

Mohawk Valley Library System
Board of Trustees Meeting
March 20, 2025

MINUTES

PRESENT: Bill Bonner, Jane Borrelli, Katherine Hawkins, Susan London, Mary VanPatten, Haileab Samuel, and Eric Trahan, Director

EXCUSED: Terry Pavoldi, April Davies

GUESTS (in-person): Kate Clingan, Mary Carrier

GUESTS (Virtual): Diane Empie (STJ), Wade Abbott, Sharon OBrien, Pat Gosda, Dave Gosda, Nicole Hemsley (AMS), Kim Zimmer (COB)

Call to Order President Bill Bonner called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

Special Presentations Mary Carrier attended the meeting to brief the board on some of her current projects as the Technology & Growth Consultant at MVLS. She and Beth Rienti are in their second year of the Cabin Fever Club, a series of virtual programs that MVLS puts on in the winter. The Amsterdam Library has been putting up displays to help promote the programs each week, and even holding watch parties at the library. This week was “Visit the Library in Your Pajamas” and several Amsterdam staff members dressed in their pajamas to promote it. The final Cabin Fever 2025 class, “Understanding Cloud Storage,” is next week.

This week, Mary and Beth also toured The Sentinel, an assisted living facility in Amsterdam, and spoke with their admissions director about outreach opportunities that libraries can offer, as well as access to materials for the visually-impaired, and how they can get residents access to library cards.

Mary has also been traveling our service area teaching technology classes through several different community partners. With Senior Planet by AARP, Mary’s focus was on presenting AI scams information at senior centers. Through the Albany Guardian Society, Mary reached over 80 attendees with classes on how to use their iPhones and Android phones, showing that virtual classes can be successful if we have a partner with a large following. This week she held her latest SCHOOL class, “25 Ways to Use Your Smartphone Camera,” in person at the Schoharie Free Library.

In grant news, for the third year in a row, Mary has applied for and received a \$10,000 Digital Learn Grant to promote digital literacy. The Mohawk Valley Economic Development District received \$130,000 grant to work on digital infrastructure to support Schoharie, Montgomery, and Fulton Counties in our system. Mary is now working with them on a Digital Capacity grant that includes partnering with WorkForce Solutions, Mid-York Library System, and the Office of the Aging. For MVLS’s part, we would offer basic digital literacy classes in our libraries and then send patrons to Workforce Solutions for more advanced job skills digital training.

Consent Agenda: Consideration of January Meeting Minutes, Treasurer’s Report, Statements of Financial Position for January and February, Payment Schedules #1 for \$108,274.62 and #2 for \$170,151.47.

MOTION: To approve the Consent Agenda.

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

Advocacy Update Recently, both the Senate and Assembly released their one-house budgets. Both included increases in library aid from the Governor’s budget. As the final budget often ends up a compromise between the three, we’re hoping that Construction Aid will be at least as much as it was last year and that Library Aid will see at least a slight increase. A few days ago, the President signed an executive order cutting funding for

the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which funds the New York State Library and DLD. As this money was designated by Congress for this purpose, we will have to wait and see how this particular issue plays out in the courts, but it's important to be aware of what's going on and to take advantage of any opportunity to advocate for libraries.

Spring Symposium The Spring Symposium is coming together; the current date is May 1 from 3-5:30pm at the Sharon Springs Free Library. The presentation will be on Succession Planning given by Meghan Harney, director of the Lowville Free Library in Lowville, NY.

MFA Implementation As discussed at our last meeting, there is an April 15 deadline for all library staff to implement MFA or lose access to their accounts. Most of our MVLS libraries have either completed implementation of MFA for all staff members or are in the process of doing so. JA sent out a reminder of the April 15th deadline this week.

Foundation Incentive Grants The Foundation proposes changing the structure of their incentive grants to make them more open-ended, allowing libraries to apply for up to \$350 for technology-related projects.

