

Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | December 2018

1. Stakeholder Survey & Listening Tour

- a. I have completed the Stakeholder Survey Project, this project surveyed four stakeholder groups to elicit their best thinking on what our organization should be focused on for the future success of member libraries and the system itself. MHLS Staff, MHLS Trustees, MHLS member library directors, and MHLS member library board presidents participated. There was a 60% response rate from external stakeholders (member library directors and board presidents) and an 80% response rate from internal stakeholders (MHLS staff and board).
- b. All 5 county groups participated in my Listening Tour which allowed for facilitated conversations around member libraries' vision for the future of their libraries and county associations and the practical steps that will be necessary to bring those visions to life.
- c. Key takeaways:
 - i. MHLS is on the right path, and seen as a critical partner to member libraries' success. With course correcting adjustments to our Action Plan and thoughtful design of professional development opportunities we can improve our support of our members as they strive to improve their provision of quality library service to their communities. For example, in the [proposed 2019 Action Plan](#) you will see an increased focus on Sierra training, trustee education, improving the user experience, community engagement and building partnerships to the advantage of libraries across the system.
 - ii. Member libraries are focused on being community centers; creating a place where all feel welcomed; being viewed as key partners in their communities' success.
 - iii. Members want to be technologically savvy. From their online presence to the capacity of frontline staff to help residents with tech, libraries are interested in raising the bar when it comes to their tech know-how.
 - iv. There is a continued drum beat for trustee education to help trustees feel more confident and comfortable in their role to secure adequate, sustainable funding for their libraries.
 - v. A large number of member libraries are contending with facility issues, from accessibility to expansion to space planning, the optimization of facilities is a hot topic.
- d. This information has shaped the [proposed 2019 Action Plan](#) considered by the Personnel & Planning Committee and is influencing upcoming hiring decisions for key positions at MHLS.

2. Personnel

a. Assistant Director Retirement

- i. Merribeth Advocate, MHLS Assistant Director, has announced her retirement. Her last day will be December 14th.
- ii. Merribeth has created a legacy to be proud of. From her leadership as interim director during the aftermath of the recession which resulted in the financial stability of our organization for the past decade to managing OverDrive, one of the most popular patron services, Merribeth has left an indelible mark on our organization. Beyond that

she is a big part of why MHLS staff are successful across the board. I know you will join me in wishing her well in her retirement.

- iii. Assessment of Merribeth's current responsibilities has been underway since her announcement on November 13th and we are currently engaged in cross training staff and receiving support from the NYS Division of Library Development to ensure a smooth transition as Merribeth departs and we work to hire new staff to take on key roles formerly managed by Merribeth.

b. Library Development Coordinator (formerly the Coordinator for Library Sustainability)

- i. We have three finalists for this position and will have a hiring decision in place in early December with this new person starting in January 2019.

3. MHLS Auditorium Renovations

- a. Phase III renovations of the MHLS Auditorium will begin on December 17th, 2018.
- b. After an RFP process conducted by Chris Herron, MHLS Facilities Manager & Assistant Delivery Operations Manager, we have signed a contract with R.L. Baxter Building Corporation to complete the work.
- c. Project timeline:
 - i. December 2018 – February 2019
 - ii. This will impact our January MHSL Board Meeting. We have secured meeting space at the brand new Highland Public Library for our first meeting of the year (Saturday, January 19th with a snow date of February 2, 2019)
- d. Project outcomes:
 - i. Expansion of meeting space and creation of a storage room for tables and chairs through the removal of the stage;
 - ii. Renovation of the serving room for easier use and management;
 - iii. New tables and chairs;
 - iv. New carpeting;
 - v. Painting of the interior space;
 - vi. Basement improvements: centralized dehumidification system, repair stairs, outdoor spigot; and
 - vii. Asbestos abatement

4. Sustainability Certification



- a. The MHLS Sustainability Initiative Team is right on schedule! We are 95% done with the environmental portion of the certification.
 - i. Highlights:

1. MHLS Environmental Sustainability Policy now in place and tied to our Purchasing Policy. (Thanks to the MHLS Board!)
 2. Job descriptions and performance appraisals all tied to the Environmental Sustainability Policy. (Thanks to Linda for her leadership on this effort)
 3. Energy Assessment conducted of the MHLS Office Building (Thanks to Chris!)
 4. Full Green House Gas Emissions Inventory benchmarking completed (Thanks to Joan!)
 5. Two waste audits conducted (Thanks to Chris & Michael!)
 6. Incorporation of environmental stewardship clauses in new delivery RFP (Thanks to Chris & Tom!)
 7. New signage to clarify recycling rules within the office building (Thanks to Kerstin!)
 8. Routine emessages to staff to highlight recycling rules, reuse opportunities and building operations issues (Thanks to Kerstin & Courtney!)
 9. Staff Events
 - a. Earth Day Staff Event (to be held annually at staff request)
 - b. Two “lunch & learn” events
 - c. Fall Clean Up Day Staff Event (to be held annually at staff request)
 10. Upcycled event decorations for DA luncheon
- b. Next will be:
- i. Wrap up remaining documentation requirements for the environmental portion.
 - ii. Final Presentation to the Green Business Partnership for Green Business Certification, the first phase of the NYLA Sustainable Library Certification Program.
 - iii. Transition to the 2nd and 3rd phases: social equity and financial stewardship.
 1. The next two sections will have policy issues that come to the committees of the MHLS Board for consideration so expect to be an active participant in this phase!

