

**Mohawk Valley Library System
Director's Report
November, December, 2025**

Empowering Member Libraries with Sound Administration & Governance

We ended the year with the great bulk of 2025 state aid received in 2025. We are still waiting for the final under \$9,000 payment of Local Library Services Aid. We are also expecting some Bullet Aid payments sometime in early 2025. This all means that, financially, we have finished 2025 more-or-less as expected, with a minimum of the calendar year issues that can sometimes muddy our year-end financial statements. As you will see in the 12/31 financial statements, we ended the year very close to the projected balanced budget.

The staff has been working on developing a strategy for getting member library input for our 2027-2031 state Plan of Service. The general idea is to use the existing goals and menu of services, as well as some big, aspirational questions, to gather input from library directors and staff on the future of MVLS services. Our objective is to have honest conversations on how libraries use MVLS services, how libraries chose not to use MVLS services, and the costs, in time and dollars, that MVLS expends in providing services. We will then host general sessions to share the results with all stakeholders.

Bill and I are working to develop the next projects for the Governance Structure Review Committee. The intent is to continue to develop policies and procedures that will help keep the MVLS board complete and well-functioning. The committee may also begin work on developing a MVLS member agreement.

One of the areas that the Governance Committee may address is MVLS committees. The first board meeting of the year is typically a time when MVLS trustees can revisit the committees an which trustees serve. Please review the committee roster and charges on the MVLS website:

<https://www.mvls.info/board-committees/>; <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/MVLS-Committee-Charges-rev-10-2017.pdf>.

The changes that you made to salaries and benefits for 2026 will require board action concerning several official documents. We will address two of those at the January meeting: the Personnel Manual, and the Office Administrator job description. There are minor amendments to each; marked up amended copies will be with the meeting materials. Other job descriptions will be updated over the next few months.

Empowering Member Libraries with Automation and Resource Sharing

The JA Council will meet the day before the MVLS board meeting, on January 14. A few items will come to the MVLS board from that meeting.

The first is the proposal for member library JA fees in 2027. The Finance Committee held its annual open fees discussion meeting on December 10. The documents for that meeting are on the JA website at: <https://jacouncil.sals.edu/meeting/joint-automation-fees-meeting-december-10th-2025/>. The participants agreed that a 5% fee budget increase will be proposed for 2027. Provided the JA Council

agrees, that proposal will be brought to the MVLS and SALS boards for action in January. We will also be updating the fee calculation to use 2025 holdings and circulation data.

The search process for replacing Michele Largeveau as the JA Project Manager is progressing well. We had eight applicants, and held six initial, virtual interviews. Three finalists have been invited for half-day, in-person interviews on January 21 and 22. The interview process will include sessions with the JA staff and trainers, an opportunity for any library staff member to interact, and a full interview with the search committee. The search committee consists of Eric Trahan and Kim Bolan (MVLS and SALS Directors; Bill Bonner and Tom Shaginaw (MVLS and SALS board representatives) and Alex Gutelius (representing the library staff members serving on the JA Council).

The schedule calls for us to name a successful candidate in early February, so a new candidate can start in conjunction with Michele's retirement in mid-March. This may require extra meetings for both the JA Council and the MVLS board. It also may be possible to empower the MVLS Executive Committee to make the decision for the MVLS board.

The JA staff and system trainers continue to be very busy with implementing the Vega Discover public interface for the Polaris Library System. Other items on the agenda include implementing the mobile app, and various policy reviews.

Empowering Member Libraries with Youth, Adult and Outreach Services

The Summer Reading Program 2026 is in process. The annual in-person planning extravaganza is scheduled for the day of our board meeting, January 15, at the Schenectady County main library. Many member library staff are registered to attend.

Storytime Bootcamp with the Upper Hudson Library System was held on November 18. Three MVLS libraries sent staff.

The Cabin Fever Club is ready to begin for 2026. The schedule and registration information is on the website at: <https://www.mvls.info/cabin-fever-club-winter-2026/>. In addition to these virtual programs, both Beth and Mary provide outreach programs both online and at locations throughout our four counties. Mary's Technology Training classes reached nearly 750 attendees in 2025.

For the first time since COVID, all of our jails and correctional facilities are catching up on their budgets for library services. It is good to see services being provided, and budgets being spent.

The Outreach Advisory Council met on November, continuing ongoing conversations on the social welfare needs of libraries and library users in the system.

Empowering Member Libraries with Training, Consultation and Collaboration

New website accessibility standards go into effect in April 2026. Mary continues to work with libraries on keeping their websites accessible, compliant and informative. Mary is also working with Workforce Solutions in the MVLS counties, helping to establish direct partnerships between them and our libraries.

