

Mohawk Valley Library System

Annual Meeting

October 4, 2023

MINUTES

MVLS Trustees: April Davies, Katherine Hawkins, Susan London, Joanne Mickle, Mary VanPatten, Christine Witkowski, Kim Zimmer

MVLS Staff: Wade Abbott, Mary Carrier, Kate Clingan, Sharon O'Brien, Sally Rappa, Beth Rienti, Joe Sherry, Eric Trahan

Library Trustees, Library Directors and Staff, and Friends

Fulton County

Gloversville Valerie Acklin, Darla Barry, Merry Brown, Linda Conroy, Sonny Duross, Liz Kurz, Lex Lanza, Barbara Madonna, John Mazur, Greg Niforos, Caren Pepper, Susan Shrader, Richard Carlson, Sally Ostrander

Northville Jane Borrelli, Michael Burnett, Stella Williams

Montgomery County

Amsterdam John Naple, Tom Twente, Dan Gentile

Canajoharie Maria Cancro, Cory Seymour, Nathan Fenno, Suzan D. Friedlander, Mary Alexander, Joanne Mickle

Fort Hunter Judi Steiger, Letah Graff, Beverly Osborne, Hillary Graff

Fort Plain Whitney Hubbard, Jacob Trahan, Sam Zimmerman

Fonda Linda Bell, Pat Galeazza, Carol Stuff, Gretchen Subik, John Sullivan

Schenectady County Cheryl Cufari, Christine Witkowski, Mary VanPatten

Schoharie County

Cobleskill Harriet Berard, Heather Heckman, Ken Hotopp, Marian Hotopp, Katherine Hawkins, Don LaPlant, Amy Mele, Julia Walter, Kim Zimmer

Middleburgh Sarah Beekman, Susan London, Diane Stewart

Sharon Springs Helen Thomas, Jeanne Irwin

Schoharie Jennie Mosher, April Davies

Director Eric Trahan welcomed everyone to the sixty-fourth Annual Meeting of the Mohawk Valley Library System. He thanked everyone all for coming here to celebrate libraries and take the chance to get to know one another better. This is a great opportunity to share stories and expertise, to take advantage of the fact that all of us are smarter than any of us.

It's become a tradition to have these annual meetings in our libraries (we'd love to have it at your library! How can we make that happen?), and tonight we are at the beautiful Arkell Museum & Canajoharie Library. Eric introduced Suzan Friedlander, the Executive Director of Museum & Library Services at the Arkell Museum. Sue welcomed everyone and wanted to remind us all that as the staff and trustees of MVLS libraries, we are all guests of the Canajoharie Library and are welcome to visit anytime. She then introduced Library Director Maria Cancro, who expressed her delight to have us all at the Canajoharie Library this evening.

As this meeting is a celebration of libraries, Eric wanted to discuss the four goals that MVLS set during our planning process last year:

1. MVLS Empowers Libraries with the Vision & Knowledge for Secure Futures: This year, 10 MVLS libraries had public budget votes. We are delighted with this number and we hope to have even more successful public budget votes next year! \$500,000 has been added to library budgets in those votes this year.
2. MVLS Empowers Libraries with the Skills, Tools, & Resources for Serving All: This year, we've expanded a lot of the shared collections that MVLS libraries have access to. We've built up our e-resources and are exploring a further expansion of those. We've also built up the physical collection with the new inDemand collection that will continue growing over the next year and bringing opportunities to your libraries. We've also been working with libraries to improve the accessibility of library websites.
3. MVLS Empowers Libraries with Collaboration for Outstanding Library Service: Collaboration is attending meetings like this (and the MVLS Spring Symposium) to get to better know your fellow library staffers and trustees. We also had a large collaborative program this summer, the Library Passport Program. This program led to more than 750 library visits, and we can't wait to expand on that even more next year.
4. MVLS Empowers Libraries with Inspiration & Methods for Telling the Library Story: We're celebrating all the things your libraries are doing with the member library posters, as well as each library's section in the Annual Report (available on our website here: <https://www.mvls.info/annual-reports-and-budgets/>). This meeting also presents several opportunities to win money for your library. Just by attending with at least one board member and one staff member, you can earn money from MVLS for a free book. The MVLS Annual Meeting Scavenger Hunt offers two more opportunities to win money – give the scavenger hunt a try and turn in your completed form and you'll win another free book certificate for your library, and the library with the most correct answers will win yet another certificate!

