

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

MINUTES

PRESENT: Bill Bonner, Jane Borrelli, April Davies, Katherine Hawkins, Susan London, Terry Pavoldi, Haileab Samuel, Mary VanPatten, and Eric Trahan, Director.

EXCUSED: Parish Ogunjana

GUESTS: Tom Gessick (T.M. Byxbee), Kate Clingan, Wade Abbott, Pat Gosda, Kim Zimmer (COB)

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

Special Presentation Tom Gessick from T.M Byxbee attended the meeting to present the 2024 MVLS and JA Review Reports and Form 990. Draft reports were reviewed by the trustees. Tom notes that this is a Review Report, not an Audit (which is more intensive). Nothing has come to their attention that would indicate that the financial reports from MVLS were inaccurate. As MVLS reports on the cash basis of accounting, increases or decreases in operating lines from one year to the next are largely due to the timing of receipts and disbursements, which you can see happened with 2023 and 2024. Notably, the Central Library Aid from 2023 was received in 2024. Eric notes that we have to report to New York State using the cash basis of accounting, which is why we use that. Tom discussed how MVLS and JA moved to QuickBooks online in 2024, which caused some confusion with the auditors, but Joe Sherry is working with Barbara Lawson at T.M. Byxbee to make changes. Tom wanted to commend Joe for the work he does at MVLS as our finance manager.

2026 Budget Hearing Eric presented the 2026 Proposed Budget. On the income side, most of the changes from 2025 are removing grants received in 2025 that are not expected in 2026. We have kept the State Aid lines flat, although it is likely that they will change at least slightly. Interest rates are down, so the interest line has decreased.

On the expense side, we see increases in salaries and benefits, which will be discussed later in executive session. Changes in library materials are mostly related to changes in how we are spending Central Library funding. The most notable change is the increase to the Automation – System line, which has been discussed before. This was a decision made a year ago to increase the amount that both SALS and MVLS pay to JA in order to stabilize the JA budget during the SCP transition out of JA. This is a one-time planned deficit for MVLS. The expectation is that it may take a couple of years for the JA budget to balance out.

Consent Agenda: Consideration of September Meeting Minutes, September Board Election Meeting Minutes, Annual Meeting Minutes, Treasurer's Reports, Statements of Financial

Position for September and October, Payment Schedules #9 for \$217,837.34 and #10 for \$109,903.44 Jane notes that a correction is needed on the Board Election Meeting Minutes, as the Northville Public Library isn't mentioned at all. They didn't have a representative present, and that change will be noted.

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda, with this change.
Hawkins/Davies. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

MOTION To accept the 2026 proposed budget
Borrelli/Davies. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

MOTION To accept the 2024 MVLS and JA Review Reports and Form 990 as presented by T.M. Bxybee.
Davies/London. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Annual Meeting/Trustee Election Debrief Eric wanted to take this time to discuss the changes we made to the MVLS Trustee Election process this year and take any feedback from the board. Katherine felt this was a great improvement.

Joint Automation: Project Manager Search The job description for the JA Project Manager position is out, and the posting is open for a few more days. A search committee has been created who will be looking at the candidates and scheduling interviews, likely in January. The hope is to have someone in place before Michele Largebeau retires in March for a smooth transition. Eric will be meeting with Kim Bolan, director at SALS, to discuss next steps.

Joint Automation: JA Agreement between MVLS & SALS If the board has any thoughts on the draft JA Agreement presented at the September meeting, please let Eric know ASAP so that he can make any changes and submit for legal review.

Joint Automation: MVLS Representative

MOTION To appoint Terry Pavoldi to another 3-year term on the JA Council to end December 31, 2028.
Borrelli/London. Ayes - All. Nays - None

Reorganizational Business - Official bank and newspaper

MOTION: To approve NBT Bank and New York Cooperative Liquid Assets Securities System (NYCLASS) as the official banks of MVLS and the Daily Gazette as the official newspaper of MVLS.
Davies/London. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Reorganizational Business – 2026 Meeting Schedule We will continue with the third Thursday of every other month in 2026. The 2025-2026 meeting schedule is online at <https://www.mvls.info/meeting-schedule/>

MOTION: To accept the schedule of meetings for 2026 as presented.

