

**MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM**  
**MINUTES of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**  
**Wednesday, July 15, 2020**

President Swierat called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

**1. ROLL CALL AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Trustees Present: Stuart Auchincloss, Lisa Baker Brill, Sharon Davis, Kenneth Goldberg, Priscilla Goldfarb, Rajene Hardeman, Debra Klein, Barry Ramage, Lynne Ridgeway, Janet Schnitzer, Richard Swierat, Mary Linda Todd

Trustees Absent: Robert Culp (e), Michele Ment (u), Mark Wilson (e)

Directors Association Liaison: Gina Loprinzo, Director, Brewster Public Library

Staff Present: Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Casey Conlin, Laurie Shedrick, Linda Vittone

**2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

In his report, President Swierat:

- Announced the formation of a Racial Equity working group.
- Noted the continued need for the MHLS Board's COVID-19 Response & Recovery Working Group, a subset of the Finance Committee, to meet to find alternative sources of revenue for the System in preparation for the financial forecast from New York State.

*President's report presented*

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Auchincloss moved and Ms. Schnitzer seconded that the minutes of the May 2020 meeting be approved with the following amendments: (1) Item 12 should note "Mr." rather than "Ms." Auchincloss and (2) The resolution in item 13 should note who seconded the resolution. **The motion carried** unanimously.

*Minutes approved*

**4. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Ms. Vittone provided a review of the provided financial reports at the request of President Swierat. Ms. Vittone noted that it is normal that we have not received any state aid at this stage in our fiscal year, however expenses are down due to concerted efforts by MHLS staff to conserve funds in preparation of likely cuts to state aid. Ms. Ridgeway moved and Mr. Auchincloss seconded that the financial reports for April 2020 and May 2020 be received. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Financial Reports received*

**5. REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Mr. Ramage reported on the committee's review of the audit report and board report from RBT CPAs, and recommended the receipt of the reports by the full board. Ms. Crowley of RBT CPAs provided a detailed review of their findings through the audit which were summarized as a "clean opinion". There were no findings/problems found through their internal controls and compliance review of MHLS financial procedures. Mr. Ramage moved and Mr. Auchincloss seconded a resolution to accept the audit. **The motion carried unanimously.** Ms. Kondapuram from RBT CPAs reviewed the management letter to the board which summarized the organization's financial status as "sound and stable." Ms. Goldfarb moved and Mr. Auchincloss seconded the acceptance of the management letter. **The motion carried unanimously.** The management letter has been sent to all board members.

*2019 Audit received*

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**6. REPORT ON PAYMENT OF BILLS**

Ms. Goldfarb reported that she reviewed the warrants for April and found them acceptable. Ms. Klein reported that she reviewed the warrants for May and found them acceptable. Ms. Hardeman moved and Mr. Auchincloss seconded that the warrant reports for April and May 2020 be received. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Warrants received*

**7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

In addition to her written report, Executive Director Aldrich reported that:

- MHLS staff have done an extraordinary job to help member libraries reopen to the public, restart suspended system services, and safely reopening the MHLS facility all while dealing with almost daily guidance changes from the NYS Department of Health, Executive Orders and unique questions from member library directors, staff and trustees. Ms. Aldrich thanked the board for their support during this challenging time, noting once again that the partnership among stakeholders in our System is holding strong and resulting in expedited and effective support for members in serving the public.
- A new team on staff has been formed with members from the Delivery Operations and Technology Operations staff to create a statistical “dashboard” to facilitate delivery volume forecasting to hopefully manage costs of the delivery contract.
- On the financial issues front:
  - No further announcement has been made about cuts to state aid, likely due to the continued advocacy work to increase aid to states in the next federal stimulus package which may come out before the end of July.
  - Ms. Aldrich provided clarification on the difference between the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) CARES Act grant the system has applied for from IMLS directly and the CARES Act funds provided to the New York State Library. More information on the State Library disbursement of these funds to public library systems should be coming in August/September.
  - Ms. Aldrich reported on the recent actions taken by the MHLS Directors’ Association (DA) to prepare for the state aid cuts and projected cash flow issue and noted, with appreciation, the leadership and partnership demonstrated by the DA in these conversations.
  - The Paycheck Protection Program loan is on track to be fully forgiven by the end of July 2020.
- Ms. Aldrich presented the “Normalize, Organize, Operationalize” framework from the Government Alliance on Race & Equity as a starting point to begin deeper racial equity work in our organization.
- Further advancements in the development of the ILS and discovery platform have begun and a plan is in place for the coming year on this front.
- Efforts continue to “get out the count” for the 2020 Census. Mr. Conlin provided an update on Census 2020 changes and efforts to get out the count.

