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**Board of Directors—2019 Fall Meeting**

**October 21, 2019**

Sofitel Chicago, Chicago, IL

**Present:** Ramiro Salazar, President; Monique le Conge Ziesenhenne, Past President (by phone); Michelle Jeske, President Elect; Directors-at-large: Cindy Fesemyer, Toby Greenwalt, Amita Lonial, Pam Sandlian Smith, Kelvin Watson, Carrie Willson; ALA Division Councilor: Stephanie Chase; Fiscal Officer: Clara Bohrer

**Approved Absences:** none

**PLA Staff:** Barb Macikas, Executive Director; Scott Allen, Deputy Director; Larra Clark, Deputy Director (by phone); Laurence Deutsch, Manager, Communications; Lian Drago, Program Officer; Mary Hirsh, Deputy Director; Kathleen Hughes, Manager, Publications; Samantha Lopez, Manager, Marketing and Membership; Emily Plagman, Manager, Impact and Advocacy

**Guests:** Alan Inouye, Senior Director, Public Policy and Government Relations, ALA Washington Office (by phone)

*Follow-up items are listed at the end of the document.*

1. **Welcome and Introductions**, *Salazar*.
2. **By consent, approved** the adoption of the meeting agenda.
3. **By consent, approved** the Draft 2019 Annual Conference Board Actions (2020.7).
4. **By consent, approved** the Draft September 5, 2019 Board Call Actions (2020.8).
5. **By consent, approved** the consent agenda, except for items 2020.12a&b, which were removed from the consent agenda for discussion.

**Consent Items Document Number**

*Governance*

* 1. PLA Committees Semi-Annual Reports 2020.9

*PLA Initiatives*

* 1. Combined PLA Initiatives Report 2020.10
     1. DigitalLearn.org
     2. Data Initiatives
     3. Health Initiatives
     4. Regional Trainings
     5. Strategic Planning
     6. Inclusive Internship Initiative
     7. 2020 Census
     8. Family Engagement Initiatives

*PLA Operations*

* 1. Combined PLA Operations Report 2020.11
     1. Membership
     2. Fundraising
     3. Communications
  2. Continuing Education Report and Annual 2019 Program Analysis 2020.12 a&b

