

Mohawk Valley Library System
Board of Trustees Meeting
July 18, 2024

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rosemary Barger, April Davies, Katherine Hawkins, Susan London, Mary VanPatten, Chris Witkowski (Virtual), Kim Zimmer, and Eric Trahan, Director.

EXCUSED: Haileab Samuel

GUESTS (IN-PERSON): Kate Clingan, Nancy Gifford (SCP), Wade Abbott,

GUESTS (VIRTUAL): Beth Rienti, Pat Gosda, Sharon O'Brien, Mary Carrier, Evan Fronk, Charity Thorne (SCP), Erica Wing (JOH), D. Miller

Call to Order President Mary VanPatten called the meeting to order at 9:30am.

Staff Update: Beth Rienti attended the meeting to talk about MVLS-GO, this summer's collaborative program. Every library has their own collectible trading cards, designed by Sam Zimmerman of the Fort Plain Free Library. On the back of them is a QR code which leads to a map on the MVLS website (also created by Sam) of all of the participating libraries. Beth also wanted to share information on her Books for Babies project, which gives out high-contrast board books to families at a local maternity ward. Each book comes with tips for picking out books to read with your baby, information about joining the "1000 Books Before Kindergarten" challenge, and a QR code to help families find their local library. Katherine asked about work with the correctional facilities in the area. Beth mentioned that the librarian at Hale Creek has been out for a bit, but they have been in touch and she should be back in August. Beth has also been in touch with the outreach coordinator at HFM BOCES to talk about getting supplies to Fulton and Montgomery County Correctional Facilities. She reached out to Schoharie County Jail but hasn't heard back yet. Kim says she'll reach out to the undersheriff to see if that can move things along.

Consent Agenda: Consideration of May Meeting Minutes, Treasurer's Report, Statements of Financial Position for May and June, Payment Schedules #5 for \$116,954.02 and #6 for \$99,131.73.

Eric reports that the financial audit for 2023 is underway with T.M. Bxybee.

MOTION: To approve the Consent Agenda.
Barger/Hawkins. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

State Aid Eric reports that we are starting to get 2024 State Aid payments.

Budget Amendments: The proposed budget amendments are in the board packet. Most of what we see is related to the timing of state aid payments in 2023/2024. There's also an increase in interest from our NYLAF account. Eric mentions that the budget assumes we will receive one year's worth of state aid in 2024, which is not always the case.

MOTION: To approve the July 2024 budget amendments.

Barger/Hawkins. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Symposium Follow-Up Eric sent a survey out to member libraries. When the surveys are complete, we will have data to compile. The questions came from the meetings that MVLS staff conducted in June with member library directors.

SCPL JA Exit Eric reports that we are currently in a bit of a holding pattern. We don't have an official exit date from SCPL.

Wade Abbott attended the meeting to brief the board on his participation at other board meetings. He's been attending the SCP board meetings for several months and recently attended an Upper Hudson Library System board meeting. He's been taking notes and sharing them with MVLS staff, trustees, and directors. He plans to continue to attend these meetings and offer himself up as a resource to the board members if they call on him. Discussion ensued about Wade's experiences at the recent SCP and UHLS board meetings. Chris Witkowski talked a bit about her experience at the February SCPL board meeting where the board voted to leave JA. Nancy Gifford, a longtime SCPL employee, attended the MVLS board meeting to discuss her experience as an SCPL staff member. She feels there has been a lot of secrecy about the decision to leave JA and that morale among the staff is low. Eric says that our way forward at MVLS is to continue to provide service to Schenectady County patrons and staff.

April notes that in his Director's Report, Eric says that transition team meetings are restarting, and asks why they stopped. Eric says that the purpose of the transition team is to work through the technical aspects of removing SCPL from JA – without concrete information on when they are leaving and where they are moving to, those technical details aren't able to be worked out. The meetings have restarted mostly as an attempt to improve communication.

Rosemary asks about the communications from DLD and the guidance that they should be providing. Eric says that he and SCPL have a meeting scheduled next week with DLD which should hopefully provide more clarity.

JA Budget Amendments Proposed JA Budget Amendments are in the board packets. There is an increase in expenses for generator maintenance and building repair, as well as an increase in interest gained from the JA NYLAF account.

MOTION To approve the July 2024 JA Budget Amendments

Davies/Barger. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Public Library Construction Grants Eric reports that we have more funding than ever for the 2024 round of construction grants, but we also have more applicants than ever before. There will be a meeting of the Library Services Committee in September to discuss the applications. If all applications remain as proposed, we will most likely be funding projects at an average of 50%.

Director's Report The Director's Report for May and June 2024 is in the board packets. Eric organized the report around the goals that were set during our Plan of Service process.

1. **Empower Libraries with the Vision & Knowledge for Secure Futures** Eric highlighted two of our libraries who have made steps recently towards getting secure funding,

Frothingham Free Library and Sharon Springs Free Library. Both have recently increased the funding they receive through local budget votes. Margaret Reaney Library in St Johnsville is taking steps to be on that trajectory as well. Kim pointed out that the Fort Plain Free Library also passed a budget vote recently, their first in several years.

2. **Empower Libraries with the Skills, Tools, & Resources for Serving All** There is a copy of the Programming and Assistance Provided by MVLS flyer that Mary Carrier and Beth Rienti sent out to members in the board packets. It highlights many of the classes and programs that MVLS staff is available to hold for the public as well as for library staff.
3. **Empower Libraries with Collaboration for Outstanding Library Services** The MVLS-GO trading cards program is a great example of a collaborative program between all of our libraries.
4. **Empower Libraries with the Inspiration & Methods for Telling the Library Story** Eric's Director's Update for June that was sent to member library trustees is included in the board packets. His goal is to get member trustees to be more plugged in to broader library issues.

Directors Council Kim wanted to thank Eric and the MVLS staff for the meetings that were held with directors after the symposium. The directors also had meetings by county to discuss issues that were affecting their libraries. What came out of those meetings was a proposal for directors to send a letter to DLD expressing their support for MVLS and requesting that they be involved in the decisions that are made. A few directors have sent in these letters, and they were shared with Eric and Board President Mary VanPatten.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

AWARDS Awards information has been updated on the website for 2024.

BUILDING & EQUIPMENT Katherine has some interest in replacing the building's hot water heater and will be looking into this.

FINANCE The annual Finance Committee meeting is usually held around the September board meeting, which is our next meeting. Kim asked if Eric had heard anything about libraries needing to provide their auditors with two years' worth of information for their annual financial reviews/audits. Eric has not heard about this. He will investigate and report back.

NOMINATING Rosemary Barger has moved out of our service area, and we sadly have to accept her resignation. The board thanks Rosemary for her years of service. Amsterdam has put forward William Bonner as her replacement on the MVLS Board. Rosemary was also our Finance Manager, so we'll need someone new to fill that position.

MOTION To accept, with regret, Rosemary Barger's resignation.
Hawkins/Davies. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

MOTION To appoint William Bonner to serve the remainder of Rosemary Barger's term, which expires on 12/31/2027.
Davies/Zimmer. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Privilege of the Floor: Katherine says that the courses that Mary Carrier offers are incredibly popular with Schoharie County residents.

ADJOURNMENT With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:18am.

Next Board Meeting:

9:30am, Thursday, September 19, 2024.

MVLS Service Center