

Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | July 2022

1. State Update

- a. Bill Updates:
 - i. The [Construction Extension Bill](#) has been signed into law by the Governor.
 - ii. The Double Taxation Report Bill did pass both houses of the legislature at the end of session. It has yet to be delivered to the Governor at the time of this report.
 - iii. The Governor has introduced a firearms bill that would restrict folks from carrying guns in "sensitive places." Libraries have been listed in the definition of "sensitive places."
- b. NYS has released the [Love Your Library Fund Tax Check-Off/Love Your Library License Plate](#) funds (statewide total: \$150,000). These funds must be spent to help support the 2022 Summer Reading Program. MHLS' portion is \$5,482. These funds will be distributed on a county-by-county basis in our system.
- c. Assemblymember Didi Barrett has awarded \$15,000 to select libraries in her district. These funds will be administered by MHLS.



- d. Legislator Roster for the Mid-Hudson Region: Primary results indicate that more than half of MHLS' 15 area legislators will turnover in the November election. We will need to make a concerted effort in late 2022-early 2023 to reach out to new legislators to introduce ourselves and our member libraries.
- e. (left) Ric and I joined Assemblymember Didi Barrett as she visited the new Sadie Peterson Delaney African Roots Branch Library of the Poughkeepsie Public Library District on June 16.
- f. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds:
 - i. [Digital Navigator Program](#): We are concluding the first-ever cohort of Digital Navigator training and implementation in our System. Due to funds that were unexpended in the first round, and an extension of the grant timeline, a second cohort of 20 library staff will be convened later this year.
 - ii. Beyond the Library Wi-Fi Project: Gerry Formby, MHLS IT Operations Supervisory and Isaac Barbee, MHLS Tech Support Specialist are wrapping up the design and installation of outdoor Wi-Fi extenders at 43 member library locations. This project is expected to be complete by the end of July.

2. Funding Update

- a. The MHLS Directors Association approved the 2023 Members Assessment unanimously. This includes a 1% increase. These funds make up 24% of MHLS revenue.

3. Personnel Updates

a. Personnel Actions:

i. Administrative Associate Position:

1. Farah Faizi has been hired as the Administrative Associate.

ii. Library Sustainability Coordinator Position:

1. Casey Conlin has resigned from this position to take a new job in a new field.
2. A search is underway to fill this position.

iii. Interlibrary Loan & Cataloging:

1. Kyra Walker has resigned from this position to take a new job at Yale University.
2. A search is underway to fill this position.

iv. Promotion for Kathryn Brew, currently the Technology Operations Support Specialist

1. *Background:* Kathryn was hired last year into a new position we created on the Technology Operations Team. This position works directly with Assistant Director/Technology Operations Manager Laurie Shedrick to support the Integrated Library System (ILS) and Technology Operations projects
Issue: Over the past year the complexity of the work assignments for this position have grown. We feel it is time to adjust the salary for this position to reflect that and to ensure we are paying a competitive wage for this work.
Action: Therefore, we are recommending a salary adjustment for this position in the Personnel Actions for this meeting.

v. **ACTION:** You will be asked to vote on these personnel actions later in the agenda.

b. Staff Luncheon

- i. There will be a staff luncheon on July 27th. Ric will be joining us to represent the board and convey the board's sentiments to the staff.

4. Facilities Updates

- a. The new fence has been installed in the parking lot. Chris Herron, MHLS Facilities Manager & Assistant Delivery Operations Manager, did an excellent job overseeing this project.

Before:



After:



- b. The railing for the ramp leading up to the front door, damaged when a delivery van backed into it, has been replaced:



- c. EV Charging Station Project:
- i. Our application for the [Electric Vehicle \(EV\) Make Ready Program](#) has been submitted.
 - ii. We have signed with Livingston Energy Group to lead this project. They have conducted a site assessment and provided us with a site drawing.

