MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM

MINUTES of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Wednesday, May 12, 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, Ken Goldberg, Priscilla Goldfarb, Rajene Hardeman, Debra Klein, Jill Leinung, Barry Ramage, Lynne Ridgeway, Janet Schnitzer, Richard Swierat, Mary Linda Todd, Mark Wilson
Trustees Excused/Absent:	Michele Ment (excused)
Directors Association Liaison:	Michele Capozzella, Director, Mahopac Library
Staff Present:	Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Saran Camara, Casey Conlin, Laurie Shedrick

2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- A written President's Report is attached to the minutes.
- Mr. Swierat thanked the board for helping the COVID-19 Response & Recovery Working Group meet their goal of having 100% of the board members participate in donating to the Support Our System fund and noted that the working group will be meeting this month to re-imagine campaign messaging and tactics considering the current fiscal outlook.

President's report presented

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Ms. Goldfarb moved, and Ms. Baker Brill seconded, the approval of the March 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 and initial targets for revenue and expenses are on target. Mr. Wilson noted that the operating reserves are now fully funded and explained that funds have been set aside for a new reserve fund that will be proposed by the Finance Committee at the next board meeting. Mr. Wilson thanked Saran Camara, MHLS Finance Manager & Personnel Officer, for her work to secure a second Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loan. Mr. Auchincloss moved, and Mr. Ramage seconded, that the January, February, and March 2021 financial report (Docs. 4.A, 4.B, and 4.C) be received. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports received

Ms. Camara thanked for PPP loan

5. REPORT ON PAYMENT OF BILLS

- Ms. Klein reported that she reviewed the warrants for March (Doc. 5.A) and found them acceptable. Ms. Leinung reported that she reviewed the warrants for April (Doc. 5.B) and found them acceptable. Ms. Ridgeway moved, and Mr. Goldberg seconded that the warrant reports for March and April 2021 be received. The motion passed unanimously. *Warrants received*

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- In addition to her written report (Doc. 6), Executive Director Aldrich reported that:
  - Legislative advocacy at the state level continues, specifically for the 90-10 Construction Aid, trustee education, and library aid modernization bills. *Advocacy for state legislation*
  - The NYS Open Meetings Law adjustments continue to be extended via Executive Orders but once those orders expire the board will need to follow the law as it stands. The board asked that legal advice be sought regarding retaining the ability to meet remotely as we have been doing.
  - Advocacy 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., continues and she asked for assistance in reaching both Senator Schumer and Congressman Maloney. *Advocacy for federal legislation*
  - She was recently invited to speak to the Office of Library Services staff at the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to help them plan for incorporating the topic of sustainability into future grant making. *IMLS presentation*

7. DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION (DA) LIAISON REPORT

- Ms. Capozzella reported that the Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee is working to finalize the Central Library Program budget in light of the unexpected arrival of the remainder of the FY2020 funds. *DA Liaison Report*
- It was noted that the reciprocal lending agreement with OverDrive is stalled due to a disagreement over the clause that requires MHLS to guarantee content spending levels by member libraires.
- Ms. Capozzella complimented the MHLS staff for their supportive approach to helping member library directors through the pandemic.

8. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

- Mr. Swierat reported on a new component of the 2022-2026 Plan of Service development plan to incorporate a review of the current mission statement; creation of vision and values statements; and the adoption of an ethics policy for the staff and board (Doc. 8.A). *2022-2026 Plan of Service Development*
- Ms. Aldrich reported that the staff is recommending the creation of an "Employment Benefit Accrued Liability Reserve Fund," which was endorsed by the Committee. A draft policy will be presented to the Finance Committee for their consideration. *Reserve Fund Proposed*
- Mr. Swierat reported that the Committee endorsed lifting the partial hiring freeze from 2020. *Personnel Actions*
- Mr. Ramage moved, and Mr. Goldberg seconded, a motion to enter into executive session to discuss personnel issues and to invite Ms. Aldrich to join the board in that session. The motion passed unanimously and the board entered into executive session at 10:50am.
- Mr. Ramage moved, and Ms. Schnitzer seconded, a motion to end the executive session. The motion passed unanimously and the open meeting resumed at 10:55am.
- Ms. Baker Brill moved, and Mr. Wilson seconded a motion to adjust the salary for three positions, effective June 1, 2021:
    - Finance Manager & Personnel Officer: $85,000
    - Library Sustainability Coordinator: $85,000
    - Data Operations Supervisor: $63,463

