IFRT Councilor’s Report: ALA Annual 2021

# Membership Information Session and Virtual Membership Meeting

The meeting opened with a review of meeting logistics, then President Julius C. Jefferson, Jr., noted the memorial and tribute resolutions (available near the bottom of the [Council Documents](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/Virtual_Council_Meetings) page). We then heard the reports of the [President](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2021.1%20Presidents%20Report.pdf), [President-Elect](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2029.1%20President-Elect%20Report_0.pdf), [Executive Director](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2023.1%20Executive%20Director%20Report%20AC21.pdf), and [Treasurer](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2013.2%20Treasurer%20Report%20to%20Council%20and%20Membership%20June%202021%20FINAL.pdf). After a break, we heard the reports of the [Budget Analysis and Review Committee](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2033.1%20BARC%20Report.pptx) (BARC), the [ALA Endowment Trustees](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2016.1%20EndowmentTrusteesReporAC21%20final%206%2025%2021.pdf), and the [Office for Public Policy and Advocacy](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2030%20Public%20Policy%20and%20Advocacy%20Report.pdf).

A few items of note from the reports:

* We have seen a significant increase in cost containment, resulting in lower actual expenses as compared to budget, and we are on target to end the fiscal year with a small positive balance.
* Budget goals include increasing our liquidity so that we have the equivalent of one quarter of our annual budget as cash on hand and having an endowment that is two to three times the size of our annual budget.
* We want to increase revenue by 10% over expenses and increase membership by 5%.
* The endowment is doing well even with having temporarily drawing down the principal through loans to the association over the past two years.

At the close of the presentations, President Jefferson reviewed the ways that members can get involved with ALA through [volunteer opportunities](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2054%20Committee%20Appointment%20Process.pdf). In response to a question, President Jefferson also reviewed where we are in the Forward Together timeline and noted that Council is about to consider a number of [resolutions](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2046.1%20FTRWG%20Resolutions%20to%20Council_FINAL.pdf) that would outline a new governance structure. There was also a question about ALA’s legal counsel and concerns that the firm is perceived as anti-union. President Jefferson reported that the executive board has discussed this concern and is comfortable with the separation of the areas of practice within the firm, since the attorney working with ALA is not involved with labor relations litigation. There were concerns about a lack of publicity for this meeting and a lack of information about the ALA Allied Professional Association outside of the twice-yearly reports to Council. Executive Director Tracie Hall noted that we exceeded our virtual conference registration goal of 9,100 by 20 attendees as of Sunday morning and will provide daily registration updates for the rest of the conference.

# Council I

The meeting opened with a review of logistics and meeting rules. After confirming the existence of a quorum, reviewing the consent agenda (see below), and approving the [agenda](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%208.6%20Council%20I%20Agenda%20_%20DRAFT%20%28Version%205%29.pdf) and the minutes from the [Midwinter](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%202.3%20Midwinter%20Council%20Minutes_2021.pdf) and [March](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%202.4%20March%20Council%20minutes%20.pdf) Council meetings by unanimous consent, President Jefferson turned to the agenda. The consent agenda included the following committee reports:

* [Budget Analysis & Review Committee](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2033.1%20BARC%20Report.pptx)
* [Committee on Diversity](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2014.1%20Committee%20on%20Diversity.pdf)
* [Committee on Education](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2041.1%20Committee%20on%20Education.pdf)
* [Committee on Library Advocacy](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2042.1%20Committee%20on%20Library%20Advocacy.pdf)
* [Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2052%20Committee%20on%20the%20Status%20of%20Women%20in%20Librarianship.pdf)
* [Council Orientation Committee](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2031%20Council%20Orientation%20Committee.pdf)
* [Policy Monitoring Committee](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2017.1%20Policy%20Monitoring%20Committee%20Report.pdf)
* [Public Awareness Committee](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2038.1%20Public%20Awareness%20Report.pdf)
* [Publishing Committee](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2032%20Publishing%20Committee%20Report.pdf)

Items on the consent agenda are not discussed unless a discussion is requested by a councilor. There were no questions on the reports. As I recall, this is the first time we’ve had a consent agenda during my time on Council, so the lack of questions may reflect a lack of understanding about how the process should work, though it was explained before Council.

