

**Mohawk Valley Library System
Director's Report
March April, 2025**

Empowering Member Libraries with Sound Administration & Governance

Tentative numbers from the developing NYS budget were released on May 8. They are:

- Library operating Aid: \$106.325 million
- Public Library Construction Aid: \$44 million

The construction aid number is the same as 2024, which was a record high in that category. The operating aid number is about a 2.4% increase over 2024, a welcome, modest increase in a difficult state budget year.

The state of federal library funding remains uncertain; while there has been some activity, most of it is exactly what was expected, and there is little real change, including no clarity on what we can expect in the future. Lawsuits have been filed, and the President's "skinny" budget has been released; but there is no meaningful information on what NYS and library systems can expect going forward. And so, it is good time to continue with advocacy! More information on how you can participate is in the Advocacy section below.

Since the fall of 2023, MVLS has been participating in NYLAF, which allows public entities in New York to pool investments for a better rate of return. Our participation in NYLAF has greatly increased our ability to earn interest. As of July 1, 2025, NYLAF is going into a reorganization with NYCLASS, the New York Cooperative Liquid Assets Securities System. We are assured that everything will work the same as under NYLAF; even our logins are expected to stay the same. But we do need to pass a resolution, similar to what we did when we joined NYLAF, to make the transition seamless. Here's the proposed resolution: "The Mohawk Valley Library System is hereby authorized to participate in the NYCLASS program under the terms of the NYCLASS Municipal Cooperation Agreement Amended and Restated as of August 1, 2023." (<https://newyorkclass.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-04.25-NYCLASS-Municipal-Cooperation-Agreement-IP-Exhibit-B-Update-Clean-.pdf>)

The Governance Structure Review Committee has been busy and productive. As reviewed at the March board meeting, we have a bylaws amendment and Trustee Nomination and Election Policy to present for board action in May. Cole recommends the language at the bottom of the bylaws amendment document. The committee has also produced a Board of Trustees Effectiveness Review proposal, and a MVLS System and Director Review proposal. All are included with the meeting documents for the May meeting.

The committee will now turn to the development of a MVLS Statement of Ethics, and new Conflict of Interest policy, and several additional proposed bylaws amendments.

Empowering Member Libraries with Automation and Resource Sharing

Haileab has continued to facilitate meetings designed to improve communication and resource sharing between SCPL and MVLS. The April 15 meeting was productive in identifying strategies for making progress in improving communications and resource sharing. Here is a summary:

- Meeting notes available quickly (Haileab has AI that helps accomplish that)
- Ongoing communication among parties between meetings
- SCPL developing detailed proposals for proposed solutions
- Emphasize practical, short-term solutions

There is a continued issue with confusion on the part of library patrons and staff about the separateness of the SCPL and JA catalogs. MVLS has developed information to help with that, it is on our website at: <https://www.mvls.info/joint-automation-information/>.

The JA Council will meet the day before our May board meeting, on May 14. Several items from the agenda will be coming to the MVLS board for formal approval. These include budget amendments and a policy update. The Multifactor Authentication (MFA) project was successfully implemented. Kudos to the JA staff and libraries for accomplishing that goal.

Empowering Member Libraries with Youth, Adult and Outreach Services

Libraries are finalizing their plans for the annual summer reading program. This year's theme is "Color Our World." Beth helped to plan the statewide virtual workshop, which was held on March 11. Four MVLS libraries participated. Most MVLS libraries are participating in our MVLS collaborative project for the year, which is a community puzzle art project. MVLS is again working with UHLS on the summer Read it Forward program, which is something like a regional community read program for teens.

Beth continues to update and develop the MVLS program kit resources, developing a new Plants & Gardening kit and updating several others. In all, 83 kits were borrowed in March & April. In addition, 135 preview books were distributed to libraries & outreach partners.

The MVLS Children's literature Challenge project is underway, with the first module now available to the four libraries that are piloting this project. This initiative is designed to help libraries build great collections of children's literature, and to use it to serve their communities.

Mary continues to provide digital literacy programs under a variety of programs. Over 60 individuals attended programs in March and April, in several locations around the MVLS service area. Beth continues to provide monthly outreach storytime programs at the Whispering Pines preschool.

MVLS is again offering Outreach mini grants, with \$5,000 allocated to these grants in 2025. Last year we had many applicants, and funded several worthy projects. The Awards committee will be meeting to review the applications.

Empowering Member Libraries with Training, Consultation and Collaboration

The 2025 Spring Symposium was a great success. Over 45 library staff and trustees gathered at the Sharon Springs Free Library on Thursday, May 1 to hear talks on helping libraries plan for a secure future. Meghan Harney from the Lowville Free Library provided a presentation on "Documenting

institutional Knowledge,” and our own Mary Carrier presented on “Resilient Staffing Plans,” followed by a lively discussion on sustainable funding and other strategies for making libraries more resilient. Thanks to all who worked to make this event a success.

