MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM

MINUTES of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

President Barry Ramage called the meeting to order at 10:05am.

1. ROLL CALL AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustees Present:	Stuart Auchincloss, Heather Blakely, Peter Carey, Rajene Hardeman, George Joiner, Debra Klein, Jill Leinung, Barry Ramage, Janet Schnitzer, Richard Swierat, Carla Taylor
Trustees Absent (excused):	Kenneth Goldberg, Mary Linda Todd, Mark Wilson
Trustees Absent (unexcused)	Alexandra Prince
Directors Association Liaison:	Catherine Benson, Director, Heermance Memorial Library (Coxsackie)
Staff Present:	Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Saran Camara, Laura Crisci, Laurie Shedrick

2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President's Report

- President Barry Ramage moved, and Rajene Hardeman seconded a motion to accept the resignation of Greene County representative Alexandra Prince. The motion passed unanimously. President Ramage noted that this leaves a vacant seat on the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group and invited anyone on the board interested in stepping up to serve through this working group to contact him.
- President Ramage urged all MHLS trustees to help with the advocacy to advance the 414 Petition Signature Reduction bill as this bill would greatly help more than half of our member libraries. President Ramage thanked Secretary Stuart Auchincloss for his leadership with not only his legislators but with the New York Library Association to urge action on this bill. Peter Carey reported on a recent meeting with the bills sponsors, Senator Harckham and Assemblymember Slater, to urge their advancement of the bill.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes Approved

- Peter Carey moved, and Debra Klein seconded, the approval of the March 2023 minutes with a correction to Kenneth Goldberg's name (Doc. 3.A). The motion passed unanimously.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

- Treasurer Richard Swierat reported on the financial position of the organization as of the first quarter of 2023 noting that we are currently underspending funds due to the delayed passage of the state budget. With the news that the final numbers for library aid matched budget projections for fiscal year 2023, staff will begin enacting agreed upon plans for the year. Treasurer Swierat noted that there are sufficient funds in reserve to draw upon until the state funds arrive. Treasurer Swierat moved, and George Joiner seconded, a motion to receive the financial reports. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report Received

5. REPORT ON PAYMENT OF BILLS

- Stuart Auchincloss reported on the review of the March warrants (Doc. 5.A), noting their acceptability. Heather Blakely, reported on the review of the April warrants (Doc. 5.B), noting their acceptability. Barry Ramage moved, and Richard Swierat seconded that the warrant reports for March and April 2023 be received. The motion passed unanimously.

Warrants Received

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Prior to the delivery of the Director's Report, President Ramage commended Executive Director Aldrich for her work as the guest editor of the Library Trustee Association Section of the New York Library Association's April newsletter, which was attached to the report.
- In addition to providing highlights from the written report (Doc. 6), Executive Director Aldrich reported that:
    - She will be working with the New York Library Association's Legislative Committee to improve the outcome for library aid in the 2024 state budget.
    - The recent minimum wage increases engaged for 2024-2027 will not impact the MHLS budget but once future increases are tied to the rate determined by the Consumer Price Index MHLS will need to carefully plan to meet variable minimum wage rates.
    - The ongoing work to create an updated Memo of Understanding between member libraries and MHLS has resulted in other areas of documentation such as the Resource Sharing Standards to be analyzed to ensure all language and intentions are aligned.

Executive Director's Report

7. DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION LIAISON REPORT

Directors Association Liaison Report

- Catherine Benson, Director, Heermance Memorial Library reported on several items under discussion by the Directors Association including the continued work of the association to standardize budgeting for content in the digital collection hosted by OverDrive; the recent analysis by MHLS staff of delivery stop volume and related adjustments to the delivery schedule; the upcoming contract negotiations with our ILS vendor, Innovative Interfaces Inc.; the MHLS Salary & Benefits Survey coming up this fall; the planned use of the new Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion statement from the Directors Association in the orientation for New Directors; MHLS' leadership to help the ConnectALL Broadband office solicit input from target groups in the Hudson Valley to inform the digital equity and inclusion needs plan to guide state funding, it was also noted that Columbia and Greene Counties have been classified as part of the Capital District region for this activity rather than the Mid-Hudson region; and current efforts to revise the Directors Associations bylaws.
- Executive Director Aldrich provided an overview of the Central Library Services Program budget approved by the Central Library / Collection Development Advisory Committee. Richard Swierat moved, and Peter Carey seconded, a motion to approve the Central Library Services Program budget. The motion passed unanimously.

8. NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Nominations & Elections Committee Charge Amended

- Chair Richard Swierat moved, and Stuart Auchincloss seconded, a motion to amend the Committee's charter as presented (Doc. 8.A). The motion passed unanimously.
- Chair Swierat reported that election notices for three seats on the MHLS Board will go out next week and that calls for self-nominations for officer positions on the MHLS Board will be due July 12, 2023.

9. FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Facilities Committee Report Provided

- Chair Rajene Hardeman presented the committee report, noting the progress on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assessment of the MHLS facilities; increased usage month over month of the electric vehicle (EV) charging stations; continued communication problems with Central Hudson related to planned power outages; and the upcoming pollinator garden project.

10. BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- Janet Schnitzer reported on behalf of the committee, noting the upcoming board self-evaluation process that will kick off this month; the development of the board mentorship program; and the sexual harassment prevention training plan for 2023.
- Janet Schnitzer moved, and Rajene Hardeman seconded, a motion to hold the 2023 Annual Membership Meeting in-person at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum on Friday, October 27, 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

Decision to hold an in-person annual membership meeting

11. BYLAWS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

- Chair Debra Klein presented the proposed amendments to the bylaws of the Mid-Hudson Library System (Doc. 11.B). Eight amendments are proposed, many of which work to expand member access to voting in trustee elections and bylaw amendments or to ensure the bylaws and recently adopted policies of the board are in alignment. Chair Klein moved, and Richard Swierat seconded, that the board propose the amendments, as presented, to the membership for a vote at the 2023 Annual Membership Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Bylaw Amendment Recommendations Proposed

12. FINANCE COMMITTEE

- Treasurer Richard Swierat reported on the recent meeting of the Foundation for Hudson Valley Libraries which resulted in (1) the final assignment of the Foundation's assets, which, after any legal obligations are satisfied, will be invested in the OverDrive collection and advocacy and outreach efforts that benefit all member libraries; and (2) an unanimous vote to dissolve the legal entity that is the Foundation for Hudson Valley Libraries. MHLS Financial Manager & Personnel Officer, Saran Camara, is now tasked with closing out the bank accounts and finalizing the dissolution with the governmental agencies that oversee the Foundation.
- Treasurer Swierat moved, and Janet Schnitzer seconded, the approval of the Donations Policy as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
- Treasurer Swierat moved, and George Joiner seconded, the approval of the amended Equipment Control Policy with an edit to clarify the lower limit is $500 not $5,000. The motion passed unanimously.

Foundation for Hudson Valley Libraries Dissolution Plan approved

Donation Policy approved

Amended Equipment Control Policy approved

13. WORKING GROUPS REPORT

- Co-chair Rajene Hardeman reported on the recent meeting of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group, noting the group once again is planning two 10-minute orientation sessions at board meetings this year and the work to develop an approach to recommend to the Bylaw, Policy and Procedures Committee related to managing disruptive behavior during the public comment period of board meetings.

EDI Working Group Report

14. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- There was no unfinished business.

15. NEW BUSINESS

- Laura Crisci, MHLS Library Sustainability Coordinator, presented the variance request of five member libraries. President Ramage moved, and Peter Carey seconded, the approval of all five libraries' variance requests. The motion passed unanimously.

Variance Requests Approved

- Rajene Hardeman moved, and Jill Leinung seconded, a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues related to MHLS Business Office Operations. The motion passed unanimously. The board invited Executive Director Rebekkah Smith Aldrich to join them in Executive Session. Executive Session commenced at 11:11am. At 11:24am Richard Swierat moved, and Peter Carey seconded, a motion to close Executive Session. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session Convened

- President Barry Ramage moved, and Treasurer Swierat seconded a motion to accept the resignation of MHLS Financial Manager & Personnel Officer Saran Camara effective June 2, 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

Resignation of Saran Camara Accepted

- President Ramage moved, and Treasurer Swierat seconded, a motion to appoint James Coyle, currently the MHLS Financial Assistant to the role of Interim Financial Manager & Personnel Officer with an increased salary of $70,000 for a period of approximately three months. The motion passed unanimously.

James Coyle appointed Interim Financial Manager & Personnel Officer

16. ORIENTATION

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group co-chair Rajene Hardeman provided a presentation on the current environment in which libraries are contending with issues

related to equity, diversity, and inclusion including the current increase in book challenges.

17. COMMUNICATION

- Janet Schnitzer shared news about a grant received by the Philmont Public Library to contribute to the New York Pollinator Pathway as well as a news story from Lake Luzerne, NY related to public protest over the library's recently planned Drag Queen Story Time.
- Stuart Auchincloss and Heather Blakely reported on their recent visits to the Kingston Library and Woodstock Public Library.
- MHLS Financial Manager & Personnel Officer Saran Camara reported on the recent audit activities, noting that several recommendations will be made due to the work to overhaul all account codes last year. She encouraged the MHLS Board to embrace the recommendations of the audit firm and view them as opportunities to complete the work of the account code project. Saran thanked the Board and Executive Director Aldrich for providing a positive work environment during her tenure with the organization.

18. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:52am, Barry Ramage declared the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Stuart Auchincloss

Stuart Auchincloss, Secretary

Approved on July 12, 2023 by the MHLS Board of Trustees