

Government & Community Relations Working Group

August 15, 2024

1. Roll Call

- ✓ Richard Swierat, Chair (D)
- ✓ Mark Wilson (C)
- ✓ Jill Leinung (C)
- Thomas Silvius (G)
- ✓ Barry Ramage, Ex Officio (D)
- ✓ Rebekkah Smith Aldrich (Staff Liaison)

2. **Velma K. Moore Award:** The Working Group discussed the good news that the MHLS Board has been awarded the 2024 Velma K. Moore Award. Part of this working group's strategy has been to seek out awards for the system to raise our visibility and this is an outcome of that priority.

3. MHLS Staff Updates:

- a. **Foundation for Hudson Valley Libraries Dissolution:** The NYS Attorney General has approved the dissolution plan and the dissolution paperwork has been forwarded to the Department of State for the final steps.
- b. **Quarterly PR Plan:** Staff continue to work through and fine-tune the plan provided by the PR consultant hired last year.
 - i. MHLS staff will table at the upcoming Walktoberfest event at The Walkway Over the Hudson.
 - ii. A member library and MHLS staff committee has been formed to plan a 2025 "Road Trip" initiative which would be a system-wide program to encourage Hudson Valley residents to visit member libraries.
 - iii. Funds have been budgeted for a publicity budget line through the mid-year budget adjustments, something that has never existed before.
- c. **Grants:**
 - i. Rebekkah continues to work with Assemblymen Jacobson's staff on an application to the Dormitory Authority of New York State for a State and Municipal Facilities Grant (SAM) to renovate the second floor of the office building.
 - ii. Staff are researching how to access the opportunity through the federal Inflation Reduction Act to recoup funding related to the solar project.
 - iii. Rebekkah is working to obtain the \$3,000 implementation grant from the Dyson Foundation.
 - iv. Rebekkah will be meeting with the funders of the Library of Local Project to pitch a third year of funding.
- d. **2025 Budget Advocacy:**
 - i. Rebekkah reported on the recent NYALS retreat to address a statewide advocacy plan for library systems and the PULSIDO meetings that immediately followed to discuss system funding approaches.
 - ii. Rebekkah and Jill serve on the NYLA Legislative Committee which is convening next week to discuss the budget advocacy strategy. Work will be done to examine the current funding formula to propose

adjustments to ensure it is reflective of current system services and capacity.

4. **Alumni Group Proposal:** The Working Group continued the discussion about Chair Swierat's proposal to create an advisory group to harnesses the expertise and advocacy strength of former MHLS trustees with a goal to broaden our advocacy capacity at the state level. The Group agreed we should pursue recommending this to the board. Ric and Rebekkah will work on a draft purpose statement and the group will reconvene to discuss this before the December board meeting.
5. **Establishment of a fund with the Community Foundation:** The group decided to table this for now and revisit it in 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55pm.