5. Union Vale Contract Update

- a. At the direction of the four impacted libraries (Beekman, Dover, LaGrange & Millbrook) in late September we completed contract negotiations for a one-year contract with the Town of Union Vale to secure funding for library services to Union Vale residents for 2019. The amount negotiated includes a 2% increase over funding for 2018.
- b. This contract is in place as a result of our [Free Direct Access Plan](#) (FDAP). The town of Union Vale does not have a library and Union Vale residents have traditionally used the four neighboring libraries. However, this use had, for many years, been subsidized by the neighboring towns. Usage of neighboring libraries rose to a level that trigger restrictions to library services for these residents due to the lack of financial investment by their town as per the FDAP. The current contract provides for a more equitable financial arrangement.

6. Pleasant Valley Fire

- a. As reported via email, the Pleasant Valley Free Library’s facility suffered from a structural fire on November 6th. No one was harmed in the fire but the facility is closed indefinitely. The library is close to signing a lease for temporary space in the center of town.



- b. Laurie Shedrick, MHLS Technology Operations Manager has worked tirelessly in the aftermath of this incident to manage patron expectations and help the library respond to the high volume of items in transit that needed a place to land. She has aided the library to reroute returns and hold pickups. We are currently hosting a library clerk from Pleasant Valley in our office space who is processing items traveling through the System that can no longer be housed at Pleasant Valley. This arrangement will cease once the library opens in its temporary space.
- c. I have met with the library director and board and am providing technical assistance on crisis response, fundraising and a variety of other topics that have arisen in the aftermath.
- d. The library most needs financial donations at this time. There is a donation button at the top of their home page at <http://pleasantvalleylibrary.org/>. Follow them on Facebook to hear of other ways to help.
- e. The New York Library Association has allotted \$1,000 from their Disaster Relief Fund to this library and has committed to all funds raised for that fund through the end of the year to PVFL. There were also several impromptu fundraisers for the library held during the NYLA Conference in Rochester.

7. Member Libraries at the Polls

- a. All member library budget votes passed in 2018.
- b. The vote to “dissolve and terminate” the Woodstock Public Library District failed by a 2-1 margin.

8. MHLS Funding

- a. State Aid Operating Funds to MHLS

Year	State Aid Operating Funds to MHLS	MHLS % Decrease-Increase
2008	\$1,735,832	
2009	\$1,535,881	-11.51%
2010	\$1,476,230	-3.88%
2011	\$1,383,072	-6.31%
2012	\$1,450,422	+4.87%
2013	\$1,521,566	+4.90%
2014	\$1,537,315	+1.04%
2015	\$1,626,686	+5.81%
2016	\$1,696,848	+4.30%
2017	\$1,697,762	+0.005%
2018	\$1,714,567	+0.989%
Difference 2008-2018	-\$21,265	-1.22%

- b. CPI Inflation: \$1,735,832 of buying power in January 2008 has the same buying power as



\$2,079,618 in October 2018. This represents a **20% decrease** in MHLS buying power over the past decade.

Source: Inflation Rate Calculator

https://inflationdata.com/Inflation/Inflation_Calculators/Inflation_Rate_Calculator.asp

9. Advocacy:

- a. **Save the Date:** 2019 NYLA Library Advocacy Day in Albany is on Wednesday, February 27th
- b. **At our first meeting of 2019** I will provide an overview of post-election considerations and the New York Library Association's Legislative and Budgetary Agenda.

10. 59th Annual Membership Meeting

- a. A report of the membership meeting is available in the [November 13th issue of the MHLS Bulletin](#).
- b. The 2019 Annual Membership Meeting will be our 60th! It is currently planned for Friday, October 25th at the Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library and Home in Hyde Park, NY.

11. Executive Director's Event Participation: Mid-September - November

- a. Columbia County Library Association @Philmont
- b. Greene County Library Association @Coxsackie
- c. Meeting with staff from Innovative, Inc.; Innovative Demo Presentation
- d. Turning Outwards Full Day Workshop @MHLS
- e. Trustee Essentials Workshop @Kingston
- f. Ulster County Library Association Annual Dinner
- g. Putnam County Library Association @Carmel
- h. Columbia County Funding Working Group @Chatham
- i. Resource Sharing Advisory Committee
- j. DA Workshop: Sierra
- k. System Services Advisory Committee Meeting
- l. Americans Disability Act & Library Facilities Webinar
- m. MHLS Personnel & Planning Committee Meeting
- n. Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO) Conference Call
- o. Division of Library Development (DLD) Conference Call
- p. MHLS Executive Committee Meeting
- q. Advanced Trustee Workshop @Kingston
- r. Advanced Trustee Workshop @MHLS
- s. Columbia County Library Association @Germantown
- t. Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee
- u. MHLS Facilities Committee Meeting & Tour
- v. Greene County Library Association @Cairo
- w. Drawdown Learn @Omega Center for Sustainable Living
- x. Ulster County Library Association @Marlboro
- y. Putnam County Library Association Dinner @Mahopac
- z. Meeting with Senator Sue Serino @Hyde Park

- aa. MHLS/CSEA Contract Negotiations
- bb. Regional Meet Up of Sustainable Library Certification Program Participants @MHLS
- cc. MHLS 59th Annual Membership Meeting @Locust Grove
- dd. MHLS Finance Committee Meeting
- ee. New York Library Association Conference @Rochester, NY
- ff. MHLS Trustee Services Committee Meeting
- gg. Columbia County Funding Working Group @Kinderhook
- hh. Dutchess County Directors Meeting @Pawling
- ii. Directors Association and Annual Appreciation Luncheon
- jj. Terry Kirschner, Executive Director of the Westchester Library System
- kk. Caroline Ashby, Executive Director of the Nassau Library System
- ll. MHLS Personnel & Planning Committee Meeting
- mm. MHLS Bylaws, Policies and Procedures Committee Meeting