

# MHLS Directors Association | Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 19, 2026 | Zoom

Columbia County			Dutchess County			Greene County			Putnam County			Ulster County		
	Chatham	Bachrach		Amenia	Herow		Athens	Benjamin	X	Brewster	Cronin	X	Esopus	Chance
X	Claverack	Schoep	X	Beacon	Murphy		Cairo	Tatavitto	X	Carmel	Martens	X	Highland	Gill
	Germantown	Place	X	Beekman	Fortier	X	Catskill	Leary	X	Cold Spring	Reinhardt	X	Hurley	Powell
X	Hillsdale	Gaskell	X	Clinton	Bancroft	X	Coxsackie	Benson		Garrison	Farabaugh	X	Kingston	Menard
X	Hudson	Chameides		Dover	Smith		Greenville	Flach	X	Kent	Perolli		Marlboro	Jankovitz
X	Kinderhook	Pavloff	X	East Fishkill	Salierno	X	Haines Falls	Elmo-Emel	X	Mahopac	Capozzella	X	Milton	Fonfa
	Livingston	Stork	X	Fishkill	Spann	X	Hunter	Johnson	X	Patterson	Harrison		New Paltz	Middleton
X	New Lebanon	Hoffman	X	Hyde Park	Palmer		Windham	Begley		Putnam Valley	Chaudhri	X	Olive	McHugh
	North Chatham	Wert		LaGrange	Moser							X	Phoenicia	Potter
X	Philmont	Whittaker	X	Millbrook	Tsahaliss								Pine Hill	Vella
X	Valatie	Buono	X	NorthEast-Millerton	Leo-Jameson							X	Plattekill	Lansperg
				Pawling	Fisher							X	Rosendale	Scott-Childress
			X	Pine Plains	Campbell							X	Saugerties	Russell
			X	Pleasant Valley	Pulice							X	Stone Ridge	Esposito
				Poughkeepsie	Lawrence							X	Ulster	O'Meara
			X	Red Hook	Geller							X	West Hurley	Keene
			X	Rhinebeck	Savolaine							X	Woodstock	Gocker
			X	Rhinecliff	Bartlett									
			X	Staatsburg	Rothman									
			X	Stanford	Cerul									
			X	Tivoli	Farley							X	<b>MHLS Staff</b>	
				Wappingers	Campbell							X	Rebekkah Smith Aldrich	
												X	Laurie Shedrick	
												X	Laura Crisci	

Meeting Called to Order by Chair Benson at 10:00 am.

## A. Action Items

- Approval of the November 13, 2025 minutes. **Motion made by Bancroft, seconded by Elmo-Emel. Passed by unanimous consent.**
- Resource Sharing Advisory Committee recommends the DA consider a system wide reset for all staff that are not directors or designated to have access. MHLS would facilitate a poll of Directors to identify the staff at each library who would retain full access to Patron data in Create Lists. **Recommendation from the Resource Sharing Advisory Committee. Recommendation is from a committee, no motions are needed. Recommendation passed by polling vote in Zoom software: 100% yes.**
- Resource Sharing Advisory Committee recommends including the Mobile App as a button link on the Discover catalog toolbar. **Recommendation from the Resource Sharing Advisory Committee.**

**Recommendation is from a committee, no motions are needed. Recommendation passed by polling vote in Zoom software: 100% yes.**

B. New/Proposed Business & Information

- None.

C. Reports

a. Advisory Committee Reports

i. System Services Advisory Committee

Matt Pavloff reported on the January 30 meeting:

1. The Committee discussed the 2027 Assessment Tables and has requested that Mid-Hudson provide several tables, including numbers above 9.5%, to review and select a recommendation to the DA.
2. Rebekkah discussed the Plan of Service. The Committee will be working with Mid-Hudson to determine the service priorities. Input from the County Association focus groups, and surveys to Board Presidents and Library Directors will inform the results.

ii. Resource Sharing Advisory Committee

Jacqueline Elmo-Emel reported on the December 15 and January 22 meetings:

