



UHLS Board of Trustees

October 8, 2025

4:30PM

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Oath of Office – M. Kissinger
3. Minutes of the September 2025 meeting
4. UHLS Staff Report – C. Sagaas, Executive Director
5. Committee Reports
 - a. Finance Committee - Treasurer's Reports & Purchase Journals for September 2025
 - b. Services Committee – 2026 Proposed UHLS Central Library Budget & Approval of Recommended Revised Construction Aid Allocation
 - c. Nominating Committee – Appointment of L. Tenney, Small Albany County Representative
 - d. Administration Committee – no meeting
6. Old Business
7. New Business
 - a. Resolution & Trustee Emeritus for S. Keitel
8. Trustee Reports and Recommendations
9. Adjournment



UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM

Together. For Better Libraries.

OFFICERS:

President: Susan Keitel
Vice-President: Marcy Savage
Treasurer: Fred Wobrock, Jr.
Secretary: Scott Wyner

Board of Trustees September 10, 2025

PRESENT: Carolyn Fagan; Fred Wobrock, Jr.; Marcy Savage; Joe Burke; Yvette Terplak; Corie Dugas; Scott Wyner; Debbie Carr; Camille Engel; Jackie Marino; Susan Keitel; Georgia Gray; S. Macinski

UHLS Staff: J. Favreau; C. Sagaas; G. Kirkpatrick; M. Zovistoski, UHY

I. CALL TO ORDER

S. Wyner called the meeting to order at 4:34PM.

II. MINUTES

MOTION: Y. Terplak moved to approve the July 9, 2025 minutes. C. Engel seconded. It was suggested to add the book title, *Co-intelligence*, to the recommended reading made by S. Keitel. Unanimously passed.

III. 2024 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REVIEW

M. Zovistosky from UHY gave the CPA's financial review report. The primary conclusion is the UHY is not aware of any material modifications that need to be made to the financial statements.

MOTION: M. Savage moved to accept the Financial Review Report as presented. J. Burke seconded. Unanimously passed.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

J. Marino asked C. Sagaas to add to his meeting with the Community Foundation. The meeting stemmed from a question initially asked by the director at POES who is looking to invest with them.

He's been managing 2025 and 2026 construction aid applications a lot over the last two weeks.

M. Fellows heard from Max Prime at NYLA that there's been support for library funding federally. We still need the House and Senate to approve – stay tuned, this is good news.

The Troy Public Library's budget vote is next week – please do anything you can to support them. The system and staff will do whatever we can do to make the case for those libraries over

the next year that may have hardships. We expect that'll be extra energy from the UHLS staff. C. Fagan noted that they are trying to flood the internet with positivity.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

F. Wobrock noted that we have two months of reports to review. The August Treasurer's Report indicated that we've received some of our state aid (basic, supplemental, LLSA and LSSA). We're in great standing. Picking up on what was covered with the financial review, it was asked why we're on cash accounting and when was it done. J. Favreau shared that it was done a year or so before her arrival back in 2017. It was done because the DLD annual report and the annual report submitted to the Comptroller's Office needs to be done on a cash basis, so it saves us time having to convert the numbers each year. F. Wobrock added that it's a real time snapshot of the organization's financials.

Looking at the July Purchase Journal, the \$12k annual HVAC contract fee was paid to StarkTech, a \$54k payment was made to Midwest Tape (to be reimbursed by the member libraries), eCommerce fines and fees were paid to the member libraries totaling \$3,200 and some Equity Challenge disbursements were paid to member libraries. August was a quieter month, with LLSA payments issued to the member libraries (totaling \$167k).

MOTION: The Finance Committee moved to adopt the July and August 2025 Treasurer's Reports and Purchase Journals. Y. Terplak seconded. Unanimous.

Services Committee

Y. Terplak reported that the committee met prior to this meeting and reviewed the 2026 Construction Aid applications and the multiple proposed options the UHLS staff provided to the committee. The committee chose option 2: recommending funding for all of the applicants at 83% of their maximum eligible award amount, with the exception of EGRN.