  The motion passed unanimously.

9. BYLAWS, POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE REPORT

- Ms. Schnitzer moved, and Mr. Auchincloss seconded, that the board approve the committee's recommendations to amend the bylaws as follows: *Bylaw amendments proposed*
    - ARTICLE IV. BOARD OF TRUSTEES, Sec. 9., item b.: edit to reflect the current MHLS Directors Association practice to assign a rotating list of System Service Advisory Board members to the role of DA liaison.
    - ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES: edit to add a list of our standing committees as they exist in current practice.

  The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Aldrich reviewed the amendment clause of the bylaws noting that there is a notification process and a vote of the membership at the annual meeting to finalize these amendments.

- Mr. Goldberg moved, and Ms. Leinung seconded, the adoption of the proposed Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy (Doc. 9.A): *EDI Policy Approved*

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

"The Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) believes in working together to co-create a society that is free from structural inequities.

MHLS commits to inclusion and making full use of the talents, skills, experience, and cultural perspectives available in a multi-ethnic and diverse society, where people feel they are respected and valued, and can achieve their full potential regardless of race, religion, nationality, national or ethnic origins, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or age.

As a cooperative library system, we commit to working with our member libraries to create space for discussion, self-reflection, and resources to aid in the development of more inclusive collections, programs and partnerships. Our overarching goal is to build empathy, respect and understanding among neighbors, to activate civic engagement, and to build community resilience that will authentically uphold our core values of diversity, democracy, and social responsibility.

We realize that we are on a journey to learn, understand and act to eliminate structural inequities and this policy is just the beginning. We recognize that there is no "finish line", but instead a continuous process of teaching and learning."

The motion passed unanimously.

10. BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

- Ms. Schnitzer reported on the plans for the 2021 annual membership meeting which were endorsed by the full board (Doc. 10.A). *Annual Membership Meeting Plans*
- The Committee will enact a board self-evaluation process which will be kicked off in May of 2021. Mr. Swierat thanked the committee for designing this process, the first in our organization's history. *Board Self-Evaluation Process*
- Ms. Schnitzer reported that the Board-to-Board Visit Program of the board is going well.

11. FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

- Ms. Ridgeway reported that MHLS is in compliance with a new state law mandating gender neutral signage for single-occupancy restrooms.
- Ms. Ridgeway reported that MHLS staff have adjusted cleaning and disinfecting protocols to align with updated Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance. *CDC Guidelines Updated*

- Ms. Ridgeway reported that the committee endorsed moving ahead with a State Aid for Library Construction application for 2021-2022 to renovate the delivery operations area. This project also has the financial endorsement of the Executive Committee. Staff will proceed with an application and present that to the board at an upcoming meeting for their approval.

Endorsement of 2021-2022 State Aid for Construction application

12. WORKING GROUP REPORTS

- Mr. Swierat reported on recent meetings of the MHLS Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group (Doc. 12.A).

EDI Working Group Report

13. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- There was no unfinished business to address.

14. NEW BUSINESS

- There was no new business introduced.

15. ORIENTATION

- Members of the EDI Working Group provided an update on the efforts of the Communication Assessment team of the working group, which included an audit of the MHLS Bulletin and social media channel communications and adoption of the "Social Justice Phrase Guide." The team stressed the importance of being respectful of all people and cultures.
- The team provided a prepared presentation to the concept of "impact over intention" which urged us all to be kinder and more respectful in our communication with others, providing examples of common ways our intention may not have in the intended impact in conversation with others.

