

Mohawk Valley Library System
Board of Trustees Meeting
March 19, 2026

MINUTES

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

EXCUSED: April Davies, Parish Ogunjana

GUESTS: Beth Rienti, Wade Abbott, Pat & Dave Gosda, Mary Carrier, Kim Zimmer (COB), Sharon O'Brien

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

Special Presentations Beth Rienti attended the meeting to brief the board on some of her current projects as the MVLS Public Services Consultant. The last couple of months have been very busy with professional development trainings for library staff. In January, Beth and Mary Fellows of UHLS held the annual Summer Reading Program workshop, this year at the Schenectady County Public Library. We also partnered with 11 other systems around the state to do virtual SRP workshops for children and teen programming. This summer, we'll once again be participating in the Read It Forward book share program for teens. Beth is working on a Readers Advisory Workshop Series with our neighboring systems that will be offered in the spring and fall of this year. There will also be a Storytime Bootcamp session with UHLS held at MVLS in April. Katherine asked about work with the correctional facilities in the area. Beth has been in touch with staff at each of our correctional facilities, most of whom have spent their allocated funds.

Wade Abbott, the MVLS Community Engagement & Communications Specialist, also attended the meeting to give a few advocacy updates. He showed an example of the Frothingham Free Library's new Plan of Service, which he has been working with them on for the last couple of years. Wade has been very impressed with the big steps the board and staff there have taken. Susan asks how long the plan of service process usually takes. Wade says it varies based on the size of the library and the goals of the process, but usually it lasts about a year. Wade also shared a summary of where we are in the state budget process, now that the Senate and Assembly have released their one-house budgets.

Consent Agenda: Consideration of January Meeting Minutes, Treasurer's Reports, Statements of Financial Position for January and February, Payment Schedules #1 for \$122,476.48 and #2 for \$ 184,803.69

MOTION: To approve the Consent Agenda.
Hawkins/London. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Joint Automation Business: Project Manager Update Michele Largeteau is retiring, her final day is today. The Project Manager Search Committee made an offer to Jesse Jensen who has accepted.

MOTION To hire Jesse Jensen as the JA Project Manager.
Hawkins/VanPatten. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Vega Discover This is something that JA and System staff have been working on with our vendor for a long time. New requirements in the ADA go into effect in April, and we need to implement Discover in order to meet these requirements. The new catalog has been "soft launched" with staff and should go live to the public at the beginning of April.

JA Fee Formula and E-Resources JA Fees are calculated based on the number of holdings and circulation a library has. As e-resources have become larger parts of libraries' collections, JA Council is going to look at the fee formula and re-evaluate their method of determining fees. This will be a long process, and any time you change the fee structure, some libraries will see big changes, which can be a shock.

Governance Structure Review Committee Bill mentioned last meeting that he planned to re-convene the GSR Committee, but he has not gotten a chance to do that yet. He will be reaching out soon.

Planning Process The first step in MVLS's planning process is meetings between MVLS staff and library directors. Eric has received dates from a few libraries and we are beginning to set up these meetings.

Personnel Manual Updates Susan has a few questions about the personnel manual that are beyond the scope of these changes, and will be reaching out to the Personnel Committee to discuss. She noted that on page 20 Appendix A: Voluntary Leave Donation Program, Section a, it still says "his/her" rather than "their."

MOTION To accept the suggested personnel manual changes, with this addition.
Samuel/Borrelli. Ayes – 6. Nays – None. Abstentions – 1 (London).

Spring Symposium The Spring Symposium will be Wednesday May 6th from 2-5 at the Middleburgh Library. Our tentative theme is on strategies for providing services to marginalized populations. One of the new resources MVLS is investing in with Central Library money is a training platform called Niche Academy. Part of the Spring Symposium will be an introduction to this platform.

The **Director's Report** for January and February 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** – Six of our libraries are having significant budget votes this year. The ultimate goal for all of our libraries are modest increases every year so that they don't need to make big asks of their community.
2. **Empower Libraries with the Skills, Tools, and Resources for Serving All** – Eric mentioned MVLS subscribing to Niche Academy. There is also a new craft and hobby database that MVLS is looking into providing to members. Beth is developing a new group of book discussion sets for children and younger readers. MVLS received Bullet Aid from Assemblyman Tague's office, and we are looking into projects to fund with that as well as with potential new LSTA grants.
3. **Empower Libraries with Collaboration for Outstanding Library Services** – The third year of MVLS's collaborative Cabin Fever program just ended. Mary's Digital Literacy classes have also been very popular. Mary applied for a grant with the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District to develop programs that help job-seekers through both the library and Workforce Solutions. Katherine asks if a subject of a future trustee training could be a presentation about marginalized communities.
4. **Empower Libraries with Inspiration & Methods for Telling the Library Story** – One of the ways that libraries can tell their stories is with things like Frothingham Free Library's Plan of Service that Wade presented earlier in the meeting, which will be up on their website soon.