MOTION: The Services Committee moved to recommend funding for all of the applicants at 83% of their maximum eligible award amount, with the exception of EGRN. D. Carr seconded. Passed unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Board and Director Evaluations: D. Carr shared an overview of the information she's found regarding board evaluations. It was agreed upon that the reasoning behind this process is to ensure the transfer of excellence as new members join the board. We need to be able to articulate what we're doing and why. J. Burke shared a draft evaluation for the executive director – please review and provide feedback before the next meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VII. TRUSTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

S. Keitel (WSTR): After this meeting, she will be resigning from the board. She's

Board Meeting 09/10/2025

learned so much and is sad to no longer be working with some of you.

S. Wyner (STEP):

Word of advice: for those of you working toward a 414 vote, run the documents needed by your board of elections to ensure they'll meet their standards. STEP had a mix-up where the paperwork approved to get on the ballot was inadequate for this second step.

MOTION:

J. Burke moved to adjourn. F. Wobrock seconded. Unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 6:04 PM.

09/25/2025 JF

Upper Hudson Library System (UHLS) Executive Director's Report October 2025

Narrative and Updates

- Our new public facing library catalog web interface (Vega Discover) should be launched soon. Some minor tweaks to the interface need to be made before it is completely ready for rollout.
- The full package of UHLS Member library 2026 New York State Construction Aid Applications is being submitted Friday, 10/3/2025. Judith Wines has been invaluable in helping us maximize the recommended award allocations for all libraries who completed applications this year.
- The 2026 UHLS Budget will be presented to the Board in October, with a vote following at the November meeting.
- Advocacy collaboration is being explored in concert with The Capital District Library Council (CDLC), Mohawk Valley Library System (MVLS), and Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS). New York Library Association (NYLA) will be holding a massive postcard campaign as part of their annual conference in Saratoga Springs in November. Mary Fellows is presenting at this year's conference, and Judith Wines and I will also be attending.
- The New York Alliance of Library Systems (NAYLS) Advocacy Launch formally put forth the following for the overall library advocacy campaign during the upcoming New York State Budget and Legislative cycle:

New York Library Association (NYLA) Budget Priorities

Library Operating Aid \$176.8 Million Increased aid is needed to support the foundational framework of NYS libraries, improving the lives of residents of all ages, abilities and economic status.

Library Construction Aid \$175 Million Over half of New York's libraries are over 60 years old. Increased investment is needed to maintain and develop the physical infrastructure to ensure safe, accessible and sustainable environments.

Library Materials Aid of \$11.33/pupil Since 2007 the per pupil rate has remained flat at \$6.25. In 2023, the average cost of a hardcover book purchased by a school library was \$26.25.

NOVELny Program \$3.1 Million A \$3.1 million allocation for the continuation of the NOVELny program would ensure equity of access to essential database and digital resources for all New Yorkers, from students in K-12 classrooms to life-long learners in the public setting.

NYLA Policy Initiatives

Freedom to Read Act

Libraries across our state face rapidly expanding efforts to censor materials and

programming they deem objectionable based on subjective personal sensibilities and partisan ideologies. We require legislation that empowers library professionals to exercise their expertise and ensure public access to materials, services, and programs that represent their interests.

If enacted, this bill would require the commissioner of education to develop policies to ensure that school libraries and library staff are empowered to curate and develop collections that provide students with access to the widest array of developmentally appropriate materials available.

Open Shelves Act

Multiple pieces of legislation intended to curb threats to patron access to materials and services in the public library setting have been introduced in the State Assembly and Senate. NYLA has helped craft the above legislation that would include in the state's Standards of Library Service a requirement that libraries adopt policies and procedures that ensure library staff are able to curate and develop collections, services, and programming that reflect the interests of all people of the community that the library serves.

eBooks Licensing Reform

This bill would help ensure libraries are able to provide patrons access to electronic books and digital audiobooks, providing requirements for contracts between libraries and publishers that involve electronic library materials.

Media Literacy in New York State

NYLA supports legislation that would require:

- The Commissioner of Education to appoint a Media Literacy Advisory Committee to study the teaching of media literacy in NYS.
- The New York State Education Department to develop media literacy standards.
- Certified school librarians and teachers to receive media literacy professional development.
- New York schools have certified school librarians across all grade levels.

