

Mid-Hudson Library System

Policy: MHLS Trustees Participation via Videoconference in MHLS Board Meetings

The participation of MHLS Board members in the MHLS Board of the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) is necessary for the effective operation of MHLS on behalf of the residents and libraries served by MHLS. However, MHLS Board members are not always available to be physically present at MHLS Board meetings. The New York State Open Meetings Law (OML) allows for remote participation and voting in Board meetings if certain requirements are met.

This policy describes the requirements that bring MHLS into compliance with NY OML and also reflects MHLS's desired use of remote participation.

Any MHLS Board member wishing to participate remotely must follow these rules:

1. The option to participate remotely is only available to a MHLS Board member when she/he is not available to be present in-person at the time of the meeting as determined by the Board member. A MHLS Board member not available to be present in-person must comply with the notification requirement stated in item #3 below.
2. The permission for a MHLS Board member to participate remotely will depend upon the technology available at the location of the MHLS Board meeting and/or the remote location the Board member wishes to use. MHLS staff will decide if the technology available at the location of a meeting of the MHLS Board and/or the remote location the Board member wishes to use adequately support remote participation.
3. In order to comply with public notice requirements, the MHLS Board member must notify the MHLS Board President and the MHLS Executive Director of intent to participate remotely along with address information of the video conference location at least ten (10) days before the relevant MHLS Board meeting.
4. The MHLS Board member must use video and audio of high quality on a broadband connection that has no obvious latency.
5. The MHLS Board member must use software for this purpose that is approved by MHLS staff for its quality to ensure that participation in executive sessions will be secure from outside observation.
6. The MHLS Board member must be willing to let members of the public join with her/him at the remote site as this address will be published in the official notice of the meeting and to ensure that the remote location is open and accessible to the public.

All Board members attending meetings by video conferencing shall be entitled to participate and vote as if they were personally and physically present at the meeting site. In addition, sufficient security and identification procedures shall be employed, either at the outset of any meeting or at any time during the meeting as appropriate, to ensure that any and all members attending for discussion or voting purposes are in fact an authorized member with the right to speak and vote.