

MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM
MINUTES of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Saturday, March 21, 2020

President Swierat called the meeting to order at 10:02am through the online meeting platform

1. ROLL CALL AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Trustees Absent: Robert Culp (e)

Directors Association Liaison: Mary De Bellis, Director, LaGrange Library

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

2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In his report, President Swierat:

President's report presented

- Reported on the need to extend a 3-month medical leave of absence for Putnam County representative, Robert Culp.
 - Ms. Schnitzer moved and Ms. Ment seconded a motion to grant said medical leave. **The motion carried unanimously.**
- Has appointed Mr. Ramage as the interim chair of the MHLS Personnel & Planning Committee.
- Reported numerous thank you messages to him commending the staff of the Mid-Hudson Library System in the face of both the contract negotiations with the Town of Union Vale and the unprecedented actions necessary to help “flatten the curve” and slow the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-29). Mr. Swierat commended the staff for stepping forward and demonstrating leadership in the face of the pandemic.
- Reported that he has completed visits to all five county directors’ meetings and on his attendance at the 2020 New York Library Association Library Advocacy Day. He encouraged all trustees to step up efforts to convey the value of libraries to our state legislators to they have a up-to-date understanding of how libraries are contributing to the COVID-19 response and aftermath in light of the predicted economic fallout from the efforts to combat the spread of the virus.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Auchincloss moved and Ms. Goldfarb seconded that the minutes of the February 2020 meeting be approved. **The motion carried** with four abstentions: Ms. Baker Brill, Mr. Goldberg, Ms. Ment, and Mr. Ramage.

Minutes approved

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Wilson, MHLS Board Treasurer, reported that he reviewed the Treasurer’s Reports and noted that the majority of the “surplus” found on page 3 of the unaudited December 2019 report is accounted for due to the transfer from the MHLS Capital Fund to cover the 2nd Floor HVAC construction project. Mr. Wilson noted that he found both the December 2019 and January 2020 reports acceptable. Mr. Ramage moved and Ms. Klein seconded that the financial reports for December 2019 and January 2020 be received. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Financial Reports received

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5. **REPORT ON PAYMENT OF BILLS**

Ms. Davis reported that she reviewed the warrants for January and found them acceptable (Doc 5.A). Mr. Goldberg reported that he reviewed the warrants for February and found them acceptable (Doc 5.B). Ms. Ment moved and Mr. Auchincloss seconded that the warrant reports for January and February 2020 be received. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Warrants received

6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

In addition to her written report (Doc 6)), Executive Director Aldrich first thanked the MHLS Board for their support, responsiveness, and quick action as the necessary work related to the pandemic has unfolded over the past few weeks. Ms. Aldrich provided an up-to-the minute report on efforts to support both the MHLS staff and member libraries in face of the COVID-19 crisis:

COVID-19 Response

- Personnel:
 - All MHLS staff are now working from home. With the exception of delivery services and in-person events all system operations are functioning at pre-pandemic levels, even in the face of significant increases in requests for technical assistance both on the Sierra end of our business and consulting on governance and management issues.
- Temporary Suspension of Holds & Delivery System
 - Assessment of the end date for this suspension is underway and will be extended as necessary.
 - Guidance has been issued to member libraries for Sierra and Encore processes through this temporary suspension
- eCollection Efforts
 - A new toolbar has been added to the front of the online catalog to help connect more patrons with the eResources available with their library card.
 - Ms. Shedrick has continued her effort to help libraries provide an online library card registration form, creating forms for 5 new libraries in just the past week.
 - At the request of the MHLS Directors Association the financial block for patrons who owe \$10 or more has been lifted to remove a barrier to their usage of online resources during the pandemic.
 - Ms. Shedrick has been working with vendors to ensure new patrons who use the online registration form have immediate access to online resources wherever possible.
- Continuing Education, Professional Development & Consultations
 - Many events and planned onsite consultations have been moved online. When it was logical events have been postponed.
 - A COVID-19 Resource page has been developed by the MHLS Library Sustainability Team which includes administrative resources, help for marketing online resources – including graphics designed in house by Kerstin Cruger, MHLS Library Sustainability Associate & Communications Specialist - and advice and technical support for engaging with patrons online:
<https://midhudson.org/covid19/>
- Communication with Member Libraries: Daily, sometimes hourly, updates have been provided to directors to ensure their awareness of the Executive Orders issued and their implications for libraries. In addition, an online briefing was held to inform and clarify

