

HURRICANE IRENE

MHLS staff and our delivery drivers deserve special praise, as do the staff and trustees of our member libraries, in their response to the impact of Hurricane Irene on libraries. Drivers continued to deliver after the storm. Staff gathered information and offered assistance. Tips on addressing storm damage and information on available relief efforts were posted on the MHLS website. Numerous libraries were without electricity, phone and/or Internet service. Damage to roads made driving a challenge. The Windham Public Library was hardest hit. Other libraries suffering damage included Desmond - Fish Library and Sarah Hull Hallock Free Library. But miraculously, all libraries are now open.

2012-2016 PLAN OF SERVICE

The most significant action of the Board on September 14 is approval of our new five-year Plan of Service. The Directors Association meets on September 8 and the Plan is on its agenda as well and approval is expected.

Legal Requirements

The Board of Trustees is required to approve and submit a Plan to the Division of Library Development (DLD) in accordance with section 272 of Education Law and Commissioner of Education Regulations Section 90.3. We chose to develop the plan this year rather than postponing the development until 2012, so the Plan must be submitted to DLD by October 1, 2011. DLD will review the plan and approval is expected in four to eight weeks.. Without a plan approved by DLD, the Library System would not be eligible for state funding.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the plan is to document the mission and goals of Mid-Hudson, as well as the intended results and methods of measuring the effectiveness of Mid-Hudson's services and programs. It also documents Mid-Hudson's Central Library program provided by the Poughkeepsie Public Library District.

The Direct Access Plan is part of the Plan of Service and ensures that the residents of Mid-Hudson's service area have equitable access to Mid-Hudson's member libraries. Additionally, the Direct Access Plan identifies what constitutes the over-use of a member library by residents living outside a member library's chartered service area and possible remedies and restrictions. The Direct Access Plan has already been endorsed by the Directors Association on May 3, 2011, and approved by the Board on July 13.

Reasons to Approve the Plan

There are several reasons why the Board should approve the Plan.

1) It is a blueprint for the collaborative development of efficient and cost-effective services for

- Managing collections and the public's use of them;
- Facilitating the public's discovery of available resources;
- Delivery between member libraries;
- Outreach to special client populations and to youth;
- Communication among member libraries and with the Library System;
- Professional development of member library directors, trustees and staff;
- Onsite consulting to address member library needs;
- Advocacy for sustainable funding;

- Facility development and construction.
- 2) It provides for the ongoing evaluation of this collaboration and service.
 - 3) It represents the contributions of over 250 directors, trustees, friends and staff from 63 member libraries, MHLS and the MHLS Board, and five correctional facilities.
 - 4) It has been extensively vetted by a special ad hoc committee of member library directors and the MHLS Board Planning and Personnel Committee. Both recommend its approval.

FACILITIES

2011-2012 Public Library Construction Grant Applications

Also on the agenda for September 14 are the recommendations of the Incentive Committee on this year's construction grant applications. The Mid-Hudson Library System is allocated \$521,041 of the state's \$14 million public library construction program. Applicants are required to provide, at minimum, a 50% match for projects funded by the program. We are submitting an application this year, our first since 2007, as are 13 member libraries. The Board will need to approve the applications recommended by the committee if the applications are to be considered by the state and receive funding. The Incentive Committee met on August 31.

Rebekkah Smith Aldrich manages the Public Library Construction Grant program and led the meeting with the Incentive Committee. She does a great job supporting the members both in the application process and with her expertise in facilities development. She is the author of our grant. Chris Herron, our facilities manager, was also involved in preparing our grant, working to obtain quotes from a number of contractors.

Mid-Hudson's Grant Application

Our application is for badly needed restoration of the Auditorium's facade and for the capital investment of a new roof for the Auditorium. As I reported to the Board in July, work on the Auditorium was identified as a high priority in 2010 by Rebekkah and Chris. Peter Hoffmann and I joined Rebekkah and Chris earlier this year in a review of needed repairs and confirmed this work continued to be a priority.

Estimates for the work on the Auditorium are \$12,500 for the facade and \$53,259 for the roof. This is a 64% increase from earlier estimates, which were shared with the Board in July. The increase is a result of new quotes after learning that prevailing wage requirements applied to Mid-Hudson for public works. Because costs will be significantly higher than our earlier estimates, we are requesting the full 50% match--\$32,879--allowed under the grant. We will use the capital fund for our match and as of July 31, the fund had a balance of \$61,323.

Parking Lot Repairs

This fall, we will follow through on our plans to address safety concerns in the parking lot by filling in depressions and sealing the lot. This is not part of our grant application and the estimated cost is \$3,500.

PERSONNEL

Staff and Staff Compensation Review

Work continues on the staff and staff compensation review, the purpose of which is to connect the new Plan of Service to staff job descriptions where appropriate, to develop a schedule of compensation that is equitable, proportionate, competitive and sustainable, and to review our policy on post-employment benefits.

