

# Executive Director's Report to the MHLS Board | January 2025

## 1. State Budget Advocacy Preparations:

- a. Please sign up for the [NYLA Library Advocate List](#) and help your library trustees, Friends, and other library supporters do the same.
- b. There is upcoming [Trustee Handbook Book Club session on Advocacy on Wednesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00pm](#), this session will cover the ins and outs of advocacy vs. lobbying and encourage trustees to connect with state legislators to make the case for increased funding for libraries and construction aid. *Yes! This counts towards your two-hours of required trustee education for the year!*
- c. If you plan to attend **Library Advocacy Day in Albany on February 5<sup>th</sup>** please review our [MHLS Library Advocacy Day page](#) for information, to:
  - Register for the day, and,
  - If you'd like to take the bus to Albany, how to register for your preferred pick-up location
- d. We are hosting an **Advocacy Day Briefing for MHLS Stakeholders on Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am**. At this session, I will be joined by Max Prime, Director of Government Relations & Advocacy for the New York Library Association. We will review key issues, helpful talking points, as well as logistics for attending Advocacy Day in person and how to help if you are not planning to attend Advocacy Day in person. [Please register here](#) for this online event.
- e. If you haven't already, we'd recommend that you **sign up for the mailing lists of the state legislators that cover your library's chartered service area**. Understanding the issues they are focused on, which committees they get assigned to in January, and where their office hours are can come in handy as a library advocate. In fact, reaching out to offer to host office hours for them at your library has been something many of them have jumped at the chance to take advantage of! A list of State legislators in our region and which libraries' services areas they cover can be found [on the MHLS web site](#).
- f. You can [review the 2025 Legislative Session page on NYLA's web site](#), this lays out the budget and legislative priorities for the library community in the coming year which were presented at the past two board DA meetings. We will review these at the Advocacy Day Briefing on January 30<sup>th</sup> as well.

## 2. New Business Items Explained: In this month's meeting agenda you will notice a number of items under "New Business":

- a. **ACTION REQUESTED:** By January 30<sup>th</sup> please review, sign, and submit the following forms:
  - [MHLS Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement](#) (Required by the [MHLS Conflict of Interest Policy](#))
  - [Ethics Policy](#)
- b. NYS Education Law requires your annual approval of the Salary Schedule. You have already approved the funds for these salaries through your approval of the CSEA Contract and 2025 Budget at our last meeting. All salaries remain the same with the increase percentage approved at the last meeting reflected here. This will be an action item at the board meeting.

- c. **Newspaper of Record:** This must be declared annually so that we can comply with the meeting notification requirements of NYS Open Meetings Law. This will be an action item at the board meeting.
3. **ConnectAll Survey Beta Testers:** Our member libraries have been asked by the State Library to beta test a survey that will be used statewide to assess current digital accessibility offerings and needs. This survey will ultimately be required for libraries to access \$1 million in funding that will be available to address this topic next year from New York State.
4. **MHLS Road Trip Update:**
  - a. The MHLS “Road Trip” is a program planned for 2025 that will encourage area residents to visit not only their own local library, but all member libraries of the Mid-Hudson Library System.
  - b. This will take place from the first week in June through the date of The Great Give Back, which is usually the third Saturday in October.
  - c. Residents will pick up a map and/or passport that will be stamped at each member library location they visit. Prizes will be given when:
    - 10 member library locations are visited
    - All the libraries in a county are visited
    - All member library locations are visited
  - d. We are currently working to hire a graphic designer, price out awards and materials necessary, and seeking funds to underwrite the event.
  - e. Our goal is to roll this out for staff training by the second quarter.
5. **Libraries and Immigration Enforcement:** We have provided member libraries with guidance issued by the American Library Association that helps member library administrators understand the federal law, the powers of immigration officers and employees, and how to manage a visit from the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency when they may be seeking to interview a library patron or library employee.
6. **Board Operations:**
  - a. **Please review the “Annual Tasks” document** attached to this report, also available on the [MHLS Board Web Page](#), to review the standard actions the board takes each Year.
  - b. **MHLS Training on Demand:** We will have your log-in information for the MHLS Training on Demand Platform for the Trustee Academy at the meeting. You can use anything you find on that platform to satisfy the 2-hour trustee education requirement for this year. Proof of attendance is due to Ashley by November 30.
    - **For your reference:**
      - [Trustee Continuing Education Policy](#)
      - [MHLS Trustee Continuing Education Procedures](#)
  - c. **Board-to-Board Visits**

- The annual outreach memo to all member library directors and board presidents will go out this month to encourage them to invite you to one of their meetings this year.
- Please review the [Board-to-Board Visits Program Information Sheet](#).
- 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.
- 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)
- Suggested Talking Points:
  - Please urge all member library boards to participate in state-level funding advocacy. The best advice you can give them is to share stories with state legislators about:
    - a. How MHLS supports their library
    - b. The need for state aid for library construction

**7. Executive Director’s Event Participation: December 2, 2024 – January 2, 2025**

- a. Consultation, Kari Capowski, Trustee, Millbrook Library
- b. Advisory Board Retreat, Sustainable Libraries Initiative
- c. Consultation, Joseph Ferraro, Trustee, Putnam Valley Library
- d. Presentation: [Climate Change Communication – How and Why to Do It in Libraries](#)
- e. Presentation: MHLS Trustee Education Series: Seven Habits of Effective Boards of Trustees, Heermance Memorial Library, Coxsackie
- f. Presentation: [Trustee Handbook Book Club “After Party”](#)

g. Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, Red Hook Public Library



On Friday, December 13th MHLS Executive Director Rebekkah Smith Aldrich joined Red Hook community members to celebrate the grand reopening of the Red Hook Public Library after their façade and front entrance renovation project. The library looks "good as new" if not better!

*Captions: Director Alex Geller received certificates of achievement from both Senator Michele Hinchey and Assemblymember Sarahana Shrestha. Shown in the photo with Teddy Artschwager from Assemblymembers Shrestha's office and Isabel D. Kroeger from Senator Hinchey's office.*

- h. Claverack Library, Celebrating 5-Years in their new facility



*Thea Schoep, Director, Claverack Library; RSA; Assemblymember Didi Barrett*

- i. MHLS Community & Government Relations Working Group
- j. Ulster County Library Association
- k. ALA Presidential Advisory Committee
- l. Mini-Orientation for New MHLS Board Members
- m. Tessa Killian, Executive Director, Southeastern Library Resources Council
- n. MHLS Audit Committee
- o. MHLS Road Trip Committee
- p. Monthly meeting between the Public Library System Directors of New York State with State Librarian & Staff of the Division of Library Development
- q. Interview, Capitol Pressroom
- r. MHLS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group
- s. Consultation, Mark Williams, Trustee, Stanford Library
- t. Consultation, Eve Wood, Board President, Starr Library, Rhinebeck