

Personnel & Planning Committee

June 23, 2025 | 10:00am

1. Roll Call

- ✓ Rajene Hardeman, Chair (D)
- ✓ Stuart Auchincloss (U)
- ✓ Kevin Finnegan (P)
- ✓ Jenny Post (C)
- ✓ Thomas Silvius (G)
- ✓ Barry Ramage (D) (ex officio)
- ✓ Rebekkah Smith Aldrich (Staff Liaison)

- 2. The Committee members reviewed the Committee's charge and recommend no changes:** *"The Committee, consistent with MHLS' vision, mission and core values, works to prepare and review the System's formal long-range Plan of Service. It also sets goals for the System and monitors its progress in connection with these plans and goals and, where necessary, advises appropriate adjustments. The Committee reviews and makes recommendations regarding the executive director's job description and evaluation procedure, salaries, benefits, and other matters pertaining to staff and employment conditions. The Committee reviews and negotiates the contract with the MHLS unit of the CSEA."*

3. Personnel Updates:

- a. Elinor Levy has been hired as the new Administrative Assistant. Elinor's first day was Monday, June 23. Elinor most recently worked at Arts Mid-Hudson as the Folk Arts Program Manager for the past eight years and lives in Poughkeepsie.
- b. Staff recommended the creation of a 401(a) Plan to manage post-severance compensation that would manage the distribution of the pay-out of accrued time to allow staff departing the organization with a large bank of accrued time the option to take that pay-out over multiple years to avoid a tax penalty. Chair Rajene Hardeman moved, and Kevin Finnegan seconded a motion to endorse the creation of a 401(a) plan option for staff. The motion carried unanimously.

4. CSEA Contract

- a. The final contract has been signed by all parties.
- b. Rebekkah and James met with the CSEA health insurance specialist to see if we can find cost savings options to add to our offerings to staff. A report from the specialist is pending.

- 5. Personnel Policies:** The Committee members reviewed a draft of amendments to the MHLS Personnel Policies. The revisions were aimed to a) ensure all policies are in compliance with state and federal law; b) to reflect the current CSEA contract; and c) clear up issues that needed more detail. The staff relied on our HR Consulting firm, Visions HR to advise on the legal compliance issues.

- a. Key highlights:
 - i. Clarification that upon a request for an accommodation, an employee needs to be diagnosed by the appropriate medical professional.

- ii. Explanation of the difference between “flex-time schedules,” “compensatory time” and “flexible time.”
- iii. Clear instructions for being paid for overtime.
- iv. Allowance for the use of sick time for family illness.
- v. Documentation of our practice to support eligible staff to pursue a Masters in Library/Information Science
- vi. Compliance with the NYS Cancer Screening Leave law
- vii. Definition of “excessive absenteeism” and “habitual tardiness” added
- viii. Integration of the board-approved Technology & Data Security Policy and email encryption procedures
- ix. Update of Smoking section to refer to vaping and cannabis use as well
- x. Introduction of rules for employees bringing pets on site for a visit
- xi. Clarification of layoff procedures
- xii. Addition of a whistleblower policy
- xiii. Addition of an Environmental Sustainability section

ACTION: Stuart Auchincloss moved, and Rajene Hardeman seconded, a motion to recommend the approval of the personnel policy amendments to the board. The motion carried unanimously.

6. **2027-2031 Plan of Service Development:** MHLS is required to file a five-year “plan of service” with the NYS Division of Library Development. This plan has three components: the plan of service, the Central Library Services Program plan of service, and the Free Direct Access Plan. The current documents are accessible [here](#). The System Services Advisory Committee has endorsed the process used in the 2020 planning cycle to shape the current plan. See previous development process/timeline [here](#).
 - a. Stuart Auchincloss moved, and Kevin Finnegan seconded, a motion to endorse the use of a similar process and timeline to develop the next five-year plan of service. The motion carried unanimously.
7. **2025 Executive Director Evaluation Process:** The Committee members discussed the process, which asks each board member to rate the Executive Director’s performance based on their job description. After a discussion about how up-to-date the job description is, it was last reviewed in 2018, the group decided to formally review the description within the next year but to use the current one to facilitate this year’s evaluation. The evaluation will be launched directly after the July 18 board meeting and trustees will have two weeks to fill out the form. This process will be led by Chair Rajene Hardeman.
8. **Other:** Executive Director Rebekkah Smith Aldrich provided an update on the impact of the federal budget reconciliation process and how the outcome may impact the New York State budget. She reported that there is a possibility of a “mid-year” cut from the state that would occur in the last quarter of our fiscal year. This will be discussed more in-depth at the July Finance Committee meeting but could have personnel and planning implications depending on if the cut happens and how deep the cut is.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:33am.