5. Accessibility Assessment Work Continues

- a. Facilities:
 - i. Work encouraged by the Facilities Committee and EDI Working Group is underway to use the ADA Checklist for MHLS Facilities.
 - ii. As a result, we will be adding a second parking spot for folks with disabilities and new signage at the entrance of our office building.
- b. Continuing Education & Meetings:
 - i. We will be switching from GoToMeeting to Zoom for future meetings and MHLS Events to ensure we can make use of better accessibility features such as closed captioning in the future.
 - ii. Staff will be compiling best practices for accessible in person and online events this year and implementing all feasible suggestions to ensure our programming is accessible to all.
- c. Web Site (midhudson.org):
 - i. We have added an [Accessibility Statement](#) to midhudson.org
 - ii. We are working to add [ReciteMe](#) to the web site. This is an “assistive toolbar” to create an inclusive environment for folks who visit our web site. The toolbar will include a screen reader, magnifier, translation into over 100 languages and give users control over the color scheme, text, font style, and spacing.

6. The Library of Local (LoL) Project Update:

- a. Thanks to our partnership with the Partners for Climate Action Hudson Valley through the Library of Local Project, all member libraries are eligible for their recently announced [Ecological Restoration Grants](#). Libraries can apply for grants in the range of \$1,000 to \$100,000 for projects that restore the ecology of our natural environment, reducing greenhouse gasses, and improving our air and water.



- b. Thanks to the grant funds received this year, we have added [all available Library of Local collection titles to our OverDrive collection](#).
- c. In May we had shared that this project had made the “long list” for the International Federation of Library Association’s Best Green Library Project of the Year Award; however, we did not make the short list. You can see who did make the short list [here](#). The winners will be announced later in July.

7. Justice at Work Program to be Launched

- a. We are opening applications to member libraries to sign up teams from their library for [Justice at Work in Public Libraries: Understanding Power, Oppression, Resistance and Solidarity](#) a new program from the Public Library Association (PLA).
- b. This self-paced 5-hour online course allows individuals on a team to explore the topics independently and then come together with the full team to discuss the concepts of Connecting Identity and Power, Understanding Oppression, Resistance and Solidarity. This intensive course model is intended to move a group from surface talk about diversity and inclusion to real,

honest conversations about justice and action plans that advance equity. This seven-part course has short, recorded video lessons that break down content in accessible chunks, activity templates that help you personalize the frameworks to your context and access to extensive lists of resources to extend your learning.

- c. Kerstin Cruger, MHLS Outreach & Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Specialist is leading this Project.

8. Trustee Education Updates:

- a. The State Library has issued its [final guidance on the new Trustee Education Requirement](#) which goes into effect January 1, 2023.
 - i. MHLS has been pre-approved as a trustee education provider. Therefore, all MHLS Trustee Education Series events, including the Trustee Handbook Book Club, will count.
 - ii. Online programs will count.
 - iii. If a provider does not provide a certificate of attendance the State Library has provided a [“Self-Assurance Form”](#)
- b. Trustee Handbook Book Club
 - i. We have finished production of the initial run of Book Club Events, this included a live webinar, related links and a DIY discussion guide for each, [archived on our web site](#), of the following topics:
 1. Duties & Responsibilities
 2. Library Board Meetings
 3. Personnel
 4. Budgets & Finance
 5. Facilities
 6. Policies & Risk Management
 7. Ethics & Conflicts of Interest + Intellectual Freedom, Censorship & Privacy (with Special Guest Sara Dallas, Executive Director of the Southern Adirondack Library System; Executive Board Member, American Library Association; Board Member, Freedom to Read Foundation; Chair, Task Force on Core Values, American Library Association.)
 8. Planning & Evaluation
 9. PR & Advocacy (with special guest AnnaLee Dragon, Executive Director of the New York Library Association)
 - ii. Next up is the recording of the “Trustee Handbook Book Club: After Party Part 2” in which we will tackle questions we got from the audience that we couldn’t get to in the second half of the series.
 - iii. We are planning to bring this series back in the fall to address topics such as construction projects, the role of the board president and the role of the treasurer.

9. 2022 Collection Management Policy Template and Guide Released

- a. MHLS has partnered with the other 22 public library systems in New York State to produce the [2022 Public Library Collection Management Policy Template and Guide](#) to help public library directors and board update their collection development policies and request for reconsideration processes.



