

## Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | January 2021

### 1. Financial Update

#### a. State Aid

- i. FY2020 closed out with no sign of the 20% of state aid that was withheld due to revenue shortfalls caused by the economic shutdown to combat COVID-19.
- ii. At the writing of this report, we await the outcome for state aid for libraries in the Executive Budget. Early communication about this indicates that the normal budget development pattern will not be followed, and we may not see a draft budget until well into March. During the Governor's first State of the State address he mentioned a worst-case scenario of a 20% cut to education, this bolsters the reference point the MHLS Finance Committee used to plan the MHLS 2021 budget approved at our last board meeting.
- iii. Advocacy work has already started with outreach to newly elected state representatives and incumbents who were re-elected. NYLA Advocacy Day is on Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup>. Details for online meetings with legislators and NYLA Advocacy Day activities will be forthcoming.

#### b. Federal Funds

- i. CARES Act funds through the New York State Library: Our application was submitted on time. We are still awaiting notice of the status of our application from the State Library.
- ii. Paycheck Protection Program (PPP):
  1. Our first PPP loan has been completely forgiven.
  2. The latest federal stimulus package provides funding for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The new iteration of the program allows for organizations, like ours, that received funding last year, to receive a second forgivable loan. We have been in touch with TDBank, our lender for the first round, to ensure we are in the loop as they work to release the new application which is expected sometime this month.

#### c. Grants

- i. Grow with Google: The State Library offered an invitational grant to all public library systems for the [Grow with Google](#) program which we applied for. We are awaiting the final outcome of this application at this time.
- ii. The New World Foundation: As reported last year, we have been in development on a program with The Boatbuilders Fund of The New World Foundation. Our paperwork has been finalized and MHLS will be receiving \$25,000 for 2021 through this fund for what had been referred to as "The Resilience Hub Project," which has been renamed to the "Library of Local Project."

1. In addition to renaming the project, the fund itself has been renamed from The Boatbuilders to “Lifeboats HV,” the Library of Local Project is one of their two first initiatives, you can read about their other project [here](#).
2. The Library of Local pilot project will include four member libraries and will work to develop resources and host events that increase community resilience through local public libraires. A portion of events created through this project will be designed in such a way that all sixty-six member libraries will be able to publicize them to their residents thereby benefitting all member libraries. For 2021, resources and events will focus on empowering community members in raising and preserving their own food.
3. Expected deliverables of the project include:
  - A project website that will gather and promote resources and events, including connections into the MHLS online catalog and eresources.
  - Five core events will be produced that will be available for promotion throughout our service area.
  - A list of speakers throughout the Hudson Valley that member libraries can draw from to schedule local programs.
  - Custom kiosks at each of the four pilot sites that will help to feature physical resources purchased as part of the program (books, films, a library of things related to gardening, etc.)
4. Our work with this project will be featured in an on-demand session at the upcoming 2021 Midwinter Conference of the American Library Association. Matthew Stinchcomb of Lifeboats HV is speaking on a panel of non-librarians about how libraries are well positioned to build community resilience.
5. Casey Conlin, MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, is the project manager for this initiative.

## **2. 2021 Legislative Initiatives**

- a. New York Library Association’s budget initiatives:
  - i. \$123.1 million in state aid
  - ii. \$45 million in state aid for library construction
- b. Board of Regents budget initiatives:
  - i. There is no evidence of a priority for state aid for libraries in their documentation
  - ii. \$34 million in state aid for library construction
  - iii. \$8 million to provide technical assistance and digital fluency support for New York students and families, this proposal would create a grant program libraries and library systems would be eligible for.
- c. The New York State Library is seeking the modernization of several elements of the library program requirements that are relevant to MHLS, including:
  - i. An amendment of Education Law to extend the time period for library construction project completion from three years to four years

- ii. "...modernize and streamline the public library system aid formula language to provide greater flexibility and ease program administration and reporting requirements by:
- iii. Consolidating Central Library Development aid and Central Book aid to create a Central Library Services Aid program, and providing for greater spending flexibility within such programs;
- iv. Amending the Public Library Basic Aid formula to streamline formula factors;
- v. Consolidating Family Literacy and Adult Literacy within the Public Library System Outreach Aid formula..."
- d. Trustee Education Bill: The library community will be prioritizing this bill in the upcoming session. As you may recall, this bill would amend NYS Education Law to require members of boards of trustees of association and public libraries to complete two hours of continuing education per year.
- e. 90/10 Construction Aid: The library community will be seeking an amendment to the 2019 bill that allows state aid for library construction funds to provide for up to ninety percent of the total approved costs for buildings of public libraries that are located in economically disadvantaged communities to allow for greater flexibility.
- f. OPEB Trust Legislation: The NYLA Legislative Committee is researching the introduction of a bill to amend NYS Finance Law, Civil Service Law and General Municipal Law to authorize the establishment of other post-employment benefits (OPEB) trusts and an investment fund to better manage these financial liabilities.
- g. The NYLA Legislative Committee has formed a School Librarian Bill Working Group to draft a proposal for the coming legislative session.