MVLS staff hosted a great session with Mario Colon and Amanda Pendergrass from Canajoharie and Alisha Rivera-Holmes from Northville on December 4, introducing them to the resources and services available from MVLS.

The Fonda and Sharon Sprigs libraries are continuing their searches for new directors. MVLS is working with them to get the announcements well-publicized.

Scheduling Directors Council meetings remains a challenge. We will be working with Nicole Hemsley and the Directors to attempt to set up a more regular schedule with scheduled topics for discussion.

The December Trustee Training session on library futures was well received. We are planning to continue these sessions in 2026, with the first scheduled for Thursday, February 19.

Empowering Member Libraries with Advocacy & Awareness

The New York Library Association annual advocacy initiatives are on the NYLA website at: <https://www.nyla.org/2026-legislative-session#PolicyPriorities>. NYLA continues to advocate for substantially increased library operating and construction funding, along with several ongoing legislative initiatives to benefit public and school libraries. We will review these at the January meeting.

In late December, Governor Hochul vetoed the Freedom to Read Act. NYLA was pushing hard to get this legislation approved. While its impact was primarily focused on school libraries, NYLA continues to provide leadership on the need to protect libraries from intellectual freedom challenges, now supporting the Open Shelves Act. We have more advocacy work to do!

That advocacy will include Library Advocacy Day, scheduled for Tuesday, February 3. Please consider attending if you can, and encourage your library contacts to attend as well. Wade is scheduling meetings and preparing materials. It will be great to have a big group to meet with our representatives.

The Foundation has again had a successful year. We raised over \$5,200 in our year-end appeal, one of our highest totals since the Foundation began.

The first annual MVLS Holiday Open House provided a wonderful opportunity for all MVLS stakeholders to gather for informal discussions on library issues. We can't wait to do it again next year.

Empowering Member Libraries with Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

11/3/2025	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Mario Colon, Canajoharie Library Terry Pavoldi, Middleburgh Public Library Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
11/4/2025	Mario Colon, Canajoharie Library Amy Heebner, Division of Library Development MVLS Member Library Directors Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library

11/5/2025	NYLA Conference PULISDO
11/6/2025	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library NYLA Conference
11/7/2025	NYLA Conference Chris Sagaas, Upper Hudson Library System
11/10/2025	Foundation Board Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library MVLS Member Library Directors MVLS Nominating Committee MVLS Personnel Committee Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
11/12/2025	William Bonner Jane Borrelli Susan London Katherine Hawkins JA Council MVLS Nominating Committee MVLS Personnel Committee MVLS Staff Tom Shaginaw, SALS
11/14/2025	Foundation Board MVLS Board of Trustees
11/17/2025	Katherine Hawkins Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Capital District Library Council Tom Shaginaw, SALS Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
11/18/2025	William Bonner MVLS Board of Trustees
11/19/2025	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
11/20/2025	MVLS Board of Trustees
11/21/2025	JA Finance Committee Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
11/24/2025	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
11/25/2025	Christine Witkowski Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
11/26/2025	Haileab Samuel Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library MVLS Personnel Committee
12/1/2025	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library MVLS Member Library Directors
12/2/2025	Madelyn Thorne
12/3/2025	Mohawk Valley Broadband

	Jeanne M. Irwin
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
12/4/2025	William Bonner
	Madelyn Thorne
	Mario Colon, Canajoharie Library
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
12/5/2025	Haileab Samuel
12/8/2025	William Bonner
	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
12/9/2025	MVLS Holiday Open House
	PULISDO
	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
12/10/2025	JA Finance Committee
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
12/11/2025	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	MVLS Trustee Education Session – Library Futures
	Thomas Gessick, CPA, T.M. Byxbee Company, CPAs, NY, PC
12/12/2025	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
12/15/2025	Jeanne M. Irwin
	Valerie Venturini, Gloversville Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
12/16/2025	William Bonner
	Haileab Samuel
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
12/17/2025	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library
	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Meghan Keaney, Sharon Springs Free Library
	Thomas Gessick, CPA, T.M. Byxbee Company, CPAs, NY, PC
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
	Chris Sagaas, Upper Hudson Library System
12/18/2025	Jeanne M. Irwin
	Division of Library Development, NYSED

	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
12/19/2025	JA Search Committee
	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
12/22/2025	William Bonner
	Christine Witkowski
12/23/2025	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System
12/26/2025	Lauren Cardinal, Division of Library Development
12/30/2025	William Bonner
	Christine Witkowski
	JA Search Committee
12/31/2025	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System