*COVID-19 Response*

Mr. Swierat moved, and Mr. Auchincloss seconded a resolution to make the following board statement to recognize the efforts of the MHLS Staff: “The Board of Trustees recognizes and congratulates the MHLS staff, and particularly Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, for their exemplary response to the COVID-19 crisis with compassion, knowledge, timeliness and respectful guidance for the member libraries and patrons, for maintaining financial and operational sustainability of the library system and providing leadership for advocacy to recognize the

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critical standing of libraries in the health and wellness of our community.” **The motion passed unanimously.**

**8. DIRECTOR’S ASSOCIATION LIAISON REPORT**

- Ms. Loprinzo conveyed the depth of gratitude from the MHLS Directors’ Association to the MHLS Staff for their support and guidance over the COVID-19 emergency and expressed that MHLS truly exemplifies the “we’re all in this together” spirit. On behalf of the MHLS Board, Mr. Swierat thanked the Director’s Association for their strong collaborative partnership with the shifting of financial resources from the Association accounts to support MHLS during the financial disruption.

*DA expresses gratitude to MHLS staff*

**9. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Swierat reported on efforts to guide financial planning, including negotiation strategies with the CSEA bargaining unit and with major vendors, and compliance with various state mandates related to re-opening the MHLS Office Building. Mr. Ramage moved and Mr. Auchincloss seconded the endorsement of the draft MHLS COVID-19 Safety Plan. **The motion passed unanimously.**

*MHLS COVID-19 Safety Plan Endorsed*

**10. NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Goldberg reviewed the committee’s efforts to rethink trustee election procedures in light of the potential for the 2020 annual membership meeting to be held online. This process revealed opportunities for this year and beyond. Mr. Goldberg moved, and Ms. Baker Brill seconded a motion to accept the 2020 Election Procedures as presented. **The motion passed unanimously.**

*2020 Election Procedures Approved*

Mr. Auchincloss moved, and Ms. Goldfarb seconded, a motion to accepted the proposed adjustments to the Committee’s charge: “Presents, at the September meeting, a slate of officers for the following year’s board of trustees. The slate is voted on at the December meeting. The Chair of this committee will also prepare and conduct the election of trustees as the annual meeting. The committee is preferably comprised of a representative from each county.” **The motion passed unanimously.**

*Committee’s Charge Updated*

**11. PERSONNEL & PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Ramage and Ms. Aldrich reviewed the committee’s work to consider adjustments to the 2020 Action Plan, noting changes that have already been implemented due to COVID-19 and financial considerations as well as proposed adjustments for the coming months that take into account both the need for socially distanced service development and the current capacity of a staff roster impacted by the hiring freeze. Mr. Ramage moved, and Mr. Auchincloss seconded, a recommendation to accept the proposed adjusted 2020 Action Plan as presented. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Adjusted 2020 Action Plan Accepted*

Mr. Ramage noted that the annual review of the Personnel Policies Handbook was conducted and no changes are recommended at this time.

*Personnel Policies Reviewed*

Mr. Ramage noted the importance of 100% participation in the upcoming evaluation of the Executive Director. Mr. Swierat provided an orientation to the evaluation process.

*Executive Director Evaluation Process Reviewed*

**12. MHLS BOARD RESPONDS: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Work**

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Mr. Swierat announced the formation of a task force to address issues related to racial equity in our organization. Representatives from each county have been named to the task force: Columbia County: Mark Wilson; Dutchess County: Rajene Hardeman; Greene County: Debra Klein; Putnam County: Priscilla Goldfarb; Ulster County: Stuart Auchincloss. This group will work to set forth a plan for how our organization will approach future work in this area. All trustees are encouraged to share resources and readings they feel will be helpful in this work with Mr. Swierat or Ms. Aldrich. All trustees were asked to read one of the following titles before the September 16<sup>th</sup> board meeting to be able to fully participate in a board level discussion about anti-racism: How To Be An Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi; White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin Diangelo; or So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Olou.

*Racial Equity Task Force Formed*

**13. CSEA CONTRACT AMENDMENT**

At 11:32 Mr. Goldberg moved, and Ms. Schnitzer seconded, a motion to go into executive session to discuss an amendment to the current CSEA Contract. Executive Director Aldrich and Financial Manager & Personnel Officer Vittone were invited to participate in the session. **The motion passed unanimously.** At 11:41 Ms. Goldfarb moved, and Mr. Auchincloss seconded, that the board leave executive session. **The motion passed unanimously.**

*CSEA Contract Amendment Approved*

Back in open session, Mr. Goldberg moved, and Ms. Klein seconded, a motion to authorize the executive director to sign an amendment to the CSEA contract to suspend fitness membership and vision care reimbursements through December 31, 2021, effective upon the date the amendment is signed by both parties; and to extend the suspension of this benefit, for the same timeframe, for all non-union staff. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**14. ORIENTATION**

Ms. Aldrich provided an overview of the 2020-2023 State Aid for Library Construction Program including estimates of the number of member libraries that will apply, the amount they are seeing and the overall need for construction aid in our service area which totals over \$33 million. Ms. Aldrich noted that as per the State Library’s guidance we are following the same timeline as in past years and that MHLS staff have been administering the program as per usual.

*State Aid for Library Construction Program Reviewed*

**15. COMMUNICATION**

Mr. Swierat reported that he will be attending all five upcoming county director association meetings.

Ms. Shedrick reported on recent software upgrades for both Sierra and Encore.

Mr. Conlin reported on efforts to transition select MHLS continuing education and development programs to an online platform.

Mr. Swierat closed the meeting with a message of thanks to fellow trustees for their responsiveness and service during this challenging year.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

