

Mohawk Valley Library System
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 15, 2022

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rosemary Barger, Jane Borrelli, April Davies, Deb Escobar (virtual), Katherine Hawkins, Susan London, Joanne Mickle, Rebecca Sokol, Mary VanPatten, Christine Witkowski, Kim Zimmer, and Eric Trahan, Director.

EXCUSED: Mary Salluzzo

GUESTS: Wade Abbott, Mary Carrier, Sharon O'Brien, Kate Clingan

Call to Order President Jane Borrelli called the meeting to order at 9:31am.

MOTION: To appoint Kim Zimmer to the Directors Council seat on the MVLS Board, a term ending Dec 31, 2025.
Davies/Hawkins. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Consideration of Minutes: The minutes from the July 21, 2022 meeting were distributed.

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

The **Director's Report** for July and August was distributed before the meeting. Eric wanted to update the Board on where MVLS stands with the goals that were set during our plan of service process:

1. Empower Libraries with the Vision & Knowledge for Secure Futures – The Amsterdam Free Library is in the midst of a building project. MVLS has been working with them on the community outreach aspects surrounding that, notably their future budgets and how they can finance this new facility. Eric also attended the Cobleskill board meeting last week, where they discussed their expansion project.
2. Empower Libraries with the Skills, Tools, and Resources for Serving All – As mentioned in previous meetings, CDLC is working to develop library web pages using ARPA funds. Many of our libraries need help with this, especially with the new minimum standards. This project will help libraries with their overall web presence, with an emphasis on websites being accessible to folks with disabilities. The new websites will start to be rolled out in the next few months.
3. Empower Libraries with Collaboration for Outstanding Library Services – The Frothingham Free Library in Fonda has recognized that they need to make a leap forward in their library to catch up to other communities. Next week, Eric is taking some

of their trustees on a field trip to Schoharie and Middleburgh so that they can get a sense of how other similar libraries serve their communities. We are hoping that this is just the beginning of this kind of interaction between library staffs and boards.

4. Empower Libraries with Inspiration & Methods for Telling the Library Story – Wade is currently helping the Schoharie Free Library run community conversations. We are happy that they are looking forward, and recognizing that they need to build their community relationships.

Susan was curious about the new strategy with the Schoharie County Jail to provide magazine subscriptions. Eric notes that magazine subscriptions are popular among the correctional facilities because it helps cut down on choices they have to make (they just have to choose once a year and new material comes monthly). Discussion ensued about how disappointing it is that the officials at the jail have been reluctant to communicate with MVLS.

Rosemary asks about the fraud with the JA account. Joe discovered it while doing the monthly bank reconciliations; one of our checks to a vendor had been altered. We've since found out that a postal facility near the vendor has an issue with checks being stolen and altered.

Staff Update Mary Carrier attended the meeting to update the board. She's happy to report that MVLS has been awarded a \$7000 grant for Digital Literacy training. She'll be using the funds to stock a mobile computer lab and then she'll be going out to libraries to teach basic digital literacy skills to patrons. Chris asked about whether these classes will be replacing classes that Schenectady already offers. Mary says this will be in addition to their classes; this is a different curriculum.

Mary has also been working on the new websites that were funded with the ARPA funds, and she's excited about how close we are to being able to implement these. Susan asks if this will end with all of the websites looking the same - Mary says it's more of a template, to allow for ease of use and to ensure that the websites are all accessible. The goal is to still allow each website to be customized and individual.

Mary VanPatten asks about helping patrons learn how to use digital libraries. Mary Carrier agrees that some of our libraries are better at this than others. That will be a good next step for us. Sharon also thinks there needs to be an emphasis on staff training with regards to e-resources, which will be a focus of the new websites.

Privilege of the Floor Deb Escobar wanted to take the moment to let the Board know that she has to resign from the Board due to personal reasons. The Schenectady board of trustees has put forth a name for her replacement.

Joanne wanted to share that Maria at the Canajoharie Library has started a Tuesday morning program for seniors to come in and get help with technology questions/issues.

Chris wanted to let the board know that the Schenectady Book Sale is October 1st and 2nd.

Director's Council Report Kim has been reaching out to the Directors to get information on where they could use more assistance from MVLS. Most would like regular Directors Council meetings to start back up in some fashion. They're also interested in doing more staff training

on resources that MVLS has available, such as databases or Libby.

Susan noticed on the MVLS website that there is an upcoming webinar on October 20th about de-escalation for library staff that she thought might be helpful.

Treasurer's Report Eric presented the Statements of Financial Position and Payment Schedules for July and August 2022.

Statements of Financial Position:

MOTION: To accept for audit the Statements of Financial Position for July and August 2022.

Davies/London. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Payment Schedules: Rosemary asked about the fuel surcharge on Arnoff invoices. Eric says that's contractual, a percentage based on the average cost of fuel. Kim asked about the renegotiation of the contract. There's not much Eric can say since those negotiations are still ongoing, although it does look like we will be changing up our delivery route.

