

**Mohawk Valley Library System
Director's Report
July & August, 2024**

Empowering Member Libraries with Sound Administration & Governance

The MVLS state annual report has been formally approved by the state. All state aid, with the exception of the final 10% of the two aid categories that are released in segments, has been received. It has ended up being a good year for state aid.

T.M. Byxbee has finished reviewing the MVLS and JA 2023 financial statements, and has produced the 2023 990. We will have Tom Gessick in to review these documents with you in either November or January.

November is the time to set the MVLS budget for 2025. A budget proposal will be included with the board meeting information on the website. The proposed budget is a balanced budget at \$1,668,000. Last year's state aid increase, and the earnings from the NYLAF investments have helped to balance the budget. The budget is reduced somewhat by SCPL's exit from JA – their IT spending will no longer go through the MVLS budget.

The staff met in October to develop a proposal to present to the Personnel Committee concerning salaries and benefits in 2025. The staff have several asks, which the committee will review on November 19. We will have an executive session at the November board meeting to discuss potential changes for 2025.

Following up on the October 2 Annual Meeting, we need to amend the bylaws to bring them in line with state law concerning who votes on motions presented at the annual meeting. The current bylaws are on the MVLS website at: <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/MVLS-BYLAWS-2024.pdf>. The proposal is to change the end of the last sentence of Article III Section 5 to: "with candidates elected via vote by the member library trustees present at such meeting."

That amendment can be formally approved at the January meeting. I recommend that we also work to better define the process for developing and selecting the individuals that will serve as future MVLS trustees. We should study other system bylaws, discuss with directors and other stakeholders, and make further amendments to the bylaws and Board Governance Policy as appropriate.

The November MVLS board meeting is the reorganizational meeting. The agenda will include the specific motions that need annual approval. It is also the time for electing the officers for 2025. The committee determined that MVLS would be best served by having a completely new slate of officers, with no individual remaining in the same office for 2025. The committee is working on securing candidates, and will present a slate at the November meeting.

A new set of officers in just the beginning of the "new" that we need to envision and implement to keep MVLS a vital part of public library service in Fulton, Montgomery, Schenectady and Schoharie counties. We need to maintain and to improve on the information gathering begun at the Spring Symposium and

continued since then. We need to find more effective ways to promote an active and involved MVLS Directors' Council. We need to develop a new common vision for how MVLS serves member libraries and library users. I suggest that we start that off with a MVLS board retreat in the first quarter of 2025.

Empowering Member Libraries with Automation and Resource Sharing

The SCP exit from the JA consortium is imminent. Their final day on the shared catalog is Sunday, November 24. The vendor III is doing the data transfer at the close of business on that day. On November 25, SCPL will begin doing business on their own separate catalog. For the first 10 days they will run in an offline client before going live with their new system on December 5. Many meetings of the Transition Team. JA staff and trainers, library directors, and various JA groups have been held to bring this change about. We have good plans in place to deal with the changes that library staff and patrons will experience.

For the past few weeks, the most pressing part of that for MVLS staff has been the moving of the 18,000 item Central Book Aid collection from SCPL to MVLS, before it is again transferred to Amsterdam after their construction is closer to completion. Every day, MVLS staff members go to SCPL to pull and pack books. These books are then inventoried, and shelved at MVLS. This is analogous to a fairly large library moving to a new location. It has been a joy to see the MVLS staff working together to make this happen by the deadline.

We continue to work with the Division of Library Development on completing the changes that need to take place for the Amsterdam Free Library to begin serving as the MVLS Central Library as of 1/1/2025. One item that the MVLS board still needs to approve is the MVLS Free Direct Access Plan. We are making minimal changes to the plan, to remove any reference to SCPL as the MVLS Central Library.

While the SCPL exit from JA does change services for Schenectady County residents, we will still have ways to share resources and to provide services to Schenectady libraries and library users. We are working with CDLC to help familiarize all member library staff with the procedures for making that resource sharing happen.

One area where there is uncertainty is in Schenectady's continued participation in the shared MVLS Overdrive collection. It appears that SCPL no longer wishes to participate in the shared collection, but that they want to have their own separate collection. Even with this, we will still have ways to share resources with SCPL users; and they with ours.

