

Mohawk Valley Library System

Director's Report

June & July, 2020

Administration & Governance

The Executive Committee met on July 9 to make decisions concerning the awarding of a Payroll Protection Plan Loan to MVLS. The committee took two actions that will in turn be action items at our August board meeting:

1. Accept the Payroll Protection Plan forgivable loan in the amount of \$95,700
2. Rescind the furlough for Library Clerk Sally Rappa effective July 1 to facilitate that loan forgiveness

The importance of this forgivable loan is illustrated by the state budget and state aid situation. New York State has stopped making payments to all state aid recipients – localities, counties, school districts, libraries – no one is receiving any aid payments; and there is no concrete word on when payments will be made or on any adjustments that may be made to the budgeted aid amounts. The best guess at this point is that the state will probably pay 80% of the budgeted amount by the end of the year. There is a sliver of good news for library systems. We now expect to receive an 80% payment of the Basic Aid – for MVLS that will be a payment of \$566,178 - probably in September. Because MVLS has the PPP money and has a healthy fund balance, that payment of about half of our total aid will easily see us through the rest of this year.

Things are less definite, but also less optimistic, for 2021. Most systems are budgeting based on an expectation that 2021 aid will be 20% lower than the budgeted 2020 aid. For MVLS, a 20% reduction in aid equals a \$244,510 reduction in our budget. It is impossible to view that as anything other than a catastrophe. There isn't any "fat" in the MVLS budget; a 20% reduction can only mean a smaller staff and reduced services. However, there are several things that will make this reduction – if it really happens – more palatable in MVLS than it will be in many other systems. Those factors are the PPP loan, our current \$750,000 fund balance, and that we have retirements and open positions.

On the subject of retirements, Sue Rokos has announced her retirement as Assistant Director and Youth Services Consultant effective September 15. By that date, Sue will have been MVLS' Youth Services Consultant for 30 years. In all of my time associated with MVLS, Sue has been the one constant. Her retirement will mark a tremendous change for everyone at MVLS and for everyone involved with library youth services in New York State.

With Sue's departure, and with our suspended search for our proposed Public Engagement & Education consultant (Lois' replacement), MVLS will have two open consultant positions. While on one hand this has financial advantages; on the other, having two of the three professional positions open really isn't sustainable. To balance those two realities, the staff and I recommend that we fill one position that we are calling Public Services Consultant. This position combines the Youth Services and Outreach functions

in one position; something that is done in several other library systems. A proposed position description will be discussed at our August meeting. We hope to have this position filled before the end of the year.

Then, when the financial situation warrants it, we will create and fill another consultant position, one that may take some aspects of the Public Services position and incorporate technology, public engagement and data analysis. Everything is a guess at this point, but maybe that can happen before the end of 2021.

With the dissolution of the union, we have been working on updating the Personnel Manual to incorporate items that were only covered in the union agreement, and to formalize accepted practices that were not in any official policies. We will have a draft for you to review at the August meeting.

Back in February, two of our counties – Montgomery and Schoharie – invited not for profit organizations to apply for funding to assist with Census 2020 outreach activities. MVLS applied for about \$9,000 from each county. That money was expected in mid-March; but then COVID-19 happened, and everything changed. In early August, the counties informed us that they expected to receive that funding by the end of August, and that we could alter our application to meet the changed circumstances. Now we have applications in for about \$10,000 through each county. If we receive the funding, we will do the project, which does contain some attractive elements, as well as about \$1,000 of administrative money, meaning money that isn't allocated to specific grant expenditures. Every dollar helps! I will provide more information at the meeting.

Automation & Resource Sharing

The JA Council met virtually on July 8, and has another meeting scheduled for September 9. The JA staff has provided great service to libraries throughout the shutdown, but that has come with several challenges. The most disruptive issue is that we were forced to turn off aspects of the Polaris software - specifically the request system – that were just not designed to be turned off. So getting them started again has been difficult. But in general, things are getting back to normal.

The September meeting is when the following year's JA budget is presented. Because JA income is not directly tied to state aid, the budget will not be as difficult as the system budgets, but a 20% cut to both systems will inevitably also affect JA. What MVLS pays to JA - \$126,000 in 2020 – is our third highest budget line after Salaries & Benefits and Delivery.

Delivery service resumed on June 8, and by the end of June was effectively back to normal. Arnoff has been very accommodating to our changing needs and to adjustments in the delivery service. We have cancelled our arrangement with Empire Library Delivery for delivery to UHLS and CDLC for Interlibrary Loan purposes. We are exploring other ways of making that connection.

E-resources use continues at record levels, although nowhere near erasing the dramatic lowering of physical circulation. There is nothing that replaces the physical browsing of the library stacks.

Outreach & Adult Services

The 2019 – 2020 Adult Literacy grant was completed. Many events were cancelled; but many others were converted to a virtual format. We purchased e-resources to use the grant money that would have been spent on the cancelled events.

