

# Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | May 2024

## 1. State Update:

### a. **State Budget Approved:**

- i. State Aid for Libraries: \$103.852 million (+4.252 million from FY 2023)
- ii. State Aid for Library Construction: \$44 million (+10 million from FY 2023)
- iii. NOVELny: \$3 million (new allocation for the coming year)
- iv. Love Your Library Fund: \$100,000 (disbursement from existing account, although there is some question if that amount is still in the fund after two years of payouts from the account)
- v. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library: \$500,000 to fund a competitive grant program with award amounts up to \$50,000 to provide up to 50% of an eligible entity's required matching funds to participate in the program. This will be administered by the State Library. No guidelines have been published yet.

**b. Education Commissioner Appeal:** The New York State Education Commissioner issued a ruling on the appeal made by Moms for Liberty and a local pastor in Wayne County to restrict the freedom to read for high school students. The Commissioner strongly refuted the attempt. The attached summary of her findings is a good review of the laws and the State's priorities around this issue.

### c. **Legislative Priorities:**

- i. Protection of Patron Access to Library Materials:
  1. Protection in Public Libraries [S7677A \(May\)](#) / [A7843B \(Kelles\)](#)
  2. Freedom to Read Act (school libraries) [S6350B/A6873B](#) - [NYLA Memo of Support](#)
- ii. Association Library Retirement Opt-in Option [S4245 \(Palumbo\)](#) / [A4885 \(Thiele\)](#) - [NYLA Support Memo](#)
- iii. Elimination of Library Construction Cap [S7093 \(Chu\)](#) - [NYLA Support Memo](#)
- iv. Book Fair Tax Exemption (this applies to events hosted by Friends of Libraries Groups) [S5955A \(Chu\)](#) / [A5538B \(Rivera\)](#) - [NYLA Support Memo](#)
- v. Access to Publicly Funded Research [S6562 \(Chu\)](#) / [A9139 \(Santabarbara\)](#)
- vi. Check Out New York [S5956A \(Chu\)](#) / [A4112A \(Jensen\)](#) - [NYLA Support Memo](#)
- vii. Media Literacy in New York State

**d. Additional State Aid for Library Construction Funds:** The State Library allocated an additional \$164,961 to MHLS for the FY2023-2024 round. This was triggered as not all public library systems were able to spend their initial allocations. This enabled us to increase funding to all member library projects approved by the MHLS Board and, thanks to some quick work by MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator Laura Crisci, allocate funds to cover 50% of the MHLS solar

project change order approved at the last board meeting.

2. **Memo of Understanding Process Update**: 100% of member libraries have signed the Memo of Understanding.
3. **Personnel Updates**
  - a. **\*ACTION**: We have **two new staff members**:
    - i. Amy Battaglia, part-time Tech Support Specialist
    - ii. John Cantamessa, part-time Material Handler
  - b. At the Public Library Association Conference in Columbus, OH, MHLS Outreach & EDI Specialist, Kerstin Cruger presented along with four colleagues on the topic of **Path to Belonging**: Creating EDISJ Small, Rural Libraries. They unveiled the web site [PathtoBelonging.org](http://PathtoBelonging.org), a work in progress.
4. **Facilities**:
  - a. Solar Project Update: The wiring of the transformer and meter are complete. The snow guard system has been installed. Next up is the installation of the monitoring system and then the inspection by the utility. Once we complete that the utility will install the net meter and give us the "Power On Approval" so we can turn on the system.
  - b. The courier used by Empire Delivery Services, the statewide delivery system, backed into the auditorium causing relatively minor damage to the roof of the building. The courier is paying for the repairs which have been completed.
  - c. MHLS Facilities Manager & Assistant Delivery Operations Manager was interviewed by Central Hudson to develop a case study to highlight the installation of our electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. The case study is attached to this report.
5. **Technology Operations**:
  - a. New Catalog:
    - i. Innovative has responded to our requests for priority fixes to the new catalog by sharing their priorities for their second quarter development road map. We are pleased to report that the critical issue of member facets has already been addressed and will be installed shortly. All other items, save one, are spread throughout the development calendar with all slated to be fixed by end of year.
    - ii. Staff have created 77 local versions of the new catalog with library collections optimized and branded for use in-house at member libraries.
  - b. Staff have begun preparations to roll out the new mobile app this summer. We are currently working with three pilot libraries to test it out: Mahopac, Marlboro, and Poughkeepsie.

