Mid-Hudson Library System | Minutes of the 65th Annual Membership Meeting

Friday, October 25, 2024 | Henry A. Wallace Center at the FDR Library and Home in Hyde Park, NY

President Barry Ramage called the meeting to order at 9:23am.

1. IN ATTENDANCE:
   a. Trustees: Stuart Auchincloss, Peter Carey, Kenneth Goldberg, Rajene Hardeman, Jill Leinung, Barry Ramage, Janet Schnitzer, Barbra Swanson, Ric Swierat, Carla Taylor, Mark Wilson
   b. Staff: Nina Acosta, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Isaac Barbee, Kathryn Brew, James Coyle, Laura Crisci, Kerstin Cruger, Tom Finnigan, Gerry Formby, Elizabeth Garcia, Rebecca Hagan, Dave Haspel, Laurie Shedrick, Ashley Teal, BJ Vickery
   c. Others Present (list attached to file)

2. ELECTION OF MHLS BOARD MEMBERS: Ric Swierat, Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee conducted the election of six trustees to the MHLS Board.

   a. Columbia County: Jenny Post was nominated for her first full five-year term by Thea Schoep, Director of the Claverack Free Library and seconded by Matthew Pavlov, Director of the Kinderhook Memorial Library. Jenny Post's nomination was approved at the Columbia County Library Association meeting held on June 14, 2024.

   b. Dutchess County: Mark Williams was nominated for his first full five-year term by Lisa Palmer, Director of the Hyde Park Library, and seconded by Christa Cerul, Director of the Stanford Library. Mark Williams' nomination was approved at the Dutchess County Library Association meeting held on July 11, 2024.

   c. Greene County: Charles Kutcher was nominated for his first full five-year term and Barbara Swanson was nominated to fill out a vacant position with a term ending December 31, 2025 by Barbara Flach, Director of the Greenville Public Library, and seconded by Corrine Tatavitto, Director of the Cairo Public Library. Their nominations were approved at the Greene County Library Association meeting held on June 12, 2024.

   d. Putnam County: Kevin Finnegan was nominated to fill a vacant position with a term ending December 31, 2027 by Stephanie Harrison, Director of the Patterson Library and seconded by Dede Farabaugh, Director of the Desmond-Fish Library in Garrison. This nomination was approved at the Putnam County Library Association meeting held on June 15, 2024.

   e. Ulster County: Leslie Gerber was nominated to fill a vacant position with a term ended December 31, 2027 by Ivy Gocker, Director of the Woodstock Public Library District, and seconded by Darren Lanspery, Director of the Plattekill Library. This nomination was approved by the Ulster County Library Association meeting held on July 16th, 2024.

   There being only one candidate nominated for each eligible position, Mr. Swierat declared the election of Jenny Post for a 5-year term commencing January 1, 2025; Mark Williams for a 5-year term commencing January 1, 2025; Charles Kutcher for a 5-year term commencing January 1, 2025; Barbara Swanson to fill out a term ending December 31, 2025; Kevin Finnegan to fill out a term ending December 31, 2027; and Leslie Gerber to fil out a term ending December 31, 2027.

3. AMENDMENT OF THE MHLS BYLAWS: President Ramage reported that the Board had satisfied ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS, Sec. 1 of the MHLS Bylaws by proposing amendments to the bylaws, in writing, at least 120 days prior to a membership meeting and mailing the proposed amendments to all member library board presidents at least 90 days prior to the membership meeting. Richard Swierat, Chair of the MHLS Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures Committee moved, and Mary De Bellis, Chair of the MHLS Directors Association and Director of the LaGrange Library seconded the motion to approved the proposed amendments. The motion passed unanimously.

4. REPORT OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT: President Ramage's report provided an overview of the board's five goals for 2024: Financial Stability; Member Outreach; Board Education; and continued work to "live our values out loud" in the areas of intellectual freedom/defending the right to read; equity, diversity, and inclusion; and sustainability. President Ramage thanked the members present for their partnership to create the new Memo of Understanding between member libraries and the Mid-Hudson Library System and the Path to System Membership Procedures.

