

Executive Director's Annual Evaluation and Goals for 2012

I want to thank the Board for its participation in my annual evaluation, its feedback on my performance, and its expression of support. It has been a privilege to serve as the Executive Director of the Mid-Hudson Library System this past year and to work with such a talented group of trustees, directors, and library system and library staff. The ongoing commitment of system staff to member library success has been particularly heartening in my "first year," which has not been without its challenges. I have especially enjoyed the creative and positive energy that I have found throughout the Mid-Hudson library community. So thank you for this wonderful continued public service opportunity!

All good evaluations are in part forward looking and the Board has asked that I identify some goals for 2012. These include:

- 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.
- Recruit and hire an automation coordinator.
- Explore the possibility of shared and consolidated services with other library systems.
- Report to the Board on the implementation of the 2012-2016 Plan of Service.
- Report on the completion of the system's 2007-2011 plan of service by March 1.
- Administer the bidding process for the replacement of the auditorium roof in March.
- Compile and distribute a statistical portrait of the Mid-Hudson Library community by April 1, which had been done by staff and the Executive Director in the past.
- 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.
- Coordinate a public relations audit and develop a plan by July 1 for how and to whom we need to communicate the system's role, goals, objectivities and activities.
- 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.
- Continued focus and advocacy for needed digital collections and technologies.

Advocacy

Peter Hoffmann, Jim Tuttle and I have talked about increasing the effectiveness of our advocacy with state representatives in 2012 by coordinating Board, Executive Director, system staff and member library advocacy. Rebekkah Smith Aldrich and I have also talked about a strategy and she has begun planning for Library Advocacy Day in Albany, which is March 6. (Mark your calendars!) Once Senate and Assembly committee assignments are in view, we will want to coordinate and schedule some visits to local legislators in February.

To start the process, I have written letters to Mid-Hudson state legislators that were sent out by Peggy Winn on January 12. The letters to area Senators began with a “thank you” for the active support Senators provided in 2011 and for the establishment of the Senate Select Committee On Libraries on January 10, 2012. Letters to members of the Assembly asked that they consider the important economic and quality of life contributions libraries make to the communities in their districts, and the role the Mid-Hudson Library System plays in support of these libraries.

On December 14, Kevin Kevin Verbesey, who is the incoming chair of the Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO) and Director of the Suffolk Cooperative Library System, had written to Governor Cuomo. He wrote of the return on investment (ROI) systems provide on the funding they receive from the state. Using the number of items shared among the member libraries of eleven systems, including Mid-Hudson, he calculated that resource sharing represented a savings of \$248 million to taxpayers and a ROI of \$11.50 on the state funding systems receive.

In my letters to legislators, I used a very conservative number of items shared among our member libraries and the same formula Kevin used in his letter to calculate the return on investment on the state funding Mid-Hudson receives, \$14.

These letters are part of System correspondence available on request.

In 2012, PULISDO plans to augment the advocacy for library systems by hiring a special advocate to focus on the Assembly, with particular focus on members of the Assembly elected from New York City. The advocacy will be coordinated with the New York Alliance of Library Systems and the New York Library Association and I plan to support this. Lack of support for libraries in the Assembly has been a major stumbling block to sustained state funding largely because the differences in funding between New York City and public libraries elsewhere. The objective is to lobby Assembly members who “have the ear” of Sheldon Silver. The Assembly’s African-American, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus, which represent important voting block in the Assembly, will be an important focus of this effort.

Automation Coordinator

We have fourteen applicants for the position of Automation Coordinator who meet the position's minimum qualifications, which are a Master's degree (MLS or MIS) from an ALA accredited institution, two or more years of related full-time experience, and one year of supervisory experience. Laurie Shedrick left on December 9 and the deadline for applicants was December 31.

I formed a selection committee to include Julie Dempsey, who is the in-coming chair of the Resource Sharing Advisory Committee and Director of the Highland Public Library, and staff members Robert Drake, Linda Vittone, Kit Kassel, Karen O'Brien and Merribeth Advocate. I serve as the committee's chair.

The committee met on January 6 and selected a number of candidates to interview. By the time the Board meets on January 21, at least two candidates will have been interviewed. There is a plan to interview at least one other candidate and a decision is expected by January 31.

CSEA Memorandum of Understanding

Included in your packet is a final draft of the Memorandum of Understanding with CSEA that summarizes the agreement we reached on November 18 with the union. It has been vetted by Dan Petigrow of Thomas, Drohan, Waxman, Petigrow & Mayle, LLP, and adopts language he specifically recommended. It should be signed, ratified by the CSEA Local 702 and copies ready for the Board's final approval on January 21.

Contract with Town of Union Vale

Included in your packet is also a copy of a near-final draft of a contract between The Town Union Vale and the Library System. Its purpose is to funnel support from the Town of Union Vale to the member libraries of Beekman, LaGrange, Millbrook and Dover Plains, and was negotiated with the Town and these libraries.

The contract was prepared by John Donoghue of Donoghue Thomas Auslander & Drohan, LLP in Hopewell Junction, and Dan Petigrow of Thomas, Drohan, Waxman, Petigrow & Mayle, LLP. (John Donoghue left the firm at the end of 2011, which has long provided Mid-Hudson's legal support on labor issues, and the partnership has changed.)