We then heard the reports from the [Resolutions Committee](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2010.2%20Resolutions%20Committee%20Report_0.pdf) and the [Nominations Committee](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/council/council_documents/councildocuments/CD%20%2312%20Nominations%20for%20the%20COC%20and%20PBA%20Election%20update_2.pdf). For the former, the outgoing chair gave his report in the form of a resolution thanking his colleagues. For the latter, the report listed the nominees for the Council Committee on Committees and the Council representatives to the Planning and Budget Assembly. There were no nominations from the floor for the Committee on Committees. A nomination from the floor for the Planning and Budget Assembly was not valid due to the proposed nominee’s ineligibility as they are leaving Council after this conference. Voting for these positions will happen immediately after Council I and results will be reported at an upcoming Council meeting.

The next section of the meeting was devoted to reports from special committees. The first one was from the [Forward Together Fiscal Analysis Working Group](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2037.1%20Fiscal%20Analysis%20Working%20Group.pdf) (FTFAWG). One of the challenges of the process for analyzing the resolutions related to Forward Together was that there was insufficient time (only 9 days) to complete the analysis, so the data are incomplete. In addition, the open-ended nature of some of the resolutions made it difficult (if not impossible) to provide a full analysis, since some costs cannot be calculated until it is known whether some of the governance groups being proposed will be meeting virtual, in person, or using a hybrid approach; likewise, the number of representatives on some of the proposed groups was also fluid, adding to the difficulties in estimating costs. The FTFAWG’s review of a [proposed standardized dues structure](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2037.1_a_Standardized%20Dues%20Structure%20for%20Divisions%20and%20Round%20Tables%20DRAFT.pdf) for ALA Divisions and Round Tables was also presented.

The [Forward Together Resolutions Working Group](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2046.1%20FTRWG%20Resolutions%20to%20Council_FINAL.pdf)’s report was presented. Of the proposed resolutions in the report, only two were deemed ready for presentation to Council: the resolutions on core values (item #1 on page 3) and round tables (item #2 on page 4). The remaining topics will be referred (motion to refer passed on a vote of 150 yes, 12 no, and 1 abstain) to a new, smaller working group to be appointed by incoming ALA President Patty Wong, with an extended timeline of reporting back to Council at a time determined by the president and executive board. Speakers offered a mixture of relief at having more time and frustration that the timeline is being extended, and there was a lot of discussion about the new working group’s composition, charge, and timeline. The core values resolution was approved (158 yes, 0 no, 2 abstain). Due to time constraints, the round tables resolution was deferred to Council II and Council 1 was adjourned.

Following up on a question from my notes on the membership information session, ALA Executive Director Tracie Hall provided the following list of cost containment measures implemented in the past year:

* general holds on hiring except for key positions;
* reduced meetings and travel except for mandatory travel related to business-development;
* reductions in purchasing new goods, supplies, and services;
* renegotiation of existing contracts for goods and services to better reflect actual use or volume

# Council II

One hour after the end of Council I (which was not quite enough time to answer all my work emails that piled up during the meeting), Council II began. After the usual start-of-meeting logistical discussions (including establishing a quorum and approving the [agenda](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%208.7%20Council%20II%20Agenda_%20DRAFT%20%28Version%204%29.pdf) as amended to include the resolution left over from Council I), we heard the report of [Executive Board actions](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2015.1%20Executive%20Board%20Actions%202021%20MDW%20Meeting%20updated%20v2.pdf) since the 2021 Midwinter Meeting as well as the [implementation report](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%209.1%20Implementation%20Report.pdf) of Council action items from that same meeting. From the Executive Board actions, one item of note is the selection of locations for future LibLearnX conferences: Orlando, FL (2024); Phoenix, AZ (2025); and Washington, DC/National Harbor (2026). The implementation report noted that Council’s new Committee on Sustainability has been appointed and that the working group on intellectual freedom and social justice has been formally appointed by the Executive Board with myself and Valerie Bell (chair, Committee on Diversity) as co-chairs.

