

# Executive Director’s Report to the MHLS Board | January 2022

## 1. State Update

- a. The Governor has vetoed the “[e-book bill](#).” This bill had broad support when it passed in the NYS Legislature in June 2021 (Assembly 148-0; Senate 62-1). In her brief explanation of the veto, the Governor said this:

Assembly Bill 5837-B

This bill would require publishers of books to provide multiple copies of electronic versions of literary works to libraries under “reasonable terms”. The bill would define reasonable terms to include a limitation on the number of users to whom the libraries may simultaneously provide access to the electronic books; a limitation on the number of days the libraries may provide a user with access to the electronic books; and the use of technological protection measures that would prevent a user from maintaining access to the electronic books beyond the access period set forth in the license, and from providing other users with access to the electronic books. While the goal of this bill is laudable, unfortunately, copyright protection provides the author of a work with the exclusive right to their works. As such, federal law would allow the author, and only the author, to determine to whom they wish to share their work and on what terms. Because the provisions of this bill are preempted by federal copyright law, I cannot support this bill.

These bills are disapproved.



The Joint Digital Content Working Group of the American Library Association had noted last month that "This is a powerful moment for libraries...If we cannot find ways to make our digital collections robust and lasting, including a return to perpetual access as an option, libraries will never be able to meet an ever-increasing demand and provide equity to the communities we serve." The veto of this bill means the national, and New York, library communities will need to continue to advocate for equitable access to digital collections for those we serve.

To learn more:

- The Joint Digital Content Working Group’s [full report](#)
  - “[Hochul Vetoes New York’s Library E-book Bill](#),” by Andrew Albanese, Publishers Weekly, 12.30.2021
  - “[AAP Sues to Block Maryland, New York Library E-book Laws](#),” by Jim Milliot, Publishers Weekly, 12.9.2021
- b. We await the release of the Governor’s Executive Budget to understand the lift for advocacy for system funding this year. Normally this budget is released in mid-January.

## **2. Personnel Updates**

- a. Kerry Chenier, our new Administrative Associate, began work on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. You will meet her at the January board meeting.
- b. Kyle Carella, a part-time Delivery Operations Clerk, has resigned to take a full-time position at the State University of New York at New Paltz. We wish him all the best.

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

- a. Libraries are doing their best to keep library workers and the public safe in the face of the rising COVID-19 infection levels. We have had three instances of libraries unable to fully staff facilities due to staff infection rates but overall, libraries are fully open. Many have pulled back on in-person programming and are reverting to online board meetings.
- b. The State Librarian issued the following statement on December 30<sup>th</sup>: “We understand that libraries might have to close temporarily due to operational issues like temporary staff shortages. As always, those temporary deviations do not have to be reported and will not count against regularly scheduled hours open. However, the expectation is that otherwise libraries will remain open and serving the public through in-person services.”

## **4. Public Library Broadband Assessment Pilot Project**

- a. MHLS was proud to be one of three public library systems in New York State to participate in the New York State Library’s (NYSL) Pilot Broadband Evaluation Process in 2021.
- b. The purpose of the project was to assist the State Library in designing a pilot process to assess public library facility IT infrastructure and identify the hurdles standing in the way of NYS public libraries getting adequate broadband and in gathering technology requirements, with a goal of identifying a pathway to scale up an assessment of all public libraries in the state.
- c. Participation in the pilot resulted in Technology Assessment Reports for two MHLS member Libraries, the Amenia Free Library and the Claverack Library. This was done with the participation of MHLS Assistant Director/Technology Operations Manager Laurie Shedrick, the NYSL’s Project Consultant, Carson Block, and the respective directors of the libraries. The reports contained key findings and recommendations; assessment meeting notes; a network diagram for the library; and appendices for speed test results, photographs and other information.
- d. Overall, the statewide pilot program identified a primary hurdle for libraries is the lack of actionable knowledge of their specific needs (including broadband services and technology components); understanding their options for technology support; and navigating options for funding (including E-rate and compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act).
- e. Participation in this pilot program has shaped 2022 action planning here at MHLS in our continue adoption in the use of the Toward Gigabit Libraries Toolkit [<http://Internet2.edu/tgl/>], and ensuring all members have access to E-rate funding.

## **5. Strategies to Assure Your Library’s Legal and Financial Stability Toolkit Launched**

- a. In 2020-2021, I was honored to work alongside my colleague Jerry Nichols to update and upgrade what had previously been known as the “Creating Public Library Districts in New York State: A “How-To Guide” for the NYS Division of Library Development. The newly enhanced

toolkit, "Strategies to Assure Your Library's Legal and Financial Stability," can be found here: <https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libraries/pldtools/toolkit/>

- b. The purpose of the Guide is to convey not only the technical aspects of stabilizing library funding and governance structures but, perhaps more importantly, the "lessons learned" over the past two decades by those trustees and library administrators who understand that they are responsible for the future of their institution, long after they are gone. The times we now live in demand such vision once again and it is our hope that this toolkit provides guidance and empowerment to help the library leaders of today ensure access to local library services for the communities of tomorrow.
- c. Multiple MHLS Member Library leaders provided feedback and shared their hard-earned lessons. Jeanne Buck, Director of the Reed Memorial Library in Carmel is quoted right at the beginning of the toolkit and feedback from folks such as Greg Callahan, the recently retired director of the Hyde Park Free Library has been incorporated.