Internal/Upper Hudson Library System (UHLS)

9/9,16,30/2025 – Business in 2025 Webinar Series (virtual)

9/4/2025 – Cohoes Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting, Cohoes Public Library (COHS)

9/5/2025 – Directors Association (DA) Meeting

9/8/2025 – Public Library System (PLS) Construction Contacts Meeting (virtual)

9/9/2025 – Albany Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting, Albany Public Library (APL)

9/10/2025 – E-Content Advisory Council (ECAC) Meeting (virtual)

9/10/2025 – UHLS Services Committee Meeting

9/10/2025 – UHLS Board of Trustees Meeting

9/12/2025 – Meeting with Melissa Tacke, Library Director, Castleton Public Library (CAST)

9/12/2025 – UHLS Central Library Advisory Committee (CLAC) Meeting

9/17/2025 – UHLS Managers Meeting

9/17/2025 – Vega Transition Meeting

Member Library Visits

9/19/2025 – Guilderland Public Library – Director Pete Petruski
9/19/2025 – Voorheesville Public Library – Director Sarah Clark
9/24/2025 – William K. Sanford Town Library (COLN) – Director Elissa Valente
9/25/2025 – Poestenkill Library (POES) – Director Donna Riley
9/25/2025 – Troy Public Library Lansingburgh Branch (TROL) – Executive Director
Tim Furgal

External/Advocacy

9/9/2025 - Public Library System Directors Organization (PULISDO) Meeting (virtual)
9/29/2025 – New York State Alliance of Library Systems (NYALS) Advocacy Launch, Latham,
NY

Networking/Professional Development

9/17/2025 – Path to Belonging Informational Webinar (virtual)
9/17/2025 – Capital District Library Council (CLRC) Artificial Intelligence (AI) Interest Group
Meeting (virtual)
9/23/2025 – Lunch Meeting with Kim Bolan, Executive Director, Southern Adirondack Library
System (SALS)
9/26/2025 - Social Work Connections and Reflections: Interacting with Distressed Patrons-Part 2
(virtual)
9/26/2025 - AI at Work: How Artificial Intelligence is Redefining Jobs, Skills, Wages, and
Productivity (virtual)

Professional Association/Outside Activity

9/18/2025 – Mohawk Valley Center for the Arts (MVCA) Mohawk Valley Gives Event and
Gallery Dedication/Grand Opening

Youth and Family Services

September 2025 Highlights

Mary Fellows, Manager, Youth and Family Services

Youth Services Advisory Council (YSAC): This month our topic was neurodiversity and sensory inclusion in youth services. We asked Colonie to host us so that attendees could see their award-winning (UHLS Program of the Year!) sensory room. Mohawk Valley Library System (MVLS) joined us for this meeting, and my colleague and I shared just-released research, program and collection ideas. We continue to create very robust meeting notes so that staff who can't attend can still benefit, and we hear that they do.

Science of Reading Training: We held a major training this month along with our partner MVLS on the hot educational topic the science of reading. As background, Governor Hochul signed into legislation her "Back to Basics Reading Plan" requiring that all school districts certify that their curriculum, instructional strategies, and teacher professional development are grounded in the Science of Reading. Additionally, the NYS Senate has passed legislation to create a dyslexia and dysgraphia center, both reading-related disabilities.

Our training, attracting 44 participants, featured as speakers two public library practitioners, a school library system director for the school perspective, MVLS colleague Beth Rienti, and myself. Our goal was to present a balanced look at options for public libraries in Science of Reading-related services. We held the training at Guilderland so that attendees could see their collections and marketing on this topic. Feedback was very positive.

Staff transition: Caroline Purdy joined our staff on September 3, so this has been a training-intense month. Caroline brings good energy and is quickly becoming adept at the many tasks of the job.

Summer Reading: We're still collecting final statistics from libraries and will have more to report next month.

Selected meetings/trainings/activities:

- NYLA Legislative Committee meeting
- CDLC Board work meetings

Automation Services Report September 2025

We continued to provide the usual services to our libraries and the UHLS staff, such as website maintenance, desktop support, helpdesk, and troubleshooting. The highlights of the month follow, in no special order:

Advisory Councils/Committees:

- The Circulation Advisory Council didn't meet in September.
- The Cataloging Advisory Council met on September 4.
- The Automation Advisory Committee (AAC) met on September 16.
- Weekly Automation Services and occasional Managers and Staff meetings. Monthly DA meetings.