It is waiting a final revision by Al Roberts, the attorney for the Town of Union Vale, that will stipulate that Union Vale residents can register for a library card at any member library in Mid-

Hudson, which is their right under Education Commissioner's Regulations. The hope is we'll have a final version available for the Board on the 21st that should differ in only this one respect.

The Town of Union Vale is a town in Dutchess County of approximately 4,500 residents. It's an unserved area--it doesn't have a library--and is not included in the chartered service area of any member library. Its residents primarily use the libraries of Beekman, LaGrange, Millbrook and, to a lesser extent, Dover Plains. Until now, the Town of Union Vale has not provided any support for the library services provided its residents.

Education Commissioner's Regulations and our Direct Access Plan allow limited restrictions to be placed on residents of an unserved area when their use of a library causes the library a hardship and requests for funding are unsuccessful. These restrictions are primarily on borrowing new materials less than a year old and would be system wide.

Commissioner's Regulations allow the library system and its member libraries to determine what constitutes a hardship. We have defined hardship when circulation by the residents of an unserved area, from which no support is provided, reaches 5% of a member library's total circulation. This has been approved by the Directors Association and the Mid-Hudson Library System Board. Annual circulation to Town of Union Vale residents by Beekman is approaching 10% of Beekman's annual circulation and Beekman has repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, requested support from the town.

To avoid restrictions, the Town of Union Vale agreed to provide \$25,000 in support of its neighboring libraries in 2012. The libraries agreed to distribute this support based on their circulation to and registrations of Town of Union Vale residents. The Boards of Trustees of the libraries approved the role of Mid-Hudson in this contract, Dover Plains on November 2, 2011, Millbrook on November 15, 2011, Beekman on November 28, 2011, and LaGrange on December 8, 2011.

On the advice of Dan Petigrow, the Mid-Hudson Board needs to approve the contract and the waiver of potential conflict of interest. The latter was required because Donoghue Thomas Auslander & Drohan provided legal advice on labor matters to both Mid-Hudson and the Town of Union Vale. A copy of this waiver is also in your packet.

Delivery Contract

Our contract with Hudson River Transport ends on June 30, although it is renewable for another five years. We and member libraries are satisfied with the service Hudson River Transport provides. However, Tom Finnegan and Chris Herron are conducting some "due diligence" and requesting proposals from other companies. We also plan to sit down with Hudson River Transport in April and discuss the issue we most want to change in the current contract, which is

the fuel surcharge agreement. It's rate of increase above the base is higher than the industry standard and inflates our costs.

Considerable thought has also been given to how the current delivery to member libraries can be improved and made more efficient. The goal is to balance levels of service with system and (member library) costs. An ad hoc committee was formed and met in the beginning of December and generally approved the Systems plans to achieve this balance. This included reducing the frequency of deliveries at some libraries and increasing them at others beginning July 1. The committee included System staff and member library directors.

2012 Census Service Populations

The Division of Library Development has sent member library service populations updated for the 2010 Census. These have been distributed to member libraries, which have been encouraged to check the numbers. Errors have been discovered and I have worked with a number of libraries to resolve these. Populations of unserved areas, areas not included in the service area of a library, are expected sometime in January.

The population served by Mid-Hudson increased by 3.64% to 650,704 since 2000. Dutchess County led the increase with 5.83%, followed by Putnam at 3.98%, Greene at 2.08% and Ulster at .94%. Columbia's population remained virtually unchanged.

Of the state's twenty-three public library systems that had increases since 2000, Mid-Hudson ranked 5th. Excluding New York City, Ramapo Catskill led state library systems with a population increase of 7.89%

2011 Annual Reports

It's that time again for member libraries and the System. Member libraries need to complete their reports online by February 17. We then quickly review them and submit them to the Division of Library Development. Our report is due in March.

Preparation of our report and the collection of data for member library reports involve nearly everyone. Linda Vittone and Joan Kay work on compiling financial data for payments to member libraries, as well as closing our books for 2011 and starting a new year. Merribeth Advocate, Tara Stohr, Kerstin Cruger, Karen O'Brien, and Robert Drake work on compiling data for member libraries, including database use, collection and circulation data, summer program data and website visits for those forty-four member library websites we manage. Without an Automation Coordinator, this process has meant additional work for several staff, especially Merribeth, Tara

and Karen. They have been remarkably positive about this and like everyone, prove again how lucky the System is to have such competent and hard working staff.

I have a small role helping to check member library reports before they are submitted to the state. I have a somewhat bigger chore in reporting the Summary of Library System Accomplishments for year five, the last year, in our 2006-2011 System Plan of Service, which I will share with the Board in March.

Regents Advisory Council on Libraries

The second draft of the Regents Advisory Council on Libraries report and recommendations to the Regents, *Creating the Future: A 2020 Vision and Plan for Library Service in New York State*, was released on December 23 for public review and comment. For public libraries and public library systems, there are reasons to be pleased and reasons to be concerned. I would especially draw attention to the recommendation that calls for the Regents to “require all public libraries to become fully funded and governed through citizen participation and public vote.” My additional thoughts on this draft are on my blog at <http://director.midhudson.org>.

Comments on the document can be submitted in writing to the Council through February 15 at NYSLRegComments@mail.nysed.gov. The Council plans to present the report to the Regents in April.