

Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | March 2022

1. State Update

a. NYS Budget

- i. Legislators are working on their one-house budget bills in response to the Governor's executive budget. We expect to see these bills in early to mid-March with negotiations continuing up to, at least, the deadline of April 1. The Governor has proposed:
 1. \$96.1 million for library aid (10% below formula and 22% below formula adjusted for inflation)
 2. \$14 million for the State Aid for Library Construction Program (60% reduction from 2021)
- ii. Thank you to all MHLS trustees who made time in their schedules to participate in Advocacy Week (February 28-March 4). With state aid making up 75% of our revenues, this is a critical time in our financial cycle to ensure state legislators are aware of the impact of the Governor's proposal on the System's finances.

b. Legislative Update

- i. Petition Signature Reduction Bill: This is a very important bill to more than half of our member libraries as it would enable a reduction in the number of signatures needed for association and municipal libraries to get on the ballot in November to facilitate a vote on the tax levy for library services in a municipality. Unlike the other ballot signature threshold in Education Law for libraries to get onto the school district ballot which calls for 25 signatures, libraries that need to get on to a municipal ballot for the general election are held to a far higher standard, needing the signatures of 10% of the number of voters that voted in the last gubernatorial election. This bill would extend the pandemic era implemented reduction for at least one more year and is reportedly a stepping stone to a permanent reduction in 2023.
- ii. For an up-to-date look at the other items on the New York Library Association's Legislative Agenda, including an historic Media Literacy Policy package, please visit: <https://www.nyla.org/2022-legislative-session/?menukey=advocacy>

c. Federal Funds Awarded through the State Library

- i. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds: MHLS has been approved for funding for the two projects we outlined in detail at our last board meeting through the New York State Library:
 1. Digital Navigators on the Hudson Valley: \$10,000
 - a. Training of 73 folks, the largest cohort of Digital Navigators in the country, was completed the week of February 7th.
 2. Beyond the Library WiFi Project: \$69,644

2. Personnel Updates

- a. Negotiations with the CSEA bargaining unit have been completed and a new three-year contract has been signed. No changes were made to the Memo of Understanding that the board approved at the January board meeting. **ACTION:** The changes to the Personnel Policies triggered through this negotiation will be included in the Personnel Committee's action item in the March agenda. We thank the members of the CSEA negotiating teams:
 - i. MHLS Team: Richard Swierat, MHLS Board President; Barry Ramage, MHLS Vice President; Mark Wilson, MHLS Treasurer; myself; and Saran Camara, MHLS Finance Manager & Personnel Officer with assistance from our attorney, Monica Lenahan.
 - ii. CSEA Team: Gerry Formby, CSEA President & MHLS IT Operations Supervisor; Nina Acosta, CSEA member & MHLS Data Operations Supervisor; Kerri Carpenter, CSEA member & MHLS Cataloging Specialist with assistance from Kate Fitzpatrick, CSEA representative.
- b. Dave Haspel has been hired as our new Delivery Operations and Facilities Associate. Dave will be assisting both Tom Finnigan on the Delivery Operations Team and Chris Herron on the Facilities Team. Dave will also join the MHLS Sustainability Team to help us complete the Sustainable Library Certification Program. **ACTION:** You will be asked to approve his appointment at the March board meeting.
- c. All staff are currently engaged in team-based discussions of the [MHLS Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(JEDI\) training videos](#) which are being facilitated by our team of Supervisors:
 - i. Tech Ops Team Facilitators: Laurie Shedrick, Assistant Director/Technology; Nina Acosta, Data Operations Supervisor; and Gerry Formby, IT Operations Supervisor
 - ii. Business Office & Library Sustainability Team: Saran Camara, Financial Manager & Personnel Officer; Casey Conlin, Library Sustainability Coordinator
 - iii. Delivery & Facilities Team: Rebekkah Smith Aldrich; Tom Finnigan, Delivery Operations Manager; Chris Herron, Facilities Manager & Assistant Delivery Operations Manager
- d. All staff have signed and filed the new MHLS Ethics Policy as of January 31st.

3. Facility Updates

- a. Two recent incidents resulted in insurance claims to be filed:
 - i. A driver from Valley Courier accidentally backed into the railing for the front entrance ramp. This has been repaired and the claim filed.
 - ii. A shot was fired in the neighborhood and hit the MHLS office building, piercing the window to the utility room and striking the concrete wall within. No damage to our boiler or pipes was incurred. A police report was filed. The glass has been replaced and the claim filed.

4. Annual Report to the State

- a. **ACTION:** The 2021 Annual Report to the State from MHLS is included in your board packet for your review. The board will be asked to vote at the meeting to accept it. Please feel free to send me any questions you may have.

- b. Variances: Staff are currently reviewing all MHLS member library annual reports. Should any variances be requested we will report on this and provide the needed background to the board.

5. Cooperation with other Public Library Systems

- a. With the approval of the MHLS Directors Association at their February meeting, we have entered into an OverDrive Reciprocal Lending Agreement (RLA) with the Upper Hudson Library System. This will enable MHLS cardholders to access the OverDrive Collection of UHLS and for UHLS cardholders to access the MHLS collection. We have negotiated with UHLS to ensure that no costs will be incurred for member libraries to facilitate this. This will result in a threefold increase to the amount of ebook and downloadable audiobook content MHLS cardholders have access to. Access will be launched in mid-March.
 - i. We are continuing talks with both the Westchester and Ramapo Catskill Library Systems to create a similar arrangement later this year should their members agree.

