

## **Mohawk Valley Library System**

### **Director's Report**

**September, 2020**

#### **Administration & Governance**

Our search for a Public Services Consultant is progressing well. We had 15 applicants, and have begun the screening process. I'll provide an update at our October meeting. It looks like we will have choice from some very well-qualified candidates.

We continue to receive state aid payments in dribs and drabs. In most cases, they are 80% of the approved amounts. In cases where the aid is usually split in two payments of 90% and 10%, the initial payment is 80% of the 90%. It gets complicated.

There is some new good news on financial matters. The federal Institute of Museum and Library Services provided funding to all state library agencies to help with COVID-19 issues. In New York, some of that funding will come to library systems. The details are not yet available, but this should amount to tens-of-thousands of dollars for MVLS.

The Audit & Finance and Personnel Committees met on September 17 to address issues concerning the 2021 budget. We looked at worst case financial analyses for 2020 and 2021. The upshot is, if we really do only receive 80% aid in 2020, and receive the same reduced amount in 2021, we would still be able to hold a \$795,000 fund balance at the end of 2021. Within that 15 month time horizon, we should continue to be in sound financial condition.

The committees also reviewed options for salaries and benefits in 2021. We will review the possibilities at the October board meeting, in executive session.

We had our annual inspection of the HVAC rooftop units and one requires the replacement of a heat exchanger. We have scheduled that work, and will have to amend the budget to absorb that over \$2,000 repair.

#### **Automation & Resource Sharing**

The JA Council next meets on November 12. We have a few issues to review at the October board meeting. The first and most notable is the pending retirement of Diane Robinson who has been the behind-the-scenes brain for JA computer operations for 25 years. While there is a sound plan to continue in Diane's absence, she will be missed.

The most exciting JA news is the development of a self-service online registration option for library users. This will allow non-users to begin the process of getting a library card from home. Users will have to visit the library to complete the process.

We have simplified the process of removing inactive borrowers from the database. Now, anyone who has been inactive for 7 years is automatically removed. This kind of automated process is part of what will make life without Diane possible.

The Shield Act is a new (March 2020) law that applies to organizations that hold individual's data; like our library database. We are exploring the need for data breach insurance, which is not covered under typical business insurance policies.

### **Outreach & Adult Services**

We are starting the process of working with the county jails to renew their collections for 2020. A few Adult Literacy and NYSCA programs have also been held.

### **Youth Services**

The Summer Reading Program 2020 statistics have been submitted to the state. While overall numbers were understandably down, many libraries were successful in accomplishing the overall goals of keeping students engaged with the library and with reading. Attendance at virtual programs was over 6,000, and 7,700 individuals participated in self-directed programs like library-provided program kits.

The next 3-system Parents Educating Children At Home virtual workshop is on Wednesday, October 14. It has been great to keep youth services workshops going with Sue's retirement and the pandemic.

### **Member Services**

Director's Council meetings are back to a regular schedule and agenda. This month we are discussing rotating collections and the e-resources budget for 2021.

The Public Library Construction grants have been submitted to the state. Amsterdam modified their project so we were able to apply for all of the available funding. In other construction news, we expect the funding for last year's construction applications to be released soon.

The Census project is progressing nicely. Libraries have the chromebooks and "We Count" books, and we have the printed promotional materials on order. We are working on getting and configuring hotspots. Four billboards are up in Montgomery County, Schoharie County will follow soon.

Schenectady County invited us to work with them on their census promotion project. The Schenectady effort will be limited to billboards and chromebooks. We have 4 billboards on order, and the library has received 5 chromebooks. Hotspots are backordered.

This, of course, leaves Fulton County left out. While we can't provide the more expensive billboards, etc., we are offering the three Fulton County libraries the opportunity to get chromebooks and hotspots. We are doing this with money left over from this summer's Foundation public service grants.

