sharing favorite performers and presenters.

Member Services

All MVLS staff have returned to making regular library visits, and it feels good. I myself have been to six libraries since our last board meeting – two of them twice – and I don't even win the sweepstakes. Mary Carrier is leading the way with "getting to know you" visits to libraries. Libraries are identifying a need for assistance with websites and communications technologies like Mail Chimp and Canva.

The requested website assistance fits in well with the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funding that is being administered by CDLC. The technology part of this project includes training for public library staff on website accessibility; as well as the development of website templates that will help libraries build accessible and user-friendly websites.

Heather has handed the Tech Savvy programs over to Mary. We now have seven member libraries cooperating in providing these valuable programs to their communities. Mary's expertise will help add new subjects and audiences for these system-funded collaborative library programs.

I have conducted trustee training in Schenectady and Fonda and am scheduled for Northville in April. I continue to work with Fonda on governance and building issues, and St. Johnsville and Sharon Springs with governance and funding.

More and more MVLS libraries are jumping on the fine-free bandwagon. I am hopeful that we will be able to make a truly remarkable announcement at the March board meeting. Going fine-free has been a positive experience for all of our libraries; and it has been an efficient way to improve people's access to library services and to improve library customer service.

As mentioned earlier in this report, our planning process now moves into implementation. The success of MVLS' advocacy for fine free libraries provides a model for inspiring and achieving other positive change in our member libraries. Our new earworm will be that MVLS serves communities by empowering libraries to be cherished community anchors with secure futures. We continue to explore ways to do that. Here are a few initiatives that you will see more of in the coming months.

- Frequent communications to library directors, staff and boards that highlight actions and attitudes that foster secure futures
- Regular and ubiquitous recognition of member library initiatives that support secure futures, celebrating both sound, transparent governance and community engagement
- Encouraging and providing opportunities for libraries to share their successes and to learn from the experiences of the wider community of member libraries
- Solid focus on the four MVLS strategic goals: vision for secure futures, resources for serving all, collaboration for improving library services, and communications to tell the library story.

Advocacy & Awareness

MVLS facilitated state advocacy was well received in late February and early March. Wade coordinated virtual meetings with many state representatives, with 21 total MVLS personalities participating, including library directors and trustees, MVLS staff and MVLS trustees. While we look forward to in-person advocacy, the virtual option has significantly improved participation. We have also continued to have good cooperation with other regional library systems and councils. We continue to be very fortunate that our state representatives are all vocally supportive of library funding and issues. It has been many years since we have had any difficult discussions with our representatives.

One related issue that we will be watching over the next few months is the consequences of redistricting on our representation. Some libraries will see significant change in both state and federal representation. The good-news part of these changes is that MVLS has existing good relationships with all incumbents who are likely to remain representatives for MVLS libraries. In other words, while some libraries will have significant changes, MVLS as a whole will not be dealing with anybody new.

A second aspect of the ARPA project will allow for regional major advertising about libraries, similar to what we did through the census project. I'll fill you in on the details as they develop.

The Foundation is once again participating in Library Giving Day, a national library fundraising initiative that coincides with National Library Week. We will be placing flyers and bookmarks/contribution forms in all libraries, and posting on social media. More information is on the Foundation website at: <https://mvlslibraryfoundation.wordpress.com/library-giving-day-april/>

Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

1/3/2022	MVLS Member Library Directors
1/4/2022	Jeanne M. Irwin MVLS Staff Meeting Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
1/5/2022	Deb Escobar Cheryl Cufari Elissa Kane, Kane & Lekakis MVLS Member Library Board Presidents MVLS Member Library Directors Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
1/6/2022	Particia Clancy MVLS Member Library Directors Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
1/7/2022	Deb Escobar Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Robert Schofield, Whiteman, Osterman & Hanna, LLP
1/10/2022	MVLS Member Library Directors Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Robert Schofield, Whiteman, Osterman & Hanna, LLP
1/11/2022	Nicole Hauser, Gloversville Public Library PULISDO
1/12/2022	Mary VanPatten Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library JA Council Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Glenn Winter, T.M. Byxbee, CPA, PC
1/13/2022	Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library Nicole Hauser, Gloversville Public Library MVLS Trustee Education Session - Schenectady
1/14/2022	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
1/18/2022	Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
1/19/2022	Jeanne M. Irwin MVLS Member Library Directors MVLS Staff Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library

1/20/2022	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library MVLS Board of Trustees Meeting
1/21/2022	Capital District Library Council
1/24/2022	Mary VanPatten Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
1/25/2022	Josh Blum Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library MVLS Trustee Education Session - Fonda
1/26/2022	Beverly Osborne Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Capital District Library Council Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library
1/27/2022	Division of Library Development, NYSED Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
1/28/2022	Capital District Library Council HFM School Library System Council
1/31/2022	Joanne Mickle Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library
2/1/2022	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library MVLS Member Library Directors
2/2/2022	Division of Library Development, NYSED Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
2/3/2022	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Frank Reese, Division of Library Development Division of Library Development, NYSED Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library Scotia branch grand opening Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
2/7/2022	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library
2/8/2022	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library MVLS Member Library Directors

PULISDO

2/9/2022 Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
Beverly Osborne
Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
Division of Library Development, NYSED
Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library
Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library

2/10/2022 Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library

2/11/2022 Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
Foundation Board
MVLS Member Library Directors
Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library

2/14/2022 Deb Escobar
Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library

2/15/2022 Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library

2/16/2022 Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
MVLS Member Library Board Presidents
MVLS Member Library Directors
Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library

2/17/2022 Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
MVLS Staff Meeting
MVLS Trustee Education Session

2/18/2022 Capital District Library Council
Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library

2/22/2022 Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
Peter Oberacker, New York State Senate
Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library

2/23/2022 Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
Kristi Beedon, HFM BOCES SLS
Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System

2/24/2022 Michelle Hinchey, New York State Senate
Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library

2/28/2022 Scotia Bullet Aid Presentation
Mary Beth Walsh, New York State Assembly
Beth DeMidio, Schenectady County Public Library
Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library