MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM

MINUTES of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

President Barry Ramage called the meeting to order at 10:03am.

1. ROLL CALL AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustees Present:	Stuart Auchincloss, Heather Blakely, Kenneth Goldberg, Debra Klein, Jill Leinung, Barry Ramage, Janet Schnitzer, Thomas Silvious, Richard Swierat, Carla Taylor, Mary Linda Todd, Mark Wilson
Trustees Absent (excused):	Rajene Hardeman, George Joiner
Trustees Absent (unexcused):	Peter Carey
Directors Association Liaison:	Matthew Pavloff, Director, Kinderhook Memorial Library
Staff Present:	Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, James Coyle, Laura Crisci, Elizabeth Garcia, Laurie Shedrick, Ashley Teal, Stephanie Werskey

2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President's Report

- President Barry Ramage:
  - Welcomed the newest member of the Mid-Hudson Library System Board, Thomas Silvious;
  - Complimented the staff and Board Development Committee on a well-run Annual Membership Meeting, the first in person membership meeting since the pandemic;
  - Thanked the board and staff for a very productive year.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes Approved

- Ken Goldberg moved, and Richard Swierat seconded a motion to approve both the minutes of the September board meeting and the 2023 Annual Membership Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial Reports Received

- Treasurer Richard Swierat reported that expenditures will accelerate in November and December as several large items will need to be paid, such as the state retirement contribution, Local Library Services Aid payouts to member libraries, and the roof and solar project. Treasurer Swierat moved, and Stuart Auchincloss seconded, a motion to receive the August, September, and October financial reports as presented. The motion passed

unanimously.

5. REPORT ON PAYMENT OF BILLS

- A report from George Joiner, in absentia, was provided, with his recommendation that the September warrants be approved (Doc. 5.A). Jill Leinung reported her recommendation of approval for the October warrants (Doc. 5.B). It was noted that the August warrants still need to be approved, which will be done at the January 2024 meeting. Treasurer Swierat moved, and Debra Klein seconded that the warrant reports for September and October 2023 be received. The motion passed unanimously.

Warrants Received

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- In addition to providing highlights from the written report (Doc. 6), Executive Director Aldrich reported that:
    - The new catalog, Discover.midhudsonlibraries.org was publicly launched today, December 6th. The new catalog has a modern and simple appearance with more intuitively organized features. Results are now more organized, displaying all formats of a title grouped together. The catalog allows for many enhancements to the user experience, including librarian recommendations; better lists, saved searches, and reading history; revamped profile giving users more control; allowing the user to see both their physical and digital items under their account. Users can also now easily search and borrow digital content directly from the catalog.
    - She, the board president and board treasurer, along with Beekman Library director Carol Fortier, met with the incoming town supervisor of the Town of Union Vale.
    - Complimentary copies of the new Handbook for Library Trustees of New York State were available to MHLS trustees at the meeting.
- Aldrich thanked the board for their dedication and hard work over the course of 2023.
- Treasurer Richard Swierat moved, and Carla Taylor seconded, the approval of all proposed personnel actions as presented in Doc. 6.A. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

7. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

- President Ramage and Executive Director Aldrich reported on the development path of the proposed Memo of Understanding (Doc.7.B), noting that this is the fifth draft of the

document which was unanimously recommended for board approval at the November 2023 Directors Association meeting. The document was vetted throughout its draft stages by the System Services Advisory Committee, MHLS Executive Committee and each county's library/director's association. Matthew Pavloff, representing the System Services Advisory Committee, also reported on the thorough nature of the development of the document. Secretary Stuart Auchincloss moved, and Janet Schnitzer seconded a motion that the board approve the Memo of Understanding as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Memo of Understanding Approved

- President Ramage and Executive Director Aldrich reported on the recent meeting of the Path to System Membership Joint Committee, made up of members of the Directors Association's System Services Advisory Committee, the MHLS Board's Executive Committee, and MHLS Staff. The Committee has proposed a path forward (Doc.7.C) should a library approach MHLS with a request to become a member library. President Ramage moved, and Treasurer Swierat seconded a motion to endorse the work of the committee and to encourage them to continue on the proposed path to develop their thinking further. The motion passed unanimously.

Path to System Membership Process Endorsed

- At 10:51am, Mark Wilson moved, and Stuart Auchincloss seconded, a motion to move into executive session to discuss the results of the Executive Director's performance evaluation. The motion passed unanimously. At 11:03am Mark Wilson moved, and Richard Swierat seconded, a motion to leave executive session. The motion passed unanimously.
- President Ramage moved, and Janet Schnitzer seconded, a motion to accept the report to the Executive Director related to the results of Aldrich's performance appraisal. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director's performance appraisal discussed

8. DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION LIAISON REPORT

- Matthew Pavloff, Director of the Kinderhook Memorial Library thanked the board for their support of the Memo of Understanding and Path to System Membership recommendations. Pavloff reported on recent topics of discussion at the Directors Association's meeting, including a policy for library card issuance to temporary residents and the State Librarian's proposed defunding of the NOVELNY program [https://novelnewyork.org/].

