

Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | January 2024

1. State Update

a. **Governor Hochul released her Executive Budget**, this is a proposal for the legislature's consideration: *“Support for Libraries. The Executive Budget supports public libraries by providing \$102.1 million of Library Aid, a \$2.5 million increase over FY 2024 Enacted Budget levels, and \$34 million for Library Construction to fund various capital projects. In addition, the Executive Budget appropriates \$3 million to ensure continued access to the New York Online Virtual Electronic Library (NOVELny), a free online library of magazines, newspapers, maps, charts, research, and reference books available to all New Yorkers.”*

b. **Preparing for Advocacy Season:**

i. Our theme: **Fund - Protect - Empower**

ii. [Register to Attend Library Advocacy Day in Albany](#) on February 7th

iii. [Register for the MHLS Advocacy Day Briefing](#) | January 30th | 10:00 – 11:00 am | Online
Join Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) Executive Director and guest speaker Max Prime, Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, NYLA. This event is designed for all library advocates – library directors, staff, trustees, Friends Groups and volunteers – who are interested in speaking up for libraries during the New York budget negotiation season.

iv. **Plan your trip to Albany!**

1. Take the bus for \$10.00! [Register to reserve your seat.](#) Bus Pick-Up Locations:

- a. West Nyack
- b. Newburgh
- c. Elmsford
- d. Brewster
- e. New Paltz
- f. Kingston
- g. Catskill

2. Driving Yourself [Directions](#) & [Parking Information Map](#) of the Empire State Plaza

v. Review the [2024 Talking Points from the New York Library Association](#) (NYLA)

vi. Check out the [MHLS 2024 Advocacy Guide](#)

vii. Stay up-to-date about Advocacy Day details and this year's critical Budget and Legislative priorities at <https://midhudson.org/library-advocacy-day/>.

2. **Delivery Services:** Action Item: We have negotiated another one-year extension with Valley Courier to continue existing-level delivery services. The overall price would go up by 2% with the fuel surcharge increasing from 2.5% to 3.5%. The maximum financial impact of the new fuel surcharge rate is \$5,714. This contract would go into place July 1, 2024.

3. **Facility:** All elements of the rooftop solar project are in place (materials, equipment, labor) to begin the installation, but the weather has not been cooperating which has elongated our timeline. The Contractor is ready to go as soon as we get a stretch of good weather.
4. **Memo of Understanding Development Update:** The System Services Advisory Committee meets on January 24th to advise MHLS staff on the Action Memo that will be sent to each member library director and board president to ask for their signatures on the document. Our orientation topic at the January Board meeting will be to take a closer look at the approved Memo of Understanding to ensure all aspects of it are clear to you.
5. **Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Bravery in Literature (aka The Eleanor Roosevelt Banned Book Awards) Ceremony:** Saturday, February 17th at 7:30pm ([Register here](#))
 - a. MHLS has collaborated with the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill to create this award and has been invited to table at the event.
 - b. 2024 Awardees:
 - i. Laurie Halse Anderson
 - ii. Mike Curato
 - iii. Alex Gino
 - iv. George M. Johnson
 - v. Maia Kobabe
 - vi. Jelani Memory
 - vii. Judy Blume will receive inaugural Eleanor Roosevelt Lifetime Achievement Award for Bravery in Literature
 - c. Additionally scheduled speakers:
 - i. Emily Drabinski, President of the American Library Association
 - ii. Matt Nosanchuck, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, often referred to as the Biden Administration's Banned Book Czar
 - d. Other collaborators include Bard College; The Freedom to Read Foundation; The Hudson Valley LGBTQ+ Community Center; Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area; National Coalition Against Censorship; Oblong Books; and Penguin Random House
6. **Technology Operations:** The launch of the new Discovery Catalog has gone relatively smoothly. Laurie Shedrick, Assistant Director and Technology Operations Manager, has continued to invite feedback from members and patrons to fine-tune the catalog and continued to work with our vendor to address systemic issues our staff do not control.
7. **Professional Development**
 - a. A cohort has graduated from the post-graduate level **Advanced Certificate in Public Library Administration Course** we offer in partnership with Long Island University's Palmer School of Library & Information Science. Our partnership results in a reduced rate for participants. I serve

as an adjunct professor for the program.