Most NYSCA events have been cancelled, and no library expressed interest in scheduling virtual writing events. NYSCA is allowing all grant recipients to roll money over to the following year, so that is what we will do. Most programs will be rescheduled for 2021.

Youth Services

Most libraries are doing modified Summer Learning Programs, with “make-and-take” kits for activities, and using the READsquared software for registration. Without an in-person element, participation is way down this year, along with library use in general. The really bright spot is in the “Fairies and Gnomes: Imagine Their Homes” project. As Sue shared at our last board meeting, this project is a collaborative project that began in Schoharie and has been embraced by most member libraries. Check out the website <https://www.518fairyhomes.com/>. This project has received great media attention. Activities include virtual events, which continue through August, so check out the MVLS Facebook page to see what is happening.

The 2019-2020 Family Literacy project came to an end on June 30. This year many changes were made to keep the project relevant in the time of COVID-19. Many e-resources were purchased, and the “Virtual Advantage” video raining series was developed and placed on YouTube. Check it out at: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcZi7bbezksTHdd_czNsYm5XXC4z2wTGa. Finally, many of the MVLS “Start With Science” kits were updated. Plans are in place to continue many of these activities when the next round of grants is funded.

Sue has been developing several cooperative projects with SALS and UHLS, projects that will be continued after Sue’s retirement. First is a three part series: Homeschooling Overview Workshop followed by a local Panel whereby local staff share insider knowledge of what families need from libraries, followed by a home and hybrid-schooling library idea swap – all virtual, taking place in September and October. In addition, Jack at SALS will create a resource website with our assistance to support member libraries provide this information locally. Also scheduled is a three system “What’s Up for Fall” programming idea swap to be held August 17 to assist members with fall event and activity planning; and an MVLS/SALS/UHLS Virtual Talking Book and Braille Library Presentation with Jane Bentley, the new Outreach Librarian at the TBBL on August 27, from 10-11 a.m.

Finally, Sue has been maintaining three lists of resources to help member libraries keep current with aids to help families and youth through the trying times. Feel free to look through these resources:

- [Online Library Resources To Share With Children, Teens, Families And Adults During COVID-19](#)
- [Resources to Help Families Understand Racism, Prejudice, Discrimination, and Inequity](#)
- [Virtual Advantage: Integrating Early Literacy Skills for Storytimes in the Library and Online](#)

The publishers preview collections are once again rotating among the members to help with book selection for children’s items. The book giveaways to member libraries for the books that complete the rotation are also continuing. Many libraries are receiving 25+ free books through this service this summer.

Sue’s contacts & visits: Arnoff Meeting, 6/1; SCP Youth Services Meeting, 6/1; Fairy and Gnome Planning Meeting, 6/2; Feltboard Workshop Planning Meeting, Joyce Laiosa, MVLS, 6/3; State Youth Consultant Call, Hunger Solutions, 6/4; Felt story/flannel board delivery, MID; SHO; COB; SCO; FON; FTH; CAN; SHS; Fairy and Gnome Planning Meeting, 6/9; Social Media Marketing, SHO, 6/9; Felt (Over) Board Fun: It’s

Not Rocket Science Zoom Workshop, MVLS, 6/10; MVLS ReadSquared Meeting 6/12; Fairy and Gnome Planning Meeting, 6/15; ReadSquared Meeting, FON, 6/16; MVLS Board of Trustees Meeting, 6/18; SCP Youth Services Meeting, 6/18; Fairy and Gnome Planning Meeting, 6/19; Fairy and Gnome Planning Meeting, 6/30; SCP Youth Services Meeting, 7/2; Fairy and Gnome Planning Meeting, 7/20; SCP Youth Services Meeting, 7/23; 3 System Planning Meeting, 7/2; Field Visit, COB, 7/28; Public Library System Youth Consultant Meeting, 7/31

Member Services

We continue to have regular Director's meetings to discuss libraries re-opening schedules and issues. Every library is different, but all are moving forward with serving their communities. As of this writing, all MVLS libraries are providing curbside services, and none are having indoor, in-person programs. We have 10 libraries that have buildings open for some services, and 7 that are open for most services except in-person programs. Many people are still choosing to stay away from libraries. While many libraries were worried about capacity issues, no library has reported overcrowding or an inability to meet demand for services.

The Gloversville Public Library has a new Director! Valerie Acklin began work in early July. I did an orientation session with her, and other MVLS staff members have been in contact and providing information to help Valerie get off to a good start at MVLS.

We have been helping two libraries with charter issues. The Schoharie Free Library is changing their service area from the Village of Schoharie to the Schoharie Central School District. This is a part of a bigger effort to make the Schoharie Library more sustainable. It is something we have been working on for a long time.

The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library is exploring changing their charter to cease being a municipal entity tied to the Village of St. Johnsville. This is probably also a long-term issue that may eventually turn into a more realistic service area for that library.