Report from the Directors Association

9. FACILITIES COMMITTEE

- Committee Member Heather Blakely reported on the recent tour of the facilities and grounds the committee members went on and their discussion of 2024 priorities for the facilities. Blakley moved, and Janet Schnitzer seconded the approval of the 2024 Facilities Plan (Doc.9.B) as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

2024 Facilities Plan Approved

10. PERSONNEL & PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Chair Mark Wilson presented the committee's recommendation to adjust the salaries of two employees due to change in job scope. Wilson moved, and Treasurer Swierat seconded, a motion to increase the salary of the Facilities Manager & Assistant Delivery Operations Manager to $70,000. The motion passed unanimously. Wilson moved, and Secretary Auchincloss seconded to increase the salary of the Library Sustainability Coordinator to $82,500. The motion passed unanimously.

Salary Adjustments Approved

- Wilson presented the draft 2024 Action Plan which is tied to the System's Plan of Service. This plan was created with input from the member library directors and System staff. It was noted that Executive Director Aldrich plans to conduct focus groups in the first quarter of 2024 so adjustments may be made mid-year next year. But for now, Wilson moved, and Carla Taylor seconded a motion to approve the 2024 Action Plan as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

2024 Action Plan Approved

11. FINANCE COMMITTEE

- Treasurer Swierat noted the importance of state level advocacy to urge the Governor to increase aid to libraries and encouraged all board members to use the new campaign from the New York Library Association to express their concern about the current state of aid to run the library system.
- Swierat spoke to the financial outlook for 2024, noting the projected deficit due to rising healthcare costs, retirement contributions, and contractual obligations in the face of stagnant funding from New York State. It was noted that should state aid remain flat or be cut the MHLS Board may need to draw down its reserves to meet its obligations in 2024.
- Swierat moved, and Jill Leinung seconded the approval of the 2024 Salary Schedule (Doc. 11.B) as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

2024 Salary Schedule Approved

- Swierat moved, and Carla Taylor seconded, the approval of the 2024 Proposed Budget (Doc. 11.C), as presented, with the understanding this will need to be revisited once the State's budget has been finalized. The motion passed unanimously.

2024 Proposed Budget Approved

12. WORKING GROUP REPORTS

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group Co-Chair Debra Klein reported that Heather Blakely has joined the working group as a welcome addition. The group is referring the issue of a policy to address disruptive behavior at meetings to the Bylaws, Policy, and Procedures (BPP) Committee. Through a discussion, it was also recommended that disruptive behavior on the grounds also be considered by the BPP Committee. Klein moved, and Stuart Auchincloss seconded, the following resolution to establish MHLS as a "Book Haven System":

  Whereas the mission of the Mid-Hudson Library System is to "act to uphold the public's right to free and equitable access to information and library resources;
  Whereas a core value of the Mid-Hudson Library System is equity, diversity, and inclusion because the staff and board believe in working together to co-create a society that is free from structural inequities; and
  Whereas the American Library Association reports on unparalleled number of reported book challenges in 2022, increasing in each of the past three years; now, therefore be it
  Resolved, that the Mid-Hudson Library System:
  1. declare itself a Book Haven Library System;
  2. annually commit to purchasing each title on the American Library Association's Most Challenged Book list; and
  3.ensure library cardholders in the Mid-Hudson Library System can borrow books from the Book Haven collection through the online catalog.

MHLS as a "Book Haven System" Established

It was noted this act will trigger the need for a system level collection management policy, including a request for reconsideration process.

The motion passed unanimously.

- Government & Community Relations Working Group Chair, Richard Swierat reported on grant applications that have been submitted; the State level advocacy plan beyond the NYLA

Campaign to reach out to the Governor; and the proposal to create an alumni group to bolster advocacy efforts.

13. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Nominations & Elections Committee Chair Richard Swierat moved, and Mark Wilson seconded, a motion to elect the 2024 slate of Board Officers as follows: *2024 Slate of Officers Approved*

President: Barry Ramage (D)
Vice President: Rajene Hardeman (D)
Treasurer: Stuart Auchincloss (U)
Secretary: Jill Leinung (C)
Immediate Past President: Richard Swierat (D)

The motion passed unanimously.

14. NEW BUSINESS

- President Ramage moved, and Stuart Auchincloss seconded, a motion to change the date of the December 2024 board meeting from December 18th to December 10th. The motion passed unanimously. Executive Director Aldrich will send out a corrected list of 2024 board meeting dates to the board. *December 2024 Meeting Date Adjusted*
- President Ramage noted he will be asking for 2024 committee assignment preferences from the board within the next week.

15. ORIENTATION

- Executive Director Aldrich provided a presentation on the topic of digital equity and digital inclusion, noting the prevalent mention of libraries in the state's new Digital Equity Plan which may lead to new funding opportunities for member libraries in 2024.

16. COMMUNICATION

- President Ramage noted the record setting amount of correspondence from member libraries to MHLS Staff and congratulated the staff on the overwhelmingly positive response,

in particular, to both the passage of the bill to reduce the number of signatures to get onto the municipal ballot and the new catalog.

- Assistant Director and Technology Operations Manager Laurie Shedrick noted the call to action to seek a catalog enhancement request of the catalog vendor to ensure all member library holdings are displaying properly.
- Library Sustainability Coordinator Laura Crisci reported on the planned MHLS exhibit table at the upcoming December 10th event at The Wallace Center at the FDR National Historic Site Visitor Center to commemorate the 75th anniversary of The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

17. ADJOURNMENT

At 12:09pm Barry Ramage declared the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Stuart Auchincloss

Stuart Auchincloss, Secretary

Approved on January 26, 2024 by the MHLS Board of Trustees