

**Mohawk Valley Library System
Director's Report
May - June, 2026**

Empowering Member Libraries with Sound Administration & Governance

We have a state budget, and it is a disappointment for libraries. While Novel NY continues to receive funding, and the state has finally recognized the need for targeted funding for the Office of Cultural Education, including the Division of Library Development; Library Operating Aid received a token, fractional increase, and Library Construction Aid was flat. We will do budget amendments in September after we have a better sense of what aid we will be receiving in the various categories. The changes will be effectively insignificant.

On the subject of finances, T.M. Byxbee has begun the annual review of the MVLS and JA financial statements for the 2025 calendar year. We expect to receive their report, as well as the IRS 990 form, in the fall.

The process for electing MVLS Trustees is underway. The Nominating Advisory Committee has met. At this point we have one recommendation for filling one of the three open seats. We are in need of trustee nominees from both Fulton and Montgomery counties. The Nominating Committee will meet in the week of July 20, and the voting information will be sent to libraries before July 31.

The Governance Committee has met several times, and has two proposals to bring to the board. The first is proposed bylaws amendments. A summary document will be with the board materials. There are two proposed amendments. The first is to add "holdover clause" language to Article III Section 2. This stipulates the conditions under which a trustee may continue to serve after a term has expired. This can be important for maintaining quorum and representation in circumstances where a new trustee is not elected or qualified. The second proposed amendment is to Article III Section 6. This proposed amendment clarifies the election process for the trustee that serves as the Director's Council representative. If the board accepts versions of these proposed bylaws amendments, they will be able to be formally approved at the September board meeting.

The second document proposed by the Governance Committee is an MVLS Trustee Job Description. It is proposed that this description become part of the Board Governance policies. This proposed trustee job description will be a discussion item at the July board meeting.

The review processes are also underway. The goal is to have the board review in July, and the director and operations review in September. I will be providing the information for the system and director review in early September. If you want to get a head start, the board review is available here: <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/MVLS-BOT-Effectiveness-Review-Assessment.pdf>; and the system and director review here: <https://www.mvls.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/MVLS-System-and-Director-Review-Assessment.pdf>.

The MVLS Annual Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 1. Our first choice for the location this year will be the Schenectady County Public Library KBJ Main Library.

Empowering Member Libraries with Automation and Resource Sharing

The JA Council will meet at SALS on July 15. Jesse Jensen will be presenting a JA update at the MVLS board meeting. New updates to Vega Discover address some of the issues raised with the implementation earlier this year. All JA users were required to complete new security training in June/July.

The JA staff, Kim Bolan, and I continue to refine the proposed JA Agreement and JA Privacy policy. Copies of both documents will be with the board materials for the July meeting, and both will be on the agenda for the July JA Council meeting. These will be discussed at the July MVLS board meeting, with the hope that we can move to final approval in September.

Many MVLS libraries are embracing Niche Academy as an effective learning platform for trustees and staff. As of the end of June, we had more than 150 users signed up.

Empowering Member Libraries with Youth, Adult and Outreach Services

Summer Reading is in full swing at MVLS member libraries. Beth organized the digital scavenger hunt that is available here: https://puzzel.org/en/scavenger-hunt/play?p=-Ot_PI56Vmzdp-lkiUZH. MVLS staff, including Beth, Kate and Mary, are making themselves available to help libraries with programs. New York State Love Your Library Funding was distributed to member libraries to assist with youth programs.

MVLS staff has assembled Community Care Kits for distribution by member libraries. Libraries who completed required homelessness training in Niche Academy were eligible to get kits for distribution to their community members. To date, 28 kits have been distributed. As a result of forming partnerships to build the kits, Beth has developed a relationship with the NYS Dental Foundation. We are working to pilot a brush and read program with them. Beth is also working to develop a partnership with the American Heart Association.

More than 50 individuals attended Digital Literacy trainings provided by Mary in May and June. Thirty-nine library program kits were borrowed in May-June; and two new dinosaur offerings were made available to go with the 2026 Summer Reading Program.

The county jails and the Hale Creek state facility continue to receive items ordered through the corrections and institutions state aid.

Empowering Member Libraries with Training, Consultation and Collaboration

Libraries continue to work on state annual reports. The new software and later schedule has been a challenge. As of today, all but two have been completed, and both are close to done. The reports for systems are not yet open, so we haven't been able to work on the MVLS state report.

