

**Mohawk Valley Library System  
Director's Report  
November & December, 2023**

**Empowering Member Libraries with Sound Administration & Governance**

Once again, all 2023 state aid was not received in 2023; we are still waiting for some \$285,000. We are not unique in this; all library systems are still awaiting aid payments. Since our reports are on a cash basis, this makes it appear that MVLS was significantly under budget for the year. Once all aid is received and paid out, we will have a slight, \$10,000 surplus for 2023 activity.

It has been announced that 4 MVLS libraries will receive Bullet Aid awards. While the libraries have been notified, these funds, similarly, have not been paid. This funding does pass through the MVLS budget.

Much effort over the last two months has gone into transferring our financial data to the QuickBooks cloud-based product. We took the opportunity to rework our financial accounts, and to bring all aspects of MVLS and JA accounting into a single financial system through QuickBooks. With the 2024 financial reports, which you will first review at the March meeting, you will see these changes. This has been a long-term goal; it is good to see it come into effect.

The proposed MVLS Bylaws changes will be on the agenda at the January board meeting. Just to review, the purpose is to reduce our number of trustees to 9 – the number of board seats that we currently have filled – and to change the geographic distribution language to not less than 1 and not more than 3 from any single county. We will need to temporarily allow for no trustees from Fulton County, since none of the sitting trustees live in that county. The first vacancy will be filled by a Fulton County resident. This concept has the endorsement of the Fulton County libraries.

Once the new Bylaws are approved, we will move to establishing a Board Development Policy, with the goal of clarifying trustee responsibilities and recruitment practices for new trustees.

We also need to firm up Committee Assignments at the January meeting. The current list is at: <https://www.mvls.info/board-committees/>. Finally, we will be doing the annual filing of the Conflict of Interest Disclosures in January.

At the November meeting, it was decided to further study the proposal to expand summer hours. I suggest that we do that over the next several months in preparation for salaries & benefits discussions for 2025.

Katherine Hawkins has been working on some building issues, including repairing the toilet in the Women's Room. Thank you Katherine! She is also assisting with a needed hot water heater replacement.

**Empowering Member Libraries with Automation and Resource Sharing**

The Joint Automation Council met on January 10. In keeping with the usual practice, the Council approved a library fee proposal for 2025. Fees that year will rise by 3.5% to a total library fee budget

line of \$733,453; and updating the formula to 2023 circulation and holdings data. Formal approval of that proposal will be an agenda item at the January board meeting

The board will also be asked to approve Assistant Director Beth DeMidio's appointment to the SCPL position on the JA Council. Beth will be taking the place of Devon Hedges, whose term ended on 12/31/2023.

In November, the Schenectady library released a proposal to change the way they use Joint Automation resources and services. The largest JA libraries, those with their own internal IT staff, have always had a different relationship with JA; and it is understandable and appropriate for SCPL to expand their IT staff and work toward a relationship more like that of the other large libraries. Unfortunately, some of the details of their proposal clash with security policies and established procedures that are in place in other libraries. Much time and effort on the part of both MVLS and JA staff has gone into working through these issues. A SCPL/JA meeting is scheduled for later in January to address these issues. The goal, as always, is to provide services that best serve all of the libraries.

Our new Central Library Plan is ready for formal approval. A copy will be with the board documents for the January meeting. The new document is simply putting the agreed-to plan into the language favored by the state. Both the MVLS and SCPL boards need to approve a Central Library plan.

MVLS staff is working to implement all aspects of the plan. Sharon, continues to develop the InDemand collection, Mary is interacting with vendors and arranging trials for new digital resources, and Beth is working to build professional development opportunities of libraries.

### **Empowering Member Libraries with Youth, Adult and Outreach Services**

Believe it or not, it is summer reading program season. The Annual Summer Reading Planning workshops are set for February 15 and 29. MVLS is planning to do more collaborative local planning this year, suggesting that libraries broaden the focus beyond summer and beyond the early literacy and elementary audience.

Beth continues to work on developing and updating the MVLS kits and promoting their use. Kit circulation to libraries was at 438 in 2023. Kits include early literacy, start with science, STEAM, Big Play, crafting, and technology resources that libraries can borrow from MVLS.

Mary's tech classes are continuing with successful partnerships in all four MVLS counties. August through December, there were 30 classes with an attendance of 245.

For winter 2024, one of our outreach activities is the Cabin Fever Club Zoom programs. See: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=696737419256874&set=gm.1674509996371975> for more information.

