

**Mohawk Valley Library System
Director's Report
March and April, 2023**

Empowering Member Libraries with Sound Administration & Governance

We, unfortunately, have disappointing news on the state budget, which was finally approved in early May. Library funding will be flat in 2023. For construction aid that is moderately good news since, at the \$34 million funding level, MVLS has a reasonable amount to allocate to our member library construction projects. Also, construction aid is as high as it ever was, and much higher than it was 20 years ago. For operating aid to be flat is a huge disappointment; even a betrayal. MVLS has a very healthy fund balance; and, at least for the short term, we will be fine. But New York State's failure to fund libraries, and indeed their failure to fund their own state library agency, is a colossal misstep and failure from our state leaders. Perhaps we need to resort to embarrassment.

But on to good news! On March 27, the Executive Committee confirmed the appointment of Beth Rienti to the open Public Services Consultant position at an annual salary of \$71,500. The board will be asked to affirm a consent agenda motion to that effect at the May board meeting. Beth's first day with us will be Monday, May 22. MVLS will once again have a complete staff of high quality, committed public library champions.

And that dedicated staff is doing great work. One very visible aspect of that is the new MVLS website – still at www.mvls.info. We have had the goal of a new site for many years: our Wordpress theme had been unsupported and unresponsive for a long time. The new site, developed by Mary Carrier with help from Sharon O'Brien and Kate Clingan, is much cleaner, more accessible and easier to use. Check it out for yourself.

MVLS has a new attorney. Kathryn McCary, our long-term retiring attorney, has helped us to develop a relationship with Sarah Gold. Sarah is a one-person office with a life-long interest in libraries. She will be working with us starting in July. By working to train a new person, we will have one more library-aware attorney in the area. We will continue to use library specialists Ellen Bach and Bob Schofield of WOH in Albany; and Stephanie "Cole" Adams, the Ask-A-Lawyer lawyer, on an as-needed basis; but it will be great to have Sarah as our go-to attorney for most matters.

By the time of the May board meeting, our new phone system should be fully functional. There were many technical issues to work out; but our new VoIP system will be less expensive and offer many additional features that will make MVLS staff more accessible to our members.

For the past 11 years I have served on the Capital District Library Council (CDLC) board, serving as Secretary, Vice President and President. As of July 1, I will be term-limited and no longer eligible to serve. State regulations and the CDLC Bylaws require an MVLS representative on the CDLC board. I am recommending that you appoint Charity Thorne to that position. No MVLS staff members are looking for another commitment, and it will be a great networking opportunity for Charity. Both Charity and the CDLC leadership support this appointment.

Mary Carrier continues to make good progress in completing her library degree. In keeping with the MVLS tuition reimbursement policy, I am recommending that the board approve the full annual \$2,000

tuition reimbursement for Mary's coursework. The initial \$1,000 payment is scheduled to be made at the end of May.

Summer Hours – that MVLS closes at 1:00 on Fridays between July 1 and Labor Day – has been a valued MVLS perk for more than 12 years. Per policy, this practice should be annually reviewed and re-approved. It should be a part of the regular approval of salaries and benefits for the year, but was inadvertently left out of this year's discussions. I am recommending that Summer Hours be formally approved for 2023.

Empowering Member Libraries with Automation and Resource Sharing

The JA Council meets on May 10. Security issues remain at the top of the JA agenda. All library staff and volunteers that use email, Onedrive, and/or Polaris have completed two rounds of phishing training and will have mandatory quarterly security training and testing to ensure that the system is protected against hackers. We have already seen marked improvement in the testing results. MVLS and several other locations are now doing multi-factor authentication for accessing accounts. Two additional new security measures will require MVLS board approval.

All entities involved in the library automation system – SALS, MVLS, the JA consortium and the member libraries – face potential liabilities if the integrated library system is hacked. The JA and SALS have approved purchasing Cyber-liability insurance, and it is now MVLS' turn. The two systems and JA have similar policies through the same carrier: Lloyd's of London. MVLS' cost will be \$3,724 annually.

A second JA security initiative is a new User Accounts Policy. This policy sets rules on password protection, security training, account expiration and other aspects of user account security. It has been approved by the JA Council, and now is submitted to the SALS and MVLS boards for approval.

MVLS and SALS libraries have been approving the annual JA User Agreements; we just have one more to collect. The SALS and MVLS Board Presidents annually sign off on these agreements.

