

Mohawk Valley Library System
Board of Trustees Meeting
May 15, 2025

MINUTES

PRESENT: Bill Bonner, Jane Borrelli, April Davies, Katherine Hawkins, Susan London, Terry Pavoldi, and Eric Trahan, Director

EXCUSED: Mary VanPatten, Haileab Samuel

GUESTS (in-person): Kate Clingan, Wade Abbott

GUESTS (Virtual): Mary Carrier, Sharon OBrien, Pat Gosda, Diane Empie (STJ), Charity Thorne (SCP), Kim Zimmer (COB)

Call to Order President Bill Bonner called the meeting to order at 9:31 am.

Staff Update Wade Abbott attended the meeting to brief the board on some of his current projects as the Community Engagement & Communications Specialist. Wade wanted to talk about tax levy data for our libraries' recent/upcoming votes. This year, ten of our libraries have gone/will go out for budget votes. Hopefully one day soon we will see all of our libraries going out for votes in a year. Middleburgh successfully passed their budget this week, and next week on May 20th we have seven libraries going up for a vote. There are still a lot of challenges – for example, there has been some controversy over the Cobleskill school district's budget, and people tend to vote the same way for the school budget and the library budget. Our libraries are doing a fantastic job of getting the word out on what great services they provide, and hopefully that will translate into positive news.

Terry asks if MVLS could send a congratulations email to all of the directors when a library vote passes so that everyone is aware of the successes. Wade and Eric agree that is a great idea.

Consent Agenda: Consideration of March Meeting Minutes, Treasurer's Report, Statements of Financial Position for March and April, Payment Schedules #3 for \$93,219.13 and #4 for \$108,761.24.

Katherine wanted to make a note that she was mistaken at the last meeting – there is not a new sheriff in Schoharie County, the current sheriff is retiring, and there will be a new sheriff after the election.

MOTION: To approve the Consent Agenda.

Hawkins/London. Ayes – 5. Nays – None. Abstentions – 1 (Davies)

NYLAF/NYCLASS reorganization New York Liquid Asset Fund (of which MVLS is a member) and New York Cooperative Liquid Assets Securities System are merging. While we have been told that everything will work the same as under NYLAF, the board needs to pass a resolution, similar to what we did when we joined NYLAF.

MOTION To approve the following 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.

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

Governance Structure Review Committee Last meeting, we introduced a bylaws amendment for the election of trustees. After sending that amendment to MVLS's attorney, Cole Adams, she had some suggestions for updates. The suggested amendment as presented at the last meeting is in the board packets (available here: <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Bylaws-Amendment-May-2025-Draft.pdf>). The suggested edits from Cole are also being presented at this meeting, to be voted on in July.

MOTION To accept the bylaws amendment as presented in March.

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

To prepare for the vote on the new Article III Section 5 text recommended by Cole Adams, the board approved the following resolution:

"WHEREAS bylaws amendments require review at a prior meeting and mailing/emailing of the proposed changes to each trustee at least ten days prior to the meeting where they will be amended, BE IT RESOLVED that the board acknowledges review of the attached bylaws revision; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of such wording shall be emailed to each trustee as required by July 7 (at least ten days prior to the July 17th meeting); and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such requirements being fulfilled, the board shall vote as to whether to pass the amendment at the July 17th meeting."

MOTION To accept this resolution for the bylaws amendment to be voted on at the July meeting.

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

Trustee Election Policy The GSRC has also been working on changes to several policies, such as the Trustee Nomination and Election Policy (available here: <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Board-Governance-Policy-Trustee-nomination-and-elections-DRAFT.pdf>)

MOTION To adopt the Trustee Nomination and Election Policy as presented.

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

Board review process Draft Board of Trustees Effectiveness Review documents are in the board packets. If accepted, Bill would like board members to take the time to examine the review documents and answer the questions as they each feel appropriate, and then hold a special meeting on June 26th at 9:30am at the MVLS Service Center to discuss their individual responses. One suggested change to this document (and the Director Review document) is to reverse the scale so that 1 is the lowest score and 5 is the highest.

MOTION To enact this board review process with the stated alteration.

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

Director review process Draft Board of Trustees Evaluation of MVLS: Director Leadership & Management documents are in the board packets. The same scale adjustment would be made to this document. Discussion ensued about the process of sharing the results with the director.

The plan for the Director Review would be for board members to individually review the questions, and then discuss at a special meeting on September 2nd. More information would be released on that meeting once the board review meeting has taken place. Kim asks if there would be input from MVLS staff, member library directors, or Foundation board members. Bill says that there are avenues for those individuals to voice their information year-round. April suggests that they invite comment around the time that they will be meeting to discuss the review. Bill agrees that that is a good idea, and also would note that this input would be good to solicit for the board review as well.

MOTION To enact this Director review process with the stated alteration.

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

Bill is hopeful that the GSRC will be finishing up its work within the next few months, with potential bylaws amendments to be presented at the July meeting and voted on in September.

Advocacy Update Eric has a meeting this afternoon with the State Education department and he'll share any new information he gets from them. The NYS Budget kept Construction Aid the same as last year which was a record high. Library Operating Aid increased by around 2.4%, a modest but welcome change.