The results of the review will be presented to the Planning and Personnel Committee on October 13 and negotiations with CSEA will follow. A joint meeting of the Planning and Personnel and Finance Committees is also planned.

The goal is to have a revised salary schedule, a policy statement on post-employment benefits, and an agreement with CSEA for the Board to consider at its meeting on December 10.

Background

Since the downsizing of staff in January 2011 from 21 to 16 FTE, a number of staff have needed to take on additional responsibilities and all staff have been affected. Additionally, there has been no adjustment in wages and salaries or cost-of-living increases since January 2010. Also, Mid-Hudson has one of the lowest staff to member library ratios in the state and challenges and pressures can be expected to grow as the Library System begins its new five-year Plan of Service.

Review Process

The first step in the review is nearly complete with all job descriptions having been revised and the final review by staff begun. All the goals of the new Plan of Service have now been pulled into staff job descriptions, particularly for senior staff. And all job descriptions now contain the same elements, such as identifying who was responsible for reviewing, revising and approving the descriptions, a summary, essential duties and responsibilities, physical conditions and requirements, key competencies, and minimum requirements.

The Library System's organizational chart is also being revised and will show which positions have responsibility for coordinating each element of the new Plan of Service.

The next step of the process has begun with the collection of job descriptions having comparable duties and responsibilities to Mid-Hudson's. These are being collected from a variety of sources, including local civil service jurisdictions, public libraries and not-for-profits, and other state public library systems. The wages and salaries of these comparable positions will be used to benchmark MHLS wages and salaries.

Post-Employment Benefits

Research on NYSHIP's lifetime health insurance benefit and available options has also begun. Two issues will be considered jointly with this research and the drafting of policy: 1) the objections of some retirees having to pay a percentage of their health insurance premium since 2006 when, at the time of their retirement, there was no such expectation; and 2) the currently unpaid Annual Required Contribution of \$257,278 for post-employment benefits identified by our GASB 45 review.

GASB 45 Update

We have updated our Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 45 review by receiving credit for our on-going contributions towards retiree health insurance costs. (GASB 45 provides the accepted methods and measurements for determining the total accrued costs for government post-employment benefits.) With this credit, the Annual Required Contribution (ARC), which would fully

fund our post-employment benefits, falls slightly from \$270,813 to \$257,278 and the total 30-year unfunded liability drops from \$3,370,110 to \$3,220,930.

BUDGET & FINANCE

2010 Financial Review

We received a draft of Mid-Hudson's 2010 financial review from Nugent & Haeussler on August 17. The review concluded that no material modifications needed to be made to the financial statements in order for them to be in conformity with general accounting principles, which I believe is CPA-speak for no problems were found with our accounting. But Linda Vittone and I both had questions, which we have now sent to the auditors, Richard P. Capicchioni and Marc Levy. Once these questions are answered, we hope to set up a time when either Mr. Levy or Mr. Capicchioni can meet with the Audit Committee. Ideally, this would be the morning just before the September 14 Board meeting.

2012 Budget

Although we presented a very preliminary 2012 budget in July along with projections for 2013 and 2014, we are continuing to review and question our assumptions. At last week's New York Alliance of Library Systems conference, John Drexelius, who was the guest speaker and has spent 24 years in the legislature as a staff attorney, shared that the the state budget will be balanced in 2012 but that the State Division of Budget estimates gaps of \$2.4 billion in 2013 and \$2.8 billion in 2014.

CONFERENCES

PULISDO & NYALS

Merribeth Advocate and I attended a three-day conference of the Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO) and the New York Alliance of Library Systems (NYALS) last week, which was held in Greenbush, just outside of Albany.

PULISDO

It was very interesting to learn how library systems differ across the state in their relationship with member libraries--the varying levels of collaboration with members and the support they receive. It confirmed, once again, how fortunate we are at Mid-Hudson with our ongoing collaboration and support. The advisory committee structure is, in particular, a strength despite the occasional challenges in reaching consensus. I also had the feeling that the high level of attendance we have at Mid-Hudson training and professional development programs is the envy of a number of library systems.

A statement on the future of libraries that highlighted the continuing importance of library systems was developed at the meeting for the New York State's Regents Advisory Council for Libraries.

Plans were also begun to develop an online repository for public library system documents, including policies, memorandums of understandings, contracts with members, legal opinions, material on staff and trustee training and surveys.

NYALS

The NYALS conference focused on library advocacy, beginning with a guest speaker and ending with the development of a number of action plans.