### **3. The Current Impact of COVID-19 on Member Library Operations**

- a. MHLS Staff continue to monitor member libraries' open status in light of the impact of the pandemic. Currently a large number of libraries have "rolled back" their reopening status to curbside due to staffing issues as more staff have contracted COVID-19 or are in a quarantine situation due to exposure or family members exposure. The current count, as reported by members, stands as follows:

<b>A:</b> Facility closed/all staff working from home	0
<b>B:</b> Curbside Service	43%
<b>C:</b> Limited Access to Library Building by the Public	30%
<b>D:</b> Reopened Building with Social Distancing	18.5%
<b>E:</b> Reopened Building (including programming) with Social Distancing	8.5%

- b. The State Library has asked MHLS to begin monthly reports on the number of weekly hours offered by members for in-person services, including curbside service. This data will be used by a new joint committee made up of members of The State Library's staff and the Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO) who have the stated purpose to: *"... work together to encourage more libraries to re-open and determine what can be done to eliminate re-opening barriers during the fluid COVID-19 pandemic especially as it relates to the minimum hours open standard. The Committee will review and establish public library/central library minimum open hours during the pandemic and develop a waiver policy and procedure that can be implemented quickly to meet the constantly changing conditions during the pandemic. The committee will function to help library systems and member libraries get the data they need to make decisions about reopening. Reopening status is very important to build a case for long-term sustainability. The reopening survey will serve to provide a snapshot of reopening status and will keep the public library systems and State Library informed on library reopening progress. "*

#### **4. Board Operations**

- a. Board-to-Board Visits & Talking Points:
  - i. By the end of the month, all member library board presidents and directors will have received the outreach letter, approved by the MHLS Board Development Committee, to encourage library-initiated invitations to you to their board meetings.
  - ii. As you visit with area library boards, we hope you will take time to listen to their efforts to iterate and innovate their service models to respond to COVID-19 concerns for library workers and the public. The creativity and determination of our members in the face of this challenge has been remarkable and we ask for your help to continue to gather stories from the field.
  - iii. Member boards may have questions about the System's finances given the severity of the cut this year, please note that all of our financial documentation, including reports of the Finance Committee, are available on our web site at <https://board.midhudson.org> If there is anything you cannot answer just let me know.
- b. 2021 Warrant Officer Schedule: Saran Camara, our new Financial Manager & Personnel Officer, hit the ground running and has implemented a new warrant review procedure for staff that will result in the package you receive looking slightly different as she and I will be reviewing warrants weekly rather than monthly, however your role remains unchanged. Please contact Saran at [scamara@midhudson.org](mailto:scamara@midhudson.org) with any questions about the role of the warrant officer or this schedule.:
  - i. January: Ken Goldberg
  - ii. February: Priscilla Goldfarb
  - iii. March: Rajene Hardeman
  - iv. April: Debra Klein
  - v. May: Jill Leinung
  - vi. June: Michele Ment
  - vii. July: Barry Ramage
  - viii. August: Lynne Ridgeway

- ix. September: Janet Schnitzer
  - x. October: Mary Linda Todd
  - xi. November: Stuart Auchincloss
  - xii. December: Lisa Baker Brill
- c. **Committee Chair Orientation:** For the first time, we are piloting a “committee chair orientation” session for 2021 MHLS Committee chairs. This event will help inform the orientation of not only the 2021 class of committee chairs but future committee chairs. The orientation will focus on committee administration, operations, and facilitation; and 2021 projects/goals for the organization.
5. **E-Magazine Service to Continue in 2021:** As you may have read in the [December 22<sup>nd</sup> issue of the MHLS Bulletin](#) we had a close call with our new e-magazine vendor. Thanks to the expert negotiation led by MHLS Assistant Director/Technology Operations Manager Laurie Shedrick, we will be able to increase our e-magazine collection from 125 titles to over 3,000 titles at a cost that was reachable thanks to an increased contribution from the Central Library Development Aid budget, which is overseen by the Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee, and the re-commitment of funds from the Columbia, Greene, Putnam and Ulster County library associations, as well as three generous member libraires. The costs associated with cataloging these new titles will also be covered through the Central Library Development Aid budget.
6. **New Ticketing System to be Implemented:** MHLS Technology Operations staff are configuring an upgrade to our ticketing system software to streamline the management of tech support and cataloging assistance tickets submitted to MHLS staff by members. This will increase the capacity of our team by creating individual logins for each staff on the team, create a knowledgebase of answers to broaden the number of staff who are able to answer questions from members, and provide analytics to better inform future training topics and resources developed for members.
7. **Presidential Advisory Committee:** I have accepted an invitation to join the Presidential Advisory Committee for [Patty Wong, the incoming president of the American Library Association \(ALA\)](#). Patty is the first Asian-American elected to this role in the 144-year history of ALA. Patty’s presidential platform includes four “pillars” that will serve as her focus during her presidential year:
- a. Digital Equity through Broadband Connectivity
  - b. Rural and Tribal Libraries
  - c. School Librarians
  - d. Sustainability
8. **Executive Director’s Event Participation: December 7, 2020 – January 8, 2021**
- a. Advanced Trustee Education Session: Seven Habits of Highly Effective Boards (Presenter) (2)
  - b. ALA Presidential Advisory Committee
  - c. Public Library System Directors Organization of New York State (PULISDO)

- d.** COVID-19 Response & Recovery Working Group (5)
- e.** Columbia County Library Association (2)
- f.** Ulster County Library Association
- g.** NYLA Legislative Committee
- h.** New York State Library/PULISDO
- i.** Racial Equity Working Group
- j.** Small Business Update (PPP), US Chamber of Commerce
- k.** MHLS Executive Committee
- l.** Grow with Google Partner
- m.** Sustainable Libraries Initiative, NYLA