

Mohawk Valley Library System  
Board of Trustees  
March 18, 2021

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Rosemary Barger, Jane Borrelli, Deb Escobar, Katherine Hawkins, Joanne Mickle, Mary Salluzzo, Rebecca Sokol, Eleanor Spencer, Felicia Spivey, Helen Thomas, Christine Witkowski, and Eric Trahan, Director

**EXCUSED:**

**GUESTS:** Kim Zimmer (COB), Kate Clingan

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

**Consideration of Minutes:** Katherine Hawkins noticed a typo in the January minutes – in the “Privilege of the Floor” Section, the word “owed” should be changed to “owned.”

**MOTION:** To accept the minutes from January 21, 2021 with this correction  
Mary Salluzzo motioned, Eleanor Spencer seconded. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

**Director’s Report** for January and February was distributed before the meeting. Eric reported:

- The financial situation is more optimistic than it has been for the last few months.
- Canajoharie has new Librarian, Maria Cancro.
- Schoharie has amended their charter to update their service area to the Schoharie Central School District. Eric will attend their board meeting next month to provide trustee training.

**Directors Council Report** Helen Thomas reported:

- Mandatory book quarantine has dropped from 96 hours to 48 hours.
- Advocacy – The New York State annual report is due Friday March 19<sup>th</sup>. There are new minimum standards, most notably getting information uploaded to the internet.
- During the Members roundtable, Schenectady noted they are starting to get back to normal operations, as well as helping seniors register to get vaccines.

**Privilege of the Floor** Christine Witkowski says that Schenectady is planning to hold their book sale this summer. It will likely be an outdoor event although there may be an opportunity for an indoor, socially-distanced portion. Chris also reports that Schenectady’s efforts to help patrons make COVID-19 vaccine appointments have been very successful. They were able to make a lot of appointments for patrons, as well as helping others get on the county waitlists.

**TREASURER REPORT**

Eric Trahan presented the statements of Financial Position and Payment Schedule for January 2021 and February 2021. MVLS has started receiving the withheld 2020 state aid and should continue receiving more over the next month or so. The 2021 budget will have to be amended because MVLS is receiving

this aid from 2020. Eric noted that there are payments on the schedule for virtual adult literacy programs in Schoharie County.

**Statements of Financial Position:**

**MOTION:** To accept for audit the Statements of Financial Position for January and February 2021. Hawkins/Thomas. Ayes - All. Nays - None.

**Payment Schedules:**

**MOTION:** To approve Payment Schedule #1 for January in the amount of \$123,538.59 and Payment Schedule #2 for February in the amount of \$103,512.38.

Witkowski/Spencer. Ayes - All. Nays – None.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**AUDIT AND FINANCE** Nothing shared

**AWARDS** Information about the Library Recognition Award and the Harold & Junice Wusterbarth Volunteer Service Award has been posted on the MVLS website and sent out to libraries. No applications have been received yet. Applications will be sent to the Awards Committee on April 1, 2021.

**BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT** Nothing shared

**COMMUNICATIONS** Nothing shared

**LIBRARY SERVICES** Nothing shared

**NOMINATING** – Rosemary Barger reports that Mary Salluzzo (Fulton County) and Rebecca Sokol (Montgomery County) are happy to remain on the board. Eleanor Spencer thinks it's time for someone else to take her place. This means that the board is currently in need of two people from Schoharie County. Discussion ensued about how to find volunteers for these positions. Eric is going to Schoharie next month, so will try to encourage people while there. Other board members and MVLS staff might be able to come up with names as well. The board is also in need of a member from Fulton County.

**PERSONNEL** Nothing shared

**JOINT AUTOMATION COUNCIL**

- There was a JAC meeting on March 10. Eric presented the Library Agreement between the Joint Automation Project and member libraries. Every year each library is asked to reaffirm this agreement, to acknowledge the terms of their participation and JA's policies. The agreement was distributed prior to the meeting, with highlighted sections where slight changes were made. Katherine noted the section that says "we will achieve excellence" and would like to alter it to "we will strive for excellence."