The annual JA Fees meeting to discuss fees for 2026 is scheduled for Wednesday, December 11 at 9:30. This meeting provides an annual opportunity for libraries to provide input into JA offerings, policies and budgets. In 2025, fees are scheduled to go up by 3.5%.

Empowering Member Libraries with Youth, Adult and Outreach Services

Summer Reading never ends. Beth collected and submitted the statistics for 2024 in October, and immediately began working on the Summer Reading Planning workshop for 2025. This year, we are returning to an in-person workshop held in conjunction with other regional library systems.

On September 27, Beth worked with the Upper Hudson Library System to provide a Storytime Bootcamp for member library staff. Three MVLS libraries sent staff. Beth continues to schedule Youth Services Meet-ups with MVLS libraries, and provides services to outreach sites as needed.

The Outreach Advisory Council met on September 19. They identified a growing need for continuing education. Beth and Mary provided an outreach workshop for MVLS member library staff on October 23.

Beth assisted libraries with participation in the Great Give Back in October. She is now starting to provide resources for Take Your Child to the Library Day in February. Beth and Mary are working together with member libraries in developing the 2025 Cabin Fever program series.

The MVLS kits and Start with Science resources continue to be updated and expanded. They are circulating at a rate of about 25 per month. Preview books also continue to be a popular resource for our members. About 60 books were provided to libraries each month. Books are also provided to outreach sites.

Beth has started an MVLS IDEA committee, for libraries to discuss issues and make plans around the topics of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility. We hope this becomes an area of growing interest for our libraries.

Empowering Member Libraries with Training, Consultation and Collaboration

We are now a licensed partner with Senior Planet and Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) from AARP. This is a one-year licensing agreement that will allow MVLS access to over 150 unique classes. Kim Zimmer and Mary completed a required 5-week Trainer the Trainer series, which will allow us to offer in-person classes to our communities. This first year is a pilot for us, with Kim offering classes to members of the Community Library community and Mary offering classes in our other member libraries. MVLS was able to use digital literacy grant money to purchase 6 laptops for The Community Library to use for this initiative.

This month, MVLS was awarded a \$10,000 grant incentive from PLA/AT&T for continuing the expansion of digital literacy class offerings through the Digital Learn program. This is the highest amount we have received in our third year of grant funding from this incentive. Mary plans to work with Nicole Hemsley of the Amsterdam Free Library to support their needs as they set up their computer classroom. She also plans to extend her training initiatives to the Fulton and Montgomery service areas in 2025.

Mary presented at the NYLA conference last week. The presentation was titled Ignite Successful Collaboration and Lasting Partnerships and showcased our library system resource sharing, partnerships between our libraries and their communities, and the collaborative projects we have created as a system, highlighting the MVLS-GO trading cards introduced during our 2024 summer reading program. There was great attendance and positive feedback for the presentation. Participants wanted to see the trading cards and a few took one home to show their own libraries.

Mary set-up and hosted the first ever MVLS Grants Meet-up. Four libraries participated. The group provided excellent ideas on finding grants, tips on grant writing, and organizational ideas for grants administration.

All of our 2024 Library construction grants have passed their initial review and will now wend their way through the state's complex approval process. The 2023 grants are finally all the way through that process. Libraries should receive that 2023 funding soon.

Empowering Member Libraries with Advocacy & Awareness

NYLA has developed an ambitious set of initiatives for the 2025 advocacy season. See this page: <https://www.nyla.org/2025-legislative-initiatives>. Many of these issues were covered in the Assembly Library Committee hearing on October 21. Participants addressed library operating aid, construction aid (that was me), disaster and emergency management aid, issues with e-resources pricing, association libraries and the state retirement system, school aid, etc. All are on the agenda for 2025.

This interacts well with a new New York Alliance of Library Systems initiative on statewide advocacy. This initiative will involve close cooperation with NYLA in developing partnerships, advocates and messaging, and resources to encourage more people to take part in library advocacy campaigns. We know that consistent, persistent messaging, combined with many passionate advocates leads to winning campaigns. I look forward to bringing these new ideas to MVLS.