1. Two action items were presented for approval at the beginning of the DA meeting.
2. With the 6.5 version of Sierra, the ability to turn on the automatic update of the inventory field is available. This field will update when an item is scanned in instead of having to be updated manually. The Committee voted to enable the automatic update feature across all locations.
3. Reviewed copies to hold requirements for physical and digital collections. Discussion about revisiting cost per circ and how balancing these purchases with the in-demand titles can strengthen the OverDrive catalog. The Committee will continue to review this metric.
4. Reviewed the Committee charge.
5. Re-voted on the Ad Hoc Committee's violation vote. The vote to enforce and continue on the course with the resource Sharing Advisory Committee and the OverDrive Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations for violations of the OverDrive spending. All libraries in violation have been notified and are on track to take corrective actions.
6. Reviewed a request from the Ulster County Libraries Association to reduce the number of OverDrive requests from 15 to 5. After discussion with the New York Public Library and researching the hold threshold of comparable systems, the Association believes the reduction would increase access, reduce wait times, and ease financial pressure on libraries. The Committee considered the fact that OverDrive recently enacted a "suspend holds" feature which would eventually reduce wait times and a report presented by Laurie indicated that 98% of OverDrive users place between 1 and 5 holds. After discussion the Committee decided that no action to reduce the number of holds will be taken at this time, and recommends that Mid-Hudson provide the average consortia wait time in the report, showing patrons with holds grouped by the number of holds at that time, to allow more transparency to monitor the need for policy updates.

iii. Central Library/Collection Development Advisory Committee

Daniela Pulice reported on the January 29 meeting:

1. The Committee discussed the Central Library Plan of Service.
2. Members of the Committee were asked to go back to their counties and review how to access Transparent Language usage statistics. Low usage is generally reported by each library, but that does not match the overall usage statistics systemwide.

3. Libraries in the Nassau County Library System surveyed their patrons regarding their use of Libby and the Committee discussed the possibility of doing something similar as a system. The results could be used to provide information to libraries, to patrons and for advocacy. Alex at Red Hook agreed to begin a draft survey which could be reviewed by the Committee at their next meeting.
  - iv. Ad Hoc OverDrive Committee

Stephanie Harrison reported on the November meeting.

    1. Per the Resource Sharing OverDrive violation review process, nineteen libraries were asked to provide the Committee with a plan to address their underspending. The plans are due February 23. Once all of the plans have been received, the committee will meet to review them.
  - v. Road Trip Advisory Committee

Rebekkah reported on the December meeting.

    1. She thanked everyone for their help evaluating the Road Trip program. The results of the surveys were provided to the DA and discussed at the December Committee meeting. Consensus was reached that people would like to do the program again but not for a few years. Thank you to Laura Crisci for helping coordinate the program.
- b. MHLS
- i. Staff Report

Highlights from the written report:

    - If there are any issues with delivery, please contact Chris or Dave as they are the intermediaries between the libraries and the drivers.
    - The new patron portal in the Discover Catalog was launched without notice to MHLS Staff. A link to documentation is available to send to Circulation Staff to help familiarize them with the changes and in answering questions that patrons may have.
    - The inventory date in the item record will be updated by the end of February so the most recent date will always be indicated in that field.
    - A reminder that the Mobile App is another place that should be kept updated. Laurie has noticed less traffic and fewer logins by staff. There are a lot of things in Training on Demand to help keep the app fresh, and staff is also invited to let Mid-Hudson know if there is anything that can be added to improve the app. Open a ticket at [techsupport@midhudson.org](mailto:techsupport@midhudson.org). Three Mid-Hudson staff members are attending Innovative Users Group and will be meeting with the development team and can bring possible enhancements to them for consideration.
    - There are still a good number of libraries who are not using LX Starter. This is an opportunity to meet patrons with sharp, branded notifications which can market the library. If you are interested in launching LX Starter or just jazzing up your current notification, open a ticket and either Kathryn or Laurie will schedule a 45-minute session.
    - Mid-Hudson staff has been invited to participate as development partners in an Innovative project about analytics and data. Innovative is creating a new data platform which will allow us to bring in other platforms such as OverDrive into our data through APIs allowing us to pull circulation statistics which will include Ebooks, Eaudiobooks and Emagazines to give a better picture of how patrons are using our resources.