The next agenda item was supposed to be continued discussion of the Forward Together Resolutions Working Group action items, but since the motion to refer most of those action items passed in Council I, we moved to the [Forward Together](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2046.1%20FTRWG%20Resolutions%20to%20Council_FINAL.pdf) resolution on round tables (item #2 on page 4) and approved it (154 yes, 4 no, 0 abstain) after some discussion. During the discussion, a proposed amendment to clarify language was ruled to be unnecessary by the presiding office, and other questions about how detailed the language should be will be addressed by the next round of resolution writing for Forward Together-related changes. Our bylaws will need to be updated as a result of this resolution, but those actions are being coordinated by (wait for it) the Round Table Coordinating Assembly, so stay tuned.

Next we heard the report from the [Committee on Organization](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2027.1%20Committee%20on%20Organization.pdf), which included five action items:

1. Expand the Policy Monitoring Committee membership: passed (158 yes, 1 no, 1 abstain)
2. Expand the Council Orientation Committee membership: passed (159 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain)
3. Create the ALA Code of Conduct Committee: passed (156 yes, 4 no, 1 abstain)
4. Disband the Committee on Membership Meetings [task completed, ongoing responsibilities addressed in #5 below]: passed (157 yes, 3 no, 0 abstain)
5. Change the charge of the Membership Committee to reflect new responsibilities [see #4 above]: passed (157 yes, 0 no, 2 abstain)

We then considered the [Resolution to Achieve Carbon Neutrality for ALA Conferences](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2053%20RESOLUTION%20to%20Achieve%20Carbon%20Neutrality%20for%20ALA%20Conferences%20Final%20Revised.pdf) and approved it (150 yes, 10 no, 3 abstain) after some discussion to ensure that divisions were also included and to understand the financial implications (e.g., if this had been in place for Midwinter 2020, ALA would have spent an additional $27K for carbon offsets, as only a fraction of these costs are covered through voluntary donations by members that are solicited at the time of conference registration. Council II was adjourned following announcements from Executive Director Tracie Hall, including .

# Council III

We began with the usual meeting logistics and announcements, then established a quorum and approved the [agenda](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%208.8%20Council%20III%20Agenda_DRAFT%20%28Version%2010%29_0.pdf) as amended to reflect some new resolutions and the removal of the report from [Digital Content Working Group](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2051%20Digital%20Content%20Working%20Group%20Report.pdf) due scheduling issues with the presenters. We then turned to the complete list of memorial and tribute resolutions (available near the bottom of the [documents list](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/Virtual_Council_Meetings)). Next up was the continuation of the Treasurer’s report, reviewing the budget and presenting the [Annual Estimates of Income](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2013.3%20Treasurer%27s%20Report%20and%20Annual%20Estimates%20of%20Income.pptx), which was approved by Council (156 yes, 1 no, 3 abstain). Most of the information Eli Mina, ALA Parliamentarian, asked to address an issue from Council II, in which a councilor called for a point of order after voting had opened on a resolution. The parliamentarian noted that no interruptions are allowed during voting, especially considering that the point of order was actually a question and not a point of order, which is a statement that parliamentary rules are not being followed (which, in this case, was not accurate).

Next came a report from the [Operating Agreement Working Group](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2040.1%20Operating%20Agreement%20Work%20Group%20Update%20and%20Motion%20June%202021.pdf) (OAWG). Last week the OAWG requested and received an extension of one year from the Executive Board and will complete their work by Annual 2022. The OAWG noted that the overhead rate charged to ALA units does not actually cover the costs classified as overhead, so ongoing discussions will look at options such as adjusting the rate or abandoning the rate altogether and moving to a unified budget. Please refer to the report for the full details.

The next section of the meeting was for committee reports. First was the [Constitution and Bylaws Committee](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2025-25.1%20Constitution%20and%20Bylaws%20Report%202020-2021.pdf), which asked Council to vote a second time as required on a constitutional amendment to clarify that Council and Membership meetings may be conducted electronically and would allow electronic voting at those meetings. Council approved this motion (157 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain). Next, the [Committee on Professional Ethics](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2024.1-24.2%20Committee%20on%20Professional%20Ethics.pdf) proposed the addition of a ninth principle to the ALA Code of Professional Ethics addressing the importance of social and racial justice as a professional value. The language of the ninth principle follows:

We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

Council voted to adopt the ninth principle with no changes (160 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain - first unanimous vote of the entire conference).

