MVLS/SALS Joint Automation Project
Joint Automation Council Meeting July 10, 2024, 9:30 am
Meeting at SALS (SOUTHERN ADIRONDACK LIBRARY SYSTEM)
Draft Minutes

Present: Beth DeMidio, Christine Connell, Sara Dallas, Guin Forshey, Alex Gutelius, Kari Kakeh (Virtual), Michele Largeteau, Tim McDonough, Haileab Samuel (Virtual), Eric Trahan, and Erica Wing.

Excused: Terry Pavoldi

Guests: Jill Ryder, Maria Cancro, Diane Empie, Evan Fronk, Nicole Hemsley, Charity Thorne, Kim Zimmer, Kathy Naftaly, Chris Mundell, Ike Pulver, Carol Kuhr, Gwen Weldy, Tom Shaginaw, Rebecca Verheyden, and Don Flinton.

Council Chair Alex Gutelius called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

Eric Trahan moved, and Beth DeMidio seconded the approval of the minutes for the May 8, 2024, JA (Joint Automation) Council meeting as amended. The motion passed.

Eric Trahan reviewed the May and June financial statements. Eric reported nothing out of the ordinary. Later in the meeting, he will introduce amendments to the budget. Eric Trahan moved, and Tim McDonough seconded a motion to receive for audit. The motion passed.

Payment Warrants for May and June were reviewed and received for audit. Eric Trahan moved, and Guin Forshey seconded. The motion passed.

Project Managers Report

PC orders: All PCs and laptops from the first group order have arrived. New images are being created and tested, and then deliveries will be arranged. The next order will be in the early fall.

Year-end processing for non-calendar fiscal years: Year-end was completed for libraries with June-May and July-June fiscal years. JA staff worked with Polaris to close out those years and provide reports.

SALS internet outage: Down trees (Saratoga Springs) caused an internet outage on May 20th. This prevented new connections to Polaris that evening, and service was restored by the morning.

There have been problems with LEAP and the PAC, either giving errors, not letting users in, or running very slowly. This started on July 3 and has been happening daily through Monday. Innovative staff can clear the problem once reported (reset two

services) but have not determined the cause. They are investigating whether it is a server resource issue or something else. There was a problem once before where bots were hitting the site, and they could put restrictions on it. It is hoped that the Innovative staff will find a permanent solution soon.

Cyber insurance assistance: JA staff has assisted or answered questions for Cobleskill, MVLS (Mohawk Valley Library System), Argyle, and Canajoharie. Michele and Chris attended the Argyle board meeting to speak and answer questions regarding cyber insurance. The Argyle board asked how many libraries have cyber insurance. Of the 25 libraries that responded, 15 do have cyber insurance. Some are considering. The cost was a factor for those who did not.

Library projects: JA staff implemented a new switch setting on some credit card routers to add another layer of security.

JA staff are testing a new user option for the Barracuda spam filter. Some staff are currently testing it. This option allows you to have all of your quarantined mail delivered in real-time with a tag so that you can know that it was flagged as quarantine, but you do not have to log into a different place to get the mail. The downside is it takes extra steps to block or whitelist a sender. Feedback from a few library staff has been very positive. It will be offered to others. Users will be able to turn this option on or off.

Amsterdam has started renovations, and Chris and Dave will work with them to relocate computers and drops to a temporary location because this involves construction where their current network closet is. Once the new network location is ready, Adirondack Cabling will do new wiring, and this new location will be available for the existing building and the new addition when they get to that phase.

Chris assisted Greenwich with a new camera system.

JA staff has helped Crandall with an email solution for their LibraryCalendar product and confirmed that Patron Point uses the Polaris API, so they are moving forward with that product.

New Director training was done for the new director, Kristi Chadwick, at Ballston Community Public Library,

Committee Reports:

Finance Committee: Eric Trahan introduced the following proposed budget amendments:

Legal Fees for Stephanie Cole Adams added to the 2024 JA budget:

Increase Professional Fees by $5,000
Add Income line MVLS/SALS Other Reimbursements at $5,000

The generator required unforeseen repairs:
Increase Generator Maintenance by $2,827
Air conditioning required unforeseen repairs
Increase Building Maintenance by $4,000

Interest increased by investing in the New York Liquid Asset Fund
Increase Interest by $17,500

These changes result in the following values for the affected accounts:

Income
7259 MVLS/SALS Other Reimbursements $5,000
7260 Interest $18,000
Total Income $1,027,465

Expense
8320 Professional Fees $30,050
8510 Building Maintenance $4,450
8520 Generator Maintenance $3,770
Total Income $1,024,355

Eric Trahan moved, and Beth DeMidio seconded a motion to move the 2024 JA budget from a budgeted deficit of $7,563 to a budgeted surplus of $3,110 and changes in the income and expense lines as shown above. Motion carried.

