

**Mohawk Valley Library System
Director's Report
January, February, 2026**

Empowering Member Libraries with Sound Administration & Governance

The final state aid payments for 2026 were received in early February. The final 10% payment of Local Library Services Aid has been paid to all member libraries. We also received bullet aid through Assemblyman Chris Tague's office. The Community Library in Cobleskill was allocated \$20,000. MVLS also received a \$20,000 award. We are developing options for potential projects. At the same time, DLD has announced an IMLS LSTA grant for which MVLS is also working to develop a fundable project.

Bill and I have been developing a scope of work for the re-formed Governance Structure Review Committee. This will include a review of the MVLS bylaws, modest revision of the Board Review and System Director Leadership and Management Review protocols, and developing a new MVLS Trustee Job Description, and well as a Trustee Onboarding policy. We will also be looking at possibly expanding the role of the MVLS Nominating Committee Advisory group.

On the subject of the Nominating Committee, it is time to begin the process of identifying and electing the next MVLS trustees. The terms of Jane Borrelli, Susan London, and Mary VanPatten are expiring on December 31. Our Trustee Nomination and Election Policy (<https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Board-Governance-Policy-Trustee-nomination-and-elections.pdf>) calls for that process to begin on April 1.

The MVLS planning process, coinciding with the development of the next state required 5-year Plan of Service, is now underway. MVLS staff will be meeting with a group from each member library to review the MVLS Menu of Services (<https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/MVLS-Menu-of-Services-8.5x11.pdf>) and to explore the potential future needs of member libraries. Those meetings will be followed by opportunities for other stakeholders to provide input via focus groups and surveys.

The Personnel Committee has reviewed the Personnel Manual, and has several amendments to present for action. In addition to the issues included in the materials for the January board meeting, there are several new sections to add, and wording changes to make the document more internally consistent. We used resources from NYCON to add language for At Will Employment, Workplace Accommodations, and Sexual Harassment policy. A copy of the proposed amended policy will be with the meeting materials. We also have two job descriptions to act on. Sharon O'Brien's job description as member Services Coordinator has not been updated in a long time, and we also have also updated the job description for the add-on Assistant Director position.

One unforeseen aspect of this work is that we have internally determined that we don't have good documentation on the benefits that we are currently providing to MVLS retirees, with consequent uncertainty about what will be provided to future retirees. We will be working on that documentation over the next several weeks, and bringing it back to the Personnel Committee.

Empowering Member Libraries with Automation and Resource Sharing

The JA Council will meet in Saratoga on March 11. This will be Michele Largeteau's last meeting with the Council prior to her retirement on March 19.

The Search Committee has been busy recruiting Michele's successor. We have selected Jesse Jensen to be the next JA Project Manager. Jesse worked for JA briefly a few years ago. He has a library degree, and has spent most of his career working for the various companies that have developed and implemented the Polaris Library System software. He brings valuable, extensive knowledge of the Polaris ILS to the JA operation and to the member libraries.

The JA staff and system trainers continue to be very busy with implementing the Vega Discover public interface for the Polaris Library System. It is important to have this implemented before April 27, so MVLS and SALS libraries have a library catalog that complies with the new ADA requirements for services provided via the web.

Changes to e-resources in some SALS libraries means there is a proposed change to the 2027 JA library fees that you approved. The change is in the data that is included in the calculation. When Overdrive e-content was first integrated into the Polaris database, JA determined that those item records and circulations should be included in the data that determines individual library JA fees. At the same time, there are many other non-integrated e-resources, from other vendors; and they are not included in the fee calculation data. Additionally, e-content holdings just aren't the same as owning a physical item. There is great uncertainty and variety as to what ownership means. For all of those reasons, the proposal is to remove e-resources item holdings from the fee calculation data.

As you all know, JA had an email phishing incident in February due in large part to a human error made by me. Chris Mundell did a great job of controlling the damage, and has implemented several technical changes to help prevent similar attacks in the future. We will also be considering some policy changes. For me, the big moral is ALWAYS verify before clicking on links. Even if something seems perfectly legitimate, never click without first independently verifying that it is legitimate.

We have agreed with the Amsterdam Free Library on the outline of a Central Library Aid budget for 2026, and have made the direct payment to them for their local costs. Other than Overdrive and the Educate Station product approved last year, we will be introducing additional new products including the training platform Niche Academy, and the Craft & Hobby database.

Empowering Member Libraries with Youth, Adult and Outreach Services

The Annual Summer Reading Program workshop done in conjunction with UHLS was at SCPL on January 15. Twenty-three MVLS member library staff members attended. Beth also helped coordinate the virtual statewide SRP workshop on February 9.

