Path to System Membership Joint Committee

(Representatives from the DA's System Services Advisory Committee, MHLS Executive Board, and MHLS Staff)

October 26, 2023

1. **Roll Call**

   MHLS Directors Association
   - ✓ Carol Fortier (D)
   - ☐ Matt Pavloff (C)
   - ✓ Thea Schoep (C)

   MHLS Staff
   - ✓ Rebekkah Smith Aldrich
   - ✓ Laura Crisci
   - ✓ Laurie Shedrick

   MHLS Board
   - ✓ Stuart Auchincloss (U)
   - ✓ Rajene Hardeman (D)
   - ✓ Barry Ramage (D)
   - ✓ Richard Swierat (D)

2. The Joint Committee members received an overview of the:
   a. [Steps to establish a Municipal Public Library](#) (Division of Library Development)
   b. [Application for Provisional Library Charter and Admission to the University Form](#) (Division of Library Development)
   c. New York Public and Association Libraries Minimum Standards ([Commissioners Regulation 90.2](#))
   d. Draft of new Memo of Understanding between member libraries and the Mid-Hudson Library System
   e. [Free Direct Access Plan](#) (MHLS)

3. The Joint Committee was provided with initial thinking from the System Services Advisory Committee regarding what potential steps would be on a path to system membership for a newly chartered library. Points of agreement for the joint committee included:
   a. Provisional charter awarded by the Board of Regents;
   b. Ability to meet minimum standards;
   c. Proof of viability to meet community needs and patron demand;
   d. Willingness to meet the conditions of the new Memo of Understanding; and
   e. Willingness to pay the Assessment, perhaps at a projected amount based on averages of libraries serving similar chartered service populations until three years of relevant, applicable data is available.

4. Discussion Points
   a. Joint Committee members felt strongly that a library would need to have a physical public service track record of at least a year prior to application for system membership. This is defined as a public library facility open to the public offering a full range of library services (e.g. circulating physical collection, digital collection development, public access technology, programming that meets community needs, reference services, etc.)

       i. If a library had little or no operating history when it wanted to apply, it was discussed what the partnership between the library and system could look like during that initial year to help support that library to position themselves for a well-received application. This could include:

1. Board education from system staff.
2. Access to the Training on Demand platform for a library's staff and board.
3. Access to library development consulting services.
4. Ingestion of the library's catalog into the System's ILS to help track usage and gauge patron demand for titles to aid the library in collection development and budgeting decisions.
5. Creation of an OverDrive Advantage Account to demonstrate ability to follow recommendations from the [Final Report of the Ad Hoc OverDrive Committee](#).

b. An application process should be developed to help an applicant library to demonstrate the ability to fully support library services and meet their community's needs, without creating undue burden on member libraries.

       i. A set of measurable standards for the evaluation would be developed to objectively judge answers on the application. Metrics applied in this situation could include:

1. Adoption of core policies (e.g. Code of Ethics, Patron Confidentiality, Data Security, Customer Service, Library Bill of Rights, Collection Development, Library Equipment Usage)
2. Demonstrable lessening of burden on neighboring libraries
3. Onsite circulation figures;
4. Holds ratio in Sierra;
5. OverDrive expenditures as compared to OverDrive usage by residents of the chartered service area;
6. Number of programs offered and program attendance as compared to libraries of similarly sized chartered service areas;
7. Accessible web site; and
8. Public Wi-Fi access

5. Next steps: Present proposed approach at November DA meeting and December MHLS Board meeting to receive further input before development of application process.