- c. Staff have begun preparations to rollout LX Starter which will greatly enhance patron notices. The Catskill Public Library volunteered to pilot this for us.
- d. We are assisting four libraries – Cold Spring, LaGrange, Red Hook, and Wappingers - with construction/renovation projects by moving segments of their collections into storage status, this requires daily updates for each as they move through their projects.

## 6. **Library Sustainability**

- a. We were able to submit challenges on behalf of over half of our member libraries through the State’s Broadband office to ensure they are all eligible for future funding from the ConnectALL program.
- b. A new edition of the municipal ballot (414 votes) how-to manual has been published: [\*Municipal Ballot Votes for Library Funding in New York State: Inch by Inch, Row by Row: Using the Municipal Ballot Option in Education Law 259\(1\)\(b\) to Obtain Sustainable Funding for your Library\*](#)
- c. PR Plan Outputs: We have been working on our quarterly PR Plan. We are learning a lot through the implementation of the plan and adjusting as we go. Stephanie Werskey, our new Library Sustainability Associate & Communications Specialist has been very busy! Highlights:
  - i. Laura Crisci worked to get more of our libraries to participate in “Take Your Child to the Library Day” in February bringing the total from 2 to 15.
  - ii. For National Library Week we spotlighted our member libraries through a series of Facebook posts with fun facts about their facilities and services, here is one example:



Mid-Hudson Library System is with Poughkeepsie Public Library District ( PPLD ) and 11 others.

April 11 at 8:00AM

66 libraries - 1 great community! We are celebrating our member libraries this week for #NationalLibraryWeek, sharing highlights, and encouraging the public to find out more about how you can support the library in your community.

#hudsonvalley #publiclibraries #NYShistory #LibrariesAreForEveryone #nationallibraryweek



**Saugerties Public Library, Saugerties**

The Saugerties Public Library was established as a Carnegie Library in 1915, and the old fireplace is framed with tiles by the Maravian Pottery and Tile Works, which depict the story of Rip Van Winkle.



**Marlboro Free Library, Marlboro**

The Marlboro Free Library was one of the first libraries within the Mid-Hudson Library System to eliminate late fees, with fine-free records dating all the way back to the 1970s!



**North Chatham Free Library, North Chatham**

At one point, the North Chatham Free Library was believed to be the smallest library in NY. That "Little Library" still stands next to the current building and has been beautifully renovated as a meeting space and reading room.



**Adriance Memorial Library, City of Poughkeepsie**

The Adriance Memorial Library is the sixth structure to serve as the home of the public library in Poughkeepsie.



