

MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM
MINUTES of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Thursday, September 10, 2026

President Stuart Auchincloss called the meeting to order at 10:01 am at the Woodstock Public Library District.

1. ROLL CALL AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Trustees Present: Stuart Auchincloss, Peter Carey, Mary De Bellis, Leslie Gerber, Kenneth Goldberg, Charles Kutcher, David Lavallee, Jill Leinung, Jenny Post, Janet Schnitzer, Barbara Swanson

Trustees Absent: Kevin Finnegan, Carla Taylor, Mark Williams

Directors Association Liaison: Margie Menard, Kingston Library

Staff Present: Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, James Coyle, Laurie Shedrick

2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- President Stuart Auchincloss moved, and Kenneth Goldberg seconded a resolution in support of the federal E-Rate program (text below). **The motion carried unanimously.** The board discussed how best to encourage local library boards and the five county library associations to follow their lead in passing resolutions that can be submitted as comments to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

WHEREAS, the Mid-Hudson Library System is a cooperative system of 66 independent libraries serving a combined service area of approximately 3,000 square miles and a population of more than 600,000 people; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Mid-Hudson Library System is to uphold the public's right to free and equitable access to information and library resources; facilitate economical resource sharing; and promote professional, inclusive, and responsive library services in partnership with its member libraries; and

WHEREAS, public libraries are critical community anchors and provide essential free access to high-speed internet, technology, digital resources, and information for residents who may otherwise lack reliable access; and

WHEREAS, state funding for the Mid-Hudson Library System, which was already insufficient to meet the growing needs of its member libraries, has remained essentially flat for the past ten years while operating costs have increased substantially; and

WHEREAS, costs not covered by state funding are largely supported by the Mid-Hudson Library System's member libraries, which rely primarily on local property tax revenue to fund their already-constrained operating budgets; and

*Resolution to support
the continuation of
the federal E-Rate
program approved*

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WHEREAS, the Mid-Hudson Library System receives more than \$7,000 annually in benefits through the federal E-Rate program, and these savings are passed directly to its member public libraries, helping them maintain affordable and reliable telecommunications and internet services; and

WHEREAS, the E-Rate program provides essential support not only to the Mid-Hudson Library System but also essential support that enables libraries and schools across the nation to sustain the technology infrastructure necessary to provide equitable access to information, education, and essential online services;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Mid-Hudson Library System respectfully urges the Federal Communications Commission to maintain its continued commitment to the E-Rate program and to preserve robust federal support for libraries and schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Mid-Hudson Library System urges policymakers to recognize the essential role that E-Rate funding plays in ensuring equitable access to reliable internet and telecommunications services in public libraries and the communities they serve.

- Donald Carragher was introduced. Mr. Carragher is running for an open seat on the board to represent Ulster County for a term to run from 2027-2031.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Peter Carey moved, and Leslie Gerber seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the July Board Meeting (Doc. 3.A). **The motion carried unanimously.**

Minutes approved

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

President Stuart Auchincloss delivered a report from Treasurer Kevin Finnegan, noting that revenues and expenditures are as expected at this time in the year. Charles Kutcher moved, and Peter Carey seconded a motion to receive the July financial report (Doc. 4A). **The motion carried unanimously.**

Financial Report received

5. REPORT ON PAYMENT OF BILLS

President Stuart Auchincloss shared Carla Taylors review of the warrant for July, noting that she found them acceptable. David Lavallee moved, and Barbara Swanson seconded a motion to receive the July warrant. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Warrant received

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Mary De Bellis moved, and Peter Carey seconded, a motion to approve the personnel actions as presented (Doc. 6A). **The motion carried unanimously.**
- Executive Director Aldrich and Assistant Director Laurie Shedrick presented the outcome of the negotiations for a new five-year contract with Innovative Interfaces Inc., the system's integrated library system software vendor. Barbara Swanson moved, and Janet Schnitzer seconded, a motion to authorize the Executive Director to sign a five-year contract, not to exceed \$225,000 annually. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Personnel Actions approved

New ILS Contract approved

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- In addition to her written report (Doc. 6), Executive Director Aldrich:
 - Reported on member library activities related to The Great Give Back program for 2026;
 - Shared the call for volunteers for the 2026 Battle of the Books program to be held on Saturday, September 19; and
 - Noted that all MHLS board members will now be included in the NYLA organizational membership.

7. DIRECTOR'S ASSOCIATION LIAISON REPORT

Margie Menard, Director of the Kingston Library and Directors Association (DA) Liaison for this meeting, reported on the success of the OverDrive Ad Hoc Committee to help evolve member library investment in the shared digital collection; noted that the chairs of the DA advisory committees met twice over the summer to consider how best to move forward with discussions related to managing the shared OverDrive collection; and shared the news that all special district public libraries in Ulster County have now moved their vote dates onto the same date in September to minimize confusion for voters.

*Report from the
Directors Association*

8. INCENTIVES COMMITTEE

President Stuart Auchincloss and Executive Director Aldrich reported on the committee's activities in the absence of Committee Chair Carla Taylor.

- Leslie Gerber moved, and Peter Carey seconded, a motion to approve the MHLS application for State Aid for Library Construction for a new boiler for the office building. **The motion carried unanimously.**
- Charles Kutcher moved, and Barbara Swanson seconded, a motion to approve the committee's recommendations, as presented in Doc. 8B), for member library and MHSL award amounts through the State Aid for Library Construction program. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Approval of the MHLS
Construction Aid
application*

*Construction Aid
Award
Recommendations*

9. PERSONNEL & PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Chair Jenny Post noted there was 100% participation by board members in the evaluation process for the Executive Director. The results will be discussed at the next board meeting.
- Janet Schnitzer moved, and Barbara Swanson seconded, a motion to approve the new draft of the Executive Director's Job Description (Doc. 9A). **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Executive Director Job
Description approved*

10. FINANCE COMMITTEE

President Stuart Auchincloss reported on behalf of Finance Committee Chair Kevin Finnegan. MHLS Finance Manager & Personnel Officer James Coyle provided an update on the business office software migration project which is on schedule and is going well. Kenneth Goldberg moved, and Charles Kutcher seconded, a motion to approve the mid-year budget adjustments as presented by the committee (Doc. 10B). **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Mid-Year Budget
Adjustments
approved*

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11. GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY RELATIONS WORKING GROUP

Chair Jill Leinung noted that the working group will reopen the question as to where to house the endowment fund during their next meeting due to questions related to gifts of stock.

12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Executive Director Aldrich reported that more than a supermajority of member library boards approved the draft Free Direct Access Plan, as required by state regulation. Barbara Swanson moved, and Peter Carey seconded a motion to approve the Free Direct Access Plan for submission to the New York State Division of Library Development for review. **The motion carried unanimously.**

*Free Direct Access
Plan approved*

13. NEW BUSINESS

Kenneth Goldberg moved, and Mary De Bellis seconded a motion to approve the proposed 2027 Board Meeting dates (noted below). **The motion carried unanimously.**

Friday, January 22 (snow date: Jan 29)

Wednesday, March 24 (snow date: March 31)

Thursday, May 13

Tuesday, July 13

Wednesday, September 22

Friday, October 22 (annual meeting)

Thursday, December 9

14. ORIENTATION

Executive Director Aldrich, who serves as chair of the Advocacy Working Group for the Public Library System Directors Organization of New York State (PULISDO), provided an introduction to the new advocacy plan enacted by PULISDO.

15. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

15. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jill Leinung, Secretary

Approved on [DATE] by the MHLS Board of Trustees