

Mohawk Valley Library System

Director's Report

July & August 2021

Administration & Governance

On Thursday, September 2, new temporary amendments to Open Meetings Law were signed into law by Governor Hochul. The new rules empower boards of trustees to continue to have virtual meetings through January 15, 2022. This reverses the suspension of the Open Meetings Law relaxation that ended over the summer. The result is that over the next four months, libraries can have virtual meetings if they wish to.

Another recent COVID related law for New York is the HERO Act. This act requires all employers in New York State to have an Airborne Infectious Disease Exposure Prevention Plan. The state Department of Labor has produced a template, which MVLS has adapted for our own use and to be a model for our libraries. A copy will be included with the materials for the September board meeting.

The MVLS Bylaws amendment is also on the agenda for our September meeting. The proposed changes will be included in the meeting materials, as will a proposed resolution to extend current terms to maintain all trustees and officers in office to account for the proposed changes to the bylaws. The goal is to have all terms correspond to the calendar year that we use for all other reports.

T.M. Byxbee has been working on the MVLS and JA 2020 financial statements, as well as the IRS 990 form. The current plan is to have them present their findings at the October board meeting.

We have received state aid for all aid categories for 2021. The only aid left to be received is the final 10% payments for Local Library Services Aid and Local Services Support Aid. Now that we have that aid, we are ready to do budget amendments for the 2021 MVLS budget. A proposed amended budget will be included with the materials for the September board meeting. The new budget shows a surplus, however, that isn't a real indication of MVLS' financial position since we received \$253,249 in 2020 state aid in the 2021 budget year. If all aid was allocated to the year that it was intended for, the budget would be balanced. We will review and act on the proposed budget amendments at the September board meeting,

The Audit and Finance committee will meet immediately following the September board meeting to review the Multi-Year Financial Forecast document; the first step in planning the 2022 budget. A copy of that forecast is also included with the September meeting materials. It shows MVLS continuing to be in a good financial position.

With input from MVLS staff and directors, we further developed the job description for our new position, including a slight change to the job title to "Technology and Growth Consultant." Approval of the updated description will be an agenda item at the September meeting. We are getting some applicants, but are seeing the seeming universal tight job market. Applications are definitely fewer than we were seeing for previous jobs.

Planning listening sessions for MVLS stakeholders are scheduled in early September. We are getting good participation from member library directors, staff and trustees. The final session is the day before our September board meeting. I will provide an initial overview at that meeting.

We will be submitting the official MVLS 2023 – 2027 Plan of Service to the state in October. To get a head start on that, we will be reviewing the MVLS Free Direct Access Plan at the September board meeting. The plan is effectively unchanged from the previous version. Every system must have an approved Free Direct Access Plan as a part of the state's required Plan of Service.

Automation and Resource Sharing

The JA Council is meeting on Wednesday, September 8, at 9:30 via GoToMeeting. The Council will be addressing the proposed 2022 JA budget. This proposed budget will come to the MVLS board for action in October. Other JA business includes work on hiring a new staff person to replace Diane Robinson, who retired last year, and ongoing work on the E-card virtual library card sign-up process. JA is also getting closer to developing a strategy for regularizing the payment for telecommunications services by libraries.

Outreach, Adult and Youth Services

Libraries are compiling final reports for their summer reading programs. We will share the system-wide statistics in October. MVLS provided libraries with unclaimed preview books to use as prizes for their summer reading programs. Heather and Kate provided End of Summer care packages (a nice note and treats) for each library location to thank them on behalf of MVLS for the hard work and care they continue to give to their communities.

The Adult and Family Literacy final reports for 2021 have been submitted. There is still some uncertainty about how those grant programs will be administered in the coming year, but MVLS will continue to support both programs.

The Adult Literacy Grant will continue to fund an expanded Tech Savvy program, spearheaded by Jennie Mosher. Member libraries will be invited to participate in virtual programs and to offer suggestions and presenters. We are currently in the planning process and scheduling virtual programs through the end of the year. Libraries have received copies of the Job Skills Toolkits, purchased with Adult Literacy Funds. Libraries are sharing with their community partners.

For Family Literacy we will continue to focus on early literacy and science literacy skills for families and libraries. Julie Dahlie has confirmed her interest in freelance work in the creation of videos for the project. Heather is promoting the Start With Science kits for use by daycares and groups. There are no plans to offer an in-person training for the fall. MVLS will offer a self-paced training cohort on neurodiversity and disability awareness in libraries through Project Enable.

Working with the correctional institutions continues to be a challenge. Heather connected with Jamel Muhammad at Schenectady County Corrections to explain the role MVLS plays in providing material support.

Heather has begun hosting a monthly gathering and conversation with member library staff to share ideas, successes and challenges with library programs. Library staff seems to value and appreciate opportunities to exchange information. The plan is to host one a month going forward.