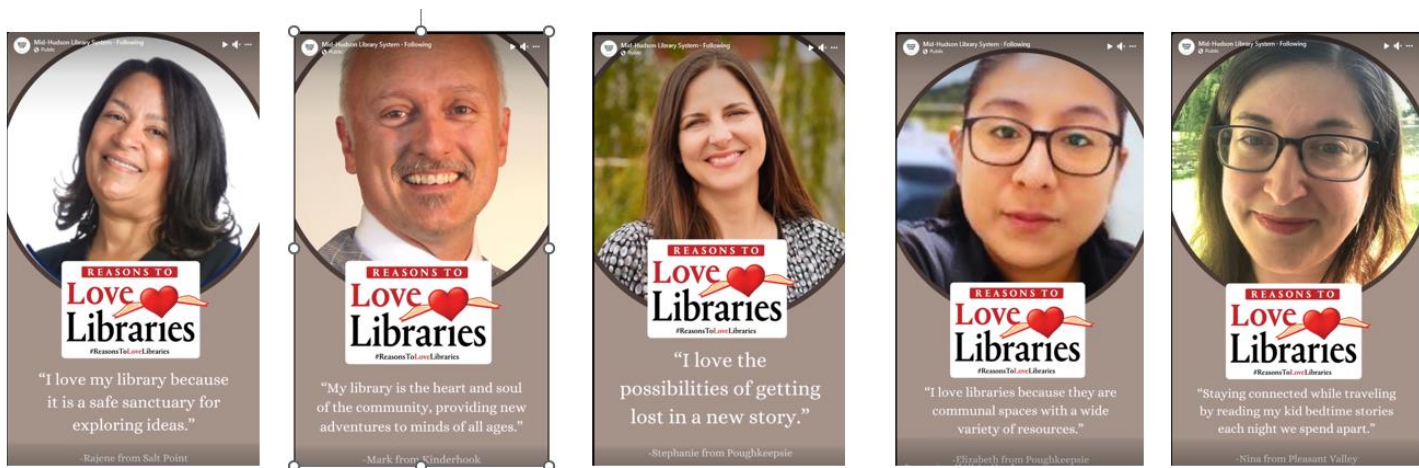
iii. The Daily Freeman featured our:

1. [National Library Week press release](#)
2. New MHLS trustees press release in their [Mid-Hudson People "on the move" section](#)

iv. Our Facebook post about April 8<sup>th</sup>, the "Right to Read Day" went viral with 3,600+ likes and 1,600 shares:



- v. Mid Hudson News came in to interview me, the first installment of the interview was [published on April 16<sup>th</sup>](#).
- vi. We are participating in the Library Journal/School Library Journal's "Reasons to Love Libraries" campaign to build our advocacy pieces for next state budget advocacy season:



- d. Our partnership with the Mid-Hudson Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club resulted in grants to 10 member libraries to support "learning about and appreciating nature and the environment." Learn more [here](#).
- e. We partnered with the Poughkeepsie Public Library District and Revolucion Radio Online to bring the "Consulate on Wheels" program from the Consulate General of Mexico to the MHLS Auditorium. 734



individuals were served over five days and 382 documents were processed.



*Above: Area residents accessing services from the Consulate General of Mexico in the MHLS Auditorium*

- f. We held a lively Member Library Friends Group Meetup at the Kinderhook Memorial Library on April 16<sup>th</sup>.
- g. We once again partnered with Assemblymember Didi Barrett to distribute the 2024 volume of Women’s History in the Hudson Valley: Ten Stories from Columbia and Dutchess Counties.
- h. The Kinderhook Memorial Library is the latest library in MHLS to complete the Sustainable Library Certification Program. Laura Crisci, MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator served as their mentor through this process. You can view their final presentation [here](#). We have 13 member libraries currently working on their certification with Laura’s assistance.
- i. Upcoming Trustee Education Opportunities
  - i. [Trustee Essentials](#) | Wednesday, June 5 | [REGISTER](#) OR Thursday, September 5 | [REGISTER](#)
  - ii. [Finance & Fiduciary Responsibility](#) | Monday, June 10 | [REGISTER](#)
  - iii. [Libraries for the Future: An Introduction to Sustainability as the Newest Core Value](#) (Trustee Handbook Book Club) | Tuesday, June 18 | [REGISTER](#)
  - iv. [Policies 101](#) | Monday, September 23 | [REGISTER](#)
  - v. [Governance Structure: The Role of Board Officers and Board Committees](#) (Trustee Handbook Book Club) | Tuesday, October 15 | [REGISTER](#)
  - vi. [Financial Planning](#) | Monday, October 28 | [REGISTER](#)

**7. The Town of Union Vale** We have had no communication from the town supervisor since March 12. We have had no communication from the library board in 2024. We understand from their web site that a new director has been hired. Currently physical services are listed on their web site as available “by appointment” with the exception of open hours from 12-3pm on Saturdays.