The speaker was JR (John) Drexelius, who is a 24-year veteran staff attorney of the state legislature. He worked with Senator Volker for 12 years. His presentation was especially insightful and he provided a number of great tips. He also had some very good intelligence on the workings and players of state government. Some of these included:

- Lobbying--petitioning the government--is a fundamental and protected right, and confirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court.
- However, the first lobbying laws in 1906 in New York that required individuals to register with the government and divulge payments for lobbying were also ruled constitutional; these laws have been made more restrictive in 1999 and 2007, the later extending ethics reform and instituting a blanket ban on gifts.
- In 2011, ethics reform mandated training for lobbyists and government officials, but exempted 501 (c) 3 from revealing contributors.
- Organizations registering under IRS 501 (c) 3 should elect the 501 (h) option. This enables a 501 (c) 3 organization to spend a base of 20% of their first \$500,000 in annual expenditures on lobbying, and allows additional spending on lobbying in declining percentages of their annual expenditures up to a maximum of \$1 million dollars.
- The New York State Commission on Public Integrity is an authoritative source on the rules and law of lobbying in New York State--www.nyintegrity.org.
- 501(c) 3 organizations can create 501 (c) 4 organizations, which include PACs
- When preparing talking points, developing multiple points and phrasing the same points differently can avoid canned letters and formulaic presentations, which can lead to more effective advocacy.
- Key understanding: the first rule of the majority leader is to remain the majority leader and keep his or her party in the majority; therefore framing advocacy on legislation in a way that improves the majority's chances of remaining the majority can be effective; and framing advocacy on legislation in a way that improves the minority's chances of becoming the majority can also be a useful strategy.
- When advocating for a bill, make sure to contact the chairs of committees; also contact any member of a key committee in the majority that may be in a competitive race and in a marginal position.
- Legislative agendas are set by the majority caucuses in both the Senate and Assembly.
- "Check the math." Determine the minimum threshold for securing support by assessing the various caucuses--majority and minority, upstate and downstate, NYC, Queens, Brooklyn, Long Island, democrat and republican.
- Downstate caucuses represent 50% of the political power in Albany.
- Identify and communicate with the staff of key committees and executive offices. Have a message tailored for these staff. What, for example, could persuade staff in the Division of Budget that a 10% cut in library funding is unfair?
- Majority rules: presently, it's the democratic caucus that selects the Board of Regents in the joint legislative session.
- The state budget cycle begins in September with the budget call, which is a letter to state departments that details budget targets.

- Advocacy should begin the first week of February instead of the first of March.
- The State Division of Budget projects a balanced budget for 2012 but estimates gaps of \$2.4 billion in 2013 and \$2.8 billion in 2014.

CORRESPONDENCE

In order to reduce the amount of extraneous paper you receive, we would like to try duplication by request only. If you want a personal copy of any document listed, please contact Peggy, ext. 216.

I. CORRESPONDENCE

- Thank you note to Merribeth Advocate, Outreach & Education Coordinator, from Erica Freudenberger, Manager Red Hook Public Library, for awarding her library a Summer Reading Program mini-grant, and for her ongoing support and assistance.
- Thank you note to Mike Nyerges from the Friends of the Cairo Public Library, for his attendance and participation in the celebration of the new library's groundbreaking ceremony.
- Letter to the Executive Director from former Saugerties trustee, Janet Carter, complimenting the professionalism of System staff, especially that of Merribeth Advocate and Rebekkah Smith Aldrich.
- Executive Director's response to Ms. Carter's letter complimenting System staff.
- Letter to Governor, Andrew M. Cuomo, from the Executive Director, requesting that he sign legislation to enable public library systems to apply for local government efficiency grants.
- Letter to Paul Eldridge Putnam County Executive, from the Executive Director, advocating continued support of Putnam County public libraries by the County.
- Thank you letter to Kerstin Cruger, MHLS Marketing & Program Assistant and Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Coordinator for Library Growth & Sustainability for the successful implementation of the new Book Club in a Bag program reservation system from Erica Freudenberger, Director of the Red Hook Public Library.
- Thank you letter to Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Coordinator for Library Growth & Sustainability from Mary Ellen O'Connor, President of the Library Trustee Association of New York State for her participation on a panel at their Trustee Institute in Albany, NY.
- Thank you letter to Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Coordinator for Library Growth & Sustainability from Cassie Guthrie, Executive Director of the Pioneer Library System for allowing her to attend the workshop Rebekkah presented, "Public Library Vote Toolbox" and for assisting her in creating a trustee education training session for her member libraries similar to the MHLS sessions.
- Thank you letter to Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Coordinator for Library Growth & Sustainability from Mary Ann Shepard, Board President of the Olive Free Library in West Shokan for the Construction Grant Workshop.
- Article from the Daily Mail about the awards made to member libraries through the NYS Construction Grant program.
- Article from Our Town about libraries and the tax cap in New York State.
- Thank you letter to Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Coordinator for Library Growth &

Sustainability from Julia L. Butterfield Library (Cold Spring) Director Gillian Thorpe for Rebekkah's assistance with a planned renovation project and construction grant application.

- Letter to MHLS Board Vice President, Michael Minor, informing him he is the recipient of the Judge Gilbert D.B. Hasbrouck Library Advocacy Award.
- Thank you note to Meribeth Advocate Terry Sennett, Director Clinton Community Library, for attending the opening of their new community Book Booth.
- Letter to Town of Union Vale Supervisor, Lisette Hitsman, from Mike Nyerges regarding the current level of usage by the town's residents at four System libraries.