

Personnel & Planning Committee

June 28, 2021 | 10:30 am

Agenda

1. Roll Call

- ✓ Barry Ramage, Chair (D)
- ✓ Stuart Auchincloss (U)
- ✓ Priscilla Goldfarb (P)
- ✓ Debra Klein (G)
- ✓ Mark Wilson (C)
- ✓ Ric Swierat (D), ex officio
- ✓ Rebekkah Smith Aldrich (Staff Liaison)
- ✓ Saran Camara (Staff Liaison)

2. Review of Committee's Charge: The Committee reviewed its current charge with an eye towards recent discussions related to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) for our organization. In light of the discussion, the committee recommends the following edit to the charge:

- a. PERSONNEL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE: **The Committee, consistent with MHLS's vision, mission and values, including but not limited to equity, diversity and inclusion,** works to prepare and review the System's formal long-range Plan of Service. Also sets goals for the System and monitors the progress being made by the System in connection with such plans and goals and, where necessary, seeing what adjustment in either plan or performance may be appropriate. Reviews and makes recommendations regarding the executive director's job description and evaluation procedure, salaries, benefits, and other matters pertaining to staff and employment conditions. Reviews and negotiates the contract with the MHLS unit of the CSEA.
 - i. **ACTION:** Mr. Auchincloss moved, and Ms. Klein seconded, a resolution to recommend the amendment noted above in red to the committee's charge to the MHLS Board. The motion passed unanimously.
 - ii. The MHLS EDI Working Group members on the committee discussed the new "MHLS EDI Policy & Procedure Analysis Framework" developed by the working group to help board committees with policy creation and review in our organization. This document will be shared with all board committees that have policymaking responsibilities.
 - iii. The Committee discussed their role to set goals for the organization related to EDI and noted that all board committees' should embrace their role to recommend EDI goals for our organization.

3. 2021 Mid-Year Action Plan Report: Ms. Aldrich provided the following written report to the Committee to itemize progress on the 2021 Action Plan so far:

- a. **Delivery:** [Delivery stops restored](#) based on analysis of delivery volume data (May)
- b. **ILS Road Map Progress:**
 - i. [Serials](#): installed, training provided to members and resources added to the MHLS Knowledge Base

- ii. [Inter-Library Loan \(ILL\)](#): installed, training provided to members and resources added to the MHLS Knowledge Base
 - iii. [Materials Booking](#): This product allows patrons to book materials hours, days, weeks and months in advance. It has been installed, MHLS staff are utilizing it for special projects; training and resources coming soon for members.
 - iv. [Patron Images](#): installed, waiting on member libraries to self-identify as a pilot
 - v. [Encore Harvesting](#): now live with New York Heritage, including Hudson River Valley Heritage content appearing in our online catalog.
 - vi. [Vega Discover](#) Development Partnership continues to progress. Current estimate is that we would go live with this new interface in 2022.
- c. **eResource Statistics**: We have added [entries for all eResources in the MHLS Knowledge Base](#) and now publicly provide the [E-Resources at-a-glance document](#) to help members track the status of usage and contract dates.
- d. **Aerohive Router Project**: Wi-fi access point renewal process has been negotiated on behalf of all libraries who have an expiring account. This is resulting in a savings of \$350/unit and for licensing, a savings \$42/per unit, per year.
- e. **Trustee Education**:
- i. A **COVID-19 Briefing for Trustees** was held on May 13, 2021.
 - ii. The spring **Trustee Education Series** included multiple sessions of the introductory level classes: Trustee Essentials and Core Values & Ethics; the fiduciary course was offered once again; a guest speaker from the NYS Committee on Open Government was brought in to speak about NYS Open Meetings Law; an advanced session, “7 Habits of Successful Trustees” was also offered.
 - iii. We are collaborating with agencies across the state to introduce a new program in the fall: [The Trustee Handbook Book Club](#). This will be a live event that is recorded and feature the co-authors of the *Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State* (Rebekkah Smith Aldrich & Jerry Nichols). The events will be moderated by two Public Library System Directors: Brian Hildreth, Executive Director of the Southern Tier Library System and Ron Kirsop, Executive Director of the Pioneer Library System. Promotional partners include: The New York State Library, the Public Library System Directors Organization of New York State (PULISDO), the Library Trustee Association of New York State (LTA), and the Public Library Section of the New York Library Association (PLS).
- f. **Leadership Development**:
- i. A new cohort of the **Advanced Certificate in Public Library Administration** offered by the Long Island University’s Palmer School of Library & Information Science will be hosted by MHLS starting this fall. This is a five semester-long program that focuses on “all the things you didn’t learn in library school,” in the areas of finance, human resources, technology and facilities, and legal issues.
 - ii. Thirty-eight (38) [COVID-19 Updates](#) have been provided to member library directors in 2021 as of June 21, 2021.
- g. **Professional Development Highlights**:
- i. [The Reimagining Library Services Series](#), created in response to local need exacerbated by the pandemic, wrapped up in May:
 1. Collaborations and Partnerships
 2. eBooks
 3. Online Programming Like a Pro
 - ii. National experts were brought in to provide a webinar on the intersection of **intellectual freedom and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)** in light of the controversy over Dr. Seuss’ estate’s removal