Policy Committee: The MVLS and SALS boards have approved changes from the May JA Council meeting. The approved policies will be posted on the JA Council Website.

Old Business:
SCPL (Schenectady County Public Library) withdrawing from JA: A draft agenda for the next transition team meeting is in the works, and a meeting will be set for later in July. MVLS, SALS, and JAC (Joint Automation Council) leadership will be present in case decisions that are outside the transition team's scope need to be made.

Four Ad Hoc Committees were to bring recommendations back to the JA Council. The JA Council is advisory and will share the following with the MVLS and SALS Board of Trustees as they are the policy-making bodies.

Third Party IT Ad Hoc Committee:

Charge: Explore a model for third party IT to manage and support the network and PCs that access JA services.

The committee finds that third party IT could be considered with these requirements:
1) Joint Automation maintain control of the networks
2) Joint Automation should develop a list of requirements for qualifications to ensure vendors are qualified, with Joint Automation Council final approval
3) Require third party cyber liability insurance
4) Joint Automation would agree to look at these requests on a case-by-case basis, with the determination in a timely manner
5) Follow Joint Automation PC requirements and recommendations, and network rules
6) Require a contract to include response time and service agreements

For the [full report and discussion topics](#)

ILS Ad Hoc Committee:

Charge: Explore policy adjustments to ILS features as listed by SCPL
Goals: Assess items from the SCPL whitepaper, Determine ILS features that could be considered for possible implementation**,** and identify any JA policies that could be considered for review. Items from JA reply to SCPL Withdrawal from JA whitepaper.

1) Ability to implement autorenewal:

Committee recommends JAC reconsiders implementing this feature. Committee recommends policy adjustment on renewal limits and implementation system-wide to prevent confusion. (Action needed)

2) Improved public catalog features, including the ability to filter by items currently on the shelf, display of locations on the main search results page, display of how many holds are currently on a title and your place in line:

- Filter by currently on shelf: We already filter by what is on the shelf. The committee *recommends bolding the "Find It" button* to make it more obvious to patrons.

- Display of holds and place in line: The committee discussed that other systems show holds place in line in their PACs, but those systems require more reciprocal sharing than we do, and they use Vega in conjunction with the Polaris PAC. *The Committee would like to see a redesign of the PAC and asks the JA Operations Committee to look into adding Vega and other enhancements.*

3) Ability for us to manage and set appropriate ILS permissions for each library employee according to their job titles, functions and assigned responsibilities:

System trainers and JA staff are currently reevaluating the structure of permission groups. The committee agreed that this may work to address the issue. *No committee recommendation.*

4) **Ability to implement SCPL Board of Trustee policies relating to circulation, such as our fine block threshold**:

Committee recommends JAC develop a fine threshold guideline/policy to allow flexibility within an agreed upon range for each library. A threshold range of $20-$50 is recommended. (Action needed)

5) **Ability to automate replacement cost bills via digital communications instead of printing and manually mailing them:**

Committee recommends JAC reconsider implementing this feature. Committee noted that billing by text may cause confusion among patrons who have that selected. Committee recommends JA submit a ticket to Polaris about the ability to choose which notification option bills are sent by (email). If impossible, Committee recommends that a standard message suggestion be developed for text bills, directing patrons to contact their library. (Action needed)

6) **Ability to discontinue collecting unnecessary personally identifiable information such as driver's license numbers and reduce library liability and impact in the event of a cybersecurity breach (which in itself would be much less likely with the enhanced cybersecurity measures we'll implement under County IT):**

Committee was unable to come to a conclusion on whether to continue to collect driver's license numbers or use a partial number or alternate unique identifier, as this is important in identifying/preventing duplicate patron accounts. The committee recommends further assessment by JAC. (Action needed)

7) **Ability to do our own cataloging:**

Committee recommends JAC make no changes to this item.

8) **Ability to edit bib records:**

Committee recommends JAC make no changes to this item.