Sierra/Encore:

- Over Labor Day weekend we purged 84,410 patron records that had expired three or more years ago, only if the patrons owed no money and had no current checkouts.
- On 9/11 III upgraded *Sierra* from version 6.2 to 6.4. As usual there was no downtime that affected our libraries at all.
- Our [Online registration form](#) has been a problem since the beginning. We had ineligible people (Idaho, New Jersey, et al) registering and using our online resources. And we had many (many!) bots creating *Sierra* patron records. We managed these problems by deleting the ineligible accounts almost immediately, but it was a pain. I created a new form to check for residency in Albany or Rensselaer Counties and that worked well, until it didn't, to stop the out-of-area registrants, but did nothing to control the bots. The problem continues and we continue to work with III to fix it.
- After the recent *Sierra* upgrade to version 6.4, several libraries reported a new, annoying message when looking at patron records, where *Sierra* said the record was locked. They can work around the problem but we're working with III to explain why it happens and what we can do to fix it.
- Months ago we changed our merchant bank in our *PayPal* account from *PayPal* to *Clover*, which eliminated a years-long problem that you've heard me whine about many times, where patrons were trying two or three times to pay their fines online and were sometimes billed two or three times by *PayPal*. Now *Clover* is requiring us to run some verification tests for PCI compliance and other security issues that apply to stores and other sellers but not to us. We're working on it but it's complicated by the fact that the processing takes place among III, *Clover*, and *NBT Bank*, and we never see or handle a payment directly. We're working on it.

Vega Discover

- We changed the [bad patron addresses report](#) to include expired records because III has to include them in the patron ingest process for *Vega Discover*. We had already used that report to clean up bad addresses for non-expired patron records, hoping that that would solve the problem that's delaying our rollout of *Vega Discover*. It didn't. III needs to ingest all records, expired or not, so we have more work to do.
- We'll need to enable the *Pay Online* function in *Discover*, but to do that while *Encore* still allows online payments would require a separate account with *PayPal* and maybe with *Clover*. We'll discuss how we want to handle that soon.
- I added all UHLS staff as content creators in *Discover*, so they can create showcases, etc. Judith and I are "super admins" but we're still just plain folks.
- I added [Library Events](#) to the [Discover](#) header menu.

Vega Mobile

- Carousels have stopped working for a couple of libraries. We're working with III to get them back.
- Self-service checkouts are still not working (Are we the first customer to implement this function?)
- We're struggling to add *Libby* to most libraries' apps. We want to have *Libby* and *hoopla* on almost every site.
- *Capira* (the *UHLS Mobile* app) allowed users to suspend/freeze holds. That function was not enabled by default in the *Vega Mobile* app. Using instructions provided by Phil Berardi at BETH, I enabled the function for all libraries.

Reports

- I sent a list of all users of VAFL Google accounts to a VAFL trustee who wants to manage access.
- With Anne and Judith, we produced spreadsheets for EGRN that show *OverDrive* and *hoopla* usage by EGRN patrons in 2024.
- We noticed that a lot of patrons have attributes (Patron Type, Patron Agency, Home Library, etc.) that don't match. I don't know, but I think this would matter especially for *hoopla*, where the charge for a checkout goes to the Patron Agency. For example (a totally random example), if a patron with Patron Type 'APL Adult' and Patron Agency VAFL checks out a *hoopla* title, VAFL is charged. To address this, I wrote a [program](#) for the libraries to use to identify the problem records for their libraries. I also added the report to the [Ad Hoc Reports](#) page. And, *hoopla* or not, it seems like a good idea to clean these up.
- We sent reports of Magazine circulation stats to APL for all branches.
- The [report](#) that Jona uses to reimburse the libraries for fines and fees collected online through *PayPal* had to be revised to reflect the different fees charged by *Clover* instead of *PayPal*. *PayPal* was 1.99% of the amount and \$0.49 per transaction. *Clover* is 2.85% of the amount and \$0.10 per transaction. *Clover* looks like it'll be slightly cheaper for the libraries than *PayPal*.
- The program used by Youth Services to manage Advanced Reader Copies failed when Caroline tried to copy and paste a long description into a record. I increased the size of the *Description* field from 500 to 3000 characters so we should be good.
- I sent a report of Museum Pass usage for 2025 to TROY.
- I ran three reports for Judith and Anne that show where GUIL patrons live. One report for all patrons, one for non-expired patrons (records, that is), and one for active patrons, i.e.

they use the library. Anne cleans up the addresses and Judith produces reports that show where a library's patrons live.

