

Report on Visit to Ulster County Library Association
February 20, 2024
Stuart Auchincloss

The meeting was held at the Plattekill Library and on zoom. I attended in person.

The routine business went off routinely—approval of minutes, warrants and treasurer's report.

The highlight of the meeting was the discussion Rebekkah Smith Aldrich (RSA) conducted (a focus group format) about the challenges that the directors are facing now and their vision for where they would like to take their libraries if they could. As she explained at the beginning, MHLS is doing a mid-term review of its own 5 year plan of service and she wanted to know if it needed adjustment. This discussion was pretty lively.

Rebekkah is doing this with all the county library associations.

Later in the agenda the other lively conversation was about the subject of trustee education and engagement. RSA reported that there had been discouragingly low turnout for the in-person trustee trainings in 2023 and she fears that the trustees in the system are losing touch with one another if all the training is on Zoom. She asked the directors if there were topics they thought would cause trustees to turn out and if, perhaps, there was something else also going on in the county libraries that could happen with a trustee training to get better turnout. Perhaps the thought of getting your entire 2 hours at one time would help.