*ALA Reports*

* 1. BARC on site

**Action/Discussion/Decision Items**

1. **PLA President Update**, *Salazar* (no document). Salazar thanked previous PLA President le Conge Ziesenhenne for her service, thanked Sandlian Smith for filling the board vacancy and continuing to serve, and welcomed Greenwalt and Lonial to their first official meeting. Salazar reported that he has worked extensively on the #eBooksForAll Campaign with the ALA Washington Office and other partners including the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), the Canadian Urban Libraries Council/Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CULC/CBUC), and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA). Salazar stressed the importance of creating a coalition with a common message. Due to the issue’s tremendous impact on public libraries, PLA has made it a priority, activating leadership and issuing its own statement. Watson has agreed to co-chair the new ALA Joint Working Group on eBook and Digital Content Pricing in Libraries. That working group is expected to convene virtually in December and meet at the 2020 Midwinter Meeting. The working group will be looking at long-term solutions and may be expanded to include academic and school library issues with publishers. Hope was also expressed that the working group will make progress on breaking down silos among library and related groups, such as the Book Industry Study Group, to encourage more productive collaboration. PLA leaders strategized about what PLA can do soon, including continuation of the public awareness effort and discouraging other publishers from following MacMillan’s lead. Board members also expressed interest in helping PLA members by providing talking points for their boards and other stakeholders. It was noted that PLA has not yet responded to a meeting invitation from MacMillan CEO John Sargent. Further discussion of this issue occurred later in the meeting when Inouye joined.
2. **Review of actions from Annual Conference meeting**, *Allen* (2020.13). Status of items requiring follow up from the 2019 Annual Conference meeting were briefly reviewed. Actions related to the PLA budget were largely accomplished and would be discussed later in the meeting agenda. PLA’s Budget and Finance Committee did not yet prepare recommendations related to the financial health of ALA/PLA for the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE) because SCOE has not yet moved forward with its planned financial modeling or with discussions of the ALA operating agreement. Actions steps intended to help PLA promote engagement in the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) are in process, awaiting input from the member leaders who are actively working with IFLA.
3. **PLA Strategic Plan Update, Focus on PLA Committees**, *all* (2020.14, 2020.15). A report on status of implementing the 2018-2022 PLA Strategic Plan was briefly reviewed. In addition to a comprehensive report, staff prepared a report aligning PLA committee and task force work with the strategic plan goals. Previously, committee leaders participated in PLA board meetings, and as such their work was often discussed in more detail. More recently, written committee reports have been included on the consent calendar, and board discussion of other priority items, such as eBooks, has left little time for updates on core PLA activity and the work of hundreds of committee and task force volunteers. Discussion focused on four areas of activity where board member input was sought.
   1. Social Worker Task Force: PLA began working with library-based social workers in the fall of 2018 and has identified best practices, training topics, and more to help both social workers themselves and the other library staff who attend to diverse community challenges. PLA is collecting data on the prevalence of social work staff and interns in libraries. Other activity has included articles in PLOnline, two podcasts, a monthly virtual forum, and more. The task force is promoting the need for trauma-informed care/services and a person-centered, strengths-based approach. The board briefly discussed challenges for PLA’s work in this area, which include countering poor advice to libraries (for instance, included in ALA’s own publication The Librarian’s Guide to Homelessness); reducing the extent to which the task force members are providing personal or one-on-one consultation to other library staff so their expertise can have a greater impact in the field; and expediting publications and continuing education opportunities related to social service needs in libraries.
   2. Leadership Development Committee: PLA’s leadership model was revised two years ago, and Leadership Academies are planned every year for the next three years. A challenge to PLA is to extend impact of this training, since the Leadership Academies only impact 28 library professionals each year. Creating a new program, perhaps using the Emerging Leaders program model, and developing new content specifically on asset-based community development, were suggested.
   3. Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment Committee (MEAC): This group, along with the now-defunct Public Library Data Service (PLDS) Committee, have focused mostly on discrete projects to help libraries collect and use data, such as question development for Project Outcome and PLDS. Determining the future of PLDS, which is now on pause, is a current priority. However, beyond that, these leaders are shifting their work to consider how to meet the bigger data and advocacy needs of the public library field. New strategies are being discussed to use outcomes for change, to improve benchmarking and peer-to-peer comparisons, and to better connect library data to city/county data streams. The board noted the need for libraries to be represented at state and local meetings of city and county leaders, to more effectively spread messages about library impact.
   4. Membership Advisory Group: This group has focused on increasing touchpoints between PLA and new members, including welcome emails and promoting the networking potential of ALA Connect. One challenge to this group is the lack of opportunities, other than national conferences, for them to be face-to-face with members. Another challenge includes retaining members who only sign up in order to get the PLA Conference registration discount. A membership survey has been on hold but will be completed in 2020 to provide additional data and direction for membership recruitment, retention and engagement work.
   5. Task Force on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice (EDISJ): The Task Force has had great success with its regional trainings, which may reach as many as 400 library staff in 2019. In addition to expanding access to the training, their next challenge is continuing to engage and learn from those who have participated. The board suggested the Task Force consider how training graduates can eventually be engaged to be EDISJ leaders. It was also suggested PLA invest time and resources in identifying and training facilitators, who are needed to advance EDISJ work at the library and community level. Finally, the Task Force has also struggled to either develop or identify assessment and outcome measurement strategies for library EDISJ work.
4. **PLA 2020 Update and PLA Board roles at PLA 2020**, *Johnson, all* (2020.16). The guidelines for the PLA President, PLA President‐Elect and PLA Board Members at PLA conferences were reviewed and discussed briefly.