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issues around MHLS services, directives from the state and advice on how to serve patrons needs when facilities are closed.

o Financial Issues:

- o The efforts of the state to ensure everyone is staying home may compromised member library budget vote timelines and elections days. This is an issue the executive director is partnering with others in the state to address and find clarity on.
- o The state budget is predicted to be significantly compromised due to the economic fallout of the efforts to slow the spread of the virus. This could have dire financial implications for the System and member libraries. More advocacy was strongly urged as we approach the April 1 deadline for the completion of the NYS Budget by the State Legislature and Governor.

o 2020 Census:

- o Mr. Conlin provided an update on the impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on the 2020 Census, a report of the workshops conducted in each of the five counties, and urged trustees to continue to help get the word out about the importance of the Census as they have been doing.

7. DIRECTOR'S ASSOCIATION LIAISON REPORT

Ms. De Bellis, Director of the LaGrange Library served as the Directors Association Liaison for this meeting. Ms. De Bellis commended the MHLS staff for their responsiveness to members in the context of the pandemic, citing their "advice, support, timely communication, and good humor" as being invaluable to the directors during this challenging time.

*DA liaison commends
MHLS Staff*

8. INCENTIVES COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Auchincloss, Chair of the Incentives Committee reviewed the work of the committee at their March 12th meeting (Doc 8.A) and explained the recommended enhancement to the Funding Priorities list for 2020-2021. Ms. Aldrich noted the committee decided not to change the MHLS definition of an "economically disadvantaged community" until the release of the 2020 Census data. (Doc 8.B.1)

*2020-2021 Funding
Priorities for the
Construction Program
Approved*

- Ms. Hardeman moved, and Ms. Davis seconded the committee's recommendation that the board approve the funding priorities for the 2020-2021 State Aid for Library Construction Program and the MHLS economically disadvantaged community definition.
The motion carried unanimously.

9. BYLAWS, POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Klein reviewed the work of the Ad Hoc Bylaws Amendment Working Group (Doc 9.A) and noted the request that the Trustee Services make the final decision about the name of their committee by the May 2020 MHLS Board meeting and the retraction of the working group's initial suggestion to merge the Trustee Services and Nominations & Elections Committee.

*Bylaw amendment
process to be
underway by May
2020*

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None reported.

11. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review and Approval of Member Library Variance Requests

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Ms. Aldrich reviewed for the board why variances were called for in the three cases presented. IT was confirmed that all three libraries are expected to come into compliance by the end of the calendar year. Mr. Ramage moved and Mr. Auchincloss seconded the approval of the submission of variance request form to the New York State Library from the Morton Memorial Library (Pine Hill), Plattekill Library, and Rosendale Library. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Variances approved

B. Review and Approval of the 2019 MHLS Annual Report

Ms. Aldrich thanked Mr. Conlin, Ms. Vittone, and Ms. Shedrick for their diligence in the preparation of the System’s 2019 Annual Report and informed the Board that New York State requires annual board review and acceptance of the report (Doc 11.B) in order to receive state aid. Ms. Schnitzer moved, and Ms. Klein seconded that the board has reviewed and accepts the MHLS 2019 Annual Report, as presented. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Approval of Annual Report to the State

C. Town of Union Vale Public Library Service Issues

Ms. Aldrich reviewed the actions taken by the four member library boards impacted by the lack of a service contract with the Town of Union Vale since January 1, 2020 and presented the renewed claims of “serious inequities and hardships” from the boards of the Beekman and Millbrook libraries which have been verified for a second time. Mr. Auchincloss moved, and Ms. Davis seconded the following resolution:

