

**Mohawk Valley Library System
Director's Report
March & April, 2024**

Empowering Member Libraries with Sound Administration & Governance

The State Budget was finally passed in late April. Library operating aid was increased by 4.25%. Construction aid was increased by \$10 million. And \$3 million was allocated to keeping the NOVEL databases available. We will be amending the MVLS budget once we have firm numbers on the aid that will be received in 2024. We have also informed libraries that now is the time to get Bullet Aid requests in for 2024. We did have 4 libraries receive awards in 2023. Of course, that funding actually appeared in 2024.

As was discussed with T.M.Byxbee at our March meeting, our 2022 IRS 990 form was submitted late. Tom Gessick has assisted in sending in an appeal to have penalties waived, and has again assured us that the firm will take care of any penalties that may be forthcoming. Tom didn't mention it at our meeting, but you should know that, in addition to the reasons he shared with us, an aggravating fact in the delay was an extended illness.

It is spring in Rotterdam, and so our soggy grounds are unable to handle any situation where a vehicle wanders off the pavement. We have had two after hours incidents where unknown trucks rutted up the lawn. Our landscaper will do repairs, which shouldn't cost much more than a hundred dollars. We have discussed a variety of more permanent solutions – Jersey barriers, guard rails, a gate – but the truth is that it is much less expensive, and probably easier, to just make the minor repairs when it happens.

We still have a trustee vacancy on the MVLS board, from Becky Sokol's resignation. We have put out a call for trustees to the Fulton County libraries without result. It is now probably time to recruit more widely for a potential trustee from Fulton County.

The MVLS Spring Symposium was again a great success. Thirty-six staff and trustees from MVLS and member libraries gathered in the fabulous Reaney Room at the Margaret Reaney Memorial Library. Mary Carrier did a presentation on Developing a Library Elevator Pitch (see more on that below), but most of the event was dedicated to gathering information from participants on how MVLS can improve communication and services. Kate McNally from the New York Council of Non-Profits (NYCON) facilitated the session. She presented her findings to the MVLS staff a week later. We will discuss a series of recommendations at the May board meeting. They will be included in the board packet as a separate document. That list of recommendations will be added to the website after our Tuesday, May 14 staff meeting.

MVLS has been a member of NYCON for many years. We get our health insurance through their subsidiary Council Services Plus, and we participate in their Mineral human resources information platform. NYCON also has a division called BoardStrong, which is a resource for Nonprofit boards. I am including one of their resources in the board meeting materials. We may want to use more of this aspect of their services.

Empowering Member Libraries with Automation and Resource Sharing

A tremendous amount of work has been done over the last two months by MVLS, SALS and JA staff on the proposed SCPL withdrawal from the Joint Automation System. FAQs, whitepapers, press interviews, weekly Director's meetings, meetings among MVLS, SALS and UHLS representatives, Transition Team meetings with SCPL and County IT staff – see <https://www.mvls.info/joint-automation-information/> and <https://jacouncil.sals.edu> for the latest. More information should be added in the next few weeks. But at the same time, not that much has actually happened. There is still no decision on whether SCPL will join the UHLS ILS, so there are still no answers as to how resource sharing will work for library patrons after Schenectady exits JA. It has become plain that while the August 27 exit date is feasible for JA, SCPL will not be ready to exit.

That issue of an undefined exit date is just one of the many associated issues that are under review by our attorney, Stephanie “Cole” Adams. Cole will give a presentation and answer questions at the May board meeting. She will cover issues raised by the letter from State Librarian Lauren Moore, as well as other issues. As I shared with you several weeks ago, there are potential scenarios that could have existential consequences for MVLS.

The Joint Automation Council met on May 8, and will be meeting monthly for the foreseeable future. The minutes will be included with the meeting materials on the MVLS website. Many committees are being activated or set up to get member input on issues related to the proposed SCPL withdrawal. The JA Council also gave unanimous approval to a variety of policy updates that have been in the works for more than a year. Acting on those policy amendments will be an action item at the MVLS board meeting. Marked up policies will be included with the meeting materials.