- We purged 84,000+ patron records that expired three or more years ago if the patrons owed no money and had nothing checked out. But that still left us with a lot of expired patron records. In the August [monthly reports](#), I dropped the section in the [Registered Borrowers report](#) that showed all patrons, including those with expired records. Now it shows only patron records that are not expired. I'll do the same for the annual reports. If libraries (understandably) used the number that included expired records, their next NYS reports will have much lower numbers this year for registered borrowers..

Miscellaneous

- Not a very warm welcome: Our new Youth Services Support person - Caroline Purdy - had a problem with our old, repurposed, crumbling hardware that we generously provide to our staff. Her laptop's screen was separating from the cover and her docking station stopped doing its job. Rob cobbled together some (other) old equipment to get her going, but we bought her a new laptop and docking station and are hoping we didn't leave Caroline with a lasting impression of a stingy Automation Services Department.
- While getting Caroline set up, we discussed whether we want to subscribe to *Microsoft Office 365* so our staff will always have the latest version of *Office*. We're running pretty old versions (2013 and 2016) but we're a *Google* shop and don't use *Office* a lot, so we decided to stick with our current setup. (It's cheaper, of course, which seems to be the theme of this report.)
- COLN asked if their new Self-checkout station could have its own *Sierra Loan Rules*. We tried to make it work but ... nope.
- We purchased two refurbished laptops from GE for GRAF. I guess we are cheap.
- We moved DNS support for POES and CAST from *namecheap* to *cloudflare*. This will enable us to implement geofencing (no access from outside the U.S.) for those libraries, which should greatly reduce the bots and malware attacks.

Rob:

In addition to his many routine tasks, In September Rob did the following:

- **NGRN** - Fixed and delivered a public computer.
- **HOOF** – Joe replaced a fan in a public computer. Sent back to the library, and no problems were reported.
- **GRAF** – Staged two public laptop computers.
- **UHLS** – Staged a staff computer for ys-support (Caroline)
- **MEND** – No problems with public computers, so my repairs worked.
- **RVLL** – Original cataloging for 8 titles.
- **STEP** - Original cataloging for one title.
- **SNLK** – Original cataloging for one title.
- **POES** – Original cataloging for 3 titles.
- **ALTM** - Staged and delivered a refurbished public computer.
- **RCSC** – Discussed with Jill Kobayashi the current computer environment at the library. She wants the public computers to remain on the domain set up by Rawdon but is open to suggestions going forward.

UHLS AOS Services Report: September 2025

Outreach

- We received and are able to fund Period Product Mini Grants for ten libraries: Troy, Poestenkill, Rensselaer, Menands, Brunswick, Voorheesville, RCS, Cohoes, Berne and Nassau. Each library will receive a dispenser(s) for their bathrooms and starter supplies of period products. (Cohoes only applied for supplies as they are in a temporary location.)

Adult Services

- The Adult Services Advisory Council meeting focused on keeping low quality (e.g. AI slop and bootleg materials) out of library collections, and on ways we can utilize our shared calendars to improve programming.
- The Messages from Survivors exhibit was on display in Poestenkill and Nassau.

E-Content

- The E-Content Advisory Committee considered different models for increasing access to digital comics and manga. After comparing a simultaneous-use package within Libby and the stand-alone platform ComicsPlus, most members preferred ComicsPlus due to the depth of its manga collection. The pros and cons of each will be brought to the Directors Association for consideration for a potential group purchase.
- With help from staff from Guilderland and Albany Public, we offered an advanced training for Overdrive selectors. The session focused on patron driven acquisitions, different uses of the cost-per-circ model in Overdrive, and youth content controls and collection development.
- Met twice with the NYS E-book Working Group to consider optimal data collection practices.

Equity Committee

- The Equity Committee met to review three modules submitted by Guilderland: Marketing, Facilities & Equipment, and Outreach.
- Andrea Nicolay from Albany Public facilitated another *Getting it Done* session prior to the September Director's Association meeting. The topic was the Organizational Culture and Leadership module and featured work done by Bethlehem and Valley Falls libraries.
- The committee was able to share out three Equity Challenge interviews in September. Interested parties can find these on Upper Hudson's social media accounts.

Miscellaneous

- Prepared draft budget for Central Library Advisory Committee.
- Worked with Chris on Construction Grant submissions.
- Was glad to collect and share out information on the resounding wins for the North Greenbush and Troy levy votes.