**MOTION** to accept the Library Agreement with this change  
Mickle/Spivey. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

- Eric says that the ability to sign up for a library card using the online catalog is almost here. When signing up online, patrons will start off with limited privileges (e-resources); in order to

get full library privileges, they will still need to go to the library to show ID and proof of residence. The idea behind this new sign-up is to promote going to the library for people who otherwise might not.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**FOUNDATION UPDATE** Eric says the Foundation is running a new initiative called Library Giving Day. Library Giving Day was started by the Seattle Public Library Foundation as a national day of giving for libraries. It is held on the Wednesday of National Library Week, which this year makes it April 7th. The Foundation will be posting on Facebook, sending out mailers to past donors, and sending info out to member libraries in order to encourage donations in celebration of Library Giving Day. Other Foundation fundraising events are coming up later in the year. Currently there are two golf tournaments on the schedule: one in Canajoharie on July 26<sup>th</sup> and one at the Mohawk Golf Club on September 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **ADVOCACY DAY REPORT**

- Advocacy Day looked very different this year. The virtual format allowed us to spend more time with the representatives and to have much more detailed/local discussions. Meetings with representatives took place on various days during the week surrounding Advocacy Day, as opposed to all on the same day. This allowed participants to opt out of some meetings while still being involved in Advocacy Day. Wade Abbott worked hard to target each session to the specific representative and feature that representative's constituents.
- We also had much more participation from member libraries and their boards than we usually do. Next year, while we should hopefully be able to do in-person lobbying, we'd also like to keep doing these virtual meetings to increase accessibility for people who might not be able to go to Albany in person.
- We've been able to see positive results from Advocacy Day already. Both the Senate and the Assembly have produced budgets with library aid at a level we are happy with. The Senate keeps aid at the amount it was at in 2020, and the Assembly has the amount at what it was in 2019. Every expectation is that the aid will be much higher than what we planned on in our budgets. Keep an eye out for more advocacy alerts as we get closer to the budget being confirmed.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **REOPENING STATUS**

- The current trend is for libraries to be adding more services. We still have a few member libraries only doing curbside pickup, but we are moving towards being more open. Schenectady will be opening for in-person service on Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- We expect to continue to see a lot of virtual programming through this summer, although we do have a few libraries doing in-person programs, mostly outdoors.
- Library workers are now eligible for vaccines. We should make sure local library workers are aware of this, so that they can make appointments and hopefully be more comfortable interacting with the public as libraries reopen.

**ANNUAL MEETING** MVLS Bylaws require us to hold this year's Annual Meeting before June 1<sup>st</sup>. Discussion ensued about whether it would be possible to hold an in-person meeting this year, perhaps outdoors, but in the interest of safety, a virtual meeting is probably the best option. We will still

announce the award winners this year at the meeting. Eric will look at the calendar, figure out scheduling, and plan a virtual meeting similar to what we had last year.

### **CARES ACT FUNDING**

- The CARES Act, passed in March of 2020, allocated money to state library agencies. We expect to get some funding from this although we don't know when that will materialize. One thing we are looking to do is use some of this money to help member libraries with programming by providing small grants to individual libraries. This would be similar to the Summer Reading Program grants that we did in the past, but discontinued when we lost funding for them a few years ago. CARES Act funding would allow us to reinstate these grants to help member libraries with virtual or outdoor in-person programs.
- The recently-passed American Rescue Plan also includes money for libraries, so we are just waiting to know more about that. There is another piece of legislation working its way through federal systems called the Build American Libraries Act that we feel optimistic about, so many opportunities for various funding streams are coming this way. These provide great opportunities to add to library services.

### **PLAN OF SERVICE/CONSULTANT POSITION**

- Every 5 years we must submit our Plan of Service to the state. The format is dictated by the state, but we can go beyond what they tell us to do. Last time, the Plan of Service became our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Libraries initiative. We'd like to use this current Plan of Service to determine what our new consultant job description will look like, based on what we decide the libraries need.
- Our experience with Advocacy Day has changed over the last 10 years. There used to be reluctance on the part of our representatives to give funding, but we've changed that with targeted, consistent messaging that libraries play an important role within our communities. We know how important local advocacy and community engagement can be for our libraries and we'd like to get all of our member libraries more involved in that.
- We want to work on getting people to see the possibilities. The goal of the Plan of Service is to develop various workshops involving both directors and board members to establish a shared vision of what a successful library looks like. There's also a possibility of bringing patrons into this discussion because when people are invested in their libraries they're more likely to advocate for them.

**Adjournment** With no further business, Jane adjourned the meeting at 10:36am

### **Next Board Meeting:**

Thursday, April 15, 2021

MVLS Service Center