5. **Nominating Committee Report**, *Smith* (on site). Smith reported that the Nominating Committee was one candidate shy of a full slate for the 2020 PLA elections. Subsequent to the meeting, the slate was announced as follows: candidates for President-elect include Melanie Huggins and Kent Oliver; candidates for Director-at-large include Kevin King, Steven Potter, and Dara Schmidt; and candidate for Division Councilor is Stephanie Chase.
6. **COSLA Public Library Data Alliance**, **ACTION** (2020.17 a&b). The Public Library Data Alliance (PLDA) is being developed as an ongoing, independent group with representation from major library association leadership and others. Its purpose is to “advance public library data gathering and use that aligns with community needs.” Leadership of five associations will have representation on the PLDA, including ALA, PLA, COSLA, ULC and the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL). The ALA board has already approved ALA participation. It was moved, seconded and **approved** that the PLA Board of Directors supports the concept of the Public Library Data Alliance and approves PLA’s participation in the PLDA as outlined in board documents 2020.17 a&b.
7. **Report on eBook licensing, DCWG**, *Inouye, Clark, all* (on site). Inouye thanked PLA for its leadership and financial support of the eBook campaign. The history of ALA’s work with the “big 5” publishers was reviewed, up to the current situation with MacMillan specifically. ALA’s strategy was reviewed, and it was noted that work has evolved beyond the #eBooksForAll public awareness effort. Upcoming activities will include Congress and may activate ALA members to contact their representatives, and also include consultation with lawyers about legal strategies. Legal strategies may be challenging because ALA or another group would need to have legal standing to justify bringing a suit against a publisher or related party. Some states are also getting active on the issue via their Attorneys General. The extent to which ALA could assist with state efforts was discussed, and Inouye noted that ALA lacks expertise at the state level, where laws are varied. In terms of MacMillan specifically, ALA’s proposal to hold a facilitated meeting with MacMillan was rejected, but informal discussions are continuing. To date, it doesn’t seem like other publishers are planning to follow MacMillan’s lead and implement similar restrictive policies. Board members reiterated their hope that this work can involve other library associations such as ULC and COSLA. Inouye indicated that ALA can engage other partners but noted the cost and communication challenges to creating a coalition.
8. **ALA Executive Board Calls**, *Macikas* (2020.18). PLA’s liaison to the ALA Executive Board, Lessa Pelayo Lozada, has reminded PLA that ALA Executive Board meetings are open to all members. Board members agreed PLA should participate, and a schedule will be developed to confirm which board members will join which calls.
9. **Financial Reports**, *Bohrer,* *Macikas* (2020.19 a-e, 2020.20). PLA’s final FY19 budget was reviewed and it was reported that PLA did better than budgeted (budgeted net loss was $749,540 but actual net loss was only $333,816). FY19 should include the maximum ($49,999) transfer from PLA’s net asset balance into the long-term investment account, as approved during the June 2019 meeting. The larger transfers discussed will begin in FY22.
10. **Report from PLA Fiscal Officer**, *Bohrer* (no doc). ALA’s financial status was briefly discussed. ALA ended FY19 with a larger net loss than budgeted (budgeted net loss was $2.4 million, primarily due to strategic investments, but actual net loss was about $700,000 higher, in part due to high costs for audiovisual charges at the 2019 Midwinter Meeting). Revenue was also down, in part because six new publications did not make it to sale during the fiscal year as planned. Board members also briefly discussed ALA staff changes, including the departure of the Chief Financial Officer and outsourcing of some accounting functions, and the sale of the headquarters building.
11. **SCOE update** (on site). It was reiterated that the first vote on proposed SCOE changes will occur at the 2020 Annual Conference in June, the second vote will occur at the 2021 Midwinter Meeting in January, and the full membership vote will occur in the spring of 2021. As of the PLA Board meeting, the next report from SCOE had not been released, and steps to determine financial impact and consider changes to the ALA Operating Agreement had not started. Further, no additional information was available on SCOE’s plans to hold membership meetings about the changes at the 2020 Midwinter Meeting. Some ALA groups have voiced objection to proposed changes (roundtables and some chapters were noted). It was believed that ALA Councilors are looking to PLA and others for guidance on how to react to the SCOE proposals. Board members considered if PLA should make a public statement and when; if PLA should advocate for acceptance of the proposed changes in full or piecemeal; and what type of internal advocacy PLA leadership should conduct. Some board members felt they need to get better educated about the changes and what they entail, so a board conference call including Vailey Oehlke and Felton Thomas was proposed. It was agreed to develop questions for Oehlke and Thomas in advance. Members also noted that proposed revisions to the ALA Operating Agreement and other financial issues will be critical to PLA’s position on any changes. Further, they were interested in how other ALA divisions were proceeding, and they discussed the potential for divisions to band together to request faster movement on potential changes to the Operating Agreement.
12. **ALA 2020 Midwinter/ALA Council-Communication from PLA** (2020.21 a&b). Despite the lack of information from SCOE or a clear message from PLA to Councilors noted above, board members agreed PLA should still hold its Councilor breakfast at the 2020 Midwinter Meeting. PLA may use the meeting to hear from Councilors and answer their questions rather than promote PLA’s specific position. PLA can also present its impressive work generally and our progress on the PLA strategic plan, noting that PLA’s current autonomy is contributing to those successes and should not be taken away. Board members who would be attending Midwinter and could participate in the Councilor breakfast were confirmed.
13. **Future PLA Board Meetings**, *Macikas* (2020.22). The board will hold its next meeting on Tuesday, February 25, 2020 immediately before the PLA 2020 Conference. ALA will hold its library legislative day events on May 4-5, 2020, so PLA will meet the day before (Sunday, May 3, 2020) in Washington, DC as in the past.
14. **New Business**, *all*(no doc). Board members briefly discussed the potential to include Bill Gates as a Big Ideas speaker at the PLA 2020 Conference. Staff consulted with Salazar and Felton Thomas about this opportunity and are currently coordinating with Penguin Random House to determine if Gates will be available and if so, if PLA will offer him the slot. Subsequent to the meeting, PLA was informed that Gates was not available to speak. The board agreed that further discussion is needed about the processes and priorities for making decisions about issues such as this.
15. **Adjourn**. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5pm. The next PLA board meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2020 in Nashville, TN.