We continue to work with libraries on navigating through the 2025 construction grant process, and now are beginning the process for 2026 grants. This year, we expect to have applications from Amsterdam, Cobleskill, Gloversville and Schenectady. The application deadline will be September 2. The Library Services Committee will meet on or before September 15; and the MVLS board will review the final 2026 grant package at their meeting on September 17.

Beth is working with colleagues from four of our library system neighbors to plan a one-day mini conference for directors of small libraries. The conference is planned for September 28 at the Canajoharie Library & Arkell Museum.

Mary is working to help libraries with the new minimum standards concerning policies. She is sharing and curating the helpful information from the state. Mary has also taken the lead in sharing information on AI with libraries. Here's an example of a recent item shared: <https://newslit.org/unplugged/>.

There has been a run on targeted, situational trustee training in the past few months; I have worked with six different boards on a wide range of issues. It is very good that boards and directors are comfortable seeking MVLS' assistance.

The Director's Council's met on June 3 at St Johnsville, and has a meeting tentatively scheduled for August 5. The Directors had some very meaningful discussions in May. As a result of our planning and those discussions, MVLS has begun sending a weekly update email to all directors, reminding them of ongoing activities and of notices that have come over NYLINE. It has been very well received.

We also had an impactful discussion on the MVLS Awards. The directors would like to see awards become less formal, less exclusive, and ongoing. They see the need for a better way to recognize library staff and innovative programs. We will have a brief discussion on this at the July board meeting.

Empowering Member Libraries with Advocacy & Awareness

MVLS Libraries are having wonderful success with public budget votes! Seven libraries had successful votes in May; and Johnstown's June vote also passed with a good margin. We have one more library with a 2026 public budget vote: Sharon Springs has a town-wide vote on Election Day.

The disappointing state budget results for library operating aid has led to a renewed focus, both regionally and statewide, on advocacy. Two strategies are being discussed: placing more advocacy focus on library operating aid, and exploring more targeted funding for library systems. The recent new LSTA grants, as well as the targeted funding for Novel NY and Cultural Education, are examples of how that could work. I will be attending the New York Alliance of Library Systems conference later this month, which is focused on advocacy.

The Foundation had a very successful golf tournament in Canajoharie on June 29. A second fundraising golf tournament is scheduled for August 31 in Johnstown. Foundation Dream and Do grants for member libraries will again be offered later this summer.

Wade worked with the Frothingham Library in Fonda to get excellent media coverage for their library.

Empowering Member Libraries with Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

5/1/2026	Cory Seymour, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery	Annual Report
	MVLS Member Library Directors	NYLA Memberships
5/2/2026	Diane Stewart	Library Finances
	Terry Pavoldi, Middleburgh Public Library	Library Finances

5/4/2026	Madelyn Thorne Beverly Osborne Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council Jesse Jensen, Joint Automation	MVLS Committees Bylaws Meeting scheduling JA Council
5/5/2026	Tim Burke Stephanie Cuomo Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library	Nominating Advisors Charter issues Annual Report
5/6/2026	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library Jesse Jensen, Joint Automation MVLS Workshop	NYLA Membership Security Policy Spring Symposium
5/7/2026	William Bonner Mary Donohue Jesse Jensen, Joint Automation Terry Pavoldi, Middleburgh Public Library Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Emily Bond, Sharon Springs Free Library Kim Zimmer, The Community Library	Planning Meeting Financial Review Meeting prep Thank You NYLA Membership Training & Planning Fundraising Meeting
5/8/2026	April Davies Paul O'Brien Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Kim Zimmer, The Community Library	Fundraising Meeting Foundation Trustee Foundation Trustee Construction Update Construction Update
5/11/2026	Mandy Travis, Mid York Library System MVLS Trustee Education Session Kim Zimmer, The Community Library	Library Data STJ Charter NYS Election Database
5/12/2026	Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library Emily Bond, Sharon Springs Free Library Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library	Annual Report Annual Report Annual Report
5/13/2026	JA Council Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	Regular Mtg Annual Report Arnoff Delivery
5/14/2026	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Emily Bond, Sharon Springs Free Library	Construction Update Construction Grant Construction Grant Annual Report Annual Report
5/15/2026	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development MVLS Board of Trustees	Construction grants Meeting Materials
5/16/2026	William Bonner	Planning Meeting
5/17/2026	Carol Stuff	Benefits rules
5/19/2026	Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council Mandy Travis, Mid York Library System MVLS Member Library Directors NYLA	Advocacy Charters. Etc. Trustee Issues Spring on the Hill
5/20/2026	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development Jesse Jensen, Joint Automation	Financial Reports Budget Vote Issue Social Work Interns Construction grants Meeting prep

