



UPPER HUDSON LIBRARY SYSTEM

Together. For Better Libraries.

Chair: Sarah Clark

Vice Chair: Mindy Fowler

Secretary: Sara Hopkins

X	APLM – Andrea Nicolay	X	NGRN – Mary Klimack
X	ALTM - Joseph Burke		PTRB – Anita Wilson
	BRLN – Sara Rogers		POES – Donna Riley
X	BERN – Kathy Stempel	X	RCSC – Lisa Neuman
X	BETH – Geoff Kirkpatrick		RENS - Jane Chirgwin
X	BRUN – Sara Hopkins		RVLL – Patrick Wynne
X	CAST – M. Tacke		SNLK - Melinda Fowler
	COHS – Ray LeMay		SCHG - Nick Matulis
X	COLN – Elissa Valente	X	STEP - Kim Roppolo
X	EGRN - Jill Dugas Hughes	X	TROY – Christiann Gibeau
X	GRAF – Leanna Sweet	X	VAFL - Kelly Akin
X	GUIL – Pete Petruski	X	VOOR – Sarah Clark
	HOOF – Danny Yetto	X	WTVT – Whitney Gitman
	MEND – vacant	X	WSTR – Amy Powarzynski
	NASS – Tracey Clague	X	UHLS - Tim Burke

Directors' Association

Date: July 10, 2024

Others in Attendance: J. Favreau; M. Fellows; J. Wines

Called to order at 11:01AM.

The group wanted to continue the Schenectady County Public Library (SCPL) discussion because the UHLS Board is scheduled to meet tonight.

A. Nicolay asked if resource sharing meant just the ILS. T. Burke expressed that in order to deliver best customer service, he thinks we should include digital resources as well. He reminded the group that SCPL would make a significant purchase as soon as they can. She then asked what our current wait time was – J. Wines confirmed it is 34 days. As of the report, SCPL wait time is 24 days. G. Kirkpatrick spoke as the eCAC representative and relayed that the group could not more clearly say they are not interested in sharing digital content despite the weirdness of it until full system membership happens.

M. Tacke asked if SCPL will change their current Hoopla spending model. J. Wines reiterated that SCPL is spending a lot on Hoopla because they do not have the option to purchase content in OverDrive. They'd be open to adjusting but don't want to commit at this point because this is the best customer service for their patrons.

E. Valente shared that she got to meet with her full board and they feel very similar about the digital collections. They are very concerned with a potential increase of attendance, which may push them to issue residency restrictions for programming, which they don't want to do. They are more open to full membership rather than having a temporary period of unknown. T. Burke noted that only 7% of SCPL annual circulation comes from other libraries in MVLS/SALS.

J. Burke reiterated many of his concerns, as none of them have been alleviated in any way. He's found this to be a really sad and disappointing process with people and organizations that don't seem to be acting in a way of transparency and or with the values we try to uphold as a profession. He's disappointed in SCPL and MVLS for not trying to sit down and resolve their differences. It just feels like we don't have enough information to make an informed decision. UHLS's part to push this forward seems rushed. The UHLS board keeps saying that we don't feel the pressure, that this was created by SCPL deciding to leave when they did and we can take our time but we find ourselves having this meeting. No good decision happens in July or at 2AM, we're all busy and overtaxed. He doesn't feel like we were given information in a timely manner – last night the board received T. Burke's documents at 8PM. They won't have time to ask questions and ask directors within 13 hours and could have been provided the statistical information far earlier. He doesn't understand why we are being pushed into a decision on the timeframe we are. The conversations between MVLS, SCPL and DLD need to happen first before we make this decision – they just haven't tried to mediate with another adult in the room. One of the consequences followed by the request from SCPL to fully join UHLS is that the staff at MVLS will lose their jobs, and the amount of funding that will leave means that the services that MVLS is now able to provide to the smaller libraries will be gutted. Or they'll be combined into a super-SALS and will they be able to function over that broad terrain? And would they want that? There has been no acknowledgement of impact on the broader community.

A. Nicolay asked if the UHLS Board was committing to a contract at this evening's meeting. T. Burke noted that the question before the board is that we've explored this for many months, is the board willing to enter into an agreement if SCPL makes the request? The document itself has

not been created but will be loosely based on what the UHLAN agreement looks like for current member libraries. Yes, the Board's decision would or would not give a commitment to SCPL. Their decision tonight does not prevent anyone at SCPL or MVLS from sitting down to try and resolve this. He has heard that DLD has reached out to MVLS and SCPL and renewed their encouragement to get together; that meeting will happen the week of July 22.

It was asked of T. Burke if there are other examples of environmental impact – have you reached out to other system directors or do we have a parallel somewhere? T. Burke has not had any conversations outside of the state. There is no research on impact and won't be evident until a merger happens. J. Dugas Hughes is aware of several CT library automation systems who have member libraries that have moved between systems. She is happy to send the system names and contact information if that would be helpful.

K. Roppolo asked what happens if DLD says no once we agree to share. T. Burke would like to see DLD show leadership during this process. Consensus from the group was that this squishy temporary agreement isn't going to work.

P. Petruski shared that GUIL is concerned about the impact on staff and our patrons. They are not in favor of anything squishy or temporary because it becomes an issue for both staff and patrons. A lot of his reservations come from his fear of the unknown, this could be a huge nothing-burger but we just don't know. He'd hate to be put into a position to restrict access similar to COLN. He's in favor of this process being slow; GUIL has a lot of internal work to get into place at the moment before they'll consider taking this on.

J. Dugas Hughes sent an email to the group during the meeting. The slower the better so that our staff can be supported during this change. We should include very specific language that the intention is full membership. Politics change, people change, and we have to have it all documented. She'd also like to document how to dissolve the relationship should DLD say no. She thinks there's more of an UHLS staffing impact than is being discussed and we need to look over fees charged, in support of a membership. T. Burke stated that temporarily we couldn't afford to bring on a staff member but if we did talk about full membership, expanding our population would bring an estimated \$450k additional state aid annually. That kind of money could give the system the ability to build the staff out if needed.

A. Nicolay asked who is going to be making this decision and do they understand the stakes – and who's going to be involved in drafting the agreement. T. Burke stated that he would take the lead and would reflect the board's sensitivities in the document. It was asked what would the role of the DA be? He explained that this group is a sounding board for UHLS decision making, but they won't have a true vote, other than having a seat on the board which is currently filled by J. Burke. He is not looking to establish a committee as it will slow the process down and isn't necessary.

G. Kirkpatrick shared that for those of you with representative seats on the UHLS board, you have easy and quick access to the UHLS Board. He and his representative have frequent conversations; that is an important relationship. A. Nicolay noted that the APL seat is unfilled currently.

C. Gibeau asked how much communication has gone out to our current staff and board, are we not saying anything to our patrons at this point? T. Burke noted internal conversations at this point, no communication with library staff because it only creates confusion, until decisions are made.

M. Tacke asked if a decision on the part of the UHLS board to pursue a resource-sharing agreement with SCPL on the way to full membership would impact eCAC's recommendations regarding digital resource sharing. G. Kirkpatrick noted that this conversation hasn't been had so he can't answer on that at this point. J. Wines encouraged everyone to have a conversation with their eCAC representative.

L. Neuman shared that she's not a fan of the way this has transpired but sadly feels that it's inevitable.

Feel free to reply to J. Dugas Hughes' email to keep the conversation going.

12:01 PM meeting adjourned by S. Clark.