We have another successful budget vote at an MVLS library! Sharon Springs Free Library had a budget proposition pass on election day. They are our only library to hold a vote with a Town on election day. Congratulations Sharon Springs! It is great to see more and more of our libraries embracing the annual budget vote as a strategy for a secure library future.

We are in the midst of the Foundation for Mohawk Valley Libraries annual appeal. This is the Foundation's biggest fundraiser of the year, bring in twice as much funding as any of our other events. This funding supports grants for member libraries. The next round of grants are the winter advocacy grants. This may be the last round of that particular grant program, The Foundation is discussing a more open ended incentive grant for future rounds.

A new issue of the MVLS Newsletter was produced in October. It is on the MVLS website at: <https://www.mvls.info/newsletter/>,

Empowering Member Libraries with Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

9/3/2024	Susan London Christine Witkowski Becky Leggieri Haileab Samuel Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Kathy Naftaly, Crandall Library Foundation Board Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
9/4/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library

	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development
	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Heather Devitt, Mohawk Valley Digital Inclusion Coalition
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Executive Committee
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
9/5/2024	April Davies
	Kathy Naftaly, Crandall Library
	JA Finance
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
9/6/2024	Christine Witkowski
	Brideen Finegan
	Haileab Samuel
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Library Services Committee
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
9/9/2024	Haileab Samuel
	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library
	JA Council
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Executive Committee
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
9/10/2024	Brideen Finegan
	William Bonner
	Karen Bradley
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council
	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library
	MVLS Library Services Committee
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	PULISDO

	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Brian Hildreth, Southern Tier Library System
	Thomas Gessick, CPA, T.M. Byxbee Company, CPAs, NY, PC
	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
9/11/2024	Katherine Hawkins
	Brideen Finegan
	JA Council
	Kathryn McCary, Law Office of Kathryn McCary
9/12/2024	Brideen Finegan
	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
9/13/2024	April Davies
	Susan London
	Frank Reese, Division of Library Development
	Foundation Board
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
9/16/2024	Haileab Samuel
	Madelyn Thorne
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
9/17/2024	Mary VanPatten
	William Bonner
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Library Services Committee
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
9/18/2024	John Lui, Canajoharie Golf & Country Club
	Kristi Beedon, HFM BOCES SLS
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
9/19/2024	MVLS Board of Trustees
9/20/2024	Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
9/23/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Frank Reese, Division of Library Development
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library

	MVLS Board of Trustees
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
9/24/2024	Frank Reese, Division of Library Development
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
9/25/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
9/26/2024	MVLS Member Library Directors
9/27/2024	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
9/30/2024	Madelyn Thorne
	Christine Witkowski
	Rosemary Barger
	Frank Reese, Division of Library Development
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Lauren Moore, New York State Librarian
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
10/1/2024	Christine Witkowski
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
10/2/2024	Mary VanPatten
	Christine Witkowski
	Karen Bradley
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Public Relations Event
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
10/3/2024	Jeanne M. Irwin
	Tom Twente
	Karen Bradley
	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
	Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Member Library Directors
10/4/2024	Beverly Osborne

	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Board of Trustees
10/7/2024	Rosemary Barger
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
10/8/2024	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
10/9/2024	Max Prime, NYLA
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
10/10/2024	HFM School Library System Council
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
10/11/2024	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
10/15/2024	Julia Maxwell, DLD
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	MVLS SCPL JA Discussions
	Grace Riario, Ramapo Catskill Library System
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
10/16/2024	Jeanne M. Irwin
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	MVLS SCPL JA Discussions
10/17/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
10/18/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Frank Reese, Division of Library Development
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
10/21/2024	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Angelo Santabarbara, New York State Assembly
	Max Prime, NYLA
	NYS Assembly Library Services Committee
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
10/22/2024	Beverly Osborne
	Christine Witkowski
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
10/23/2024	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	NYALS
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
10/24/2024	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Board of Trustees

	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Max Prime, NYLA
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
10/25/2024	Christine Witkowski
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
10/28/2024	Foundation Board
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
10/29/2024	MVLS Member Library Directors
	MVLS SCPL JA Discussions
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
10/30/2024	Christine Witkowski
	Madelyn Thorne
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library