One item on which we have some clarity from the state library, is that if Schenectady is not participating in the system ILS, they can not continue to serve as the MVLS Central Library. The Amsterdam Free Library is prepared to begin serving as the MVLS Central Library. System Central Libraries are named by the system board. Changes in Central Libraries may also require changes to the state sanctioned system Plan of Service. I waiting for guidance from the Division of Library Development on how best to accomplish this necessary change.

Empowering Member Libraries with Youth, Adult and Outreach Services

MVLS provided thousands of eclipse glasses to member libraries, as well as resources for eclipse programming. Beth continues to assist libraries with planning for the 2024 Summer Reading Program, with a Teen workshop taking place in March. A new initiative this year is the Smokey Bear Reading Challenge. This is a planned series of activities that libraries can use to promote summer reading.

Beth and Kate worked together with colleagues from other systems to organize and facilitate the GOATS meet-up (Greatest Of All Teen Services). This mini-conference highlights great ideas from regional libraries on serving teens.

The Cabin Fever virtual program series is complete. Weekly sessions were held January – March. Individuals from nine member libraries participated. Mary and Beth are planning to do it again in 2025! Digital Literacy classes are also continuing. Classes include topics like “Getting Started with Libby”, “Internet Safely and Privacy” and “What is AI?”

An upcoming Outreach initiative involves the development of Memory Care Kits and programming aids. Beth has been setting up kits for use by libraries and patrons. The Outreach Advisory Council continues to be active, with meetings scheduled regularly.

Empowering Member Libraries with Training, Consultation and Collaboration

Mary continues to assist libraries with website issues. In the last few months that has included Fort Plain, Northville, Sharon Springs, and St. Johnsville.

MVLS staff continues to work with the new directors, including the very newest, Meghan Keaney in Sharon Springs. Plans are also in the works to bring them all to MVLS to learn about all of the resources that they can access.

Mary and Beth's Elevator Pitch presentation was very well received. A shortened, virtual version is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUHOJYp4MDM>.

Beth attended the NYLA Youth Services Section Conference April 18 & 19. A grant that Beth spearheaded also allowed representatives from the Amsterdam Free Library to attend.

The Handbook for Library Trustees in New York State has finally been updated on the State Library website. You can use access the Handbook here: <https://nyslibrary.libguides.com/Handbook-Library-Trustees>. MVLS has also been distributing printed copies, although we encourage libraries to use and publicize the online version.

MVLS is continuing to provide free NYLA Organizational Memberships for all MVLS member libraries. NYLA has changed their membership process, setting a standard membership year of June 1 – May 31, so now is the time for libraries to renew their membership and send the invoice to MVLS.

Empowering Member Libraries with Advocacy & Awareness

The state budget has passed, but there are still state advocacy issues that could be addresses in the current legislative session. Two new bills are of interest. Angelo Santabarbara has introduced a bill that would further reduce the matching requirements for public library construction funding. The second bill, which was introduced in the Senate, addresses library pricing for e-resources.

NYLA hosted a mini-conference called Spring on the Hill on April 23. The program featured sessions on advocacy, legal issues and intellectual freedom.

It is library budget vote season. We have several libraries with consequential budget votes. MVLS has been assisting through advocacy grant funding and consultations. Unfortunately, on May 7 the Gloversville Library had a proposition voted down by a very slim margin. MVLS has been in contact to offer support and information.

The 2024 public library construction season has also begun. With the increased funding, MVLS will have \$1,145,377 to allocate. We will be using a process with interim deadlines like the 2023 process. This plan allows us to maximize the amount that MVLS libraries can receive. For the 2023 applications,

recent state reallocations allowed all MVLS projects to be funded at 75%. Those projects are slated to receive final state approval sometime later this year.

The Foundation is having a successful start to 2024 fundraising. The Library Giving Day appeal raised over \$2,600, more than ever before. And sponsorships have been coming in for the Canajoharie Golf Tournament scheduled for July 1. These events provide the funding for the Foundation Advocacy and Dream & Do grants.