MOTION: To approve Payment Schedules #7 for \$105,560.97 and #8 for \$210,125.01 Barger/Witkowski. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

AUDIT AND FINANCE Nothing to report.

AWARDS Applications have been received for the 3 MVLS Awards. There are 3 nominees for the Library Recognition Award, 2 nominees for the Wusterbarth Award, and 1 nominee for the Library Staff Award. The Awards Committee will come up with a time to meet to go through them together.

BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT Projects Update – We've got new MVLS signs on the building, and the work on the back wall has been completed. Katherine took a look at the back wall, and thinks it is mostly done well although there is one spot on the corner that she thinks needs caulking. She also had some concerns about exposed roots from some of the trees on the property. She'd also encourage the planting of more trees on the property. Speaking of trees, Rosemary had reached out to the Town about the dead tree, but they said that since it's completely contained on the Pilot station's property, there's not much they can do about it.

COMMUNICATIONS Katherine met with Lisa at the Literacy Council to set up a line of communication between Lisa, Heather, and the Schoharie County library directors. She wonders if perhaps Wade could be involved with this as well.

LIBRARY SERVICES/ CONSTRUCTION APPLICATIONS There was a meeting September 12 to discuss the applications for Construction grants -MVLS had \$885,064 to disperse. Amsterdam applied for \$698,646 to address windows, accessibility, and fire safety. Gloversville applied for \$181,140 to expand parking and create an outdoor programming space.

Schenectady applied for \$81,469 for a roof replacement and sidewalk work for the Glenville branch.

Altogether, this totaled \$961,255. In order to fund all of these worthy projects within the budget that MVLS had available, Eric proposed a 6% reduction in each project, awarding Amsterdam with \$643,270, Gloversville with \$166,782, and Glenville with \$75,012.

MOTION: To accept the Committee's recommendation for these reductions and approve the Construction Grants for \$885,064 Witkowski/London. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

NOMINATING The Nominating Committee is made up of Chris and Deb. With Deb resigning, we'll need another member as well as to set up a meeting. Becky has volunteered to replace Deb on the committee. The committee will need to focus on electing new trustees at the annual meeting. Two of our trustees (Jane and Katherine) have terms expiring at the end of the year. Katherine is eligible for another term, Jane is not. Northville is working to find a new trustee to replace Jane. Katherine is interested in serving another term. The Nominating Committee will also need to come up with a slate of officers, that election will happen at the November board meeting.

PERSONNEL A meeting needs to be set to discuss the 2023 Salary and Benefits package. This is another committee that Deb was on, so we'll need someone to replace her here, as well. Joanne has volunteered to replace Deb on the committee.

JOINT AUTOMATION COUNCIL There was not a meeting on September 14th because they didn't have a quorum. The JA Council still needs approval of the JA 2023 budget, which is in the board packets.

MOTION: To approve the 2023 JA Budget.
Mickle/Barger. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

FOUNDATION UPDATE The Foundation has a golf tournament coming up on the 26th, and they are getting ready for their year-end appeal as well as the Stay at Home & Read initiative.

OPEN MEETINGS LAW UPDATE We are required to have in-person meetings. Individual trustees in excess of a quorum have the ability to do the meeting remotely if they have a reason for being unable to attend in-person. Meetings must also be recorded and available to be viewed by the public.

ANNUAL MEETING The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Thursday October 27th at 6pm, in the McChesney Room at SCPL. Chris comments that this conflicts with a Schenectady Board of Trustees meeting, which is a problem that Eric is going to address. We'd like to have a meeting of the Annual Meeting planning committee on Thursday the 22nd at 3:30pm.

NEW BUSINESS

DREAM & DO GRANTS The Foundation received 9 applications at \$500 each for a total of \$4500

MOTION: To approve the Dream & Do Grants for a total of \$4500
Hawkins/Mickle. Ayes – 10. Nays – None. Abstentions – 1 (Zimmer).

BY-LAWS & POLICY UPDATE The new library minimum standards require regular updates to library policies. Eric had some suggestions for updates to our by-laws. He'd like to update the Purpose (Article II) to reflect our new Mission/Vision Statements. Under Officers (Article IV), our Treasurer is an employee now, so we should make that change, as well as alter the Treasurer's duties (Article V, Section 3) to reference the job description. Under Committees (Article VII), the Executive Committee is very much spelled out in Article VII, Section 1, which the board should adjust. Eric suggests replacing the Treasurer as a member of the Executive Committee with the auditor. It also specifies that the immediate past president be a member of the committee, but most recently our past presidents have left the board after their term was up, so Eric wondered if we should change that language. In Article VII, Section 2, the committees are listed. Eric suggests that we no longer have a list of these committees in the bylaws but instead have the by-laws reference where the list can be found. He will be proposing official amendments to the by-laws at the November meeting.

ADJOURNMENT With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25am.

Next Regular Board Meeting:
Thursday, November 17, 2022
MVLS Service Center