MOTION To approve the establishment of new Foundation incentive grants to give each library up to \$350 for technology-related projects.

Borrelli/Samuel. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Governance Structure Review Committee Since our last meeting, the GSR Committee has been created and met twice, on 3/5 and 3/19. In the board packets are the charter for the committee as well as the minutes from the first meeting on 3/5. They started by reviewing the election process at the MVLS Annual Meeting, and reached out to MVLS's attorney, Cole Adams, for some guidance. At the meeting on 3/19, they discussed changes they'd like to make to the election process. First, they'd like to put together an advisory committee comprised of 2 people from each county who could bring potential candidates for the board to the nominating committee. Rather than holding the election at the annual meeting, they could send out a ballot with nominees to member library boards ahead of time, so that those boards could discuss the candidates and submit their board's vote. In the case of a tie, there would be a runoff vote. If that still resulted in a tie, the seat would remain vacant until the MVLS board voted to appoint someone to the seat at their next regular meeting.

Potential Bylaws Amendment In order to implement the recommendations of the GSR Committee, there would need to be a change to the MVLS Bylaws. Their proposed bylaws amendment is in the board packet and online at <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Bylaws-Amendment-Draft-March-19-2025.pdf>. This would be voted on at the May meeting. The committee will also be looking at decoupling Procedures from Bylaws.

MOTION: To present this bylaws amendment at the May meeting.

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

Central Library The Board approved a Central Library plan in September and MVLS submitted it to the State. DLD has suggested a few changes. There is a copy of the new Central Library plan in the board packets. Eric noted one mistake in the plan that needs to be corrected: both Goals 4 and 5 mistakenly say "2026 and 2026," and should say "2025 and 2026."

MOTION: To approve the Central Library Services Plan 2025-2026, as amended.

Borrelli/Samuel. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

State Annual Report The MVLS 2024 State Annual Report is available for review online at <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/MVLS-State-Report.pdf>

MOTION: To approve the 2024 State Annual Report as submitted.
Hawkins/London. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

The **Director's Report** for January and February 2025 was distributed before the meeting. As usual, Eric organized the report around the goals that were set during our most recent plan of service process.

1. **Empower Libraries with the Vision & Knowledge for Secure Futures** We have two libraries currently engaged in the planning process. The Frothingham Free Library in Fonda is in the middle of producing their strategic plan, and The Community Library in Cobleskill is starting that process.
2. **Empower Libraries with the Skills, Tools, & Resources for Serving All** This relates to a lot of the work that Mary discussed in her presentation earlier: digital literacy classes in the community are an example of the system helping libraries develop their tools for serving all.
3. **Empower Libraries with Collaboration for Outstanding Library Services** We have been working closely with our neighboring library systems, SALS and UHLS, as well as 4CLS and MYLS on things like collaborative workshops and grant applications.
4. **Empower Libraries for Inspiration & Methods for Telling the Library Story** The Annual Reports that libraries fill out and submit to the State are part of telling the library story. Libraries can use the information in their annual reports to tell their stories to their communities.

Mary VanPatten asks about helping unserved areas like Broadalbin to create a library. Eric says we do periodically check in with these places to try and encourage them to move toward having their own libraries. For example, Beth has recently been to Broadalbin.

Katherine announced that The Community Library in Cobleskill has received a grant to replace their sign out front.

Director's Council Report The directors are planning to meet in April.

Privilege of the Floor Bill had mentioned in January that he wanted to visit MVLS libraries. Since then, he has stopped by Johnstown and had a great meeting with their director, Erica Wing. Now that the weather is getting nicer, he plans to try and visit other libraries and will send out invites to other trustees so that folks can join him. He also wanted to mention that the board education session in February at MVLS (and online) was very productive. The next one is set for April 24th.

Katherine reports that there is a new sheriff in Schoharie County.

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 11:06am.
Samuel/VanPatten. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Next Board Meeting:

9:30am, Thursday, May 15, 2025.

MVLS Service Center