The effort to develop new Central Library services continues. We have a general agreement that the services will include additional Overdrive e-resources, additional platforms available through Overdrive, including video and instruction, additional CE opportunities for libraries, and the development of a floating popular materials collections. The plan is to implement these starting in late 2023 through 2024.

Overdrive resource availability has been dramatically increased with sharing agreements implemented by MVLS, SALS, the Upper Hudson Library System and the Mid Hudson Library System. Overdrive users who set up this option will see many more items available for borrowing. Sharon O'Brien is managing this effort, and is keeping statistics to evaluate the initiative.

For the last 8 years, out of area Interlibrary Loan for MVLS libraries has been provided through the Capital District Library Council. Of course, between MVLS and SALS libraries we have seamless, patron-initiated ILL. Within the 10 county CDLC service area, including all academic, public, school, and special libraries, we have robust library mediated service through the CDLC ILL e-form. The out-of-area ILL is for requests that can't be filled from within the CDLC service area. This amounts to fewer than 100 requests per year, but it is an important service for those who use it. CDLC has announced that they will cease

that service starting July 1. We have worked out an alternative arrangement through the Crandall Library in Glens Falls; the SALS Central Library. We will pay \$750 for service from 7/1/2023 – 7/1/2024, annually renewable. We are working to make this change as seamless as possible for our member libraries.

Empowering Member Libraries with Youth, Adult and Outreach Services

Kate Clingan spearheaded the MVLS participation in the regional Greatest of All Time Teen Services meetup, held on April 18 in East Greenbush. She will share information about that in the staff update part of the May meeting.

Libraries are gearing up for the 2023 Summer Reading Program. MVLS is again providing mini-grants to help libraries with summer programming. Funding will come from a combination of Foundation and I Love My Library funding. This year, every library location applied for a grant. Kate did a great job of encouraging libraries to participate.

Kate has also taken on the development of a collaborative aspect of the 2023 Summer Reading Program. Most libraries will be participating in a passport project that will encourage participants to visit multiple library locations.

Mary's Digital Literacy Classes are ongoing in member libraries. To date, there have been 8 successful Digital Literacy programs with a total attendance of 32. Mary also facilitated another MVLS Adult Programming meet-up, to encourage collaboration.

Mary has been helping libraries with technology issues. Fonda experimented with the MVLS hotspots, and elected to implement with a less expensive vendor. Schoharie and Schenectady are interested in coding clubs/classes and Mary is assisting with that. And the Princh wireless printing is now live at Gloversville, and a few other libraries are interested in implementing that. Mary also continues to proactively assist libraries with website issues.

The CDLC Consumer Health project continues to be frustrating. Mary is working to find alternative uses for the Chromebooks that were a part of that project.

Empowering Member Libraries with Training, Consultation and Collaboration

With the new requirement for trustee continuing education, there has been more interest in trustee training. Board training sessions have been held in Fonda and St. Johnsville; in Fonda focused on their dream of a new facility, and in St. Johnsville on the topic of their new director search. More general trustee education sessions are planned in Gloversville and Schenectady. Of course, quite a few member library trustees fulfilled their trustee training requirement at the Spring Symposium.

The MVLS Spring Symposium was a big success, in nearly every way. Gloversville was a gracious and attentive host. Kate did a great job handling the details of promotion, registration, refreshments, etc. Wade was essential for the virtual participants. All other MVLS staff contributed in effective ways. And the MVLS community clearly showed that they are hungry for and appreciative of these kinds of system events. We will discuss more at the board meeting, but my takeaway is that our emphasis on community engagement and secure funding is exactly what our members want. I am sure we can learn to be more effective, but there is no doubt that our focus is in the right place.

Libraries are nearly done with their 2022 state annual reports. Schenectady has made great progress in getting the report submitted in a timely fashion.

Empowering Member Libraries with Advocacy & Awareness

NYLA and other advocacy leaders will be having many discussions digging into the reasons behind the poor results libraries have been getting in advocating for state library operating aid. Here are some hard-hitting statistics. Library operating aid is lower than it was in 2007. That means the funding that public library systems receive from NYS is lower than it was in 2007. In the meantime, everything we pay for costs more than it did in 2007: salaries & benefits, information technology, delivery. In a more recent time horizon, in the last 7 years, since 2016, library operating aid has increased by a total of 4.2%. While many state programs, including education, typically see annual increases of 4%; library systems are supposed to be content with a 4% increase over 7 years. Our libraries who settle for that kind of budget stagnation regularly hear from me about the need for steady annual increases. But MVLS is held to 4% over 7 years.