- Patron record cleanup by PType – Laurie has been working on cleaning up patron records in batches – patrons who have been expired for more than three years who do not owe fines more than seven years old. The next step of the process is to provide deep dive training into the patron record, and this has been scheduled for the beginning of March. Lastly, is the mapping of unserved areas by working with County Associations to redefine and add PTypes. Once that is complete, Mid-Hudson will create opportunities for staff to learn and master the process of entering new patrons.
- Laurie requests support for the cataloging team to stand behind an initiative that has been put forward by a working group to address a change that the Library of Congress has already slated to implement. They request a format subdivision of the Subject heading which gives additional information about the format itself, e.g. the subject heading is concerto and the subdivision would be solos for piano. A poll was presented with 87% agreeing to support the initiative and 13% abstaining.
- The Wi-Fi Access Points that were distributed by Mid-Hudson in 2016-2018 have licenses that will be expiring in October 2026. Units provided by the Beyond the Library ARPA grant in 2022 expire in June 2027. Mid-Hudson will provide licensing options and replacement quotes once they have the cost and will facilitate purchasing in August. A survey will be sent to determine interest. Libraries should budget \$1,450 for each unit plus a five-year license. Libraries can purchase their own units, which are e-ratable, but will then be in charge of managing the units on their own.
- Rebekkah highlighted the upcoming Trustee Handbook Book Club series as well as the new Director Handbook Book Club series.
- Laura encouraged folks to register for the New York State Talking Book and Braille Library [TBBL] information session on February 23. The number of libraries in the Mid-Hudson region registered for this service is low. Each library should be registered to be kept up to date on free resources for the community.
- Each library had 12 months of free access to dPlan. The introductory webinar has been added to Training on Demand. This will help libraries get ready for the new State requirement to have a disaster plan by 2027.
- Thanks to The Library of Local Project funding, Mid-Hudson is piloting a Library of Things collection for local libraries to assist with disaster recovery, such as a solar generator. This will be launched at the April DA meeting.
- Mid-Hudson has begun tracking two new data points in the OverDrive monthly report as requested by the Resource Sharing Advisory Committee. Each month they will provide an average Wait Time figure as well as a chart showing Patron Counts by the Number of Holds they currently have. Both are a capture on the day the monthly reports are compiled and do not reflect the monthly average. This data is a way to track changes over time.
- MHLS is inviting MHLS Member library staff to suggest titles to be highlighted in the online catalog and within OverDrive. Each month staff will be invited to suggest up to two titles to contribute to a themed showcase that will display in the Discover catalog and through Libby/OverDrive. Staff may also write a brief explanation of why they are suggesting a title that may be used as a “shelf talker”

in Libby/OverDrive. The first “Staff Picks” will be featured in April and focus on sustainability and Earth Day.

- Rebekkah thanked everyone for their participation in the recent advocacy efforts. Negotiations are ongoing with the Senate and the Assembly to get their one house budget bills to reflect our priorities as a library community which includes an increase to library and construction aid, retaining and increasing NOVELny funding, and asking that they also introduce the budget line to stabilize Office of Cultural Education. There is less than a month to influence this so please continue the advocacy efforts.
- Once the budget is done, attention will be turned to the legislative priorities. There are a few bills that have arrived to the library Committee that were not initiated by the Committee which could prove challenging. They are promoting the things that they want but also trying to shape the things they did not initiate.
- With the support of the MHLS System Services Advisory Committee, MHLS is joining forces with other public library systems in NYS to advocate to the Governor that public libraries and association libraries be added to the list of “sensitive locations” where a judicial warrant would be required for federal officers to enter a location. As of now, ICE agents have the right to enter public spaces and question people.
- At the federal level, funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services has been approved for at least another year. Stabilization money is still being negotiated with the State.
- Four Mid-Hudson association libraries that are U.S. Passport acceptance facilities, providing a service that helps connect people to getting a passport in more remote locations, have been told to stop this service by the US State Department. If the SAVE Act makes it more difficult for married women to prove citizenship, and the best solution being a passport, it doesn’t make sense to limit the number of ways people can get them. Please advocate with your Congressional representative and Senator on the federal level’s website to amend the Passport Act [H.R. 6997] to allow these libraries to remain as U.S. Passport Acceptance Facilities.
- Mid-Hudson will place holds on behalf of us for our library patrons through OCLC when they are not found in the system or SEAL if the cost is more than \$25.00. If the item is available in a library that is included in the Empire Delivery, Mid-Hudson will request it if it is less than \$25.00 because there is no shipping. To find out if an item can be requested through Empire Delivery, contact Mid-Hudson. Empire Delivery is underwritten with Central Library money, which is overseen by the Central Library Collection Development funds, another example of how State funds are increasing access for our patrons.
- The list of approved Construction Grant awards was recently in the Mid-Hudson Bulletin. Laura will be presenting an informational session on April 14 and an intent to apply questionnaire will be sent in March.
- To effectively communicate with members, the Mid-Hudson Library System maintains a database of contact information for member libraries. Once a year we request an update of this information, to keep records accurate. Member library directors have received an encrypted email with two attached PDF files, one containing the library information on file, the other for the library's trustee

information on file. Please review the information in the files, and if changes are not needed - respond to the email stating that the information is correct and does not require changes. The deadline to submit updated details through the form (links will be provided in the email) or confirm the information provided is Friday, March 6, 2026.