6. The Library of Local (LoL) Project

- a. Applications are now open for member libraries to become a satellite location to host a collection of LoL materials and quarterly programs that focus on climate change, renewable energy, green buildings, and regenerative land use.
- b. The Howland Public Library in Beacon will become an anchor location for [The Library of Local Project](#) (along with Hudson, Kingston, and Mountain Top libraries) and house the kiosk formerly located at the Morton Memorial Library & Community House.
- c. This year's focus will also include the development of partnerships with local community groups, particularly within [NYS Climate Smart Communities](#).

7. Board Operations

- a. Newspaper of Record: To comply with the Open Meetings Law and other instances in which we are legally required to post a legal notice the MHLS Board should declare a newspaper of record. After a survey of other multi-county cooperative library systems in New York State, I learned that customary practice is to name the largest newspaper in the county in which the system headquarters is located in. **ACTION:** I am recommending that the board name the Poughkeepsie Journal as our newspaper of record. This will be an item on the March board agenda.
- b. Orientation for New System Trustees
 - i. The annual orientation for new(er) MHLS trustees will take place the same day as our board meeting, Saturday, March 12th. We will begin 30 minutes after the end of the board meeting. This session will be held online as is the board meeting for March. We estimate this program will last for 90-12 minutes. At this program we will review:
 - 1. The mission of MHLS and how we carry out that mission.
 - 2. MHLS Board Operations

3. A review of fiscal documents you are asked to review
 4. Key Operational Relationships
 5. An overview of the [MHLS web site](#)
- c. Board-to-Board Visits & Talking Points
- i. Since our last meeting, many of you have received invitation to member library board meetings and county association meetings. Thank you for your coordinated and prompt reply to these invitations. Written reports about these visits are optional but if provided, will be included in the next board packet.
 - ii. For the coming month, when visiting member boards:
 1. 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.
 2. Please help advertise the upcoming Trustee webinars
 - a. Spring 2022: [MHLS Trustee Education Series](#)
 - b. [Trustee Handbook Book Club](#)
 - iii. Should you be asked: the new Trustee Education Requirement goes into effect January 1, **2023**.
 1. Also of note: I have been named to the NYS Division of Library Development's working group to develop the guidance for the implementation of the new Trustee Education Requirement. That guidance is slated to be issued mid-year.

8. Executive Director's Event Participation: January 4, 2022 – March 3, 2022

- a. CSEA Negotiations (2)
- b. Annual Kick-off meeting with MHLS Board Committee Chairs
- c. Sustainable Libraries Initiative Advisory Board (3)
- d. Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO) monthly meeting (2)
- e. Consultation: Victoria Hero, Director, Amenia Free Library
- f. Consultation: Kinderhook Memorial Library Board
- g. Demo with reps from Gale: High School Program; Analytics; Environmental Studies in Context database
- h. Public Hearing: Woodstock Public Library District Facility Plan
- i. Columbia County Library Association (2)
- j. Ulster County Library Association (2)
- k. Presentation: Trustee Handbook Book Club (2)
- l. Teaching: Advanced Certificate in Public Library Administration Course (5)
- m. Legislative Committee of the New York Library Association
- n. Dutchess County Directors Association (2)
- o. Meeting: Senator Michelle Hinchey
- p. Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee

- q. New Trustee Mini-Orientations: Peter Carey & Carla Taylor; Alexandra Prince
- r. Putnam County Library Association (2)
- s. System Services Advisory Committee
- t. Resource Sharing Advisory Committee
- u. Consultation: Red Hook Public Library Board
- v. ALA Nominating Committee
- w. Presentation: Sustainable Thinking for Libraries, Ramapo Catskill Library System
- x. Consultation: Alexis Tackett, Director, Pine Plains Free Library
- y. Meeting: Assemblymember Didi Barrett
- z. MHLS Directors Association
- aa. Consultation: Courtney Tsahalis, Director, Millbrook Library
- bb. Meeting: Yariv Kursh, General Manager; Toni Minick, VP Product Management; and Raena Morrison, VP Sales North America of Innovative Interfaces Inc.
- cc. Training: Digital Navigators Program
- dd. New Director Orientation: Ben Gocker, Director, Catskill Public Library
- ee. Meeting: Stakeholder Group, OverDrive Reciprocal Lending Agreement
- ff. MHLS Bylaws, Policies and Procedures Committee
- gg. Meeting: Lauren Moore, State Librarian, re: [The Palace Project](#) Pilot
- hh. Presentation: [Working Towards a More Ethical Information Community](#), NISO Plus 2022
- ii. Division of Library Development/PULISDO (2)
- jj. Meeting: Focus on Board Diversity Strategies with Kristen Salierno, director of the Howland Public Library (Beacon); Emily Chameides, director of the Hudson Area Association Library; and Margie Menard, director of the Kingston Library
- kk. ALA Council Committee on Sustainability (2)
- ll. MHLS Incentives Committee
- mm. Presentation: [2022 Advocacy Briefing for MHLS Member Library Stakeholders](#)
- nn. JEDI Discussion: Delivery & Facilities Teams
- oo. MHLS Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group
- pp. Consultation: David Lavalley, Board President, Starr Library (Rhinebeck)
- qq. Presentation: [ALA Connect LIVE! Session on Sustainability](#) with ALA President Patty Wong
- rr. Consultation: Elting Memorial Library Board (New Paltz)
- ss. Advocacy Week Meetings:
 - i. Senator Sue Serino
 - ii. Assemblymember Jonathan Jacobson
 - iii. Senator Daphne Jordan
 - iv. Assemblymember Jake Ashby
 - v. Senator Peter Oberacker
 - vi. Senator Michelle Hinchey
 - vii. Assemblymember Didi Barrett