- b. A webinar to introduce this new guide, “Ready, Set, Policy! Using the 2022 “Collection Management” Guide, is planned for Tuesday, July 19th from 10:00-11:00am. You can [register here](#) for this event if it is of interest.

10. Censors Target Pride Month:

- a. June is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Pride Month which was created to “...honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan.” (Source: [Library of Congress](#)) Many public libraries help celebrate this month with book displays, programs, and partnerships within their communities.
 - i. A “Hide the Pride in Public Libraries Campaign” by the political action group Vote Catholic has resulted in some community members checking out all books from public libraries Pride displays or hiding books from Pride displays so they cannot be checked out.
 - ii. In Smithtown, New York, the library board garnered national attention for a last-minute vote to dismantle a Pride display in their library. Both the New York Library Association and the Public Library Directors Association of Suffolk County issued statements in opposition of this decision. (You can read NYLA’s statement [here](#).) 48 hours later, due to an extraordinary level of public outcry – more than 1,000 people attended their special board meeting last week - they rescinded this vote. The Ask A Lawyer service of the Empire State Libraries Network addresses this issue in the answer found [here](#).

- iii. Many libraries, including MHLS member libraries, host “Drag Queen Story Hour,” a national program designed to promote diversity and inclusion for young people. These events were targeted in three state by a group called the [Proud Boys, which the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated as a Hate Group](#). Folks affiliated with the Proud Boys showed up to these events with the evident intent to block families from attending and to intimidate library staff and performers. Police removed these protesters from the libraries in all instances.

11. 2022 Summer Reading Program Kicks Off!

- a. This year’s Summer Reading Program theme is “Oceans of Possibilities”
- b. Member Libraries have been hard at work planning SRP kick off parties and a full complement of events and programs for the children and families of their communities this summer
- c. Directors are reporting high turn out to the kick off events, finally seeing pre-pandemic attendance numbers again.



Patterson Library SRP Kick Off Event

“Hundreds of people showed up for our “Summer Reading, “Oceans of Possibilities,” kick-off on Friday with plenty of fun water activities. The waterslide was a big hit, as was the dunk tank where kids got to knock one of the Carmel Rams football players into the tank! Uncle Louie G's served excellent ice cream while Deputy Sheriff Hill delighted the kids with a demonstration featuring his dog Flash! “

12. Board Operations

- a. The Board Self-Evaluation Survey has closed. Thank you to all who responded. Results are being summarized and will be presented to the Board Development Committee for discussion at their next meeting.
- b. Board-to-Board Visits
 - i. Reminders:
 - 1. Please coordinate responses to libraries requesting a visit with your peers in the county and, as always:
 - a. Please let me know if you need any assistance to prepare for your meetings.

- b. Please let Farah or I know once you've attended a meeting for tracking purposes.
 - ii. Talking Points
 - 1. Please raise awareness about the new web site [Unite Against Book Bans](#).
 - 2. Trustee Education
 - a. Please help advertise the guidance on the new Trustee Education Requirement which goes into effect January 1, 2023:
<https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/education.htm>
 - b. Please raise awareness about the Fall 2022 Trustee Education Series Schedule:
 - i. Trustee Essentials (Introductory): Tuesday, September 13th from 5:00-6:30pm ONLINE
 - ii. Trustee Essentials (Introductory): Wednesday, September 21st from 10:00am-12:00pm IN PERSON
 - iii. Core Values & Ethics (Introductory): Thursday, September 22 from 5:00-6:30pm ONLINE
 - iv. Overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for Library Facilities: Friday, September 23rd from 10:00-11:30am ONLINE
 - v. Financial & Fiduciary Responsibilities (Intermediate): Thursday, October 13th from 10:00am-12:00pm ONLINE
 - vi. Pathways to Sustainable Funding (Advanced): Thursday, October 27th from 10:00am-12:00pm IN PERSON