### **Empowering Member Libraries with Training, Consultation and Collaboration**

As of the first week of January, we have two new Directors leading MVLS libraries. Alisha Rivera-Holmes in the new Director in Northville, and Diane Empie has begun in St. Johnsville. Congratulations to those libraries and to the new Directors. MVLS has begun the orientation process, and we will continue to help libraries with these transitions. Sharon Springs is still searching for their new Director.

I am continuing to distribute a Director's Update every other month. This report, built around the four MVLS goals, is distributed to all MVLS member library Directors and board members. We are also continuing to produce a periodic Newsletter. The Newsletter is archived on the MVLS website at: <https://www.mvls.info/newsletter/>.

The Director's Council has settled on quarterly meetings, with the most recent held in Fort Plain in December. There was great attendance and good discussion. In addition to Director's Council, we now have regular youth services and adult programming meet-ups for member library staff.

### **Empowering Member Libraries with Advocacy & Awareness**

The New York State budget advocacy season has begun. MVLS used both the newsletter and director's update to promote the welcome new effort to influence the Governor in her budget proposal for libraries. It is not too late. See that advocacy effort at: [https://oneclickpolitics.global.ssl.fastly.net/messages/edit?promo\\_id=21508](https://oneclickpolitics.global.ssl.fastly.net/messages/edit?promo_id=21508). Advocacy Day is scheduled for February 7. Please participate in any way you can, and be diligent in adding your voice to any advocacy initiatives that are promoted. Library aid has increased by a total of 4.2% over the last 7 years. That is an average of ½ of 1% per year. This is not sustainable! The 2024 NYLA advocacy message will be included in the materials for the January meeting.

The Gloversville Library's planning process is nearing completion. Wade continues to work with Middleburgh and Fonda on planning activities. We are also beginning to work with libraries on proposed spring budget votes.

Three libraries applied for Advocacy grants in the current round. Amsterdam applied for a project to build their young adult audience, Canajoharie applied to improve marketing materials and build their hotspot program and Cobleskill applied to again do their successful budget postcard mailing. Discussion and approval of Advocacy Grants will be on the agenda for the January meeting.

Foundation fundraising is what enables this grant program. The Foundation annual appeal raised \$3,855; a bit of a reduction from last year's record-breaking total.

### **Empowering Member Libraries with Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits**

11/1/2023	PULISDO
11/2/2023	MVLS Personnel Committee NYLA Conference Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library
11/3/2023	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council NYLA Conference Don LaPlant, The Community Library Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
11/6/2023	Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library MVLS Personnel Committee

11/7/2023	Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Jeanne M. Irwin MVLS Personnel Committee MVLS Staff
11/8/2023	Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library Jeanne M. Irwin MVLS Member Library Directors
11/13/2023	Haileab Samuel Foundation Board MVLS Central Library Advisory Committee
11/14/2023	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
11/15/2023	Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library Rebecca Sokol Rosemary Barger John Sullivan MVLS Staff
11/16/2023	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library MVLS Board of Trustees
11/17/2023	Rebecca Sokol Foundation Board Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library PULISDO
11/20/2023	Rebecca Sokol Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library MVLS Member Library Directors Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
11/21/2023	John Sullivan
11/27/2023	MVLS Member Library Directors
11/28/2023	Christine Witkowski Rebecca Sokol Haileab Samuel Cheryl Cufari Mary VanPatten
11/29/2023	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library MVLS Member Library Directors Beth DeMidio, Schenectady County Public Library Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
11/30/2023	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library MVLS Member Library Directors Beth DeMidio, Schenectady County Public Library Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library

12/4/2023	Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library MVLS Member Library Directors STJ Board of Trustees
12/5/2023	Cheryl Cufari Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
12/6/2023	Jeanne M. Irwin Christine Witkowski Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Gabriel Lukas, PMA Financial Network, LLC Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
12/7/2023	Nancy Stowell Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library SHS Board of Trustees Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library Beth DeMidio, Schenectady County Public Library Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
12/8/2023	Rebecca Sokol
12/11/2023	Cheryl Cufari Haileab Samuel Mary VanPatten Christine Witkowski
12/12/2023	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Cheryl Cufari Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library PULISDO Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library Suzan Friedlander, The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie
12/13/2023	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library John Sullivan JA Finance Committee MVLS Board of Trustees
12/14/2023	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library Christine Witkowski Julia Maxwell, DLD MVLS Staff
12/15/2023	Mary Donohue
12/18/2023	Christine Witkowski Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery MVLS Board of Trustees

MVLS Member Library Board Presidents

MVLS Member Library Directors

12/19/2023

Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development

Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library

12/21/2023

Thomas Gessick, CPA, T.M. Byxbee Company, CPAs, NY, PC

12/22/2023

Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library

12/26/2023

Sharon Jordan

Kim Zimmer, The Community Library

12/29/2023

Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library

Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library

Beth DeMidio, Schenectady County Public Library