The next report, submitted in two parts online, was from the Intellectual Freedom Committee, which included updates on work from the Privacy Subcommittee and the Intellectual Freedom and Social Justice Working Group. The [Resolution on U.S. Enterprises' Abridgement of Free Speech](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2019.4%20Intellectual%20Freedom%20Committee_action%20item.pdf) (a joint IFC/International Relations Committee effort; available on page 9 of the first report) was approved by Council (158 yes, 0 no, 2 abstain). A footnote defining US enterprises as “intended to refer to corporations, businesses, and other commercial organizations based in the US. It is not directed at non-profit organizations such as libraries” will be added to the resolution by the Executive Director. [The Resolution in Support of Open Educational Resources](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD19.5-19.7%20Intellectual%20Freedom%20Committee_action%20items.pdf) (a joint IFC/Committee on Legislation effort; available on page 11 of the second report) was approved by Council (155 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain). Both of the resolutions had been endorsed by the IFRT.

There were no action items from the [Committee on Legislation](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2020.3%20Committee%20on%20Legislation_1.pdf) or the [International Relations Committee](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2018.1%20International%20Relations%20Committee.pdf), but their reports include updates on library-related federal funding and legislation and on awards and scholarships related to international library activities, respectively. The [Tellers](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2012.2%20Report%20of%20Tellers%20on%20COC%20and%20PBA%20Election.pdf) report provided the results of the elections for Council representation on two groups. Oscar Baeza, Regina Beard, K.C. Boyd, and Binh P. Le were elected to the Council Committee on Committees. Sharrese C. Castillo, Jos N. Holman, Trish Hull, Alanna Aiko Moore, and Edward Sanchez were elected as the Council representatives to the Planning and Budget Assembly.

Next on the agenda were the reports from “special” (i.e. non-standing Council) committees, including the [Freedom to Read Foundation](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2022.1%20Freedom%20to%20Read%20Foundation%20Report_0.pdf) (FTRF). For the FTRF report, updates on relevant court cases not included in the report were provided, including the ruling supporting student speech outside of school ([*Mahanoy Area School District v. B.L.*](https://www.oyez.org/cases/2020/20-255)). A document from the Executive Board providing [guidance to libraries in support of patron privacy as it relates to contact tracing](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2049%20Guidance%20to%20libraries%20in%20support%20of%20patron%20privacy%20as%20it%20relates%20to%20contact%20tracing_final_2021.pdf) was presented as another special report.

The final business items were two resolutions: the [Resolution on Greater Transparency in the Library of Congress Subject Headings Revision Process](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2055%20RESOLUTION%20on%20Greater%20Transparency%20in%20the%20Library%20of%20Congress%20Subject%20Headings%20Revision%20Process.pdf) (endorsed by the IFRT) and the [Resolution on Replacing the Library of Congress Subject Heading Illegal Aliens Without Further Delay](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2056%20RESOLUTION%20on%20Replacing%20the%20Library%20of%20Congress%20Subject%20Heading%20Illegal%20Aliens%20Without%20Further%20Delay%20Final.pdf) (not endorsed by the IFRT -- concerns raised by the Committee in Legislation were discussed as a issue during the board’s discussion). During the discussion of the process-focused resolution, concerns were raised about damaging the relationship with the Library of Congress and about setting a precedent of ALA directing a library (even the Library of Congress) what to do. Ultimately, the process-focused resolution was not approved by Council (24 yes, 125 no, 9 abstain). The specific LCSH resolution was referred to the Committee on Legislation (91 yes, 61 no, 6 abstain) after an extended debate about taking action vs. letting the political process work out.

Outgoing [councilors and Executive Board members](https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/ALA%20CD%2048%20Retiring%20Councilors%20and%20Executive%20Board%20Members_0.pdf) (including yours truly) were recognized at the end of the meeting, which did not end on time (and made us late for the closing session with former President Barack Obama). Executive Director Tracie Hall polled Council about their plans for attendance at LibLearnX to assist with planning for the event. The registration numbers as of Monday night were 9,133 compared to a goal of 9,100. Everyone was invited to attend the inauguration of Patty Wong before the meeting adjourned.