

**MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM**  
**MINUTES of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**  
**Tuesday, December 10, 2024**

President Ramage called the meeting to order at 10:00am in the Mid-Hudson Library System Auditorium.

**1. ROLL CALL AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Trustees Present: Stuart Auchincloss, Kevin Finnegan, Leslie Gerber, Kenneth Goldberg, Rajene Hardeman, Jill Leinung, Barry Ramage, Janet Schnitzer, Barbara Swanson, Richard Swierat, Carla Taylor, Mary Linda Todd, Mark Wilson

Trustees Absent: Peter Carey

Directors Association Liaison: Catherine Benson, Heermance Memorial Library (Coxsackie)

Staff Present: Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, James Coyle, Laura Crisci, Laurie Sheldrick, Ashley Teal

Guests: Jean Currie, Library Trustee Association (NYLA), Jennifer Post

**2. Velma K. Moore Award Presentation**

*Award Presentation*

Jean Currie, President of the Library Trustee Association Section of the New York Library Association presented the MHLS Board with the 2024 Velma K. Moore Award in recognition of their work to be the first public library system in the country to complete the Sustainable Library Certification Program.

**3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

In addition to his report, President Ramage welcomed new trustees Leslie Gerber and Kevin Finnegan. He recognized departing trustees Richard Swierat, Mary Linda Todd, and Mark Wilson for their dedication and lasting impact on the Mid-Hudson Library System. Resolutions recognizing the departing trustees are attached to these minutes.

*President's report*

- President Ramage reported on behalf of the MHLS board committee chairs, noting they gathered three times this year to ensure committee work was aligned with 2024 board priorities.
- Carla Taylor moved, and Kenneth Goldberg seconded the approval of the 2025 board meeting dates as proposed in the agenda. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*2025 Meeting Dates Set*

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Richard Swierat moved, and Stuart Auchincloss seconded a motion to approve the minutes of both the September Meeting (Doc. 3.A) and the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Membership Meeting (Doc. 3.B). **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Minutes approved*

**5. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Treasurer Stuart Auchincloss provided an overview of both the September (Doc. 4.A) and October (Doc. 4.B) financial reports, noting all is going as expected for this time of year. Auchincloss moved, and Kenneth Goldberg seconded a motion to receive the September and October financial reports. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Financial Report received*

**6. REPORT ON PAYMENT OF BILLS**

Richard Swierat reported that he reviewed the warrants for September and found them acceptable (Doc. 5.A). Carla Taylor reported that she reviewed the warrants for October and found them acceptable (Doc. 5.B). Taylor moved, and Swierat seconded a motion to receive the September and October warrants. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Warrants received*

**7. Board Development Committee**

Chair Kenneth Goldberg reported on the minutes of the Board Development Committee from November 14, 2024 (Doc. 11.A). The committee has recommended that the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Membership Meeting be held at The Henry A. Wallace Visitor Center of the FDR Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park again this year. Chair Goldberg moved, and Janet Schnitzer seconded a motion to approve The Wallace Center as the annual meeting location for 2025. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*2025 Annual Meeting  
Location Set*

**8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Executive Director Aldrich answered questions from the board about items in her written report (Doc. 6) related to state and federal advocacy for library aid; MHLS Outreach Mini-Grants; and the outcome of Proposition 2 in the Town of Union Vale. The board agreed Aldrich should continue to pursue strategic partnerships with both Central Hudson and The Tempestry Project. Richard Swierat moved, and Mark Wilson seconded a motion to authorize Aldrich to enter into a formal Letter of Agreement (Doc. 6.B) with Central Hudson to define the partnership. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Executive Director's  
Report*

*Approval of Central  
Hudson Letter of  
Agreement*

**9. DIRECTOR'S ASSOCIATION LIAISON REPORT**

Catherine Benson, Director of the Heermance Memorial Library (Coxsackie), Directors Association Liaison for this meeting reported on concerns with Hoopla's lack of oversight on published materials accessible to patrons (Doc. 7.A). Benson reported on the meeting minutes of the Central Library / Collection Development Advisory Committee (Doc. 7.B). Benson expressed the Directors Association excitement over the Amazon Prime agreement with all member libraries and the success of The Great Giveback. Benson noted that the member library directors sponsored a luncheon to express their gratitude to the MHLS Staff in November.

*Report from the  
Directors Association*

**10. NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**

Chair Richard Swierat moved, and Carla Taylor seconded a motion to approve the 2025 Slate of Board Officers as presented in the agenda. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Slate of Officers  
Approved*

2025 Officers:

President: Barry Ramage (D)

Vice President: Rajene Hardeman (D)

Treasurer: Stuart Auchincloss (U)

Secretary: Jill Leinung (C)

Member-at-Large: Kenneth Goldberg (U)

**11. FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

Facilities Chair Carla Taylor reported on the November meeting of the committee, including the performance of the new solar panels, Auditorium gutters, main building third floor HVAC system, and pollinator garden. Thomas Silvius moved, and Barbara Swanson seconded the approval of the 2025 Capital Plan. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*2025 Capital Plan  
Approved*

**12. PERSONNEL & PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Chair Mark Wilson moved, and Rajene Hardeman seconded a motion to approve the 2025 Action Plan (Doc. 10.B). **The motion carried unanimously.**

*2025 Action Plan  
approved*

Rajene Hardeman moved, Richard Swierat seconded a motion to go into executive session to discuss the CSEA contract and the Executive Director's performance appraisal results. **The motion carried unanimously** and the board entered into executive session at 11:28am.

