

MID-HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM
System Services Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: January 24, 2024

Location: Virtual

Committee members attending:

☒ Matt Pavloff (Columbia)
☒ Thea Schoep (Columbia)
☒ Carol Fortier (Dutchess)
☒ Mary De Bellis (Dutchess)
☒ Catherine Benson (Greene)

☐ VACANT (Greene)
☒ Michele Capozzella (Putnam)
☒ Johanna Reinhardt (Putnam)
☒ Julie Kelsall-Dempsey (Ulster)
☒ Margie Menard (Ulster)

Staff Attending: Rebekkah Smith Aldrich (MHLS), Laurie Shedrick (MHLS)

Others Attending: N/A

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 2023 meeting was made by Thea, seconded by Margie, and unanimously approved.

Discussion Items

1) DA/ SSAC Officers

Johanna reviewed the list of officers approved at the November DA meeting for attendees.

2) SSAC Liaison Assignments

- a. Fri, January 26th at 10am: Carol Fortier
- b. Sat, March 16 at 10am: Catherine Bensen
- c. Wed, May 15 at 10am: Mary De Bellis
- d. Wed, July 17 at 10am: Julie Kelsall-Dempsey
- e. Fri, September 27 at 10am: Matt Pavloff
- f. Tue, December 10 at 10am: Thea Schoep

3) Memo of Understanding

Rebekkah reminded the committee that the fifth draft of the Memo of Understanding has been approved by the DA and the MHLS Board. An action memo will be going out to libraries, and she requested feedback on what content the memo should

contain to best inform library trustees of the content of the MOU. After a discussion, Rebekkah offered to draft an action memo for the committee to review before it is sent to member libraries.

4) Union Vale Update

Rebekkah reported that the town of Union Vale has submitted a charter application to be reviewed by the DLD. The new town supervisor will work with MHLS and the impacted libraries on negotiating a working contract or other solution.

The MHLS Board has endorsed the direction being taken by the Path to System Membership Ad-Hoc Committee and encouraged the them to continue.

5) MHLS Updates

a) 2024 Budget – Rebekkah reported that MHLS will be operating with a deficit budget this year, and is strongly encouraging state-level advocacy to counteract increased costs. The governor’s draft budget offers a slight increase in library aid; however, a larger increase would go further toward supporting library systems.

i) MHLS has negotiated with Valley Courier to extend our contract for one year at a 2% increase.

ii) Laurie Shedrick will be meeting with representatives from Ill to negotiate upcoming work and contracts regarding Vega.

iii) Rebekkah will be focusing more on grant writing and fundraising to hopefully increase funding for MHLS.

b) Annual Report -- The annual report for libraries is not yet open, but Laura Crisci will be letting libraries know as soon as it is. She is also running a training session for new directors.

c) Trustee Education—The Trustee Handbook Book Club dates have been set for March 19th, June 18th, and October 15th. Due to feedback from last year’s trustee trainings, MHLS is putting more of a focus on on-demand training in 2024 to engage more library trustees.

d) MHLS as Book Haven—The MHLS Board has passed a resolution officially declaring the system a “book haven” in an effort to help libraries protect the freedom to read. This means that MHLS will own its own collection of commonly banned books that are available to patrons at MHLS libraries.

e) Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Bravery in Literature—MHLS is partnering with the Eleanor Roosevelt Center to create an award highlighting authors of frequently-challenged

books. The first awards will be presented on Saturday, February 17 at the Fischer Center Auditorium.

f) Digital Equity and Inclusion—The Digital Navigators of the Hudson Valley is going strong, and Rebekkah is hoping that this momentum attracts additional funding from New York State. Support for digital equity is a concern for many officials, and more and more frequently libraries are being cited as vital in addressing these issues. Rebekkah thanked Laurie for helping member libraries develop their infrastructure to meet patron needs.

g) Libraries as Resiliency Hubs—The Libraries as Resilience Hubs cohort has launched with a partnership between Sustainable Hudson Valley and RCLS.

h) Sustainable Libraries Initiative—Two more libraries from MHLS have joined the SLI: Claverack and Red Hook

6) Other

a) The committee had a brief conversation regarding best practices when it comes to closing for inclement weather, and decided that at this point no action needed to be taken.

b) A motion to allow MHLS staff to be fine-free was made by Catherine, seconded by Margie, and passed unanimously.

Next SSAC Meeting: May, 2024