

**Mohawk Valley Library System
Director's Report
January & February, 2024**

Empowering Member Libraries with Sound Administration & Governance

The final 2023 state aid payments were received in February. We have paid out all of the Local Library Services Aid and Central Library Aid to members. We have also received 2023 Bullet Aid payments for 4 libraries – Amsterdam, Canajoharie, Fort Plain and Gloversville. Aid was secured by Senator Neil Breslin and Assemblyman Robert Smullen. All of this will require budget amendments to put this unexpected activity in the 2024 budget.

The state budget outlook appears to be positive this year. The Governor proposed small increases in library aid, the both the Senate and Assembly are supporting expanding on those increases. More is below in the Advocacy section.

The MVLS 2023 State Annual Report is ready for your review. A copy will be with the meeting materials. Board review of the report is an annual action item for all libraries and systems.

Our auditor, Tom Gessick of T.M. Byxbee, is scheduled to be at the March 21 meeting to review the 2022 MVLS and JA Project financial statements and the 990 form.

The March meeting will be your first look at the financial statements produced through our new QuickBooks online financial software. The materials included on the website will look different, but they contain all of the same information that you are used to. We will also include a more detailed financial statement with the warrants that are sent to you via email. I am very pleased at how smoothly this transition has worked. Joe and Kate have both done a great job of jumping right in to the new system.

Empowering Member Libraries with Automation and Resource Sharing

The Joint Automation Council met on March 13. Minor policy updates are in the works for four JA policies. The JA Project has a new website; you should have received a message about that a few days ago. Visit it at: <https://jacouncil.sals.edu>.

Of course, the big item of discussion is Schenectady's unfortunate decision to withdraw from the JA Consortium. We have received the official withdraw notice from SCPL. Our attorney, Stephanie "Cole" Adams, is working with us on a response. There are many facets to a response. One is the technical details of how data, hardware and network infrastructure is transitioned, and this initial response will deal with those issues. The bigger issues concern the future of meaningful resource sharing once SCPL is not a part of our shared database. Since resource sharing is by far the most impactful and expensive system service, and since it affects every library, there will be many decisions made that will affect every library. We are working to develop a process that is representative of member libraries to help make the many necessary decisions.

At the same time, we need to make it clear that, for MVLS library users who do not physically use Schenectady locations, their exit will have very little impact. Users at non-Schenectady locations will still have access to 2 million items, and will be able to place requests and receive those items in delivery.

They will still be able to use the ILL protocols to get any items that are not in the Polaris database. They will still be able to seamlessly use any non-Schenectady location. Yes, Schenectady will be taking their 268,000 items, but they will also be taking their users. They are a profound net borrower of other library's items, and they have by far the lowest level of cross borrowing – borrowing by registered users of other libraries, in the system. There will be many library users in MVLS libraries who don't notice any change at all.

Be that as it may, we need to make sure we are continuing to provide excellent service to those who are affected. One aspect of that will be Central Library services. At the same meeting where they voted to leave the JA Consortium, the SCPL board failed to approve the Central Library Plan. Determining the future of Central Library Services is another task we face over the next several months.

Empowering Member Libraries with Youth, Adult and Outreach Services

Beth Rienti will be providing our staff update at the March meeting, and is providing a report that will be included in the meeting materials, so I will just highlight a few new things here. Beth has been distributing free books to a variety of outreach sites, including Little Free Libraries. MVLS has been working to help libraries to be ready to support programming for the solar eclipse, and we have developed a new grant project: Outreach Mini-Grants.

These grants are a replacement for the summer reading Grants that we have done for the last few years. They are designed to encourage libraries to think beyond the summer reading program to new audiences and seasons. Since these are competitive grants, we are suggesting that the Awards Committee review applications. The application deadline is April 26.

In February, Mary's digital literacy classes went on pause while she goes through knee surgery, but the virtual Cabin Fever Series continues. Sessions are being held on Wednesdays in February. Mary is also doing member library staff training on technology topics.

Empowering Member Libraries with Training, Consultation and Collaboration

MVLS staff members are spending lots of time on the far edges of MVLS, in Northville and St. Johnsville, working with new directors Alisha Rivera-Holmes and Diane Empie. Sharon Springs has announced the appointment of their new director. Meghan Keaney will be starting in April.

It is Annual Report season for member libraries. About half of the libraries have submitted their reports and most others just have a few tweaks to work through. On the contacts list you will see me working with Directors and others nearly every day, answering questions and questioning inconsistencies.

Mary continues to assist libraries with website issues. In recent months, she has been working with Sharon Springs, Gloversville, Fort Plain, Fonda, and Cobleskill, who have launched a new website. See it at: <https://www.communitylibrarycobleskill.org/>.

Canajoharie has decided to pull out of the most recent library construction grant process. They were running into feasibility issues with their proposed project. We were able to reallocate the money to other projects, and successfully talked DLD into letting us increase Cobleskill's project to beyond their requested amount. We are now funding all four larger projects at about 65%. We should be able to increase that amount further once the state determines the final total state-wide request.

We have begun having weekly SCPL/JA Information sessions for member library directors to make sure directors are included in the decision-making process as it will affect their libraries. These sessions join many other opportunities that member library staff have for interacting, including Adult Program Swaps, Public Services Meet-ups, Youth Services Meet-ups, etc.

