

# Mid-Hudson Library System | Minutes of the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Membership Meeting

Friday, October 24, 2025 | The Academy in Poughkeepsie, NY

President Barry Ramage called the meeting to order at 9:10am.

1. IN ATTENDANCE:

- a. Trustees: Stuart Auchincloss, Peter Carey, Kevin Finnegan, Leslie Gerber, Charles Kutcher, Jill Leinung, Jenny Post, Barry Ramage, Janet Schnitzer, Barbara Swanson, Carla Taylor, Mark Williams
- b. Staff: Nina Acosta, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, Kathryn Brew, James Coyle, Laura Crisci, Kerstin Cruger, Gerry Formby, Rebecca Hagan, Chris Herron, Dave Haspel, Elinor Levy, Laurie Shedrick, BJ Vickery
- c. Others Present (list attached to file)

2. ELECTION OF MHLS BOARD MEMBERS: Janet Schnitzer, Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee conducted the election of three trustees to the MHLS Board.

- a. Columbia County: Jill Leinung was nominated for her second full five-year term by Tiffany Buono, Director of the Valatie Free Library and seconded by Thea Schoep, Director of the Claverack Free Library. This nomination was approved at the Columbia County Library Association meeting held on June 13, 2025.
- b. Dutchess County: David Lavalee was nominated for his first full five-year term by Carol Fortier, Director of the Beekman Library, and seconded by Amy Smith, Director of the Dover Plains Library. This nomination was approved at the Dutchess County Library Association meeting held on June 20, 2025.
- c. Greene County: Barbara Swanson was nominated for her first full five-year term by Jacqueline Elmo, Director of the Mountain Top Library, and seconded by Catherine Benson, Director of the Heermance Memorial Library. This nomination was approved at the Greene County Library Association meeting held on May 21, 2025.

There being only one candidate nominated for each eligible position, Ms. Schnitzer declared the election of Jill Leinung for a 5-year term commencing January 1, 2026; David Lavalee for a 5-year term commencing January 1, 2026; Barbara Swanson for a 5-year term commencing January 1, 2026.

3. AMENDMENT OF THE MHLS BYLAWS: President Ramage reported that the Board had satisfied ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS, Sec. 1 of the MHLS Bylaws by proposing amendments to the bylaws, in writing, at least 120 days prior to a membership meeting and mailing the proposed amendments to all member library board presidents at least 90 days prior to the membership meeting. Peter Carey, Chair of the MHLS Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures Committee moved, and Mary De Bellis, Chair of the MHLS Directors Association and Director of the LaGrange Library seconded the motion to approved the proposed amendments. The motion passed unanimously.
4. REPORT OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT: President Ramage's report provided an overview of the board's five goals for 2025: Financial Stability; Member Outreach; Board Education; and continued work to "live our values out loud" in the areas of intellectual freedom/defending the right to read; equity, diversity, and inclusion; and Environmental stewardship.

5. REPORT OF THE BOARD TREASURER: Treasurer Stuart Auchincloss provided a report on the fiscal standing of the organization and reported that despite initial, conservative budget estimates that may have required use of reserve funds, that MHLS will close out its fiscal year with a balanced budget due to increased state aid, careful monitoring of expenses, contract renegotiations, and grants. Auchincloss thanked Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Executive Director and James Coyle, MHLS Finance Manager & Personnel Officer for their diligent work to ensure MHLS' finances are in good order.
6. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Executive Director Rebekkah Smith Aldrich provided:
  - a. An update on the status of state aid for libraries and shared elements of an advocacy strategy for the upcoming budget year.
  - b. A review of System efforts over the course of 2025 including the everyday success of MHLS Staff in supporting member library operations; the finalization of a new 3-year contract with Valley Courier for delivery services; the introduction of a mobile app for patrons; professional development highlights such as the Collection Management Series and the Sustainable Funding Series; the administration of the State Aid for Library Construction; strategic partnerships with the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill, Central Hudson, and The Tempestry Project; MHLS Outreach Mini- Grants to Member Libraries to address adaptive technology; and the first MHLS Road Trip.
  - c. Chris McCann, MHLS Delivery Operations Clerk II, was recognized for 15 years of service to the MHLS community and Chris Herron, MHLS Delivery Operations Manager, was recognized for 30 years of service to the MHLS community and was presented with a citation from Senator Rob Rolison.
  - d. A presentation of "Outstanding Accomplishment" awards to:
    - i. Olive Free Library for the grand opening of the new Shokan Branch Library
    - ii. Woodstock Public Library District for the grand opening of their new facility
7. ADJOURNMENT OF THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: At 10:30am, President Ramage adjourned the Business portion of the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Membership Meeting.
8. KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Aldrich introduced Sam Helmick, President of the American Library Association (ALA). Helmick shared discussed libraries as economic equalizers; persistent underfunding of libraries, information literacy challenges; growing, organized censorship attempts; key clauses of The Library Bill of Rights; key campaigns to join such as Unite Against Book Bans and ALA's Show Up For Our Libraries; and a new resource created thanks to a partnership between ALA and the League of Women Voters on civic engagement.