## **8. Board Operations:**

- a. The annual MHLS Board Self-Evaluation form will be sent to you via email after the May board meeting.
- b. MHLS Trustee Continuing Education Reminder: MHLS trustees should take at least 2-hours of continuing education relevant to our work on the board each year. Dates for [live webinars](#) have been set; if you need help logging into the Training on Demand platform to watch recorded sessions please reach out to Ashley Teal, MHLS Administrative Association:  
[ateal@midhudson.org](mailto:ateal@midhudson.org)
  - i. [Trustee Continuing Education Policy](#)
  - ii. [MHLS Trustee Continuing Education Procedures](#)
- c. Board-to-Board Visits
  - i. Reminder: Please coordinate response to libraries requesting a visit with your peers in the county before individually responding and, as always, please let me know if you need any assistance to prepare for your meetings or with follow-up information.
  - ii. Please let Ashley know when you have completed a visit so we can track our outreach to members as per the request from the Board Development Committee:  
[ateal@midhudson.org](mailto:ateal@midhudson.org)
  - iii. Suggested Talking Points:
    1. Encourage member library trustees to reach out to their State Senator and Assemblyperson to thank them for their efforts to increase library and construction aid in the state budget and to let them know more investment in libraries will be necessary in the coming years.
    2. Highlight the offerings available to satisfy the trustee education requirement in the MHLS Training on Demand platform:  
<https://my.nicheacademy.com/midhudson-trustees>

## **9. Executive Director's Event Participation: March 7 – May 7**

- a. MHLS Resource Sharing Advisory Committee
- b. Columbia County Library Association + MHLS Plan of Service Focus Group
- c. Public Library System Directors Organization of New York State (PULISDO) (2)
- d. Consultation: Starr Library Board-Friends Group (with Laura Crisci, MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator)
- e. Presentation: Online Forum – National Climate Action Strategy
- f. State of the County Address, Dutchess County at the Red Hook High School
- g. Tour: Radio Kingston
- h. Ulster County Library Association (2) + MHLS Plan of Service Focus Group
- i. Advisory Board Meeting, Sustainable Libraries Initiative (2)

- j. Presentation: What's New in the 2023 Edition?, Trustee Handbook Book Club
- k. Libraries as Resilience Hubs Cohort (session 2 online; session 3 at the Gardiner Library)
- l. Dutchess County Library Association (2) + MHLS Plan of Service Focus Group
- m. NYS Division of Library Development monthly meeting with Public Library System Directors
- n. Consultation: Peter Johnson, Board President, Philmont Public Library (2)
- o. Putnam County Library Association + MHLS Plan of Service Focus Group
- p. Consultation: Board of Trustees, Julia L. Butterfield Memorial Library (Cold Spring)
- q. New Director Orientation: Corinne Tatavitto, Cairo Public Library
- r. MHLS Board Orientation
- s. Public Library Association Conference, Columbus, OH
- t. New Director Orientation: Dee Ann Campbell, Pine Plains Library
- u. MHLS Board Development Committee
- v. MHLS Facilities Committee
- w. MHLS Planning & Personnel Committee
- x. Greene County Library Association (with Barbara Swanson)
- y. Presentation: Municipal Ballot Votes
- z. Construction Contacts Meeting, New York State Library
- aa. Annual Meeting Presentation, Sustainable Libraries Initiative
- bb. Presentation: Ambassadors & Advocates for the Putnam County Library Association at the Mahopac Library
- cc. Compassionate Customer Service Workshop with Jennifer Bollerman
- dd. Path to Membership Joint Committee
- ee. MHLS Nominations & Elections Committee
- ff. Consultation: Christopher Leary, Director, Catskill Public Library

**10.** I have written a chapter in the new book **Library 2035: Imagining the Next Generation of Libraries** edited by Sandra Hirsh. The chapter is called "*Sustainable Libraries in 2035: Refuge. Resistance. Resilience. Regeneration.*"