MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM

MINUTES of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Saturday, March 13, 2021

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

1. ROLL CALL AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustees Present:	Stuart Auchincloss, Lisa Baker Brill, Priscilla Goldfarb, Rajene Hardeman, Debra Klein, Jill Leinung, Michele Ment, Barry Ramage, Lynne Ridgeway, Janet Schnitzer, Richard Swierat, Mark Wilson
Trustees Excused/Absent:	Ken Goldberg (excused); Mary Linda Todd (excused)
Directors Association Liaison:	Mary De Bellis, Director, LaGrange Association Library
Staff Present:	Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Saran Camara, Casey Conlin, Laurie Shedrick

2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In his report, President Swierat: *President's report presented*

- A written President's Report is attached to the minutes
- Mr. Swierat noted that since the last meeting the Executive Committee authorized the acceptance of a second Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loan. R. Swierat moved, and Ms. Schnitzer seconded the endorsement of the authorization by the full board. The motion passed unanimously.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Goldfarb moved, and Ms. Klein seconded, the approval of the January 2021 minutes (Doc. 3.A). The motion passed unanimously. *Minutes approved*

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Wilson reported that the finances of the system are in good order; that the operating reserves are intact, and that current revenue projections are more positive than they were at the end of fiscal year 2020. Mr. Wilson expressed his thanks to the MHLS staff, the Finance Committee and member libraries for their hard work and collaboration as we have navigated financial uncertainty in the face of the pandemic. Ms. Ment moved, and Ms. Leinung seconded, that the December 2020 financial report (Doc. 4.A) be received. The motion passed unanimously. *Financial Reports received*

5. REPORT ON PAYMENT OF BILLS

Warrants received

Ms. Goldfarb reported that she reviewed the warrants for January (Doc. 5.A) and found them acceptable. Ms. Hardeman reported that she reviewed the warrants for February (Doc. 5.B) and found them acceptable. Mr. Auchincloss moved, and Ms. Baker Brill seconded that the warrant reports for January and February 2021 be received. The motion passed unanimously.

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- The state budget negotiations continue with an expectation that the April 1st budget deadline will be met by the State Legislature. *State and Federal Budget Update*
- The newly passed American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) includes funds for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and an "Emergency Connectivity Fund," both of which have the potential to aid libraries in Mid-Hudson Library System.
- There is a current need to advocate for the Build America's Libraries Act which could provide $5 billion for the construction and renovation of public library facilities in the U.S.
- Library workers will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine starting on March 17, 2021. Ms. Aldrich thanked the board for their support in advocating for library worker access to the vaccine. *Library worker vaccine access*
- Highlights from the System's annual report to the state include the facts that:
  - MHLS staff offered three times the number of continuing education program as the previous year in response to the demand from members when all library workers were ordered to work from home by the Governor and as it became clear library services would need to pivot to respond to community needs during the pandemic, which resulted in a four-fold increase in program attendance. *Pandemic response outputs of MHLS Staff*
  - MHLS staff provided twice the average number of consultations during 2020 and saw a three-fold increase in visits to midhudson.org due to pandemic-specific issues.
- A meeting with Regent Wills noted in her report was productive and an indicator that further outreach efforts to the members of the Board of Regents that represent the MHLS service area is called for. *Regents Outreach*

7. DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION (DA) LIAISON REPORT

Ms. De Bellis reported that there were no updates to the provided documentation from recent meetings. Ms. De Bellis complimented the MHLS staff for their supportive approach to helping member library directors.

DA Liaison Report

8. INCENTIVES COMMITTEE REPORT

- Mr. Auchincloss reviewed the work of the committee to identify the priorities for funding projects through the State Aid for Library Construction program and the economically disadvantaged community definition for the same program. (DOC 8.B) Mr. Auchincloss noted that there are no changes proposed to these two items from the previous year.
    - Mr. Auchincloss moved, and Ms. Baker Brill seconded, the committee's recommendation that the board approve the funding priorities for the 2021-2022 State Aid for Library Construction Program. The motion passed unanimously.
    - Mr. Auchincloss moved, and Ms. Schnitzer seconded, the committee's recommendation that the board approve the definition for an economically disadvantaged community for the 2021-2022 State Aid for Library Construction Program. The motion passed unanimously.

State Aid for Construction Priorities and Definition Approved

- Mr. Auchincloss noted the Committee's recommendation that both the Mileage Equalization Program and the NYLA Conference Attendee Grant be provided for in the 2022 System budget.

9. BYLAWS, POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE REPORT

- Ms. Klein reported on the Committee's discussions regarding updates to the System's Bylaws including a listing of standing committees and modernizing the language for liaisons to the System Board. The Committee will present draft amendments for the Board's consideration at the next board meeting.

Bylaw amendments proposed

- Ms. Klein reported on the Committee's discussion regarding how best to codify the board's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. At this time, the Committee recommends that the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group draft a policy for the

Expression of the Board's Commitment to EDI

board's consideration.

10. WORKING GROUP REPORTS

A. Mr. Swierat reported on the adjusted goals of the COVID-19 Response & Recovery Working Group in light of the shifting financial outlook for the System. He explained the goal of the working group to have 100% of MHLS Board Members financially contribute to the organization to ensure prospective donors and grant makers understand that our board is invested in the financial success of our organization. A detailed request letter will be provided to all board members. Mr. Swierat also reported on the results of the recent marketing research survey and explained how the results will be used.