## **6. Trustee Handbook Book Club to continue in 2022**

- a. We are pleased to announce six more sessions of the Trustee Handbook Book Club. The series, launched in the fall of 2021, has drawn more than 700 trustees from across the state to attend. This series is produced thanks to a collaboration with MHLS, the Public Library System Directors Organization of NYS, the State Library, the Public Libraries and Library Trustees Association Sections of the New York Library Association.
- b. The six planned sessions will follow the same "book club" model, focusing on chapters within the Trustee Handbook:
  - i. January 18: [Budgets & Finance](#)
  - ii. February 22: [Facilities](#)
  - iii. March 29: [Policies & Risk Management](#)
  - iv. April 19: [Ethics & Conflicts of Interest + Intellectual Freedom, Censorship and Privacy](#)
  - v. May 3: [Planning & Evaluation](#)
  - vi. June 14: [PR & Advocacy](#)
- c. To see recordings of the first three sessions, including a bonus "After Party" recording to answer more of the questions that came in across the first three sessions, please visit: <https://midhudson.org/trusteebookclub/>

## **7. Facilities Update:**

- a. The Delivery Operations area renovation is now complete. This project involved the installation of a new floor, zoned air heat pump, a new garage door, and a reconfigured mail and delivery processing area. This grant was underwritten by 50% by State Aid for Library Construction funds.
- b. A Clean Up/Clean Out Day was held on Monday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. All staff participated. Staff cleaned out closets, work spaces – both physical and digital, and shared spaces to clear out clutter, properly dispose of old computer equipment, share unneeded office supplies, etc.

## **8. New Online Calendar Launched**

- a. MHLS staff have launched a new online calendar: <https://midhudson.org/calendar/>

- b. The new calendar enables streamlined workflows for staff to avoid duplication of effort and enhances the user experience by allowing for integration with a local calendar to cut down on data entry for the registrant. The new calendar software is robust and customizable which allows us a high level of control and flexibility in meeting the needs of MHLS stakeholders now and in the future.
- c. Thank you to MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator Casey Conlin for spearheading this project and for MHLS IT Operations Supervisor Gerry Formby for his leadership in implementing this installation.

## **9. Sustainable Library Certification Program**

- a. In 2018 MHLS signed up for the Sustainable Library Certification Program through the [Sustainable Libraries Initiative](#) as an early adopter. This is an award-winning program to help library organizations work towards more sustainable operations, services, and partnerships using the triple bottom line definition of sustainability, the same one we have adopted in the [MHLS Sustainability Policy](#).
- b. In 2019 we were awarded a completion certificate for the Green Business Partnership, the third-party agency that, at the time, oversaw the environmental portion of the certification program.
- c. Since we are not a public library, we have been waiting on the other two sections specific for public library systems – delayed due to the pandemic - which are now available. We are working through the benchmarks for the social equity and financial feasibility sections and will have a report for you by the end of the first quarter on our progress.

## **10. Board-to-Board Visits & Talking Points**

- a. As per the Board Development Committee’s directive, a letter has gone out to all board presidents and library directors to promote the request that MHLS board members be invited to local library board meetings.
- b. Please encourage member library boards to reach out to [their state representatives](#) to invite them into their libraries and to share how the Mid-Hudson Library System benefits their library. The majority of state aid is allocated to systems but benefits local patrons, something not immediately evident to state representatives, particularly newer legislators.
- c. We have updated the [Year at a Glance document](#) with 2020 Annual Report Data that is approved by the State Library to share with member library boards during your visits.
- d. Should you be asked: the new Trustee Education Requirement goes into effect January 1, **2023**.

## **11. Executive Director’s Event Participation: December 4, 2021 – January 3, 2022**

- a. Greene County Library Association
- b. Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley Project Coordinators meeting (2)
- c. Columbia County Library Association
- d. New Director Consultation: Ivy Gocker, Woodstock Public Library District (w/Laurie Shedrick and Tom Finnigan)

- e. MHLS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group
- f. Library of Local Project Planning Committee - Year 2
- g. Sustainable Libraries Initiative Board Meeting
- h. Public Library System Directors Organization of New York State
- i. Trustee Handbook Book Club (2) (presenter)
- j. Russian and US Libraries Dialogue on the UN Sustainable Development Goals – Supporting Sustainability: Libraries and the Green Agenda (presenter w/ Casey Conlin)
- k. NYS Division of Library Development Monthly Update Meeting
- l. New Director Consultation: John Faria, Putnam Valley Library (w/ Laurie Shedrick)
- m. Ulster County Library Association
- n. New Director Consultation: Alexis Tackett, Pine Plains Free Library
- o. Board Consultation: Tivoli Free Library (w/Casey Conlin)
- p. Board Consultation: Elting Memorial Library (New Paltz)