of several titles from their catalog. We partnered with the Southern Adirondack Library System to produce this event and opened up registration to all library systems in the state. We had 240 colleagues register for this event.

1. Ms. Aldrich verbally reported on on-going efforts to recruit and plan speakers/events related to EDI for the membership.
 - iii. Hosted a **COVID-19 Legal Issues webinar** with two well-respected, Albany-area lawyers.
 - iv. Hosted the “[Strengthening Families Through Early Literacy Practices](#)” webinar presented by Dr. Susan Neuman, Professor of Childhood and Literacy Education at NYU.
 - v. Hosted speakers from the NYS Archives to review the new **LGS-1 records retention schedule**.
 - vi. Produced a new web resource featuring [MHLS Lab Project Toolkits](#), capturing the resources and outcomes of three MHLS Lab Projects:
 1. Increasing Circulation
 2. Increasing Active Account Holders
 3. Increasing Program Attendance
 - vii. The **New Directors Forum** and **MHLS Leadership Circle** have been re-introduced after taking a break during 2020 due to the pandemic.
- h. Consulting & Development Services**
- i. **2021 Turning Outward Cohort** has record-setting 15 member libraries participating this year.
 - ii. **A support cohort for the record number of libraries (11) going for a municipal ballot vote (414 vote) in November 2021 has been formed.**
 - iii. [The Library of Local Project](#) launched in April thanks to our partnership with Partners for Climate Action Hudson Valley.
 - iv. Introduction of a [new, draft Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Toolkit](#) which includes a series of on-demand, 30-minute training videos on topics related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI).
 - v. MHLS Staff continue to serve as a mentor to member libraries enrolled in the **Sustainable Library Certification Program**. The [Highland Public Library](#) and [Town of Esopus Public Library](#) both recently finished the environmental section!
 - vi. MHLS Staff continues to support member libraries in meeting the **new Minimum Standards for Public Libraries from New York State**.
- i. Awareness & Advocacy**
- i. Conducted our first-ever, fully online **Advocacy Week** (February 22-26, 2021)
 - ii. Contributed towards the successful advocacy for the passage of:
 1. [S4420/A5456: Reduce Petition Requirements for Library Elections](#)
 2. [S6511/A7021: Streamline & Modernize Library Program Requirements](#)
 3. [S4435/A6121B: Training for Library Trustees](#)
 4. [S5753A/A7060A: Increased Access to the Library Construction Program](#)
- j. Construction**
- i. **New Partnership with MetroIAF and NYSERDA** to provide access to member libraries to a new funding stream available for energy assessments of facilities and funds for retrofits to decarbonize HVAC systems.
 - ii. **Conducted a survey of member library directors’ opinions towards the funding priorities the MHLS Board uses for the State Aid for Library Construction Program.**
- k. Correctional Facilities**

- i. Completed annual negotiations for the NYS Public Library System Services to State Correctional Facility Libraries State Aid Program

4. 2022-2026 Plan of Service Development: Ms. Aldrich reported on the activities engaged in to draft the three required components of the 2022-2026 Plan of Service as prescribed by the New York State Division of Library Development.

