

System Services Advisory Committee
January 14, 2025
Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Thea Schoep (Columbia)
Matt Pavloff (Columbia)
Mary DeBellis (Dutchess)
Carol Fortier (Dutchess)
Catherine Benson (Greene)
Christopher Leary (Greene)
Johanna Reinhardt (Putnam)

Michelle Capozella (Putnam)
Margie Menard (Ulster)
Julie Kelsall Dempsey (Ulster)

MHLS Staff
Rebekkah Smith Aldrich
Laurie Shedrick

Committee Orientation

- 1) The meeting began with an overview of the role, function, and history of the System Services Advisory committee by Rebekkah Smith Aldrich.

- 2) Aldrich reviewed the committee charge:

“The charge of the MHLS System Services Advisory Committee is to represent MHLS member library interests by collaborating with System staff and Board in determining services and how they are funded.

Activities include:

- *Review and recommend changes in member services*
- *Review and recommend changes in member assessments*
- *Assist in the evaluation of System Services”*

After a discussion, the committee agreed that the charge needed no updates.

- 3) The committee reviewed the draft schedule of meetings for 2025 and discussed the annual staff luncheon in November. The committee will meet in January, May, and October.
- 4) The 2025 member assessment table was reviewed by Aldrich, who also reviewed the various factors taken into consideration for the assessments.
- 5) Aldrich shared the Plan of Service for discussion and reviewed the action plan for 2025. The committee discussed various professional development opportunities that MHLS has provided and areas that they thought could be addressed to benefit libraries.

Discussion Items

- 1) Minutes of the October meeting were reviewed and passed by unanimous consent.
- 2) Liaison assignments for the MHLS Board of Trustee meetings were reviewed.
 - a. Saturday, January 11 at the MHLS Auditorium: Mary
 - b. Wednesday, March 12 at the MHLS Auditorium: Catherine
 - c. Tuesday, May 13, location TBD: Michele
 - d. Friday, July 18 at the MHLS Auditorium: Johanna
 - e. Friday, September 12, location TBD: Carol
 - f. Tuesday, December 9 at the MHLS Auditorium: Thea

- 3) 2026 Assessment: The committee reviewed various member assessment tables and discussed which would be most appropriate to present to the DA. Discussion followed regarding the different percentage increase amounts, which range from 3% to 10%, and the varying impact these amounts would have. The committee will review the amounts again at the May meeting, once the outcome of the State budget is known, to make an official recommendation to the DA.
- 4) Members Capital Fund: The committee reviewed the Capital Fund, which has money set aside for potential upcoming expenses, such as a new ILS. There is currently approximately \$235,000 in the account. With no major expenses seen in the near future, the committee will be considering how much is appropriate to retain in the account, as well as larger services that could be purchased for MHLS libraries. Many committee members felt that they needed additional information related to state budget projections before making a decision. The discussion will continue at future meetings.
- 5) Patron Advocacy: The committee briefly discussed strategies for increasing advocacy efforts by Mid-Hudson patrons, and presented some ideas including placing calls for advocacy on the catalog or in the app that is being developed.
- 6) Road Trip Committee: Aldrich reviewed the discussions from the Road Trip committee to keep the SSAC informed. It was reiterated that the goal is to provide an enjoyable experience for our patrons without burdening the staff at the individual libraries.
- 7) DA Bylaws: The committee reviewed the current bylaws of the DA, and had no recommended amendments.
- 8) Union Vale Update: The committee was apprised of the current situation in Union Vale.

MHLS updates

- 1) Aldrich discussed the general timeline of when we can expect to see the governor's draft budget and reminded the committee that although we may expect flat funding this year due to the political climate, libraries need to continue advocating.
- 2) The annual report for libraries opened earlier than expected, and MHLS is prepared to take advantage of the increased timeframe by offering continued support for member libraries.
- 3) Mid-Hudson is planning to update their website this year to provide a better experience for visitors.
- 4) Shedrick and the IT team are developing one app with different spaces for individual libraries. Training will be offered once the app is rolling out.
- 5) Aldrich informed the committee that MHLS is planning to offer more in-person professional development opportunities for trustees through the county associations.
- 6) New York State will offer Digital Equity and Inclusion initiatives for libraries.
- 7) The Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Bravery in Literature will be presented on Saturday, April 5th at Bard College.
- 8) MHLS is looking at ways to work with Central Hudson on energy saving initiatives.
- 9) Aldrich discussed a new program, The Tempestry Project, that was brought to her attention which combines crafting with climate change awareness. After looking into it more, she is working to partner with this group for a system-wide community art project.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by DeBellis, seconded by Fortier, and passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: May 2025