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

Reorganizational Business - Election/Appointment of Officers 2026

Eric, on behalf of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officers for 2026:

President: Bill Bonner

Vice President: Susan London

Secretary: Katherine Hawkins

Finance Officer: Jane Borrelli

Executive Committee Member-At-Large: Mary VanPatten

Treasurer: Sally Rappa (not a trustee)

MOTION: To accept the slate of officers for 2026 as presented.

Davies/Samuel. Ayes – All. Nays – None

The **Director's Report** for September and October was distributed before the meeting. As usual, Eric organized his 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 and Eric are currently working with the Frothingham Free Library on the planning process, which is expected to be completed by January. The Schenectady County Public Library is also in the midst of planning, which they've hired a consultant for. They currently have a public survey out and are holding focus groups.
2. **Empower Libraries with the Skills, Tools, and Resources for Serving All** - MVLS is involved with several other regional organizations like CDLC, and encourages our libraries to interact with the wider library community.
3. **Empower Libraries with Collaboration for Outstanding Library Services** – Eric notes that part of the collaboration between our libraries can be seen in the shared MVLS Overdrive collection, which our libraries fund together as they recognize the importance of a robust digital collection.
4. **Empower Libraries with Inspiration & Methods for Telling the Library Story** – Eric was very pleased with the fact that our libraries all got up and talked about their stories at the Annual Meeting and those stories were incredibly meaningful to hear. This was also a topic of discussion at the NYLA meeting this year, which several of our member attended, with the keynote speech specifically about ways to tell your library's story.

Directors Council Report Terry reports that the directors met in October where they discussed their representative on the MVLS board, as Terry's term ends at the end of this year. Terry would like the directors to come up with a job description of sorts for the Directors' representative on the MVLS board. The directors will be meeting in December to discuss this. Katherine notes that maybe there should be a job description for their representatives on the JA Council as well.

COMMITTEE REPORTS No further reports from Committees. Bill notes that he does plan to reconvene the Governance Structure Review Committee in the new year.

Privilege of the Floor Eric notes that MVLS is having a Holiday Open House on Tuesday, December 9th so feel free drop in between noon and 4pm!

April notes that she changed her cell phone number and will update Eric on that.

Katherine notes that she's heard of more unhoused populations using the libraries in our service area, and would like to see MVLS present guidelines for libraries to create their policies around. Bill asks if there are resource packets available. Terry says that there is a Schoharie County resource packet that she has given out. Bill suggests creating a committee with the directors to discuss this issue and asks Terry to bring it to Directors Council at their next meeting. Haileab points out that this is a bigger problem that is not necessarily libraries' job to solve, although it is important to look at what part we are able to play in a solution.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session at 11:04 am to discuss 2026 Salary & Benefits package for MVLS staff.

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

The board meeting resumed at 11:14am.

The Personnel Committee proposes the following:

1. To provide all staff with a 3.5% cost of living salary increase starting January 1, 2026
2. To provide a one-time salary increase of \$2,000 for Kate Clingan starting January 1, 2026
3. To develop a job description for the Assistant Director position and to provide a one-time salary increase of \$1,000 for the Assistant Director starting January 1, 2026
4. To provide health insurance coverage for all eligible employees at an employer contribution rate of: Individual, 90%, Two-Person 85%, Family 70%

MOTION To accept the Personnel Committee's recommendation for the Salaries & Benefits package for 2026.

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

MOTION To adjourn the meeting at 11:15am

Davies/Van Patten. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Next Regular Board Meeting:

Thursday, January 15, 2026

MVLS Service Center