I want to make it clear that the Schenectady County Public Library remains a full member of MVLS and is continuing to use JA services. JA staff have been onsite at Schenectady branches nearly every day in the last couple of weeks, assisting with network upgrades and equipment installations. MVLS staff also continue to interact with and provide services to SCPL staff and patrons.

The MVLS Spring Symposium is coming! The date is tentatively set for Thursday, May 2 from 3:00 – 5:00 at the Margaret Reaney Memorial Library in St. Johnsville. The format will be similar to last year; including a presentation and a planning activity. We are working with the New York Council of Nonprofits (NYCON) on both aspects of the event. We are looking to have the presentation on Developing a Library Elevator Pitch, and to have the planning activity be a related description of what MVLS does, and what the participants would like MVLS to do.

Empowering Member Libraries with Advocacy & Awareness

MVLS had a very successful Library Advocacy Day. We had nearly 20 participants, and provided presentations and had conversations with 10 NYS legislators. There appear to be positive developments. There is an expectation that the final budget will increase library further than the Governor's proposed small increase, and we could also see an increase in Library Construction Aid. All sides also appear to be committed to an increase in school library materials aid, and in providing funding for the continuation of the NOVEL databases. Please signal your support of these positive developments by visiting the NYLA Advocacy center here:

https://oneclickpolitics.global.ssl.fastly.net/messages/edit?promo_id=22249

The Gloversville Library has a new Plan of Service. This new plan is a great example of the kind of planning that libraries can achieve by using the community engagement and plan development services that Wade provides. The plan isn't yet publicly posted, but we will include it with the meeting materials so you can review the result.

Foundation fundraising efforts are underway for 2024. We will be doing a campaign for Library Giving Day, which is scheduled for Wednesday, April 4. Summer golf tournaments are tentatively scheduled for July 1 in Canajoharie and August 23 in Cobleskill.

Empowering Member Libraries with Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

1/2/2024	Katherine Hawkins Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library Beth DeMidio, Schenectady County Public Library Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
1/3/2024	Katherine Hawkins

	Terry Pavoldi, Middleburgh Public Library
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
1/4/2024	Mal Martin
	Jacob Trahan, Fort Plain Free Library
	Beth DeMidio, Schenectady County Public Library
	Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
1/5/2024	JA Council
1/8/2024	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Sarah Gold, Gold Law Firm
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
1/9/2024	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	JA Council
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Beth DeMidio, Schenectady County Public Library
1/10/2024	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	JA Council
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Lauren Moore, New York State Librarian
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
1/11/2024	Bonnie Kerr
	Beverly Osborne
1/12/2024	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	MVLS Board of Trustees
1/16/2024	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
1/17/2024	Frank Reese, Division of Library Development
	Lauren Moore, New York State Librarian
1/18/2024	Cheryl Cufari
	Haileab Samuel
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Grace Riario, Ramapo Catskill Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
1/19/2024	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library
	Grace Riario, Ramapo Catskill Library System
1/22/2024	Harriet Berard
	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
	Lauren Cardinal, Division of Library Development
	Laura Wolven, Finkelstein Memorial Library

	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	John Sullivan
	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Suzan Friedlander, The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
1/23/2024	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
	Lauren Cardinal, Division of Library Development
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
1/24/2024	Beverly Osborne
	Carol Stuff
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
1/25/2024	Haileab Samuel
	Christine Witkowski
	Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS SCPL JA Discussions
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
1/26/2024	Beverly Osborne
	Stephanie Cuomo
	Madelyn Thorne
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library
	HFM School Library System Council
1/29/2024	Beverly Osborne
	MVLS Staff
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
1/30/2024	Kimberly Zimmer
	MVLS Member Library Directors
1/31/2024	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
	Division of Library Development, NYSED
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
2/1/2024	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
	Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
2/2/2024	Steve Bachman, Four County Library System
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
2/5/2024	Nathan Fenno
	Foundation Board

2/6/2024	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery NYLA PULISDO Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library
2/7/2024	Suzan Friedlander, The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery NYLA Advocacy Day!
2/8/2024	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library Lynn Richardson Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
2/9/2024	Heather Devitt, Mohawk Valley Digital Inclusion Coalition Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Foundation Board Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
2/12/2024	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library John Sullivan Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
2/13/2024	Regina Gilbert Beverly Osborne
2/14/2024	Christine Witkowski Madelyn Thorne Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
2/20/2024	Christine Witkowski Madelyn Thorne Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Jeffrey Kirkendall, Division of Library Development Gene Nescot, NYS Deferred Compensation Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
2/21/2024	Christine Witkowski Cheryl Cufari Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library MVLS Member Library Directors
2/22/2024	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library Cheryl Cufari Christine Witkowski Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library

Lauren Moore, New York State Librarian
Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
2/23/2024 Thomas Gessick, CPA, T.M. Byxbee Company, CPAs, NY, PC
2/26/2024 Cheryl Cufari
Haileab Samuel
Christine Witkowski
Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
Gabriel Lukas, PMA Financial Network, LLC
Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
2/27/2024 Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library
MVLS Member Library Directors
2/28/2024 Susan London
Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library
Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
MVLS Board of Trustees
MVLS Member Library Board Presidents
MVLS Member Library Directors
Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
2/29/2024 Jeanne M. Irwin
Nancy Stowell
Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library
Foundation Board
Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
Terry Pavoldi, Middleburgh Public Library
Lauren Moore, New York State Librarian
Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
Thomas Gessick, CPA, T.M. Byxbee Company, CPAs, NY, PC