Town of Union Vale restrictions pending

Whereas, in December 2019 the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) Board of Trustees authorized and directed the MHLS Executive Director to confer with the MHLS Directors Association to implement a plan to restrict Union Vale cardholders from non-print resources (i.e. DVDs, CDs, Video Games, Audiobooks), special collections (i.e. museum passes and kits), and downloadable content currently available through OverDrive Advantage Accounts paid for with local funds, should no contract for public library services be in place for the town by December 31, 2019; and

Whereas, the boards of the Beekman Library and the Millbrook Library requested that the Executive Director delay the implementation of restrictions in January 2020 due to their desire to continue to negotiate with the Town of Union Vale, despite the absence of a contract for public library services on January 1, 2020; and

Whereas, the Beekman Library and Millbrook Library have renewed their claims of “serious inequities and hardship” to the MHLS Executive Director and requested that their boards’ claim of “serious inequities and hardship” be verified and that the Executive Director proceed with developing a plan for restrictions and remedies; and

Whereas, the Executive Director has verified their claim; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) Board of Trustees renews their authorization and directs the MHLS Executive Director to confer with the MHLS Directors Association to implement a plan to restrict Union Vale cardholders from non-print resources (i.e. DVDs, CDs, Video Games, Audiobooks), special collections (i.e. museum passes and kits), and downloadable content currently available through OverDrive Advantage Accounts paid for with local funds, on a timeline that is acceptable to the Beekman and Millbrook Library Boards.

The motion carried unanimously.

D. Pandemic Policy

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Ms. Aldrich reviewed the MHLS Pandemic Policy passed by the MHLS Executive Committee on March 12, 2020. It was clarified that this policy is in effect only while there is both a declared pandemic and a related state of emergency in New York State. Ms. Baker Brill moved, and Mr. Auchincloss seconded the approval of the policy, as presented. **The motion carried unanimously.**

MHLS Pandemic Policy approved

E. Auditor Correspondence

Mr. Ramage presented the correspondence which outlines the scope of audit services for the year. Ms. Vittone reported that the audit will take place off site next week. Mr. Swierat encouraged the board members to familiarize themselves with the scope of work to ensure when the auditors present their report they are satisfied the work outlined was conducted to our specifications.

12. ORIENTATION

A. MHLS Finances: Member Library Assessment & E-Resources Fees

Ms. Aldrich presented the history and current state of the Member Library Assessment and the E-Resources Fees noting the commitment of the Directors' Association to more routinely increase their contribution through the Assessment in coming years.

Assessment and E-Resources charts reviewed

12. COMMUNICATION

A. Board Members

- Ms. Baker Brill reported on her outreach efforts to have information about libraries' online resources added to an online community bulletin board used by citizens in Catskill and Palenville.

Trustee Outreach Activities

B. Staff

- Ms. Shedrick provided a more complete report of the activities of the MHLS Technology Operations Team in response to efforts in support of member libraries in the face of the COVID-19 Crisis and commended her team's efforts.
- Mr. Conlin reported on the impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on planned library sustainability projects such as Turning Outward, which will be postponed until later in the year; and the 2020 Lab Project to help libraries increase the number of yes votes received which is under review in light of members' decisions surrounding their votes. Mr. Conlin also reported on his team's efforts to support member libraries' through the COVID-19 Crisis which have resulted in timely resources to both inform administrative, outreach and service design issues that have arisen in the face of the efforts to slow down the spread of the virus.

Staff efforts related to pandemic

Mr. Swierat commended Ms. Vittone and Mr. Finnigan, who was not present, for their efforts to ensure critical onsite services are continued during the COVID-19 Crisis. Ms. Aldrich explained the safety measures in place to protect staff that still need to come into the building on an extremely limited basis.

MHLS Facility Procedures

13. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:40 A.M., Ms. Baker Brill moved, and Mr. Auchincloss seconded that the meeting be adjourned. **The motion carried unanimously.**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13th at 10:00am at the Stanford Library.

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Board Member Orientation & Luncheon following the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

Michele Ment, Secretary

Approved 2020

By the MHLS Board of Trustees