Back row (l-r): Rebekkah Smith Aldrich; Amy Mikel, Kristen Campbell, Laura Crisci, Sarah Potwin, Debbie DiBernardo; Front Row (l-r): Kristen Salierno, Lindsay Jankovitz, Johanna Reinhardt

- i. This program spans five semesters and covers:
 1. LIS 700 - Principles of Public Library Organization and Management
 2. LIS 701 - Legal Issues in Public Library Administration
 3. LIS 702 - Human Resources Administration in the Public Library
 4. LIS 703 - Financial Management of Public Libraries
 5. LIS 704 - Administration of Public Library Facilities and Technology
- ii. Graduates from the cohort include:
 1. Laura Crisci, MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator
 2. Debbie DiBernardo, Head of Circulation, Haverstraw King's Daughters Public Library
 3. Kristen Campbell, Director, Grinnell Library District (Wappingers Falls) (Kristen was the director of the Hurley Public Library when the cohort started)

4. Lindsay Jankovitz, Assistant Director, Marlboro Free Library
 5. [Amy Mikel](#), Director of Customer Experience, Brooklyn Public Library
 6. Donna Perolli, Director, Reed Memorial Library (Carmel) (Donna was the director at the Dover Library when the cohort started)
 7. Sarah Potwin, Director, Niagara Falls Public Library
 8. Johanna Reinhardt, Director, Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library (Cold Spring)
 9. Kristin Salierno, Director, East Fishkill Community Library (Kristen was the director of the Howland Public Library in Beacon when the cohort started)
- iii. The courses were held online with the exception of our final class which was held in the MHLS Auditorium.
 - iv. The next cohort will begin in the Fall of 2024.
- b.** We are partnering with [Sustainable Hudson Valley](#) and the Ramapo Catskill Library System to produce a four-part cohort series on **Libraries as Resilience Hubs**. The American Library Association has called climate change [the “greatest challenge of our generation.”](#) In partnership with the Mid-Hudson Library System and Ramapo Catskill Library System, Sustainable Hudson Valley has designed a program of action planning, training and support for libraries as living laboratories for climate resilience in their communities. This will help library leadership make their facilities energy-secure, safe and comfortable in extreme weather, and position them to serve as community hubs for education and action projects to help their surrounding neighborhood deal with climate change. This cohort program includes 4-sessions to facilitate participants’ understanding of climate resilience needs and opportunities at and around their locations, and the participatory approaches to working with local stakeholder partners to capture these opportunities.
- i. **Session 1: February 21 | 10:00 am | Online | [REGISTER](#)**
Assessment and Engagement: A Place-based Framework for Assessing Vulnerability and Opportunity
 This process begins with a review of climate trends and approaches to resilience, then moves into an assessment of the library facility and surrounding public spaces, to be done by staff, board members, Friends Groups and other supporters, in order to develop a thorough understanding of the physical characteristics of the place.
 - ii. **Session 2: March 20 | 10:00 am | Online | [REGISTER](#)**
What to Do: Technologies and Strategies for Ensuring Resilience in a Changing Climate
 Take a deeper dive into technology and funding opportunities to facilitate neighborhood-based climate resilience approaches. Examples of initiatives, programs, and tried-and-true projects undertaken by public institutions, city governments, private property owners, etc. designed to build climate adaptive and sustainable communities will be presented.
 - iii. **Session 3: April 15 | In-Person at Gardiner Library | [REGISTER](#)**
 133 Farmer's Turnpike, Gardiner NY 12525 [view map](#).
How to Get it Done

More on Financing and Planning, with detailed case studies and discussion of technical assistance resources. Funding sources, requirements, and pitfalls; timing of funding opportunities; matching funds required, and opportunities by sector (electrification and building heating and cooling; landscaping for storm/ flood resilience, biodiversity and food production; transportation; communications and emergency response) will be covered.

iv. **Session 4: May 22 | 10:00 am -12:00 pm | In-Person at Howland Public Library | [REGISTER](#)**