Terry asked the directors to take a look at the board meeting documents before the meeting and they had some questions about the Director's Report. Several directors are interested in developing a trustee onboarding policy and asked if MVLS has one; Eric says we currently do not. Kim asked if the removal of e-content from JA fees changes the JA budget. Eric says the calculation is used to determine what each library's portion of the overall budget is, but it does not change what the overall fee budget is. Regarding Central Library Aid, in the past there was a committee that determined how that money was spent. Eric

says this is another thing he wanted to discuss at Directors Council because most recent decisions about Central Library Aid have been made there, but we could re-convene that committee if that would be a better way forward. Kim asked about what the senior book club is; it's a book club that Mary runs at the Parkland Gardens senior center. Terry asked about the new amendments to minimum standards. Eric says there's a process to change some of the policies that libraries are required to have. This is going to change the policy questions that are asked on the annual report that libraries fill out and submit to the state. MVLS will be able to help in the development of some of these policies.

Directors Council Report There is a Directors Council meeting scheduled for April 1st in Amsterdam. They have created a schedule of meetings for the entire year, which Terry thinks will really help with attendance. Before this meeting, Terry reached out to her fellow directors to see if anyone had anything they'd like to share with the MVLS Board. Cobleskill has added Comics Plus, a digital database of graphic novels. They are having a tiny art show that runs throughout April. All four Schoharie County libraries will be represented at Maple Fest on April 25th at the Cobleskill Fairgrounds. Johnstown is currently selling tickets for their annual basket raffle through March 29th and will be drawing the winners on the 30th. Middleburgh is having their annual crockpot cookoff on March 28th. St. Johnsville is having a fundraising Paint 'n Sip on Friday April 24th to raise money for improving building accessibility.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

JOINT AUTOMATION Bill notes that as many of us are aware, there was an email compromise in February. Bill thinks there were all sorts of missing pieces that came up in this situation. Katherine asks if the board could be notified quickly when these things are detected, as by the time she learned about the attack she had already fallen for it.

MOTION To request the incoming JA Project Manager review the cyber attack in February and make a report to the MVLS board about whether all policies and procedures were followed. If any policies and procedures were missing so we might avoid this in the future, those policies and procedures are recommended to the JA Council and MVLS and SALS boards.

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

Personnel Manual Updates: Member Services Coordinator and Assistant Director Job Descriptions Susan noted that we skipped this section on the agenda earlier.

MOTION To accept both job descriptions as presented.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Building and Equipment Katherine took a look around the building and found a few concerns in the back of the building: A small spot on the top of the side wall near the roof that needs caulking, the base trim along the outside back wall is pulling away from the wall and needs to be re-attached, and there are also a lot of weeds and tree branches along the edges of the property.

Privilege of the Floor Susan wanted to note the MVLS driveway has a lot of potholes and asks if we can have the driveway repaved. Eric reached out to the state because Route 7 is a state road so the initial driveway is actually their responsibility. He will reach out again. Bill asked if we can obtain 3 quotes to re-pave the entry driveway before the next board meeting.

Katherine notes that she expects to be published in the next issue of the Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society. Two days ago, she met with Kim Zimmer about the roof on The Community Library which is not in good shape. She put Kim in touch with a specialist in restoration of old buildings. She recommended

folks look up a video “They always come for the books” by Steve Hofstetter that she mentioned at the last meeting. She brought up the idea of MVLS developing a policy for staff sharing within libraries. Terry thinks it’s better for individual libraries to be able to sustain their own staffing needs. Mary thinks this is a cooperation between libraries and that MVLS should not have a role in individual libraries’ staffing. Bill thinks it would be inappropriate for MVLS to step in as this is up to the individual library boards.

MOTION To adjourn the meeting at 11:20am
VanPatten/Samuel. Ayes – All. Nays – None.

Next Regular Board Meeting:

Thursday, May 21, 2026

MVLS Service Center