5. REPORT OF THE BOARD TREASURER: Treasurer Stuart Auchincloss provided a report on the fiscal standing of the organization and reported that despite initial, conservative budget estimates that may have required use of reserve funds, that MHLS will close out its fiscal year with a balanced budget due to increased state aid, careful monitoring of expenses, contract renegotiations, and grants. Auchincloss thanked James Coyle, MHLS Finance Manager & Personnel Officer and Elizabeth Garcia, MHLS Finance Assistant for their diligent work to ensure MHLS' finances are in good order.

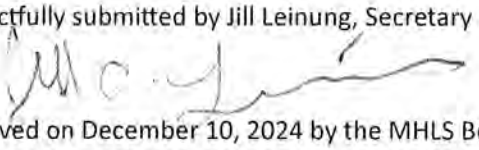
6. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Executive Director Rebekkah Smith Aldrich provided:
    a. An update on the status of state aid for libraries and shared elements of an advocacy strategy for the upcoming budget year.
    b. A review of System efforts over the course of 2024 including the everyday success of MHLS Staff in supporting member library operations; the finalization of a new 5-year contract with Innovative Interfaces Inc. for our ILS and catalog; an 18-month extension of our delivery services contract; the introduction of a new library catalog: discover.midhudsonlibraries.org; a pilot of LX Starter to upgrade courtesy notices to patrons; the administration of $1.4 million in State Aid for Library Construction; the new partnership with the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill to create the Bravery in Literature Award; the establishment of The Debra Wilcox Klein Book Haven Collection; $23,000 in MHLS Outreach Mini-Grants to Member Libraries to address collections, programs, and services with an increased focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion; continuing education offerings including cultivating compassion for library worker wellness, best publicity practices, media literacy, and a full complement of Sierra, OverDrive Marketplace and Trustee Education offerings; Learning Cohorts which included topics such as early literacy, libraries and resilience hubs, digital navigators, and evaluating the impact of the Summer Reading Program; a new partnership with the organization Girls Who Code; The Library of Local Summit; the new National Climate Action Strategy for Libraries; solar panels added to the roof of the MHLS Office Building and completion of a pollinator garden which is now connected to the Pollinator Pathway.
    c. The MHLS Technology Operations Team was awarded an appreciation award in recognition of their excellent work in producing a new online library catalog.
    d. Isaac Barbee, MHLS IT Support Engineer, was recognized for 15 years of service to the MHLS community.
    e. A presentation of "Outstanding Accomplishment" awards to:
        i. Students who recently completed the Certificate in Public Library Administration Program through a partnership with MHLS and Long Island University: Laura Crisci, Kristen Campbell, Lindsay Jankowitz, Donna Perolli, Johanna Reinhardt, and Kristen Salierno.
        ii. Hudson Area Library for securing sustainable funding through a municipal (414) ballot vote in the Town of Greenport.

iii. Pine Plains Free Library for securing sustainable funding through a municipal (414) ballot vote in the town of Pine Plains.
iv. Phoenicia Library for becoming the first public library in the U.S. to have their facility certified under the Passive House standard.
v. Kinderhook Memorial Library for completing the Sustainable Library Certification Program.

7. ADJOURNMENT OF THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: At 10:33am, President Ramage adjourned the Business portion of the 65th Annual Membership Meeting.

8. KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Aldrich introduced Lisa Raff Varga, Executive Director of the Virginia Library and Library Journal's 2024 Librarian of the Year. Varga shared resources related to managing attempted book bans in public libraries such as book resumes and easy ways to help people advocate for libraries and First Amendment Rights.

Respectfully submitted by Jill Leinung, Secretary



Approved on December 10, 2024 by the MHLS Board of Trustees