Empowering Member Libraries with Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

3/1/2024	Madelyn Thorne Christine Witkowski Jeanne M. Irwin Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams MVLS Member Library Directors Lauren Moore, New York State Librarian Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
3/4/2024	Christine Witkowski Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams MVLS Staff Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/5/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams MVLS Board of Trustees Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/6/2024	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams Heather Devitt, Mohawk Valley Digital Inclusion Coalition MVLS Board of Trustees MVLS Member Library Directors Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/8/2024	MVLS Trustee Education Session Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
3/11/2024	Kate McNally, New York Council of Nonprofits, Inc. NYCON Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/12/2024	John Naple Frank Reese, Division of Library Development JA Council

	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	PULISDO
3/13/2024	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Cheryl Cufari
	HFM School Library System Council
	JA Council
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/14/2024	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
	Christine Witkowski
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Linda Conroy, Gloversville Public Library
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/15/2024	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	Kate McNally, New York Council of Nonprofits, Inc. NYCON
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Thomas Gessick, CPA, T.M. Byxbee Company, CPAs, NY, PC
3/18/2024	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/19/2024	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/20/2024	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
	Rosemary Barger
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
3/21/2024	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	MVLS Staff
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/22/2024	Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Thomas Gessick, CPA, T.M. Byxbee Company, CPAs, NY, PC
3/25/2024	Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
	Christine Witkowski
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Board of Trustees

	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Thomas Gessick, CPA, T.M. Byxbee Company, CPAs, NY, PC
	Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
3/26/2024	Haileab Samuel
	Madelyn Thorne
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
3/27/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/28/2024	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/29/2024	Rosemary Barger
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/1/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/2/2024	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/3/2024	Mary VanPatten
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Heather Devitt, Mohawk Valley Digital Inclusion Coalition
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
4/4/2024	Barbara Paxton, BoardStrong
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Wanda Bruchis, Mid York Library System
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/5/2024	Mary VanPatten
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Steve Bachman, Four County Library System
	MVLS Staff
	Kate McNally, New York Council of Nonprofits, Inc. NYCON
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
4/8/2024	Christine Witkowski

4/8/2024	Foundation Board Kate McNally, New York Council of Nonprofits, Inc. NYCON
4/9/2024	Christine Witkowski Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams MVLS Member Library Directors Kate McNally, New York Council of Nonprofits, Inc. NYCON
4/10/2024	Christine Witkowski Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Mid-Hudson Library System MVLS Member Library Directors Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
4/11/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams Heather Devitt, Mohawk Valley Digital Inclusion Coalition MVLS Board of Trustees MVLS Staff Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
4/12/2024	Katherine Hawkins Christine Witkowski Foundation Board MVLS Board of Trustees MVLS Member Library Directors Fonda Library Anniversary Celebration Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
4/15/2024	Christine Witkowski John Lui, Canajoharie Golf & Country Club Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams MVLS Member Library Directors Kate McNally, New York Council of Nonprofits, Inc. NYCON Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/16/2024	Katherine Hawkins Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library
4/17/2024	Katherine Hawkins Joe Burke, Altamont Free Library Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library

	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
4/18/2024	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/19/2024	Christine Witkowski
	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Foundation Board
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
4/22/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Thomas Gessick, CPA, T.M. Byxbee Company, CPAs, NY, PC
4/23/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Lauren Moore, New York State Librarian
	NYLA Spring on the Hill
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/24/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Terry Pavoldi, Middleburgh Public Library
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	MVLS Trustee Education Session - Amsterdam
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kevin Verbesy, Suffolk Cooperative Library System
4/25/2024	Nancy Stowell
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Board Presidents
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	PULISDO
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/26/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	John Spears, Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/29/2024	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Kate McNally, New York Council of Nonprofits, Inc. NYCON

4/30/2024

Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
Ken Hotopp
Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
MVLS Member Library Directors
Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library