5/21/2026	MVLS Member Library Directors Division of Library Development, NYSED MVLS Board of Trustees	Budget Votes Regular Meeting Regular Meeting
5/22/2026	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Charity Thorne, Schenectady County Public Library	Financial Reports Construction Grants Construction Grants
5/24/2026	Linda Bell, Frothingham Free Library	Construction Grant
5/26/2026	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library MVLS Member Library Directors Emily Bond, Sharon Springs Free Library Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library	Director's Council Group Orders Group Orders Director's Council
5/27/2026	Carol Stuff Margaret Kindling Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System Kim Zimmer, The Community Library Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library	Benefits rules Training Annual Report Bylaws & Governance JA Minutes Annual Report Annual Report
5/28/2026	MVLS Staff Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library	Planning Process Financial Reports
5/29/2026	MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee MVLS Member Library Directors	Meeting Minutes Meeting Materials
6/1/2026	Foundation Board Jesse Jensen, Joint Automation	Golf Tournament JA Minutes
6/2/2026	Kristi Beedon, HFM BOCES SLS Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System Kim Zimmer, The Community Library Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library	Meeting prep JA issues Fundraising Annual Report
6/3/2026	MVLS Member Library Directors Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Emily Bond, Sharon Springs Free Library	Council in St Johnsville Construction Polaris & Ordering
6/4/2026	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee Pamela DelSignore, SALS	Construction grants Bylaws Delivery
6/5/2026	Margaret Kindling Kim Zimmer, The Community Library	Personnel Issues Annual Report
6/9/2026	PULISDO	Regular Meeting
6/10/2026	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development JA Administrative Team MVLS Member Library Directors Emily Bond, Sharon Springs Free Library	Construction Construction grants JA System Agreement Weekly Update
6/11/2026	Jane Borrelli Stephanie (Cole) Adams, Law Office of Stephanie Cole MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	Thrift Books Foundation Finance MVLS Bylaws Regular Privacy Policy Delivery

	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library	Grant support
	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library	Chartering
	Chris Sagaas, Upper Hudson Library System	Delivery
6/12/2026	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library	JA Reports
	Foundation Board	Regular Mtg
	Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library	Financial Audit
6/16/2026	Margaret Kindling	SHS Director
	MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee	Minutes, etc.
6/17/2026	MVLS Member Library Directors	Weekly Update
	MVLS Nominating Advisory Committee	Meeting Schedule
6/18/2026	Division of Library Development, NYSED	Regular Meeting
	MVLS Member Library Directors	Construction Grants
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library	Construction Reports
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library	Annual Report
6/22/2026	Margaret Kindling	Board Mtg
	MVLS Nominating Advisory Committee	Agenda
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library	Fundraising Info
6/23/2026	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development	GLV Construction grants
	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library	2026 Construction
	MVLS Trustee Education Session	COB Capital Campaign
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library	Annual Report
6/24/2026	Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council	Social Work Interns
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library	Planning
	Gianna Rodriguez, Frothingham Free Library	Construction
	MVLS Member Library Directors	Weekly Update
	Kim Bolan, Southern Adirondack Library System	JA Agreement
	Diane Empie, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library	Village & Board
6/25/2026	Barbara Madonna, Gloversville Public Library	2025 Construction
	MVLS Governance Structure Review Committee	Trustee Job Discrip
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library	Board Relations
6/26/2026	Stephanie Cuomo	Personnel
	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development	SCP Construction
6/29/2026	William Bonner	Reviews
	Foundation Event Committee	Golf Tournament
6/30/2026	Stephanie Cuomo	Meeting Planning
	Phoebe Sitterly	STJ Board Visit
	Foundation Board	Golf Tournament report
	MVLS Trustee Education Session	NOR Board
	Alisha Rivera-Holmes, Northville Public Library	Board Relations