Member Services

The Schoharie Free Library has a new Director! Yvonne Keller-Baker, who was one of the interim directors and was a school librarian in Duaneburg, began serving as library director on September 1. MVLS continues to be very involved with helping Schoharie get back on track. Heather and Kate

provided support for their summer reading program, and Sharon and I are providing ongoing training. There is a long way to go in healing the rift with the community, but they are making a good start.

Shannon Aldi-Hogan has resigned as the director of the Frothingham Free Library in Fonda. MVLS is assisting with their interim director, Linda Bell, and is providing guidance for their new director search.

The Library Services committee is meeting on Monday, September 13 at 2:00 p.m. to review this year's public library construction applications. MVLS has been assisting several libraries with construction planning. The end result for the 2021 application year will be applications from Amsterdam for their ongoing project to renovate and expand their library, and applications for five Schenectady branches for energy and lighting efficiency projects. MVLS has \$899,993 to allocate this year. The applications will come in just above that amount, so we will have just a bit to cut. A construction aid proposal will be presented for board action at the September board meeting.

Advocacy & Awareness

There has been a recent upheaval at the New York Library Association, but they are going ahead with both a virtual and an in-person conference this November. The in-person event will be in Syracuse. MVLS is again offering conference registration mini-grants of \$250 per library to encourage participation in the NYLA conference.

Libraries are submitting applications for the 2020 Foundation Library Public Service grants. Each library can apply for \$500 for a project to improve public services at their library. We have a tradition of requiring libraries to demonstrate meeting some minimum standard in order to apply. This year, we are requiring participation in the MVLS planning process. Approving these grants will be an agenda item at the September board meeting.

We have submitted the final report for the CARES Act funding, and should receive the final 10% payment of \$3,700 soon. The next round of special funding will come through the American Rescue Plan. While that funding will not come directly through public library systems like the CARES money did, we will be a part of the application to be submitted by the Capital District Library Council. I hope to have more information to share at our September meeting.

Meetings, Contacts & Field Visits

7/1/2021	Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development MVLS Member Library Directors Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library
7/2/2021	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library MVLS Member Library Directors Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
7/6/2021	Particia Clancy Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
7/7/2021	Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Edward Asselin, SUNY Cobleskill
7/12/2021	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library

	Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
7/13/2021	Foundation Board
	JA Council
	MVLS Member Library Directors
	Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
7/14/2021	Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library
7/15/2021	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Kathleen Gundrum, Capital District Library Council
	MVLS Board of Trustees
	Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library
7/16/2021	Cheryl Cufari
	Foundation Board
	Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
7/19/2021	Judith Kelly
	Particia Clancy
	Nicole Hauser, Gloversville Public Library
7/20/2021	Frank Reese, Division of Library Development
	Valerie Acklin, Gloversville Public Library
	Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
7/21/2021	Mal Martin
	Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library
	Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
	Edward Asselin, SUNY Cobleskill
7/22/2021	Judith Kelly
	Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
7/23/2021	John Naple
7/26/2021	Foundation Board
7/27/2021	Capital District Library Council
	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
	Foundation Board
	Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library
7/28/2021	MVLS Member Library Directors
7/29/2021	Linda Bell
	Mary Donohue
	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
	Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library
7/30/2021	Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery
	Natalie McDonough, Division of Library Development
	MVLS Member Library Directors
8/2/2021	Elissa Kane, Kane & Lekakis

8/3/2021	MVLS Member Library Directors Linda Bell Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
8/4/2021	Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library MVLS Staff Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library Helen Thomas, Sharon Springs Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
8/5/2021	Elissa Kane, Kane & Lekakis Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
8/6/2021	Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
8/8/2021	William Levering
8/9/2021	Particia Clancy Mary Beth Farr, Division of Library Development Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library
8/10/2021	MVLS Board of Trustees Glenn Winter, T.M. Byxbee, CPA, PC
8/11/2021	MVLS Staff MVLS Trustee Education Session – Schoharie Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library Edward Asselin, SUNY Cobleskill Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
8/12/2021	Paul O'Brien MVLS Member Library Directors NYLA Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schoharie Free Library
8/13/2021	MVLS Member Library Directors Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
8/16/2021	Particia Clancy Judith Kelly Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library Whitney Hubbard, Fort Plain Free Library MVLS Member Library Directors MVLS Member Library Directors Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library Karen Bradley, Schenectady County Public Library Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library
8/17/2021	Linda Bell Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery MVLS Board of Trustees MVLS Library Services Committee
8/18/2021	Foundation Board Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library

8/19/2021 Sara Dallas, Southern Adirondack Library System
Kim Zimmer, The Community Library
Jeanne M. Irwin
Particia Clancy
Nicole Hemsley, Amsterdam Free Library
Division of Library Development, NYSED
MVLS Member Library Directors
Yvonne Keller-Baker, Schaharie Free Library

8/20/2021 Particia Clancy
Jeanne M. Irwin

8/23/2021 Linda Bell
Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library
Edward Asselin, SUNY Cobleskill

8/25/2021 Devon Hedges, Schenectady County Public Library

8/30/2021 Barbara Madonna
Katherine Hawkins
Maria Cancro, Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery

8/31/2021 MVLS Member Library Directors
Michael Burnett, Northville Public Library