Our second Trustee Training Session, on April 24, was a success. We had 5 participants onsite and 5 via Zoom. Participation certificates have been sent to the member library trustees who attended, for their required records on training. We will be planning another session in the fall. Suggestions on a topic are welcome!

Website accessibility continues to be an important issue for libraries. New requirements under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) are going into effect. Mary has been working with libraries to provide resources and assistance. Mary is participating in a working group of nine other library systems to share resources on this topic. Mary reports that we are comparatively well positioned among library systems in addressing these accessibility requirements.

Beth is providing statewide workshops on Supercharged Storytimes through the Division of Library Development. Beth provided four statewide workshops in March and April. She also attended the annual NYS Youth Services Section conference. In addition, Beth is working with nine other library systems on the Youth Services AI Challenge, an effort to explore using AI to assist with library youth services activities.

In addition to the Read it Forward project mentioned above, MVLS is working with UHLS on the regional GOATS Teen Services one-day workshop, which will happen in October, and on an upcoming youth services workshop covering recent research on reading.

The Upper Hudson Library System has named a new Director. Chris Sagaas will begin in June. He served most recently as the director of the Utica Public Library. We have worked with Chris in the past on advocacy and other initiatives. SALS will also be getting a new director later this year. Sara Dallas announced her retirement earlier this year.

Empowering Member Libraries with Advocacy & Awareness

Many MVLS libraries have budget votes planned for this May, with most happening on May 20. Make sure you vote if your library has a proposition before the voters! Wade is working with several libraries on community engagement to help with these efforts. It was great to have a discussion on the importance of annual budget votes at the Symposium.

On the federal advocacy front, the organization Every Library has been active with federal advocacy campaigns, more information is here: <https://action.everylibrary.org/>. The ALA also has advocacy information and opportunities that anyone can access, see: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/show-up-for-our-libraries>.

I will be attending NYLA’s Spring on the Hill event in Albany on May 20. This year, the emphasis for this one-day conference will be on advocacy.

Susan London, Terry Pavoldi and I met and discussed the possibility of Gilboa starting a public library. On further investigation, it appears that there is little local interest. We have again been discussing the possibility of the Wilkinson Memorial Book Station in Broadalbin working to become a “real” library.

Beth has been working with them on children's services, and I am meeting with their board later this month.

The Foundation had a record-breaking Library Giving Day with over \$4,000 raised. Our next fundraiser is the annual golf tournament in Canajoharie, scheduled for June 30. Our late summer golf tournament will be held in Johnstown this year, and the Fox Run Golf Club.

Foundation trustee Carlton Shepard's term expires on June 30. He is eligible to serve for another term. I recommend that you approve Carl continuing as a Foundation trustee through June 30, 2028.

Empowering Member Libraries with Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

3/3/2025	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
3/4/2025	Amy Heebner, Division of Library Development
3/5/2025	William Bonner Lauren Cardinal, Division of Library Development MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/6/2025	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
3/7/2025	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee Kim Zimmer, The Community Library Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
3/10/2025	Christine Witkowski Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/11/2025	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
3/12/2025	Stella Williams HFM School Library System Council Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
3/13/2025	William Bonner Lauren Hoyt, New York Library Association
3/14/2025	MVLS Board of Trustees
3/17/2025	Diane Stewart Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library MVLS Board of Trustees

3/18/2025	MVLS Member Library Directors Stella Williams Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library MVLS Member Library Directors Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/19/2025	Gretchen Subik MVLS Board of Trustees MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee Sophia Daigneault, Northville Public Library
3/20/2025	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Division of Library Development, NYSED MVLS Board of Trustees Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/21/2025	William Bonner Amy Heebner, Division of Library Development Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
3/24/2025	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
3/25/2025	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
3/26/2025	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library John Sullivan MVLS Member Library Directors Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
3/27/2025	JA Committee - messaging Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
3/28/2025	Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library MVLS Member Library Directors Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
4/1/2025	Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams MVLS Staff Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
4/2/2025	Dave and Pat Gosda Stephanie Cuomo Jacqueline Haddam Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
4/3/2025	Cheryl Cufari
4/4/2025	William Bonner Foundation Board Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Terry Kirchner, Westchester Library System
4/7/2025	William Bonner Dave and Pat Gosda Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library

	MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/8/2025	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/9/2025	Jacqueline Haddam
	MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee
	Gloversville Library Open House
	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
4/10/2025	Haileab Samuel
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
4/11/2025	Foundation Board
	MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
4/15/2025	MVLS SCPL Discussions
	Chris Sagaas, Upper Hudson Library System
4/16/2025	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/17/2025	William Bonner
	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development
	Division of Library Development, NYSED
	MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee
	MVLS Member Library Directors
4/18/2025	Dave and Pat Gosda
	MVLS Member Library Directors
4/21/2025	Michael Feldman
	Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole Adams
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/22/2025	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
4/23/2025	Diane Stewart
	MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee
4/24/2025	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	MVLS Trustee Education Session
	Beth DeMidio, Schenectady County Public Library
	Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library
	Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library
4/28/2025	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
	Roseann Doran, Wilkinson Memorial Book Station
4/29/2025	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
4/30/2025	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library