I did a virtual trustee training session on June 13 that will eventually be available on YouTube. I also did a special session for the trustees of the Canajoharie Library in early August.

Advocacy & Awareness

MVLS and the libraries are receiving great press this summer. Libraries reopening and especially the Fairies & Gnomes initiative have been very popular with the press.

Wade has been doing quite a bit of crisis communications for libraries as issues come up concerning libraries in this time of COVID-19. But it is not all bad news! Look through the MVLS YouTube Channel to see lots of wonderful, innovative things happening in libraries. Here's the address:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9nyvIOA1Q1vKPCn1_BU-RQ

Finally, with library funding very tenuous at this point, please be as active as you can in participating in any statewide advocacy initiatives that come up.

Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

Monday, June 1
Dan Arnoff

Michael Burnett
MVLS Directors
Deb E, Felicia S., Christina K., Helen T
Dawn Lamphere
MVLS Trustees
Craig Clark
Kathy Gundrum

Tuesday, June 2

MVLS Directors
Dawn Lamphere
Judi Steiger
Sara Dallas

Wednesday, June 3

Ed Asselin
Dawn Lamphere
Mary Beth Farr

Thursday, June 4

Lendio
Dawn Lamphere

Friday, Jun 5

MVLS Board
MVLS Directors
Karen Bradley

Monday, June 8

Cathy Caiazzo
MVLS Staff
Joanne Mickle
Barb Madonna
Karen Bradley
Dan Arnoff

Tuesday, June 9

MVLS Directors
Michael Burnett
Erica Wing
Frank Reese
PULISDO/DLD
Deb Paden

Wednesday, Jun 10

Michael Burnett
Dawn Lamphere
Mary Beth Farr
Directors - JA Fees, etc.
Jennie Mosher
Kim Zimmer

Thursday, June 11

MVLS Directors
Dawn Lamphere
Kim Zimmer

Kathy Gundrum
Friday, June 12
Michael Burnett
Kaitlyn Forbes
MVLS Directors, Board Presidents
Bill Levering
Saturday, June 13
MVLS trustees
Michael Burnett
Dawn Lamhere
Monday, June 15
Dan Arnoff
MVLS Directors
Karen Bradley, Bill Levering, Kathryn McCary
Tuesday, June 16
Michael Burnett
Kim Zimmer
Whitney Hubbard
Devon Hedges
Wednesday, June 17
Foundation Board
Trustee Training
Lendio
Erica Wing
Kim Zimmer
Thursday, June 18
MVLS Board
Whitney Hubbard
DLD - Mary Beth, Frank, Amy H
Friday, June 19
Erica Wing
CDLD Committee & Board
Whitney Hubard
Foundation Event Committee
Monday, June 22
Nicole Hemsley
Dawn Lamphere
Ed Asselin
Kaitlyn Forbes
Tuesday, June 23
MVLS Directors
Frank Reese
Nicole Hemsley
Wednesday, June 24
Lendio
Bob Scardamalia
Whitney Hubbard
Thursday, June 25

MVLS Directors
Devon Hedges
Bob Scardamalia
Christina Knee

Friday, June 26

Helen Thomas
MVLS Directors - census
Klm Zimmer
DLD

Monday, June 29

DreamSpring

Tuesday, June 30

Michael Burnett
ML Directors
MVLS Board

7/1/2020	Carol Ann Desch, Division of Library Development Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
7/2/2020	Edward Asselin, SUNY Cobleskill Suzan Friedlander, The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie Tim Burke, Upper Hudson Library System
7/3/2020	Beverly Osborne
7/6/2020	Jermey Johannesen, NYLA
7/7/2020	Foundation Board Shannon Aldi-Hogan, Frothingham Free Library Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library MVLS Executive Committee MVLS Member Library Directors Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library
7/8/2020	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development JA Council MVLS Member Library Directors Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library
7/9/2020	Kaitlyn Forbes, Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library MVLS Executive Committee
7/10/2020	Kaitlyn Forbes, Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development Foundation Board Kim Zimmer, The Community Library Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library
7/13/2020	Kaitlyn Forbes, Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery MVLS Member Library Directors
7/14/2020	William Levering Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council Division of Library Development, NYSED

	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Foundation Board
	Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Mid-Hudson Library System MVLS Board of Trustees MVLS Member Library Directors PULISDO
7/16/2020	Catherine Caiazzo, Schoharie Free Library Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library MVLS Member Library Directors
7/17/2020	Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Foundation Event Committee Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library Catherine Caiazzo, Schoharie Free Library
7/27/2020	Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library Kaitlyn Forbes, Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development Foundation Board Terry Pavoldi, Middleburgh Public Library MVLS Member Library Directors
7/28/2020	Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library Patricia Clancy Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library
7/29/2020	Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library
7/30/2020	Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library Christina Knee Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System Edward Asselin, SUNY Cobleskill
7/31/2020	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System