- Know Your Rights cards are still available, so contact Kerstin if you would like any.
- The NYS Library has published a Library Accessibility Guide. This guide was designed in the months following the NYS Library's Room For Everyone: A Library Accessibility Day of Learning event this past Summer. Library workers can use this guide to learn more about physical accessibility, digital accessibility, and universal design. It's equipped with resources and materials created by NYS agencies such as the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, as well as specific insight from the NYS Talking Book and Braille Library regarding assistive technology.
- If your library is interested in becoming a Summer meals site, please contact Cody Bloomfield, Summer Nutrition Specialist, Hunger Solutions NY.
- On December 24, 2025, the U.S. Postal Service changed how postmarks are applied. Under the new process, USPS does not stamp mail when they receive it at your local post office. Instead, the "official" postmark date is whenever your envelope first hits an automated sorting machine at a regional processing center. As a result, the date shown on the envelope may be several days later than the day you placed it in the mail. This can impact bills, taxes, and vote by mail for elections that rely on the postmark to identify if the item was sent within the appropriate period. Information on how to ensure a postmark on the date of delivery can be found on the USPS website. Laura asks us to spread the word to the public.
- Mid-Hudson is still awaiting crucial information from the State Library regarding the final questions, question numbers, question instructions and software login information for the Annual Report to the State. MHLS will provide data packets to help you complete the report. Packets cannot be made available until the State finalizes the report questions and instructions. An outline of major changes is available on the Mid-Hudson website. The due date for submission of the report is Friday, March 20.
- Mid-Hudson has been working on a new website. It is still in draft form but MHLS is inviting feedback. The new design brings all of the previously created separate websites under one website that can be searched across. The front page was redesigned to appeal to a broader audience, including patrons and not just library directors and staff. Please visit <https://staging.midhudson.org/> to give the new site a test drive. You can leave feedback through the form linked at the top of each page of that draft site. This initial feedback window is open until Friday, March 20 at which time we will use your feedback to fine tune the site before going live in April 2026.
- The Plan of Service Development Timeline: A registration link for an additional Director focus group as well as two Board President focus groups are listed. A survey, indicating satisfaction with current services and requesting a ranking of those service priorities, is linked and will be sent out on the Notices list.

- ii. Board Liaison Report [met 1.31.26 at the Mid-Hudson Library System] Catherine Benson, Director, Heermance Memorial Library, Coxsackie, NY
- Mary De Bellis was elected to join the Mid-Hudson Library System Board of Trustees representing Dutchess County.
  - Policies and priorities were reviewed.
  - The pollinator garden was dedicated in honor of Barry Ramage, the previous President of the MHLS Board of Trustees.
  - Rebekkah's report included the hiring of two new part-time employees.
  - Beginning of the year's tasks such as the warrant reviewer list, the Conflict of Interest policy and the Ethics policy were completed. The newspaper of record and banking institutions were designated.
  - Mid-Hudson was invited to participate in a pilot program in Poughkeepsie supported by Central Hudson and funding through New York State to install a geothermal heating and cooling system, at no cost to Mid-Hudson, to be more ecologically conscious.
  - The Government and Community Relations Advocacy group reported on the importance of advocacy at all levels.
  - There was an orientation on State Aid, and the process it takes and timeline it should follow. Rebekkah spoke about the Governor's executive budget proposal reducing funding for library operating aid and construction aid.
  - Governor Hochul vetoed the Freedom to Read Act citing unclear language and existing protections for academic freedom.
  - Board members are encouraged to participate in board-to-board visits so they can have a connection to their own county libraries. Directors are encouraged to reach out to invite them to attend a library board meeting.
  - Rebekkah followed up to say all libraries should have received the final 10% of the LLSA.

**There being no further business, a motion to adjourn at 11:33 am was passed by unanimous consent.**

Respectfully submitted by Michele Capozzella, Secretary

Next:

- DA Business Meeting: April 22, 2026 at 10:00 am in person at MHLS.