Rajene Hardeman moved, and Richard Swierat seconded a motion to come out of executive session at 11:58am. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Richard Swierat moved, and Rajene Hardeman seconded a motion to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with CSEA for a new five-year contract starting in January 2025. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*CSEA Contract  
Approved*

Richard Swierat moved, and Leslie Gerber seconded a motion to extend the newly approved CSEA contract terms to non-union full-time staff members and for the compensation schedule in Section 1 of Article XII to extend to part-time staff. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*CSEA Contract Terms  
Extended to Non-  
Union Staff*

Jill Leinung moved, and Mark Wilson seconded a motion to accept the results of the Executive Director's performance appraisal and to authorize the Board President to engage in a contract negotiation with the Executive Director for a new five-year contract that would commence in January 2026. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Executive Director  
Performance  
Appraisal and  
Contract Negotiation*

**13. FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Chair Stuart Auchincloss moved, and Richard Swierat seconded the approval of the 2025 Proposed Budget (Doc. 12.B). **The motion passed unanimously.**

*2025 Budget  
Approved*

Auchincloss moved, and Rajene Hardeman seconded the proposed amendment to the Electronic Funds Transactions/Online Banking Policy (Doc. 12.C). **The motion passed unanimously.**

*Online Banking Policy  
Amended*

Auchincloss moved, and Richard Swierat seconded authorizing MHLS Staff to create an account with the New York Liquid Asset Fund. **The motion passed unanimously.**

*Liquid Asset Fund  
Account Approved*

Auchincloss moved, and Carla Taylor seconded the approval of the 2025 Bank Designation (Doc. 12.E). **The motion passed unanimously.**

*Bank Designation  
Approved*

**14. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

**15. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business introduced.

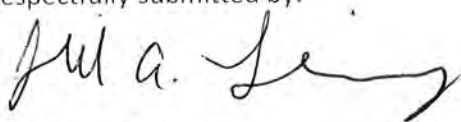
**16. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

**16. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:12pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill A. Leinung". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jill Leinung, Secretary

Approved on January 11, 2025 by the MHLS Board of Trustees



## In Recognition of Richard Swierat, MHLS Trustee

**WHEREAS** Richard Swierat has served with distinction on the Mid-Hudson Library System Board of Trustees for 10 years representing Dutchess County;

**WHEREAS** during that time he served as President for three years, including during the COVID pandemic;

**WHEREAS** during his decade of service on the Board he has made lasting improvements to the System, including:

- Building consensus to pursue the Sustainable Library Certification Program;
- The creation of a task force to consider how the System deals with all forms of equity, diversity, and inclusion;
- The creation of a task force to diversify and build the financial capacity of the System;
- Secured a grant from the Dyson Foundation to fund a public relations consultant to help raise the profile of the System throughout the Hudson Valley;
- Initiated the pattern of establishing annual priorities for the Board to work towards; and

**WHEREAS** in addition to being an effective leader on the board he has been a model of professionalism, effectiveness, and good humor. Now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees of the Mid-Hudson Library System expresses our deep appreciation for Richard Swierat's leadership during his terms on the Board and recognizes that he leaves a legacy of having strengthened our Board and our System for many years to come.



## In Recognition of Mary Linda Todd, MHLS Trustee

**WHEREAS** Mary Linda Todd has served with distinction on the Mid-Hudson Library System Board of Trustees for over eight years representing Greene County;

**WHEREAS** she has served with special distinction given her professional service at the New York State Division of Library Development;

**WHEREAS** her many years of service on board committees has improved our organization, including:

- Using her unique perspective as the former administrator of the State Aid for Library Construction Program to improve the Incentive Committee's administration of millions of grant dollars to improve member library facilities;
- Applying her commonsense approach to ensuring the library system's finances have proper oversight through the MHLS Audit Committee;
- Breaking new ground on the MHLS Facilities Committee to help the System become the first public library system in the country to achieve the Sustainable Library Certification Program; and

**WHEREAS** in addition to being an effective leader on the board she has been a model of calm, level-headed professionalism and good humor. Now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees of the Mid-Hudson Library System Expresses our deep appreciation of Mary Linda Todd's service during her term on the Board and recognizes that she leaves a legacy of improved financial oversight and sustainable practices which has and will strengthen our organization for many years to come.



## In Recognition of Mark Wilson, MHLS Trustee

**WHEREAS** Mark Wilson has served with distinction on the Mid-Hudson Library System Board of Trustees for 12 years representing Columbia County;

**WHEREAS** during that time he served as President for two years and Treasurer for three years;

**WHEREAS** he chaired multiple board committees including:

- The Executive Director Search Committee, which resulted in hiring our present Executive Director and managing the transition to her tenure;
- The MHLS Facilities Committee, which under his leadership established the System's first capital improvement plan which has improved not only our facilities themselves but the morale of the staff;
- The MHLS Personnel and Planning Committee, which, under his leadership developed two five-year Plans of Service and Annual Action Plans; and

**WHEREAS** in addition to being an effective leader on the board he has been a model of kindness, servant leadership, and good humor. Now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Trustees of the Mid-Hudson Library System expresses our deep appreciation of Mark Wilson's leadership during his term on the Board and recognizes that he leaves a legacy of improved staff and trustee morale which has and will continue to strengthen our organization for many years to come.