MHLS COVID-19 Response & Recovery Working Group Report

B. Mr. Swierat provided an overview of the current activities of the MHLS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group and noted that the orientation segments of the May and September board meetings will cover topics related to this working group.

MHLS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group Report

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business to address.

12. NEW BUSINESS

A. Mr. Swierat, Ms. Aldrich, Mr. Conlin and Ms. Camara provided a report regarding the findings of the 2020 System Annual Report to the State. Mr. Auchincloss moved, and Ms. Hardeman seconded, a motion to authenticate the Mid-Hudson Library System's 2020 Annual Report to the State. The motion passed unanimously.

MHLS Annual Report to the State Authenticated

B. Ms. Aldrich and Mr. Conlin provided an explanation of the variance request forms from the Putnam Valley and Rosendale Libraries. Ms. Hardeman moved, and Ms. Baker Brill seconded, the acceptance and approval of both the Putnam Valley and Rosendale Libraries' variance requests. The motion passed unanimously.

Variance Requests Approved

C. Mr. Swierat reported on the need to adjust the date for the September 2021 MHLS Board meeting. A poll will be sent to board members to identify a new date.

September Board Meeting Date to Change

13. ORIENTATION

Ms. Aldrich provided an overview of the Members Assessment including the history, intent of the formula, approval process, and projections for the coming year.

Members Assessment Explained

14. COMMUNICATION

A. Mr. Swierat, Ms. Hardeman, and Mr. Ramage provided a report on their recent Board-to-Board visit with the Howland Public Library's board in Beacon, NY. Their written report is part of the written record of the meeting. (Doc. 14.A.1) — *Howland Public Library Visit Report*

B. Ms. Shedrick reported on the status of the upgrade to the Technology Operations Team's ticketing system software, which was underwritten by the recent CARES Act grant, and provided an update on the development work to implement Vega, a new discovery platform that will replace Encore, the current online catalog. Mr. Conlin reported that all member libraries annual reports have been submitted on time; noted a record number of libraries that have registered for the 2021 Turning Outward program which aids members to solicit community input on their strategic plans; and reported that the Family Literacy and Early Literacy programs are off to a good start. — *Staff Reports*

C. Mr. Swierat noted the certificate of recognition received by MHLS from the U.S. Census Bureau in thanks for the staff's efforts to help all be counted during the 2020 Census, and specifically thanked Mr. Conlin for his efforts on this project. — *U.S. Census Bureau Recognition*

15. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:40am, Mr. Auchincloss moved, and Ms. Klein seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by: Stuart Auchincloss

Stuart Auchincloss, Secretary

Approved May 12, 2021 by the MHLS Board of Trustees

ATTACHMENT

President's Report | March 2021

It is important to keep our annual board goals at the forefront during our committee work. The work of our committees shows how these goals are making a difference and strengthening our work. Just as a reminder, we agreed that 2021 board goals are:

- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – all committees are discussing the importance in the work
- COVID response – seeking stability & sustainability in our financial health
- The service plan for 2022-2026 – how do our goals strengthen MHLS in operations, finances, professional growth of the board(s) and response to our community needs
- Strengthening outreach with our member library boards
- Working with our new Financial Manager & Personnel Officer to strengthen our fiscal health

I am impressed with how each of our committees have kept these goals in the forefront of their agenda and work. This work is not easy nor fast to accomplish. We need to keep focused and yet be deliberate in how this work is done. We have already seen changes and/or goals developed through MHLS staff to streamline the organization and reimagine the work. The Executive Director's report and staff reports present us with the issues they are working on including strengthening our e-resources, technology, delivery system, communications with our stakeholders and advocacy presence not only in Albany but throughout the library community.

The work being done by staff and our work groups have strengthen our system. Despite the cuts and budgetary challenges, we have a strong financial picture. Rebekkah and Saran accessed another PPP (paycheck protection program) forgivable loan, and our budgetary discussions have proven fruitful to our future health.

The two work groups, EDI and COVID Recovery have already developed strategies, activities and goals to be met during this year. We will be hearing more from the EDI committee in future trainings during the May and September board meetings about strategies to make us more aware and responsive in our work to be diverse and inclusive while defining our work to be available and equitable to our entire community.

One of the primary challenges for us in the next year will include the recruitment, education and communications with new board members in the MHLS system. We also have turn over among our library directors, so we need to support the on-boarding of the replacement staff so they can become part of our already excellent team.

I had the opportunity to participate in the Dutchess County Directors Association meeting in which a very focused discussion on how libraries are essential to support our patrons in the use of technology not only for accessing library resources, but also to support their everyday lives - job seeking, COVID vaccinations, and virtual education supports for children. In addition, a conversation about the impact of literature and censorship on our library collections provided reasonable guidance in this time of some difficult conversations. It was clear that the members of this group recognize and appreciate the support of MHLS staff and board have provided them with guidance and supports for these issues.

Our focus on advocacy has produced results.

- The Petition Bill was passed, allowing easier access for the library community to conduct their budget and board elections in this time of limited access to libraries
- Through the efforts of Rebekkah and her staff, library workers are now qualified to receive the vaccination in recognition of their front line presence

- And, the need to get bureaucratic waivers for the change in operations of the libraries was rescinded after the State Education Department and Board of Regents was presented with the logical argument for such.

We have much to be proud....and we have lots of work in front of us!