

Here are some notes from our visit with the Phoenicia board on Thursday March 18. Lynne can add her observations and comments. We continue to wish Ken well and a speedy recovery.

We told them about the amazing increase in MHLS training and contacts in 2020. We spent time urging them to lobby for funds through NYLA and ALA. At least one trustee has already contacted their new senator Peter Oberacker through NYLA and received a positive response. Director Potter described a Library Lobby Week meeting that she had with Oberacker's chief of staff, who was also the chief for the previous senator Ron Wheeler who had been a great friend of libraries. She reported that he said Peter Oberacker would continue that pattern.

Describing what they have done during the pandemic, besides going to curbside library transactions they have upped their online programming. One notable example is that they have presented a bedtime story every night through the pandemic, over 11,000 attendees in total. Also, they began calling their patrons just to check in with them. They began with the oldest and worked their way down. This program is continuing and one staff member has logged over 742 calls.

In addition, by expanding on the Pine Hill Summer Lunch program they have become a food pantry, packing and delivering five bags of food donated by Hannaford to 8-9 families every week since last July. Up until now they have delivered 13,400 pounds of food and the deliveries continue. I think this is a joint project with the Pine Hill Library.

When asked if there was anything they wanted us to report back to MHLS, Director Potter reiterated how important and wonderful the MHLS Tech Department is for them. I explained the present reorganization going on and she said there had been no decrease in services. She just wanted to say what a lifeline it is for Phoenicia.

They have received a second PPP loan (~\$27,000) so their reserves are OK for now. They are considering going for a small 414 vote this year, perhaps 2%. They have already received their check from the town, and apparently Shandaken is doing OK financially—home sales up, restaurants open.

In her director's Report Liz Potter said that they expect to open to the public (low occupancy) about May 1. All the staff will be vaccinated and will have had their second shots + 2 weeks by then.

We enjoyed our visit and I think we were well received.

Stuart

Stuart Auchincloss
Woodstock, NY 12498