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**Board of Directors— Board Call**

**1-3 pm CT, January 7, 2020**

**Present:** Ramiro Salazar, President; 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:** Monique le Conge Ziesenhenne, Past President

**PLA Staff:** Barb Macikas, Executive Director; Scott Allen, Deputy Director; Larra Clark, Deputy Director

1. **Welcome and Introductions**, *President* *Salazar*.
2. **Approved** the adoption of the meeting agenda, moving item 7, E-book update, to the top of the agenda.

**Action/Discussion/Decision Items**

1. **E-Book Update,** *Salazar* (no document). President Salazar provided an update regarding Macmillan. PLA had requested two items: 1) list of 35 library systems Macmillan met with as they formulated their plans; and 2) data that supported their decision. Both have been supplied and distributed to the PLA Board. The data document was more like talking points than data. The data also was shared with ALA Public Policy and Advocacy (Washington) PPA Office. PLA accomplished our goal of getting the list of libraries and the data. Ramiro will reach out ULC and COSLA generally but will not distribute data or list and they should remain confidential within the PLA Board.

At Midwinter, Macmillan will have a vendor session where he will respond to questions from libraries. Ramiro will coordinate with a group to strategize about the session. He asked for board feedback on engaging with Macmillan at Midwinter. Board members agreed that PLA, ULC, COSLA, ALA have consistent talking points and that we should continue to engage with Macmillan. We should have a presence at Midwinter so that Macmillan knows we are engaged and our members and other library organizations know. It’s also important to note that in addition to meeting in public; meetings continue to be held with Macmillan privately.

Other publishers should see that we remain engaged and concerned. PLA Board member and co-chair of ALA Digital Content Working Group Kelvin Watson reported that group will meet at Midwinter and discuss strategies. Overall, we need clarity around how library organizations are working together. For ALA and PLA there is a central hub, which is Alan Inouye at PPA. There is an ALA program on e-books at Midwinter and PLA has added a program at PLA conference at PLA. The online petition will be kept open through at least March; media and op-eds led by ALA and public libraries are appearing every day. Congressional work is also continuing at Federal and state levels regarding anti-trust. There is also outreach to Amazon about their unwillingness to sell original content to libraries. Activities are being posted to PLA webpage on e-books.

COSLA is talking to Amazon to try to get data and is meeting with Amazon on Jan. 10. The Washington state librarian is leading COSLA effort and ALA PPA is aware and engaged in those discussions. A positive result from the entire issue is bringing library organizations together with one voice.

1. **PLA 2020 Nominating --Candidates Slate** (2020.26). Slate is ready, thanks to PLA Nominating Committee and chair Pam Sandlian Smith. Election information is hosted on PLA website. Elections open in the spring for PLA board positions and it is an excellent slate.
2. **ALA Presidential and PLA Board** **Candidates at PLA Conference**-(doc 2020.27). ALA presidential candidate Patty Wong approached Ramiro and Barb about presenting to PLA board. In the past PLA has invited ALA and PLA candidates to be introduced at Midwinter. During PLA conference years, we offer candidates tables in exhibit halls. All options candidates have is on the PLA website. Given that the board did not meet at Midwinter, PLA has invited ALA presidential candidates Steven Yates and Patty Wong to speak to the board in Nashville. We will invite PLA candidates to lunch and to stay for meeting. ALA candidates will be invited to share their platforms for 3 minutes at the top of the meeting.

We won’t put policy in place until we see how PLA 2020 goes. We’ll use this as a pilot for future years.

1. **SCOE Response, Midwinter planning** (doc 2020.28). PLA board discussed SCOE Forward Together report at their Fall meeting and considered how to respond. ACRL is in alignment with PLA’s thinking. PLA and ACRL together are potentially impactful and draft response is good. Until PLA knows what is happening to PLA, how can we take a stand on SCOE recommendations?

We do not know what the new ALA ED thinks of plan. We will invite new ED to PLA board meeting in February. PLA can share our response at the Midwinter PLA Councilor breakfast. ALA has not looked at financial implications of SCOE and they must do that. The response document will be edited to reflect the Board’s suggestions and the revised document will be shared back with the board and ACRL for potential joint statement.

1. **PLA/ALA Finances** (no doc). PLA Fiscal Officer Clara Bohrer reviewed the status of ALA’s finances pointing out a liquidity issue due to the spend down of ALA’s liquid assets (short-term investments/cash). At the BARC meeting in the fall, which Bohrer attended, the committee was advised that a liquidity issue existed, but no specific numbers were given. It now appears that the short-term investments/cash which stood at $14M in 2016 is down to $1M in November 2019 due to both planned (investment budget) and unplanned overages in the ALA general fund. The ALA general fund has not a positive net balance since FY15. In the last fiscal year, the ALA general fund had almost $4.4M in planned/unplanned overages. ALA is spending more than it is taking in, which cannot be sustained. Over the last 10 years, revenue in ALA’s the three primary revenue sources (conferences, publishing, membership) are flat or declining. Maggie Farrell, ALA Treasurer, signaled the financial challenges in her January/February 2020 treasurer’s column in *American Libraries*. Bohrer indicated that the liquidity issue should be verified in the financial documents being developed for Midwinter.

The fund balances of the divisions and roundtables are maintained within the short-term investments/cash. Although on paper PLA has a fund balance of about $3.6M, it has been spent. ALA does have the right to spend our fund balance, since it is “one checkbook.” ALA is one legal entity. Currently, ALA is projecting several years of deficit budgets and there is no way ALA can bring in sufficient revenues to repay divisions and roundtable fund balances any time soon. PLA cannot count on the fund balance being paid back. The only other source of funds that ALA could tap to repay our fund balance would be the ALA Endowment, which is extremely unlikely. The majority of revenue from the sale of the building was put into the endowment so that the interest would cover rent in the new space. (Note: that interest alone will not cover all rent expenses going forward.) We will need to verify at Midwinter what ALA’s intent is around our fund balance. We will also need to verify at Midwinter how we need to budget in the upcoming fiscal year, which is a spend down year. There is nothing available to spend down.

PLA’s fiscal officer will attend the BARC and other financial meetings at Midwinter and will report back to the Board. She will try to get clarity around the issues. She will express PLA’s concern that current financial practices in the general fund cannot be sustained and must be addressed. PLA may also want to ask the ALA chief financial officer/Treasurer come to speak to the Board in Nashville.

Our President will speak to the ALA Treasurer to express PLA’s concern. He will also connect with ACRL to see if there is interest in meeting to discuss the current financial situation and/or coordinating a message on the issue, since both divisions had significant fund balances.

1. New Business:
* We will hold a board call ahead of PLA 2020. Staff will send a doodle poll to schedule that call later in February.
* Macmillan staff requested space at the PLA2020 conference for John Sargent to address librarians as he did at Midwinter. Ramiro informed Macmillan that PLA will not provide the time slot. There was no disagreement from board members about this response.

Meeting concluded at 2:55 pm.