313 Main St, Beacon, NY 12508 (at the corner of Main St. & South Cedar St. [view map](#))

Putting it all Together

Based on the outcomes of the place assessment, workshops and input from community stakeholders and partners, each library identifies specific priority projects and a pathway to their implementation.

c. I have completed the **six-part Sustainability series** and related articles in partnership with WebJunction:

- i. [Series Landing page](#)
- ii. [Series Learner Guide](#)
- iii. [Climate Action Plan Template](#)
- iv. Webinars:
 1. [Sustainability 101](#)
 2. [Climate Action Planning \(Part 1\): An Introduction](#)
 3. [Climate Action Planning \(Part 2\): Disaster Preparedness and Community Resilience](#)
 4. [Climate Justice](#)
 5. [Living Our Values Out Loud: Programs that Walk the Talk](#)
 6. [Stronger Together: Collective Impact and Climate Action Programming](#)
- v. Articles:
 1. [Sustainability 101](#)
 2. [Getting Started with Climate Action Planning](#)
 3. [Disaster Preparedness and Community Resilience](#)
 4. [Climate Justice](#)
 5. [Programs that Walk the Talk](#)
 6. [Stronger Together: Collective Impact and Climate Action.](#)

8. Update on the **Town of Union Vale situation** will be provided at the meeting.

9. Board Operations

- a. Please return your signed copies to Ashley by January 30th or bring them with you to the board meeting on the 26th:
 - i. Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form
 1. Please review: [MHLS Conflict of Interest Policy](#) and please sign: [MHLS Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement](#)
 - ii. [Ethics Policy](#)
- b. **Board-to-Board Visits**
 - i. The Outreach Memo has gone out to all member library board presidents and library directors. Please review the advice on participating in Board-to-Board Visits from the MHLS Board Development committee [here](#).
 - ii. Reminder: Please coordinate responses to libraries requesting a visit with your peers in the county before individually responding to requests and, as always, please let me know if you need any assistance to prepare for your meetings or with follow-up information.
 - iii. Suggested Talking Points:
 1. How MHLS supports member libraries
 2. How state aid underwrites MHLS services
 3. Library Advocacy Day: February 7th
 - iv. Please let Ashley (ateal@midhudson.org) know once a visit is complete.

10. Executive Director's Event Participation: November 28, 2023 – January 18, 2024

- a. Putnam County Library Association
- b. MHLS Facilities Committee
- c. MHLS Government & Community Relations Working Group
- d. Meeting with Steve Frazier, incoming town supervisor for the Town of Union Vale (along with Barry Ramage, MHLS Board President and Dutchess County representative to the MHLS Board; Ric Swierat, MHLS Treasurer and Dutchess County representative to the MHLS Board; and Carol Fortier, Director, Beekman Library)
- e. Retirement Reception for Gloria Goverman, Director, East Fishkill Community Library
- f. 10th Anniversary Reception for the American Library Association Sustainability Round Table (I was a founding board member)
- g. MHLS Board Development Committee
- h. Board Retreat, Sustainable Libraries Initiative
- i. Meeting with Janet Giannetta, HR Consultant, re: MHLS Personnel Policies
- j. Meeting with Teddy Artschwager, aide to [Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha](#)
- k. Meeting with Francis Rees, Library Development Specialist, NYS Division of Library Development
- l. New Director Orientation: Julian Giarraputo, Director, D.R. Evarts Library (Athens)
- m. Public Library System Directors Organization of New York State (PULISDO)

- n. Legislative Committee, New York Library Association
- o. MHLS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group
- p. Presentation/Facilitation: [Stronger Together: Collective Impact and Climate Action](#)
- q. Consultation: Rosemary Wein, Board President, Sarah Hull Hallock Free Library (Milton)
- r. Consultation: Stephen Cook, Interim Director, Elting Memorial Library (New Paltz)
- s. New Director Orientation: Shea Wert, Director, North Chatham Free Library
- t. Kick-off Meeting: National Climate Action Plan Working Group
- u. Ulster County Library Association
- v. Presentation: Financing & Managing Construction Projects, [Trustee Handbook Book Club](#)
- w. Monthly meeting: NYS Division of Library Development Staff