Respectfully submitted by Jill Leinung, Secretary



Approved on December 9, 2025 by the MHLS Board of Trustees

# MHLS Annual Membership Meeting Attendance

## 10.24.2025

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Role</b>
Aubry	John	Stone Ridge	Trustee
Auchincloss	Stuart	MHLS	Trustee
Bacharach	Hanna	Chatham	Director
Brandal	Samantha	LaGrange	Staff
Briden	Sharon	Esopus	Trustee
Carey	Peter	MHLS	Trustee
Cerul	Christa	Stanford	Director
Chameides	Emily	Hudson	Director
Chance	Jesse	Esopus	Director
Charles-Scaringi	Kirstin	Poughkeepsie	Staff
Chaudhri	Amina	Putnam Valley	Director
Chenier	Kerry	Town of Ulster	Staff
Cline	Diana	Hurley	Trustee
Cockett	Megan	Elting/New Paltz	Staff
Commisso	Ann	LaGrange	Trustee
Daley	Kim	Olive	Trustee
Daniel	Margaret	Town of Ulster	Trustee
DeBella	Tessa	Marlboro	Staff
De Bellis	Mary	LaGrange	Director
De Bellis	Claudia	Stanford	Trustee
Dietrich	Pamela	Stanford	Trustee
DiMaggio	Nancy	Mahopac	Trustee
DiMaria	Ethan	Pine Plains	Trustee
Dragon	AnnaLee	NYLA	Executive Director
Engel-DiMauro	Deborah	Elting/New Paltz	Staff
Engholm	Bruce	Town of Ulster	Trustee
Esposito	Gabrielle	Stone Ridge	Director
Ferrara	Hollie	Woodstock	Staff
Ferraro	Joe	Putnam Valley	Trustee
Finnegan	Kevin	MHLS	Trustee

Gamble	Alan	Amenia	Trustee
Gaskell	Tamara/Tammy	Roe Jan	Director
Gerber	Leslie	MHLS	Trustee
Gocker	Ivy	Woodstock	Director
Goldfarb	Priscilla	Desmond-Fish/Garrison	Friend
Green	Cindy	Mahopac	Staff
Gunning	Claire	Pine Plains	Trustee
Harlen	Cheryl	Mahopac	Staff
Harrison	Stephanie	Patterson	Director
Heady	Melinda	Stanford	Trustee
Herr	Pauline	Pleasant Valley	Trustee
Hobden	Dianne	New Lebanon	Trustee
Hoffman	Michelle	New Lebanon	Director
Howard	Mary	Germantown	Trustee
Jankovitz	Lindsay	Marlboro	Director
Joh-Carnella	Mimi	Starr/Rhinebeck	Trustee
Joyce	Rita	Town of Ulster	Trustee
Ketterer	Ardis	Sarah Hull Hallock/Milton	Trustee
Killian	Tessa	Southeastern/SENYLRC	Executive Director
Kutcher	Charles	MHLS	Trustee
Lanspery	Darren	Plattekill	Director
Lavallee	David	MHLS Board Candidate	MHLS Board Candidate
Leader	Chloe	Woodstock	Trustee
Leary	Christopher	Catskill	Director
Leinung	Jill	MHLS	Trustee
Linville	Judy	Staatsburg	Trustee
MacNish	Steve	Pleasant Valley	Trustee
Mahoney	Michael	Kent	Trustee
Martens	Denise	Reed/Carmel	Director
Martin	Leslie	Putnam Valley	Trustee
Mauer	Barbara	Stanford	Trustee
McGoldrick	Ruth	Patterson	Trustee
Menard	Margie	Kingston	Director
Middleton	Crystal	Elting/New Paltz	Director
Miller	Barry	Woodstock	Trustee

Miller	Robert	East Fishkill	Trustee
North	Fox	Esopus	Staff
O'Leary	Kevin	Elting/New Paltz	Staff
Matt	Pavloff	Kinderhook	Director
Petrovic	Greggor	Cairo	Trustee
Pierce	Adrienne	Cairo	Trustee
Placona	Pat/Patricia	Roe Jan	Trustee
Post	Jenny	MHLS	Trustee
Powell	Shannon	Hurley	Director
Power	Marilyn	Putnam Valley	Trustee
Pulice	Daniela	Pleasant Valley	Director
Pullen	Emily	Howland/Beacon	Trustee
Ramage	Barry	MHLS	Trustee
Raskyn	Terry	Putnam Valley	Trustee
Rau	Gail	Pleasant Valley	Trustee
Ray	Sue/Susan	Beekman	Staff
Robertson-Murphy	Gillian	Howland/Beacon	Director
Romeo	Linda	North Chatham	Trustee
Rothman	Lorraine	Staatsburg	Director
Rouchka	Betty	Mahopac	Trustee
Rusiecki	Wanda	Pawling	Trustee
Sassi	Lisa	LaGrange	Staff
Savolainen	Jaclyn	Starr/Rhinebeck	Director
Schnitzer	Janet	MHLS	Trustee
Schoep	Thea	Claverack	Director
Scott	Tim/Timothy	Saugerties	Trustee
Shepard	MaryAnn	Olive	Trustee
Sideris	Maureen	Amenia	Trustee
Slauson	Nancy	Town of Ulster	Trustee
Swanson	Barbara	MHLS	Trustee
Taylor	Carla	MHLS	Trustee
Tomlinson	Jeanne	New Lebanon	Staff
Travis	Diane	Mahopac	Trustee
Tsahalis	Courtney	Millbrook	Director
Vredenburg	Beth	Poughkeepsie	Staff
Wein	Rosemary	Sarah Hull Hallock/Milton	Trustee
Wierzbowski	Emily	Mahopac	Staff

Williams	Mark	MHLS	Trustee
Winters Russell	Betsy	North Chatham	Trustee
Wooldrige- King	Maribeth	Sarah Hull Hallock/Milton	Trustee
Wormley	Margaret	Roe Jan	Trustee