**PLA Board of Directors 2019 Fall Meeting**

**Action Items/Discussions Requiring Follow Up**

The following actions were drafted based on discussion at the 2019 Fall board meeting.

1. **#eBooksForAll Campaign**
   1. Staff and member leaders will promote existing talking points, and develop new ones as needed, to help PLA members have discussions with boards, consortia and community members about the library’s role in providing electronic content and what the various publishers’ actions mean for communities.
2. **Strategic Plan**
   1. Advocacy and Awareness: PLA will consider strategies (articles, webinars) to educate members about how they can become active in chapters of groups such as the National League of Cities, the International City/County Management Association, and others. This may include volunteering on committees, attending conferences and staffing exhibit booths, and other strategies.
   2. General Progress: PLA communications staff will work to include more reports to the members on where PLA is achieving success in implementing the strategic plan and what that means for members-at-large.
3. **Nominating Committee Report**
   1. Macikas will reach out to candidates for the 2020 election to update them on changes at ALA including the work of SCOE.
4. **PLA Participation in ALA Executive Board Calls**
   1. Macikas will conduct a Doodle poll to determine board member coverage and alternates for ALA Executive Board calls.
5. **SCOE Update**
   1. Board members will submit questions about SCOE and the related processes to staff in preparation for a conference call with PLA’s SCOE representatives.
   2. Staff will set up a conference call with board members, Oehlke, and Thomas to discuss SCOE proposals and PLA’s strategy.
   3. Macikas will consult with other divisions, including the Association of College and Research Libraries and the Association for Library Services to Children, to determine how they are approaching SCOE’s work and where the divisions might work together.
   4. Macikas will work with board members who expect to attend Midwinter on the Councilor breakfast agenda and presentations; this includes Bohrer, Chase, le Conge Ziesenhenne, Salazar, Watson, and Willson.
6. **New Business**
   1. The PLA Board will continue to discuss decision-making processes and priorities, for instance as related to inclusion of big-name speakers at conferences and develop any related procedures and talking points as needed.