

### **Phoenicia Library Board Visit, 2/17/22**

The three members of the MHLS Board from Ulster County joined the Phoenicia Library Board on February 17 2022. Instead of having our own place on their Agenda, during her report Director Liz Potter called on us to talk about how MHLS had changed and reacted to the conditions of 2021.

Stuart began by describing the improvement in our financial situation because we received the State funds that had been withheld in 2020 in addition to the regular distribution for 2021. He said that a major benefit for the System, as well as the member libraries, was the end of the hiring freeze. Director Potter commented how important the tech support is and how grateful they are that department was fully staffed. Ken spoke about the benefit that the System received from the pandemic in making the delivery contract more flexible. Ken noted that Mid-Hudson analyzed in detail the utilization of the vans on the routes so that they could be adjusted to have fewer runs when there was less demand, saving a little money while maintaining prompt service for inter-library sharing. Ken mentioned that the libraries were helping with that by forward-sorting the books for pick-up at their libraries. Lynne followed with a brief description of the other things that the System does to help the member libraries, including the progress Mid-Hudson was making embedding equity, diversity and inclusion into our work. Ken reinforced this idea mentioning our hope that this may inspire similar thinking in some of the members.

Stuart ended the visit by asking the Phoenicia Trustees to help with lobbying to increase state funding for libraries. He said that now was the moment for the trustees to contact their state legislators while each house considers it one-house bills. He was able to report on the strong support from Senator Martucci. He emphasized the importance of trustee participation since we are volunteers and not dependent on the aid for our salaries. Director Potter said that they had an appointment to talk with Senator Oberacker's office during lobby week and invited the trustees to join the call.

Our report was followed by the Director's Report. Director Potter spoke about the library's plans to start in-person programs around the beginning of May. In response to a comment of one of the trustees there was a discussion of the special efforts library staff and volunteers make to keep in touch with their very elderly, shut-in patrons, offering rides and book delivery services to them.

There were no direct questions from the Phoenicia trustees.

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