Obviously, change is needed and MVLS will be participating in the statewide efforts to encourage change. I am considering two, more local, initiatives to try to encourage change. The first is to greatly increase our interactions with state leaders. We need to be in touch with them throughout the year, showing them over and over again how MVLS and the member libraries strengthen communities. The second is to work to increase the cooperation between MVLS, SALS and UHLS in an effort to provide better service to our members in spite of our flat funding.

Meanwhile, MVLS libraries are having successful budget votes! Gloversville successfully increased their tax levy by over 10% at a May 2 vote; and Middleburgh voters approved a 6% increase on May 9. Many other MVLS libraries have votes on May 16. We will review the results at the board meeting. It is great to see more MVLS libraries embracing the winning concept of annual budget votes with planned increases that will provide the resources necessary to keep libraries at the center of their communities.

I will be working with the Library Services committee to develop a new schedule for the public library construction grants. The general plan is to have a series of deadlines in the application process. This should give the committee more time to review the proposals, and will help members plan their projects to make the most efficient use of the funding that is available. We have several libraries with potential projects for 2023.

July 1 is one of the rolling deadlines for Foundation Advocacy Grants. We will be awarding any grants from that round at our July meeting.

The Foundation had a successful Library Giving Day campaign in April, raising \$2,300; right in line with last year. Two golf tournaments are planned: July 24 in Canajoharie, and September 25 in Cobleskill. We are already getting a good response for the Canajoharie tournament. Please support these Foundation fundraisers in any way you can. They provide our libraries with valuable opportunities for community engagement, advocacy, and library programming.

Empowering Member Libraries with Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

3/1/2023	Kathryn McCary, Law Office of Kathryn McCary Roger Butler, Schoharie County Sheriffs Department
3/2/2023	Katherine Hawkins Susan London Charles Reed Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Mary Beth Walsh, New York State Assembly Roger Butler, Schoharie County Sheriffs Department
3/3/2023	MVLS Member Library Directors MVLS Staff
3/6/2023	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/7/2023	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/8/2023	JA Council Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/9/2023	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council Elissa Kane, Kane & Lekakis MVLS Member Library Directors Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Erica Freudenberger, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/10/2023	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
3/13/2023	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library MVLS Member Library Directors Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library
3/14/2023	Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library Elissa Kane, Kane & Lekakis Erica Freudenberger, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/15/2023	HFM School Library System Council MVLS Member Library Directors MVLS Staff
3/16/2023	Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library MVLS Board of Trustees
3/17/2023	Capital District Library Council Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
3/20/2023	Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library Terry Pavoldi, Middleburgh Public Library

MVLS Library Services Committee
 Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
 Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
 3/21/2023 Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
 Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
 3/22/2023 Laurie Bargstead, H-F-M BOCES Adult Education
 3/23/2023 Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
 MVLS Trustee Education Session
 3/24/2023 Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council
 Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development
 Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
 Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
 MVLS Library Services Committee
 3/27/2023 Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
 MVLS Member Library Directors
 Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
 3/28/2023 MVLS Member Library Directors
 MVLS Staff
 3/29/2023 Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
 Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development
 Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library
 MVLS Member Library Directors
 Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
 3/31/2023 Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
 Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library
 Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
 4/3/2023 MVLS Member Library Directors
 4/4/2023 MVLS Executive Committee
 4/5/2023 Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
 MVLS Board of Trustees
 MVLS Executive Committee
 Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
 4/6/2023 Joanne Mickle
 Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library
 MVLS Central Library Advisory Committee
 Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
 Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
 4/7/2023 Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
 Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
 4/10/2023 Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
 Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
 Foundation Board
 4/11/2023 Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council
 Kristi Beedon, HFM BOCES SLS
 MVLS Staff
 PULISDO
 Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library

4/13/2023	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library MVLS Executive Committee
4/14/2023	Foundation Board John Sullivan, Fonda Library Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
4/17/2023	MVLS Central Library Advisory Committee MVLS Member Library Directors MVLS Trustee Education Session
4/18/2023	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development Foundation Board Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library
4/19/2023	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Kathy Naftaly, Crandall Library Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
4/20/2023	Division of Library Development, NYSED Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
4/21/2023	Capital District Library Council
4/24/2023	MVLS Member Library Directors MVLS Trustee Education Session Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/25/2023	William P. Leitch Beverly Osborne Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Elissa Kane, Kane & Lekakis Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library Erica Freudenberger, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/26/2023	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library Sarah Gold, Gold Law Firm Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
4/27/2023	MVLS Staff
4/28/2023	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System