- a. Background documents provided:
 - i. [Themes Report from Community Conversations](#)
 - ii. [Plan of Service Development Timeline](#)
- b. Drafts of the three components were provided, all of which have been vetted by the MHLS Directors Association (DA)'s System Services Advisory Committee and unanimously endorsed by the MHLS Directors Association:
 - i. [MHLS Plan of Service draft](#): This plan contains the goal statements, intended results and evaluation methods for System (MHLS) services. This plan provides macro goal statements that inform the more detailed draft [Action Plan](#) that staff develop in conjunction with the DA and the MHLS Board of Trustees. The plan was drafted after MHLS staff conducted eight focus groups with member library directors in the first quarter of 2021 called "Community Conversations," which resulted in the [Themes Report](#) provided at the April 2021 DA meeting and MHLS Executive Committee meeting. This plan was reviewed by the System Services Advisory Committee, along with the adjacent Action Plan, and recommended for endorsement by the MHLS Directors Association (DA). **At their June meeting, the DA unanimously endorsed the plan.**
 - ii. [Central Library Program Plan of Service draft](#): This plan describes the services funded by two state aid programs: the Central Library Development Aid (CLDA) and Central Book Aid (CBA) programs. This plan was developed over the course of three meetings with the Central Library / Collection Development (CL/CD) Advisory Committee of the DA, the committee tasked with oversight of these aid programs and unanimously recommended this plan for endorsement by the DA. **At their June meeting, the DA unanimously endorsed the plan.**
 - iii. [Free Direct Access Plan draft](#): This plan is a state approved agreement between MHLS and the State Education Department's Division of Library Development and is required by Commissioner's Regulations 90.3 (a) through (d)(4). The plan provides the process for a member library to identify and place restrictions on excessive and unfair use of resources that have a negative impact on services a member library provides their resident borrowers. The draft was developed with the help of an ad hoc committee whose members included: Mary De Bellis, Director, La Grange Library (and SSAC member); AnnaLee Dragon, Director, Kinderhook Memorial Library (and SSAC member); Tom Lawrence, Executive Director, Poughkeepsie Public Library District (and SSAC member); Courtney Tshahalis, Director, Millbrook Library; MHLS Staff: Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Casey Conlin, Laurie Shedrick. This plan was reviewed by the System Services Advisory Committee and recommended for endorsement by the DA. **At their June meeting, the DA unanimously endorsed the plan.**
- c. **ACTION:** Mr. Auchincloss moved, and Ms. Goldfarb seconded, a resolution to recommend the acceptance of the MHLS Plan of Service draft, the Central Library Program Plan of Service draft, and the Free Direct Access Plan draft, as presented, to the full MHLS Board at the July meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

5. CSEA Contract Negotiations

- a. The Committee appointed a negotiating team for the anticipated negotiations with the CSEA bargaining unit later this year:

- i. Ric Swierat, Board President
- ii. Barry Ramage, Vice President
- iii. Mark Wilson, Treasurer
- iv. Saran Camara, MHLS Finance Manager & Personnel Officer
- v. Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Executive Committee

6. 2021 Executive Director Evaluation Process

- a. Mr. Auchincloss moved, and Ms. Klein seconded a resolution to proceed with evaluation process as follows: The Committee agreed to conduct the evaluation as it has been done the past two years, via survey of the board in July. This will be administered by the MHLS Board President. Results will be provided to the MHLS Executive Committee in August for discussion and shared with the full board at their September 2021 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. It was noted that the executive director's current contract ends in December of this year.

7. Personnel: Ms. Aldrich reported on current personnel actions to recover from the 2020-2021 hiring freeze including:

- a. The promotion of Kerstin Cruger, the current Library Sustainability Association & Communication Specialist to a reconfigured position of Outreach & Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Specialist with a recommended salary of \$63,463.
 - i. **ACTION:** Mr. Auchincloss moved, and Ms. Goldfarb seconded, a resolution to endorse the salary level for this position. The motion passed unanimously. This issue will be voted on at the July board meeting.
- b. MHLS staff have four open positions it is currently interviewing candidates for:
 - i. Library Sustainability Associate
 - ii. Technology Operations Support Specialist
 - iii. Cataloging and ILL Specialist
 - iv. Administrative Associate
- c. COVID-19 Update: Ms. Aldrich provided a report of actions that have been taken in light of the state lifting most COVID-19 restrictions including noting that
 - i. Staff who report they are vaccinated will no longer be mandated to wear masks in office, social distance, or fill out the daily health screening form as per CDC guidance adopted by NYS.
 - ii. As per the new guidance from NYS, we will cease contact tracing activities for visitors to our office.
 - iii. The MHLS Auditorium has been reopened for use by MHLS staff and per the Auditorium Use by Outside Organizations Procedures.
 - iv. Staff impacted by the temporary, mandatory telecommuting agreements are clear that those agreements expire on June 30, 2021, and that to continue any level of telecommuting they must negotiate a formal telecommuting agreement with their supervisor as per the board-approved telecommuting policy found in the employee handbook that has been in place for several years. They are required to have these in place before June 30th. The outcome of this exercise will influence the future layout of the 2nd floor as we have a better long-term sense of how that space will be used.

8. Cell Phone Policy: Ms. Aldrich presented an updated Cell Phone Policy.

- a. **ACTION:** Mr. Ramage moved, and Mr. Auchincloss seconded, a resolution to recommend the policy, as presented, for acceptance by the board. This motion passed unanimously.

9. **Other:** Ms. Aldrich reported that she and staff have concluded phase one of a policy and procedure audit for the institution.

The meeting adjourned at 11:53am.