9) **Ability to run custom reports:**

Committee recommends JAC look into options for providing custom reporting to senior staff. Committee noted that there are limitations to what information can be gathered from custom reports and some of this work is very specialized. The committee also worked to identify gaps in Polaris reports that could be added to the Polaris reports server for staff to utilize. (Action needed)

10) **Ability to utilize functionality such as bulk record changes:**

Bulk change permissions are currently given to a limited number of staff, and with proper training. The committee discussed the advantages (ability to take care of daily tasks without having to ask for help)

and disadvantages (bulk change can be dangerous in terms of making a big mistake affecting many items) of offering this more broadly to library staff. No committee recommendation.

JA Finance Ad Hoc Committee:

Agenda (Charge):
Explore, if it is necessary, establishing a rate to provide ILS access to SCPL after 9/4, to ensure on going transition activity does not economically impact SALS and MVLS members.

Underlying questions:
1. Determine if written notice is required for SCPL to change the exit date and the implications of the date possibly changing multiple times
2. Evaluate "cost" to JA for SCPL to remain past 9/4/2024
3. Determine if there is a need for charges beyond the monthly JA fee billing
4. If needed, determine a rate and how this will be billed

Outcome:
A. Message to JA meeting (to be held on July 10, 2024):

> 1. Determine if written notice is required for SCPL to change the exit date and the implications of the date possibly changing multiple times. Answer: **Written notice is strongly encouraged. It ensures that all parties are working to the (single) date sanctioned by SCPL and JA.**
>
> 2. Evaluate "cost" to JA for SCPL to remain past 9/4/2024. Answer**: Service costs are a continuation of existing JA monthly fee billing. No change is anticipated here.**
>
> 3. Determine if there is a need for charges beyond the monthly JA fee billing. Answer: **This is wholly a function of the requests made by SCPL. It is possible SCPL will request something to support the withdrawal that would drive incremental costs to fulfill (beyond the terms of withdrawal cited in the JA contract). In this case, incremental costs should not be borne by the JA partners that remain SCPL should be responsible for these expenses.**
>
> 4. If needed, determine a rate and how this will be billed. Answer: **As noted above, this is a function of the requests made by SCPL to support the withdrawal. If such a circumstance arises, JA should inform SCPL of the scope and estimated costs of the proposed effort for SCPL to determine whether to pursue it or retract the requested effort.**

B. Additional investigation items: Is unanimity required for Ad Hoc Committee resolutions? **Answered at meeting – no it is not required. This is an advisory body. The JA, MVLS, and SALS staff all voted to abstain from the vote.**

C. Open items:

> a. Understand specifics of SCPL withdrawal requests (low-level details),
> b. Evaluate against withdrawal terms of JA contract (resolve any disagreements in subjectivity),
> c. If efforts are held to be beyond the existing terms of the JA contract, estimate costs to perform and convey that scope and cost estimate to SCPL for consideration.
> d. Evaluate any future SCPL withdrawal requests in a similar fashion.

D. Next steps for Finance Ad Hoc Subcommittee:

a. Facilitate the effort in Outcome C above.
b. Support JA Ad Hoc Committee leading up to and through the July 10, 2024 meeting.

Ending Reciprocal Holds Ad Hoc Committee
Agenda (Charge):
Explore what the approach shall be to ending reciprocal holds between the SCP and other MVLS/SALS libraries.

Discussion of whether reciprocal holds should end in advance and the difficulties involved with items returned after SCP's withdrawal from JA.

Discussion of possible extension of SCP's withdrawal date from original September 4, 2024. No extension has been formally proposed but this is a possibility.

Discussion of options to ease transition including; changing renewal settings, continuing reciprocal holds until day of transition or ending reciprocal holds sooner. Conversation about the logistics of how long items circulate, the renewal settings and the timeline to bill for lost materials. Also, the staff time at SALS and MVLS to implement any possible changes and any possible public relations concerns.

A motion was made by Ms. Hemsley, seconded by Ms. Verhayden that the member libraries of both Mohawk Valley Library System and Southern Adirondack Library System recommend ending reciprocal holds four months before Schenectady County Public Library's withdrawal from the Joint Automation Project. Motion passed with 4 in favor, 2 against and 4 abstentions from Ms. Largeteau, Mr. Thompson, Ms. O'Brien and Ms. Ryder as they do not represent member libraries.

Visit [the MVLS/SALS Joint Automation Council](#) to read the full minutes of the working groups.

Old Business:
Adjournment: Next meeting September 11th at MVLS