MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM
MINUTES of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Wednesday, January 20, 2021

President Swierat called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

OATH OF OFFICE FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Swierat, in his role as Board President, administered the 2021 Oath of Office to Board members in attendance and to the Executive Director. Dutchess County Oath of Office forms were provided to Board members beginning new terms: Debra Klein (Greene County); Jill Leinung (Columbia County); and Barry Ramage (Dutchess County).

1. ROLL CALL AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustees Present:	Stuart Auchincloss, Lisa Baker Brill, Sharon Davis, Kenneth Goldberg, Priscilla Goldfarb, Rajene Hardeman, Debra Klein, Jill Leinung, Michele Ment, Barry Ramage, Lynne Ridgeway, Janet Schnitzer, Richard Swierat, Mary Linda Todd, Mark Wilson
Directors Association Liaison:	Catherine Benson, Director Heermance Memorial Library (Coxsackie)
Staff Present:	Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Saran Camara, Casey Conlin, Laurie Shedrick

2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In his report, President Swierat:

President's report presented

- 2021 Board Committees: Presented the 2021 Committee rosters noting that they reflect a commitment to have representatives from each county on each committee. Shared an overview of the first Committee Chair Orientation recently held to review administrative details for the role and facilitation best practices as well as an overview of goal areas for the year.

- 2021 areas of focus for the board outlined:
    - Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Working Group recommendations
    - COVID-19 Response & Recovery Working Group recommendations
    - Development of the 2022-2026 Plan of Service
    - Outreach Efforts to member library boards and county library associations through Board-to-Board visits
    - Working with Saran Camara, our new Financial Manager & Personnel Officer

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes approved

- Ms. Goldfarb moved, and Ms. Schnitzer seconded, the approval of the December 2020 minutes (Doc. 3.A). The motion passed unanimously.
- Ms. Hardeman moved, and Ms. Klein seconded, the approval of the 2020 Annual Membership Meeting minutes (Doc. 3.B). Mr. Wilson noted a missing letter in item #5 of the minutes which will be corrected. The motion passed unanimously.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial Reports received

Mr. Wilson reported that reserves and cash flow are in good shape thanks to the work of the MHLS staff and Finance Committee, and that 2021 finances are stable with a clear plan to address the deficit thanks to recent news about the state budget and the work of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Working Group. Ms. Ment moved, and Ms. Baker Brill seconded, that the November 2020 financial report (Doc. 4.A) be received. The motion passed unanimously.

5. REPORT ON PAYMENT OF BILLS

Warrants received

Ms. Baker Brill reported that she reviewed the warrants for December (Doc. 5.A) and found them acceptable. Ms. Ment moved, and Mr. Auchincloss seconded that the warrant report for December 2020 be received. The motion passed unanimously.

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

In addition to her written report (Doc. 6), Executive Director Aldrich reported that:

State Budget Update

- The state budget briefing indicates the possibility that the 20% in aid withheld last fiscal year will be converted to a permanent 5% cut with funds potentially restored in the first quarter of 2021. $87 million has been allocated for state aid to libraries in the budget proposal put forth by the Governor with $14 million allocated for the State Aid for Library Construction Program. If this is the final number in the budget passed by the legislator, it would represent a 10% cut in operating aid for the system compared to FY2019.
- Ms. Aldrich reported on the New York State Library's effort to modernize elements of the library program including creating more flexibility in the Coordinated Outreach and Central Library programs.

COVID-19 influence on the delivery of library services

- A review of the service level status of member libraries reveals a trend towards the conservative delivery of services due to the spike in COVID-19 infections after the holidays. It is predicted more libraries will go back to summertime levels of service in the coming weeks as the infection rate subsides. Libraries continue to make data-driven decisions and follow best practices promoted by the NYS Department of Health to keep library workers and the public safe.
- Ms. Aldrich reported on her efforts to ensure library workers have clear and early access to available COVID-19 vaccines.
- Ms. Aldrich reviewed the warrant officer schedule and process.

7. DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION (DA) LIAISON REPORT

DA Action Items

Ms. Benson reviewed recent actions taken by the Directors Association including efforts to streamline due date and library card expiration management during the pandemic. DA Advisory Committee reports were shared including the recommendation from the System Services Advisory Committee that the CARES Act funds awarded to MHLS be spent on system services rather than distributed to libraries for maximum impact.

8. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

- Mr. Swierat reported that the committee followed through on the board's recommendation to show their appreciation to the MHLS staff for their efforts throughout the pandemic and fiscal crisis by awarding an additional "floating holiday" to all staff for use in 2021.

Appreciation Action for MHLS Staff

- Mr. Ramage moved, and Ms. Schnitzer seconded, a motion to move into executive session to discuss the most recent outreach efforts with the CSEA bargaining unit. This motion passed unanimously, and the board moved into executive session at 10:42am, inviting MHLS Executive Director, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich to join them. At 10:47am Mr. Ramage moved, and Ms. Ment seconded a motion to leave executive session, the motion passed unanimously.
- Mr. Swierat introduced the draft Emergency Health Plan (Doc. 8.B) as reviewed by the Executive Committee. Ms. Goldfarb moved, and Ms. Schnitzer seconded, a motion to approve the Emergency Health Plan as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Emergency Health Plan approved

9. EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION (EDI) WORKING GROUP REPORT

Mr. Swierat reported on the recent activity of what had formerly been called the MHLS Racial Equity Working Group, the group has decided to expand the scope of their work and with that, decided the group will now be called the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group. The group's four teams have been active and recently contributed to the Committee Chair Orientation process. Mr. Swierat stressed that EDI work is not "one and done" but is an ongoing effort that will require patience and iteration. Feedback to the group is welcomed. The group plans to share a curated list of resources with the full board and continues to work on board education approaches, a policy audit process, assessment of communications from the system and ways in which we can support members to use an EDI mindset for board recruitment activities related to the MHLS Board.

Racial Equity Working Group changes its name to the Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Working Group

10. NEW BUSINESS

A. Mr. Wilson moved, and Ms. Goldfarb seconded a motion to approve the 2021 Salary Schedule (Doc. 11.A). The motion passed unanimously.

2021 Salary Schedule approved

B. Mr. Swierat reviewed the MHLS Conflict of Interest Policy and encouraged trustees to submit their completed disclosure form (Doc. 11.B) to MHLS staff by the end of the month.

11. ORIENTATION: Broadband

Ms. Aldrich provided an overview of current issues surrounding the access and affordability of broadband connectivity for member libraries and the communities that they serve.

Orientation to Broadband Connectivity Issues

12. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Conlin provided an overview of upcoming professional development offerings and projects the Library Sustainability Team is undertaking including the 2021 Turning Outward project to assist member libraries obtain community input for planning purposes, the 2021 Early Literacy Training Cohort as well as an update on the work to support member libraries in filling out their

Library Sustainability Coordinator updates

annual reports to the state.

2021 meeting calendar approved

Ms. Shedrick reported on her efforts to reorganize the Tech Ops team in the wake of the departure of the MHLS ILP Operations Supervisor and the capacity-building effort to upgrade the MHLS Tech Support Ticketing System.

Mr. Swierat thanked the MHLS staff for the continued good work and for finding efficiencies in the face of the partial hiring freeze in response to the fiscal crisis caused by the pandemic.

13. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:22am, Ms. Ment moved, and Ms. Schnitzer seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:
Stuart Auchincloss, Secretary

Approved March 13, 2021 by the MHLS Board of Trustees