"Impact over Intention" Presentation

16. COMMUNICATION

- Mr. Swierat noted a record number of written Board-to-Board visit reports in the first quarter of the year (Docs. 16.A.1-7) and thanked the group for their efforts. All participating trustees reported positive interactions with the boards they visited and

Board-to-Board Visits

recognized the value of the visits to their ability to better represent member interests at the MHLS Board.

- MHLS Assistant Director and Technology Operations Manger Laurie Shedrick reported on the hiring of a new staff member, Henry Barish, and the participation of member libraires in the Innovative IDEA LAB program, which helps to prioritize improvements to the Sierra and Encore software. *Staff Reports*
- Library Sustainability Coordinator Casey Conlin reported on an upcoming webinar with presenters from the NYS Archives to decode the new record retention schedule for public libraires; he provided a recap of the 2021 Reimagining Library Services webinar series; and noted the record number of libraries (15) participating in the MHLS Turning Outward program this year.

17. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:45am, Ms. Schnitzer moved, and Mr. Auchincloss seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:

Stuart Auchincloss

Stuart Auchincloss, Secretary

Approved on July 14, 2021 by the MHLS Board of Trustees

ATTACHMENT

President's Report | May 2021

President's Report – May 2021

Each of the committees have been using the focus on equity, diversity and inclusion in discussions. As you read through the committee reports, you will see how these values are being included in committee goals and work. The EDI work group has continued to focus on the idea that our work must be authentic. That is, if we say we stand for a set of values, the work we do will be representative of these values. Indeed, this is what our board and committees are doing. This is especially true of the work that is being done in developing the next Plan of Service. Please note the minutes from the Executive Committee in which the Plan of Service and the EDI processes are being used as the basis for a full review of the Mission, Vision and Value Statements for MHLS.

The COVID Response & Recovery Work Group will be meeting at the end of May to review our strategies and tactics for moving forward with plans to secure a sustainable financial picture for MHLS. The MHLS board has now established a fund with over $6000 in contributions to serve as the basis for going forward with a campaign to create a fund for sustainability. This fund represents 100% participation by our board members. The COVID work group will be discussing what we have learned from this process, and from our interviews with community partners to frame a campaign message that relates to our goals.

The agenda for May included five reports from Board to Board visits. I cannot remember when we have had this level of activity for Board to Board visits. This is an extremely important duty for each of us so that we continue to learn about how our library members are surviving these times, and what we can do to continue to support their needs. Thank you to all who have actively participate in this endeavor.

In addition to the Board-to-Board visits, MHLS has been surveying all our constituencies, including our board, in regard to priorities for the future. I hope you have seen and participated in this survey. It is one of the tools we use to ensure that the voices of our member libraries, patrons and boards are reflected in our plans for budgets and goals.

There are a significant number of board-trustee trainings planned for the next few months. There are a number of new topics that reflect the need for active discussion regarding the future of libraires. Among the topics are discussion about how we can be more collaborative within and outside our system of libraries. The MHLS staff have already reached out in a number of ways to form new collaborative efforts among our stakeholders. I encourage our board to participate in some of these trainings since these topics will inform how these future goals will impact and expand the impact of MHLS.

Lastly, the financial reports and news from New York State indicate that we are in much better position than earlier this year due to the federal supports received. Thanks to the focus and direction of our executive director and director of finance, we have a stable and positive financial picture. We will be discussing how our financial position will allow for effective investments in the system so MHLS can continue to move forward. While we must be very diligent with our financial decisions, this is the time to plan for our future contingencies and sustainability. We are fortunate to have the leadership of Rebekkah, Saran, Laurie and Casey who, through advocacy and focused planning, have continued to give us (the board and member libraries) the platforms for moving into the future with financial stability.