### **Advocacy & Awareness**

The annual NYLA Conference will be all virtual this year, and will take place on November 5-6. We have been encouraging libraries to register and attend. We are offering a \$150 reimbursement grant to each library to facilitate attendance. \$150 covers the registration cost for one member at the early-bird rate. All of our libraries are organizational members, with those memberships paid by MVLS.

NYLA is developing a modified advocacy strategy designed to maximize library aid in 2021. It is a more realistic ask than they have put forward in recent years. There will be no traditional advocacy day with travel to Albany; but they are developing alternative advocacy efforts. Advocating for state funding will be more important than ever in the coming year.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library Initiative is getting started in Cobleskill with community listening sessions on the schedule. Middleburgh is also gearing up for community engagement. Just as state funding advocacy is even more important this year, so is our local library's advocacy to their communities.

I am meeting with the Schenectady library board on October 22 to begin a trustee education effort that – let's hope – will lead to a more realistic and healthy relationship between the library board and Schenectady County.

### **Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits**

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 9/1/2020  | Christine Witkowski   |
| 9/2/2020  | Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council<br>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System   |
| 9/3/2020  | MVLS Member Library Directors<br>PULISDO<br>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System<br>Edward Asselin, SUNY Cobleskill  |
| 9/4/2020  | Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council<br>Edward Asselin, SUNY Cobleskill<br>Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library  |
| 9/5/2020  | MVLS Member Library Directors<br>Suzan Friedlander, The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie  |
| 9/8/2020  | Kaitlyn Forbes, Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery<br>PULISDO<br>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System<br>Edward Asselin, SUNY Cobleskill  |
| 9/9/2020  | Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council<br>JA Council<br>Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library<br>MVLS Member Library Directors<br>Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library   |
| 9/10/2020 | Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development<br>Kathryn McCary, Law Office of Kathryn McCary<br>Susan Mitchell, North Country Library System<br>Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library<br>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System<br>Suzan Friedlander, The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie |
| 9/11/2020 | Foundation Board<br>MVLS Library Services Committee<br>Glenn Winter, T.M. Byxbee, CPA, PC   |
| 9/14/2020 | Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library<br>MVLS Member Library Directors   |
| 9/15/2020 | Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development<br>MVLS Library Services Committee<br>Catherine Caiazzo, Schoharie Free Library<br>Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library  |

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| 9/16/2020 | Kim Zimmer, The Community Library<br>Catherine Caiazzo, Schoharie Free Library  |
| 9/18/2020 | Kim Zimmer, The Community Library<br>Capital District Library Council<br>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System  |
| 9/21/2020 | Kim Zimmer, The Community Library<br>Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library<br>Catherine Caiazzo, Schoharie Free Library<br>Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library<br>Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System   |
| 9/22/2020 | Suzan Friedlander, The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie<br>Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library<br>Shannon Aldi-Hogan, Frothingham Free Library<br>Catherine Caiazzo, Schoharie Free Library<br>Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library<br>Edward Asselin, SUNY Cobleskill<br>Suzan Friedlander, The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie<br>Kim Zimmer, The Community Library |
| 9/23/2020 | Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library<br>Glenn Winter, T.M. Byxbee, CPA, PC<br>Suzan Friedlander, The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie  |
| 9/24/2020 | Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library<br>Terry Pavoldi, Middleburgh Public Library   |
| 9/25/2020 | Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library<br>Foundation Event Committee<br>Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library  |
| 9/28/2020 | Suzan Friedlander, The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie<br>Deborah Grimshaw<br>Shannon Aldi-Hogan, Frothingham Free Library<br>Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library<br>Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library   |
| 9/29/2020 | Judi Steiger, Fort Hunter Free Library<br>Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library<br>Erica Wing, Johnstown Public Library<br>Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library<br>Suzan Friedlander, The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie<br>Kim Zimmer, The Community Library  |
| 9/30/2020 | Dawn Lamphere, The Margaret Reaney Memorial Library<br>Deborah Grimshaw<br>Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library<br>MVLS Member Library Directors<br>Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library<br>Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library<br>Suzan Friedlander, The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie   |