

SYSTEM ADVOCACY - We're developing some of our advocacy for the new year but still waiting to give our message its legislative focus. The NYLA Legislative Committee usually harmonizes this message state-wide, but it doesn't meet until December 12. The governor's call letter to state agencies in September warned state agencies to hold changes in costs to zero for the next two years, recognizing that School Aid and Medicaid are "subject to different growth caps." It can't hurt to emphasize our educational role. But there may still be "dry times" ahead, so we'll also want to create and strengthen ties to legislators. I've included an updated list of state representatives in the Mid-Hudson Library System region, which Rebekkah has compiled and already shared with the Directors Association.

We will also want to ask Rebekkah what she heard in Albany at the November 29th NYS Assembly Committee on Libraries and Educational Technology Public Hearing, where she was filling in for NYLA Director Jeremy Johnson and spoke, I'm sure, about the importance of libraries and library services

I plan on submitting written testimony to the Assembly Committee and went up last year to present my advocacy in person.

LTA MEMBERSHIP - Mid-Hudson's membership in the Library Trustee Association of New York State provides you individual membership as well. To activate your membership, all you need to do is register on their site at www.librarytrustees.org. There's an upcoming conference in Unionvale in May that you may be interested in.

REVIEW OF BUDGETS & 2013 BUDGETS - Your packet includes the proposed 2013 budget, which has been reviewed by the Finance Committee. It includes the following schedules:

- Summary 2011-2013
- Disbursement Details 2011-2013
- Revenue Details 2011-2013
- Summary with Projections and year-end fund balances, 2011-2014.
- Categorical aid for 2013

PROPOSED 2013 OPERATING BUDGET - Overall expenditures are projected to rise 4%.

Personnel expenditures will increase from 52% of the total budget in 2011 to 55% of the total in 2013, not an unreasonable percentage considering the importance of staffing to System services and the deep cuts in staffing last January.

Bottom-line personnel costs will increase 8.3% in 2013 over our adjusted budget of July, but up 12% from what we now expect to spend for personnel this year.

Drivers of these increases include:

- Increase in retirement costs and planning for a 12% increase in the costs of health insurance.
- Anticipating coverage for new family plans, which in a small staff can have a large affect.
- Salary adjustments that include a new role of assistant director and an across-the-board increase of 1%, which is part of our CSEA salary agreement.
- Changes in personnel this year that expanded a half-time IT staff to full-time and shifting the focus of the chief IT staff away from "machines" to coordinate IT services with the members, beginning with a focus on e-rate.

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- A temporary--one-year--part-time communications specialist that will create online tutorials to support the public's use of Sierra as part of a redesign and rebuilding of the System's website.
- We are also projecting the cost of an additional full-time position in 2014. This is only blue-sky thinking at present, but senior staff are talking about the growing challenges to complete projects and respond to member needs.

Professional development opportunities continue to be a high priority in 2013 and include funding for continuing education programs for member libraries and staff education, travel and conference attendance. Funding to bring in outside experts as part of the System's education program for member libraries will double; and system staff training in 2013 include certifications in IT, MS Office and Project Management in addition to conference attendance at NYLA, ALA and IUG.

Capital repairs and improvements are also funded at increased levels that will include an asbestos abatement project, work on the auditorium facade, and the possibility in 2014 of installing new energy efficient windows and an exterior insulation finishing system (EIFS) on the office building, both of which will reduce future energy costs.

We're also proposing a post-Sandy and "worse case" scenario in state funding for 2013 and 2014 and basing our budgeting on what the System received in 2011. This is 4% below what the System expects to receive this year.

The State Comptroller's Mid-Year report on the state's financial health noted lower than expected General Fund tax collections have been off-set by unexpected, one-time, revenues, but a number of uncertainties still threaten the state's finances, including Federal budget action and the impacts of Sandy. And the governor's "call letter" to state agencies in September warned that growth needed to be kept to zero through April 2015.

Another item to note among revenues is the additional \$30,000 in member library fees to cover the new costs of the annual Sierra cloud-fee.

MEMBERS SURVEY - I think we should be pleased with the level of participation, which was higher than previous years, (57 directors and 34 board presidents), and the positive view most respondents have of System staff and services. As John says, there are a mix of possible actionable items by staff and senior staff will be looking at the results, which have been shared with the board as well. A decision is expected in January on how to share the results with our member libraries.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT - The Trustee Services Committee meets with a new Chair, Steve Mac Nish, on December 13 to plan for a board planning session in January and to decide on a new trustee orientation. We're suggesting moving the board's meeting to a weekday and later in January. With an increase in board-to-board visits, it will be useful to set aside some time to discuss how to unify the message we want to deliver or information to collect as well as take a tour of the System and meet staff.

SENYLRC STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE - Southeastern's strategic planning process continues and Meribeth Advocate and I recently participated in a discussion with a consultant hired by SENYLRC to conduct a series of discussions among Southeastern's members about SENYLRC's mission and the quality of its services, as well as the potential for greater regional affiliation in library services. It was interesting to talk about the possibility of greater regional collaboration and provide our assessment of SENYLRC services. This is the third time I've been involved in this process. I served on a panel

discussion this summer and spoke with another consultant about SENYLRC earlier in the year. Merribeth, of course, is an active Southeastern Board member.