MVLS Libraries continue to make effective use of MVLS program kits and other program resources. Libraries borrowed just under 80 kits in January and February. Beth is adding a new resource: Children's literature book discussion kits.

The Cabin Fever Club programs have concluded for the year. Mary and Beth facilitated 12 programs attended by 87 individuals.

Five in-person and two virtual digital literacy classes were held in January and February, with a total attendance of 91. The Senior Planet programs have been renewed for 2026. The senior book club also continues.

Mary has organized an AI Working Group for member library directors and staff interested in discussing AI related topics.

The pilot libraries are completing the Board Book Challenge continuing education series. Fort Plain and St Johnsville received their incentive grants.

MVLS is once again offering registration cost reimbursements for libraries who send staff to the annual NYLA Youth Services Section spring conference. Gloversville and Cobleskill are sending staff.

Empowering Member Libraries with Training, Consultation and Collaboration

MVLS has two new library directors! Gianna Rodriguez started in Fonda in January, and Emily Bond started in Sharon Springs in early March. Gianna has been to MVLS and has received some training. I am scheduled to meet with Emily next week, and we will be setting up a time for her to visit MVLS. Both libraries have been very proactive in getting training for their new directors.

We now have a regular schedule for Director's Council meetings. The directors will meet with MVLS staff on the first Wednesday of alternate months, rotating the meetings between mornings and afternoons. The next meeting is scheduled for April 1 in Amsterdam.

Our February 19 trustee training session on open Meetings Law and FOIL was well received. We will host another session in April. Suggestions for a topic are welcome.

The state annual report continues to be delayed. The state now has a vendor, and is working to get everything in place. A tentative deadline for report submission has been set for April 16.

The MVLS Spring Symposium is on the calendar! We will meet at the Middleburgh Library on Wednesday, May 6 at 2:00. The overall theme will be on strategies for providing services to marginalized populations. Be on the lookout for the Save the Date notification and an invitation.

Mary continues to work with libraries on making websites fully informative, compliant with minimum standards, and accessible. She worked with five libraries in January and February, making site visits to several libraries. Mary also assisted libraries by providing an Emergency Preparedness and Public Safety checklist.

MVLS is working with the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District (MVEDD), and Workforce Solutions on a grant application to develop digital literacy training to help disadvantaged job seekers navigate the online job application environment. Mary worked with these partners to develop the grant application. We will hear whether we receive the funding over the summer.

Empowering Member Libraries with Advocacy & Awareness

Thank you to all who participated in NYLA's Advocacy Day! We had good representation and productive meetings with our representatives and/or their staff. The one-house budgets have come out, and, as usual, they are positive for libraries. Now is a time for more advocacy! NYLA just today unveiled a campaign designed to improve our chances at getting these one-house numbers into a final budget. The link to contact legislators is here: [NYLA Campaign](#).

There are also opportunities to advocate on the federal level. IMLS funding seems secure for this year, but the specific budget bills still need to be approved. Both ALA and EveryLibrary have active federal advocacy campaigns ongoing. Use these two links to add your voice: [ALA](#) : [EveryLibrary](#)

We are working with CDLC on an effort to make all three capital-region public library systems and four school library systems more effective in connecting with our state representatives. The goal is to organize meetings outside of the ordinary advocacy schedule.

It is also time for local advocacy; library budget votes happen in the spring. We have many MVLS libraries with consequential budget votes planned for this year. Wade is available to work with any library on these plans. We have consulted with several libraries already. Wade is also completing a Plan of Service with the Frothingham Library in Fonda. The plan is scheduled to be approved the week of our board meeting. We will discuss it at the meeting.

The Foundation is getting ready for the 2026 fundraising efforts. Library Giving Day is Wednesday April 1, and we are also getting ready to begin seeking sponsors for the June 29 Canajoharie Golf Tournament. This year we will be honoring Bonnie Kerr, former MVLS and Foundation trustee, who originated the Canajoharie Golf Tournament.

Foundation Incentive Grants are also ongoing. We continue to reimburse libraries for NYCON membership costs, and are planning incentive grants related to the Children’s Literature Challenge.