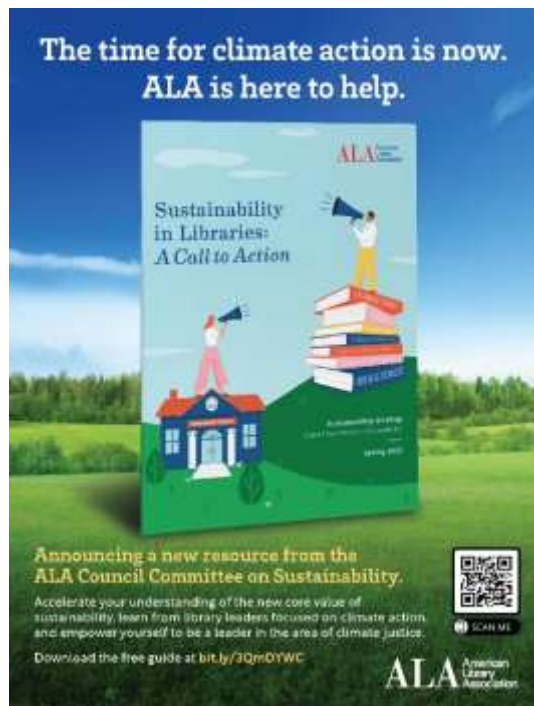
13. Executive Director's Event Participation: May 2 – July 1, 2022

- a. MHLS Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee
- b. MHLS Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group
- c. Facilitation: Municipal Ballot Vote (414) Libraries Meet Up
- d. Facilitation: County Funding Advocacy Support Group
- e. MHLS System Services Advisory Committee
- f. Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO) monthly meeting (2)
- g. Columbia County Library Association (2)
- h. New York Library Association's "[Spring on the Hill](#)" Event (Albany, NY)
 - i. Presentation: Public Library District Toolkit
- i. Division of Library Development/PULISDO (2)
- j. Visit: Pleasant Valley Library Board of Trustees (with Ric & Barry)
- k. Presentation: Trustee Essentials, MHLS Trustee Education Series (2)
- l. Council Committee on Sustainability (ALA) (2)
- m. Meeting: Matt Stinchcomb, Partners for Climate Action Hudson Valley
- n. Putnam County Library Association (2)
- o. Putnam County Library Association Annual meeting (with Carla & Peter)
- p. MHLS Resource Sharing Advisory Committee
- q. Presentation: Core Values & Ethics, MHLS Trustee Education Series

- r. MHLS Audit Committee
- s. Facilitation: Library of Local Project Participating Libraries Meet Up
- t. Advisory Board, Sustainable Libraries Initiative (2)
- u. MHLS Personnel & Planning Committee
- v. Presentation: Sustainable Thinking, New Hampshire Library Association
- w. MHLS Directors Association
- x. New Directors Forum
- y. NYLA Legislative Committee
- z. Meeting: Assemblywoman Didi Barrett (with Ric)
- aa. Presentation: Pathways to Sustainable Funding, MHLS Trustee Education Series
- bb. Presentation: State Aid for Library Construction Program Technical Assistance
- cc. American Library Association Annual Conference, Washington D. C.
- dd. Consultation: New Director Orientation, Caroline Ford, Catskill Public Library

14. ALA Council Committee on Sustainability Update:

- a. June marked the end of my term as the chair of the Council Committee on Sustainability during their inaugural year. I would like to thank the board for your encouragement of my service to the profession through this work. I am proud to share the deliverables from this committee over the past 12 months below. I am stepping down as chair as of June 30th.
 - i. Creation of a [briefing on sustainability](#) for the ALA membership, "Sustainability in Libraries: A Call to Action." [ATTACHED] Below is the full-page ad for the briefing that will appear in the latest issue of [Public Libraries Magazine](#).



- ii. Production of an [infographic](#) to explain the “triple bottom line” definition of sustainability used by ALA in their adoption of sustainability as a core value of the profession.



- iii. [Carbon Neutral / Carbon Offset FAQs](#)
- iv. ALA [LibGuide on Sustainability](#)
- v. Joint advocacy effort with the ALA Sustainability Round Table to ensure sustainability is included in the curriculum for library schools as part of accreditation standards.