DIRECTOR EVALUATION AND GOALS - My Goals in 2013 will be focused on projects already begun or planned. This includes the migration from Millennium to Sierra, in which I have a supportive role. But I am open and will solicit suggestions from board members, staff and member library directors. Personnel & Planning Committee Chair, John Bickford, suggested that I also include some self-assessment of how I met the goals I set for myself this year. I am, but I'm minimizing the "pain" and shortening this where I can, but I have added some comments as well.

1. Recruit and hire an automation coordinator.

Although I can't take credit for the high energy, high level of performance and expertise of Eric McCarthy, who assumed the role of Automation Coordinator on March 12, I do take some credit for leading the process that led to his recruitment and smooth transition.

2. Report on the completion of the system's 2007-2011 plan of service by March 1.

The progress of our 2007-2011 was summarized at the board's March 10 meeting. Linda was responsible for reporting financial data. Merribeth reported on outreach. I completed the narrative report. The report was submitted a week before the state's deadline.

3. Report to the Board on the implementation of the 2012-2016 Plan of Service.

Other than the annual presentation to the board in March, plan-of-service reports are sprinkled through my reports to the board and include:

- Tom and Chris's modification of our delivery routes and our discussion with library directors that addressed the plan-of-service intended result, "Library materials will be collected and distributed by the most efficient and cost-effective method, through continuous refinement of methods to expedite delivery."
- Rebekkah and Meribeth's co-development of the LSTA-funded leadership series with Sandra Nelson, addressing the intended result "Member libraries will have access to a coordinated program of continuing education, resources and networking opportunities."
- Needed modifications of our Direct Access Plan. The Plan is integral to our mission and ensures "the public's right to free access" to member library resources. We modified it, adopted it and got it accepted by the state.
- Increasing a part-time IT staff to full-time and enlarging the Systems Administrator role to a more active system-wide role and enable the System to better address the plan-of-service intended result "A current, reliable, cost-sustainable ILS and support that provide member library staff and patrons with effective and efficient access to member library collections."
- About the annual meeting program, which was meant to address the plan-of-service intended result "Member libraries will have access to a coordinated program of continuing education, resources and networking opportunities in such areas as... managing growth and transition."

4. Administer the bidding process for the replacement of the auditorium roof in March.

I can't take full credit for this project because Peter Hoffmann developed the bidding documents and managed negotiations with the contractors and Chris Herron solicited initial quotes. But I coordinated the communication between Peter, contractor and Chris, as well as with Linda Vittone in the business office. I also stuck around early one Saturday and Sunday evening to lock up after the roofers finished when Chris was on vacation. And I did guide the pick of the roofing color!

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5. Compile and distribute a statistical portrait of the Mid-Hudson Library community by April 1, a project shared between staff and the Executive Director in the past.

I sorted, compiled and published some dozen files in both Excel and two PDF using 2011 library annual report data that reflect the interests of member library directors. These can be found at http://midhudson.org/annual_reports/2011/

6. Lead negotiations in April for a new delivery contract, balancing levels of service to system and (member library) costs. Contract to be approved by the Board in May.

The revision was successful and we're poised to realize further savings by utilizing county tax-free fuel. The negotiations included a review of the contract by Dan Petigrow of Thomas Drohan Waxman Petigrow & Mayle, LLP of Hopewell Junction. A draft of the contract with the county for tax-free fuel is with Thomas Drohan Waxman Petigrow & Mayle and pending their approval.

The Executive Director is empowered to sign contracts and contracts are not routinely approved by the board. The board has been involved in the approval of salary and benefit contracts, but trustees are also engaged in the negotiations for these agreements.

7. Coordinate our advocacy efforts with state representatives, the governor and others to better leverage my advocacy, the advocacy of system staff and trustees, and member libraries.

I was pretty active early in the year and visited three local Senators--(I testified at last year's Assembly Committee of Libraries hearing in November--and had fun talking about libraries in Albany on Advocacy day; I've made dozens of contacts in letters and calls. But I will need to refocus and make calls, write letters, plan visits as we move into the first of the year.

8. Explore the possibility of shared and consolidated services with other library systems.

I've been involved in both informal and formal discussions that included greater collaboration between systems, including (SENYLRC) Southeastern's ongoing strategic review, September's INY2 summit and the summer retreat of system directors in Greenbush.

9. Coordinate a public relations audit and develop a plan by July 1.

I have little to report on this "front." However, a quick reading of system communications is the DA's first focus session. This is much better than my leading a review of staff!

10. Coordinate the migration of the system's website to a content management system by October 1 to serve as an anchor in the system's public relations and communications efforts with the integration of social media, use of web 2.0 technologies, and improved organization of system online resources.

We've adopted a menu for the new site and have decided on a content management system, but for a number of reasons related to staffing, including a lack of staff, this is moving very slowly. I have included a temporary, part-time, staff person in the 2013 budget to assist in the transition from our 1990s-site to an updated and mobile-responsive site.

I've also been experimenting with Twitter and blogging. The topics I occasionally blog are focused on the future of libraries and ebooks. My Twitter feed and blog, along with these reports and my reports to the DA, are at <http://director.midhudson.org>.