Federally, an injunction was placed on the stoppage of IMLS funding, but it's a very confusing time and no one knows what is going on. Eric encourages folks to take advantage of any and all advocacy opportunities. This will come up more when the federal budget comes out later in the year, probably around August/September.

Spring Symposium We were very pleased at the turnout for the Spring Symposium. An evaluation went out to attendees, and the results were largely positive – the general consensus was that people wanted a longer event, maybe even a full day.

JA Business: Policy Updates The JA Council met yesterday on the 14th. There were many policies updated at yesterday's meeting which need approval from the MVLS and SALS Boards.

Language was changed in seven policies (Identification Information in Patron Registration Policy, Network Connections Policy, Security Policy Section V Confidential Library Patron Data Policy, Security Policy Description, Security Policy FAQ, Access to Polaris Policy, and Workstation Purchase and Support Policy) to change specific numbers of libraries to "participating libraries in the Mohawk Valley and Southern Adirondack Library Systems." The User Account policy was updated to add the statement that Multi-Factor Authentication is required for all accounts.

MOTION To approve these JA Policy changes.

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

JA Business: Budget Amendments There was one increase in JA's income due to interest accrued in the NYLAF account, and several increases to expenses due to unforeseen repairs to the generator and air conditioning, as well as additional costs for database upgrades. Budget amendments are available here: <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/JA-business-for-MVLS-board-May-2025.pdf>

MOTION To approve the JA budget amendments.

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

Foundation trustees, fundraisers, and grants Last month we approved the \$350 Foundation Technology Grants. We had applications from ten of our libraries.

One Foundation trustee, Carlton Shepard's, term is expiring in June 2025. He is interested in serving another term.

MOTION To appoint Carlton Shepard to another 3-year term on the Foundation board to expire June 2028.

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

The **Director's Report** for March and April 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** Wade's presentation shows how many of our libraries are working to secure their futures through annual budget votes. We also hope that the workshops MVLS holds such as the Spring Symposium and our trustee training sessions can help libraries plan their futures.
2. **Empower Libraries with the Skills, Tools, & Resources for Serving All** MVLS creates and houses many different kits that can be used by libraries to assist in their programming. Beth has been working on developing new kits as well as updating older ones. In March and April of this year, 83 kits went out to our libraries!
3. **Empower Libraries with Collaboration for Outstanding Library Services** MVLS staff has been collaborating statewide with other libraries and systems. Mary has been working with other libraries throughout the state on website accessibility. For the second year in a row, Beth has been teaching a statewide Supercharged Storytimes training.
4. **Empower Libraries for Inspiration & Methods for Telling the Library Story** Eric is meeting with folks from Broadalbin on Monday to discuss how they can move forward into becoming a library. Next time he is hoping to have more information to share.

Outreach Mini Grants: MVLS received several applications for our 2025 Outreach Mini Grants, totaling slightly over the amount we have available. Beth will be sending information out to the Awards Committee to plan a meeting to discuss the applications.

Director's Council Report The directors met at Amsterdam in April. Mary Carrier presented about making websites and social media posts more accessible, which was very helpful. Terry appreciates the support that Mary gives in that area. Nicole from AMS discussed using central library money to purchase library memberships to the New York Council of Nonprofits, which provides very helpful services to libraries. MVLS Libraries are also eligible for membership in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, funded by the United Way of the Capital Region as well as various philanthropic groups. Patrons can register online and children under 5 get a free book every month. Terry also wanted to congratulate Kim Zimmer for being voted one of the Top Five Women Changemakers in Schoharie County. It's lovely to see a librarian being celebrated for the great work she provides.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Awards There will be a meeting coming to discuss Outreach Grants.

Building & Equipment Katherine asked what they're building next door. BJ's Wholesale is moving there. Susan asks about the potholes in the driveway. Eric says he is planning to patch those once the weather cooperates.

Finance No report

Joint Automation No further report.

Library Services Eric says we've been told that the Library Construction Grant process will be beginning in a few weeks. Libraries will be getting more of the reallocation funds from last year. A bill was passed last year that increased the percentage cap that the grants can pay for.

Nominating The committee will be meeting soon to discuss the new trustee nomination and election policy.

Personnel No report.

Privilege of the Floor Susan asks about whether the Board has ever appointed a Trustee Emeritus. Eric says that it has happened in the past, but it has been many years. Susan thinks the board should consider honoring someone with that. Bill welcomes any names to be submitted.

Katherine mentions that she sent Bill and Eric a YouTube video of the world's greatest libraries that she found interesting and thinks other library patrons would like as well. She also read a bit from the letter to the editor in today's Cobleskill Times-Journal about the Cobleskill-Richmondville School District vote. April notes that the archive of the Times-Journal will be moving to the SUNY Cobleskill library, which will be more accessible to the public.

Bill reminds board members to keep an eye on their email for information about the special meeting in June.

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 11:10am.

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

Next Regular Board Meeting:

9:30am, Thursday, July 17, 2025.

MVLS Service Center