Empowering Member Libraries with Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

1/2/2026	William Bonner Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System Kim Zimmer, The Community Library	Meeting prep JA search Construction
1/5/2026	William Bonner Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library Kim Zimmer, The Community Library	Board agenda Construction member library issues Construction Construction Grant Construction Construction Construction Construction
1/6/2026	Margaret Kindling Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System Chris Sagaas, Upper Hudson Library System	Director JA search records mgmt
1/7/2026	Brideen Finegan HFM School Library System Council Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System Kim Zimmer, The Community Library	Construction Council Meeting JA search JA
1/8/2026	Brideen Finegan Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	Construction SHO Construction JA search
1/9/2026	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library MVLS Board of Trustees	Spectrum Meeting materials

1/12/2026	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System Mario Colon Lauren Cardinal, Division of Library Development	JA search Teams update DLD Representative
1/13/2026	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library William Bonner Margaret Kindling Leah Fitzgerald, Amsterdam Free Library Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Terry Pavoldi, Middleburgh Public Library MVLS Member Library Directors Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System Chris Sagaas, Upper Hudson Library System	New Dir Bd prep Director search JA Council MVLS Bd rep MVLS trustee term DC Rep const JA officers OML
1/14/2026	Madelyn Thorne William Bonner JA Council Mandy Travis, Mid York Library System Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System Chris Sagaas, Upper Hudson Library System	SCPL Overdrive Bd prep regular meeting FDA Construction JA Search Committee FDA
1/15/2026	Margaret Kindling Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library MVLS Board of Trustees MVLS Workshop Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library	Director Search Director's Council Regular Meeting Summer Reading Budget Vote
1/16/2026	William Bonner Margaret Kindling Mario Colon Mandy Travis, Mid York Library System MVLS Board of Trustees Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library	JA Search Director Search Personnel Policy Personnel Policy JA Search process Budget Vote
1/20/2026	Lisa DeNovio, Division of Library Development Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library MVLS Member Library Directors Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	Construction grant updates Collaborative Projects Construction Webinar JA Search Committee
1/21/2026	JA Committee Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	Candidate interviews SALS Governance
1/22/2026	Susan London JA Committee Hannah Dillenbeck, Mohawk Valley Broadband Tom Shaginaw, SALS	Personnel Manual Candidate interviews Potential grant JA & trustees
1/23/2026	Stephanie Cuomo Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library HFM School Library System Council	Personnel issue Conatruction Grant Long Range Planning
1/26/2026	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library	Board Committees
1/27/2026	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library	Construction grants JA Finance Personnel issues
1/28/2026	Stephanie Cuomo Becky Leggieri JA Committee	Personnel issue Bullet Aid Search Committee
1/29/2026	Stephanie Cuomo	Personnel issue

1/30/2026	William Bonner Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Stephanie Cuomo Division of Library Development, NYSED Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	Board update Construction grant Personnel issue Annual Reports Construction Grant JA Search
2/2/2026	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library NYALS PULISDO Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	Personnel issues Policies Advocacy Plan Advocacy Planning JA Search
2/3/2026	Chris Sagaas, Upper Hudson Library System NYLA Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	NYLA Advocacy Day! JA Search
2/4/2026	Margaret Kindling Stephanie Cuomo Mario Colon Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	Director Search Personnel issue Construction Plans JA Search
2/5/2026	Brian Hildreth, Southern Tier Library System Foundation Board Hannah Dillenbeck, Mohawk Valley Broadband MVLS Member Library Directors	Foundations meeting materials Keep MV Beautiful Keep MV Beautiful
2/6/2026	William Bonner MVLS Member Library Directors MVLS Staff	Governance Committee Trustee Training regular
2/9/2026	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Jeffrey Kirkendall, Division of Library Development Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library	CLA & DC Annual Reports Personnel Benefits
2/11/2026	Eric Laughlin, Council Services Plus Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library MVLS Member Library Directors MVLS Personnel Committee	health insurance options Benefits & Budgets DC Meeting Pers Manual Edits
2/12/2026	JA Committee	Search Committee
2/13/2026	Foundation Board Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library MVLS Member Library Directors MVLS Personnel Committee	Regular Meeting Construction Project Trustee Training Session Personnel Manual
2/17/2026	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System Brenda Schworm Capital District Library Council Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System Kim Zimmer, The Community Library	JA Search Advocacy thanks Internships JA Budget Keep MV Beautiful
2/18/2026	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library JA Committee MVLS Member Library Directors MVLS Personnel Committee	Training Construction grant Search Committee Director's Council options Personnel Manual
2/19/2026	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System William Bonner MVLS Member Library Directors MVLS Trustee Education Session Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	JA Search JA Search process Trustee Training resources OML & FOIL JA Search

2/20/2026	Capital District Library Council JA Committee MVLS Board of Trustees Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	Internships Search Committee Security Breach JA Search
2/23/2026	Margaret Kindling Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library JA Committee Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	Director Search Central Lib Aid Search Committee JA Agenda
2/24/2026	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Division of Library Development, NYSED Thomas Gessick, CPA, T.M. Byxbee Company, CPAs,	Central Lib Aid Construction Grants Security Incident
2/25/2026	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Lauren Cardinal, Division of Library Development MVLS Member Library Directors	Construction grant Construction Grants Planning meetings
2/26/2026	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library	Budget Vote
2/27/2026	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Mario Colon Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library	Director's Council planning Security Incident IMLS and Symposium