Eric then introduced MVLS Staff, MVLS board members, member libraries directors, member library board members, and member library staff. It is an honor to be here with you all tonight!

Business Meeting:

President Mary VanPatten called the business meeting to order at 6:17pm. The first order of business is to elect trustees. The MVLS Board has one trustee seat that is opening at the end of 2023, as Joanne Mickle from Montgomery County will not be seeking another term on the Board. There are also two open seats in Fulton County. If you are in Montgomery or Fulton County and you'd like to be on the MVLS Board, we'd love to have you! There will also be an opening on the Foundation Board in June 2024.

Mary VanPatten asked for any nominations from the floor for trustees in Montgomery or Fulton County. There were none. Mary then called for the presentation of the MVLS Awards.

The **Harold & Junice Wusterbarth Volunteer Service Award** is presented to an individual, organization, or business for contributions of time and effort promoting libraries or furthering the work of a member library or the system. MVLS has given out a Volunteer Service Award since 1974, and in 2011, it was named in honor of Harold and Junice Wusterbarth. This year's winner is Jean LaPorta from the Friends of the Gloversville Public Library. On behalf of the staff, trustees, and volunteers of the Gloversville Public Library, Gloversville Board Vice President Merry Brown spoke to honor Jean. Jean has been a member of the Friends since 2008 and President since 2012. Under her leadership, the Friends have donated \$10,000 annually to the Gloversville budget. The donations of time and money from the Friends has helped to ease the library budget and ensure that the library shines in the community. To promote literacy, Jean assists with the Club Baby early literacy program and is a guest reader at Story Time. Jean has encouraged and helped with the Friends' ever-popular book sale as well as fundraisers like the pie sale and chicken barbecue. Twice each year, she organizes appreciation gifts for the staff. Jean does all of this with a smile and never forgets to show appreciation for everyone who is able to help her. Jean took a moment to thank all the people who do the work day after day to provide services at all our different libraries. She was surprised by her fellow Gloversville library folks, and had no idea she was getting this award tonight!

The **Outstanding Library Staff Award** is presented for the second time tonight. It honors a staff member at an MVLS member library for outstanding efforts and/or results in providing library service to community members. The MVLS Outstanding Library Staff award is awarded to Letah Graff from the Fort Hunter Free Library. Fort Hunter Board President Beverly Osborne wanted to thank MVLS for giving her the opportunity to honor this truly outstanding staff member, Letah Graff. Bev is not exaggerating when she says that Letah has changed the face of the Fort Hunter Free Library. Their Summer Reading Program attendance has more than quadrupled in the last 3 years. Letah has taken on huge projects such as transforming the library into Hogwarts and bringing in a mermaid for their summer reading kickoff. As one of their patrons once said, "There's no reason to be here if Letah isn't." Fort Hunter Free Library has struggled to be seen for years, but that has changed with everything Letah has done. Letah, also surprised

by her library with this award, says she's always loved libraries and loves being here at the Annual Meeting to hear all about what every library is doing.

The **Library Recognition Award** honors an MVLS Library for an outstanding activity, program, or service. This year, it is presented to The Gloversville Public Library for their School's Out Program. Valerie Acklin, the director of the Gloversville Public Library, thanked MVLS for this award. Lex Lanza, the Gloversville teen librarian, created this program in 2022 to fill a need in their rural community for a safe space for queer teens to meet and support each other. They teamed up with the Pride Center of the Capital Region who have been hugely helpful in guiding them as the program grows and evolves. The program is for school-aged students from 13-18 twice a month at the Gloversville Public Library. They are delighted to keep providing it as long as there are teens who are happy to be there.

Mary Carrier spoke to remind folks about the Library Superstars initiative. Mary is very passionate about all of the work being done in our member libraries. She says that while she may not get out to visit libraries as much as she wants to, she is always paying attention to what is happening and all of the creative, innovative, collaborative things that libraries are doing. We are encouraging library directors, staffers, and boards to recognize the amazing work happening in all MVLS libraries, and one way we'd like to do that is with the Library Superstars. When you see exceptional work happening around you, let MVLS know! The person you recommend as a Superstar will receive a candy bar and a card thanking them for their hard work. MVLS will be sending out several of these in the near future to help the initiative gain visibility, and we'd like to hear from you about people you think deserve recognition – anyone can nominate anyone! Send us a note if someone you know is doing great work!

ADJOURNMENT With that, the Business meeting was adjourned at 6:42pm

Next Regular Board Meeting:

Thursday, November 16, 2023, 9:30am
MVLS Service Center