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**PLA Board of Directors Meeting**

**Virtual Meeting – 12:00-2:00pm Central, December 15, 2021**

**Present:** Melanie Huggins, President; Dr. Maria Taesil Hudson McCauley, President-elect; Directors-at-large: Amita Lonial, Erica Freudenberger, Toby Greenwalt, Candice Wing-yee Mack, Brandy McNeil, Dara Schmidt; Stephanie Chase, ALA Division Councilor; Clara Bohrer, Fiscal Officer

**Absent:** Michelle Jeske, Past President

**Guests:** Larry Neal, ALA Executive Board; Megan Cusick, ALA Public Policy and Advocacy Office; Deborah Caldwell-Stone, ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom

**PLA Staff:** Mary Davis Fournier, Executive Director; Larra Clark, Deputy Director; Lian Drago, Meetings Manager; Mary Hirsh, Deputy Director; Samantha Lopez, Manager, Marketing and Membership; Megan Stewart, Program Coordinator; Steven Hofmann, Manager, Web Communications; Kathleen Hughes, Manager, Publications; Melissa Johnson, Conference Manager; Nellie Barrett, Program Officer

1. Welcome, *Huggins.*
2. By consent, the board approved the adoption of the meeting agenda.
3. By consent, approved the consent agenda as presented.

EDISJ work, *Maria McCauley, PLA President-elect*

The meeting began with a two-word check-in, speaking on the topic of gratitude. Giving voice to gratitude helps to build resiliency. Board read the equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice goal from PLA’s Strategic Plan aloud and discussed PLA’s role in forwarding this work in the profession.

**Consent Agenda Document Number**

1. *Organizational Excellence and Governance*
   1. Draft October 2021 Board Minutes 2022.16

**Action/Discussion/Decision Items Document Number**

1. PLA President Update, *Melanie Huggins* no document

Huggins participated in a few interviews regarding the future of libraries: one with 1A (NPR) and another with an NPR affiliate in Illinois. She had a discussion with Patty Wong regarding the equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice (EDISJ) work being performed by ALA’s divisions and learned the ALA Allied Professional Association is developing an EDISJ training; Huggins offered to have PLA’s Committee on EDISJ review the trainings. Spoke with Carrie Willson, former PLA board member and director of Calvert (Md.) Library regarding the American Association of Publishers’ lawsuit against the state of Maryland. Lastly, Huggins recommends board members check out PLA Benchmark tool.

1. PLA President-elect Update, *Maria McCauley* no document

McCauley participated in strategic planning discussion with Fournier. She also completed Committee on Appointments work with ALA. Participated in ALA’s October 16 virtual Legislative Summit, which brought together collective body of advocates for ALA to get an overview of challenges currently taking place in libraries. In terms of advocacy work, she gave talks on digital equity and library access to digital content. She is also working on conference program prep for LibLearnX and PLA 2022.

1. PLA Liaison to ALA Executive Board Update, *Larry Neal* no document

The ALA Board signed on to the National Coalition Against Censorship; the path forward includes figuring out how ALA can best support members as they’re feeling pressure from so many angles. Board discussed approving Nominating Committee for 2023 Election. Registration for LibLearnX 2022 is lower than projected. ALA’s FY 2023 budget will be discussed at Board’s January meeting. The board also discussed ALA’s new hires and promotions.

1. PLA Executive Director Report, *Mary* *Davis Fournier* no document

The 2022 PLA Nominating Committee has approved a slate of candidates which is expected to be confirmed very soon; the slate will be announced to the board via ALA Connect rather than at a future meeting. The Benchmark platform is up and running. January 14 is the deadline to complete PLA’s library staff diversity survey. ALA staff will begin hybrid in-office, remote work schedule on January 4. The PLA staff gathered for strategic planning/EDISJ-focused retreat on November 17. Fournier made a site visit to Portland during the week of December 6 to meet with convention center staff, Visit Portland tourism representatives, and Vailey Oehlke and her team at Multnomah County Library. During the site visit, she toured the convention center and took a bus tour of routes the attendees will take. Visit Portland will provide free transit passes to conference attendees.

1. PLA 2022 Update and Discussion, *Melissa* *Johnson, all* 2022.17
   1. Action: Affirm Conference Format and Schedule

Given what staff saw during the site visit, the current registration numbers, and the reality of COVID, PLA staff is doing everything they can to provide a safe conference experience.

Action: The PLA Board votes to reaffirm plans to host the PLA 2022 Conference in-person, along with a with a virtual conference option.

**Motion passed.**

Additional discussion included concerns about smaller spaces in the convention center and attendees being turned away from program rooms. There are no plans to cap registration at a certain number. The board also recommended reaching out to Travel Portland for a list of black-owned businesses that attendees can support during the conference. The opening and closing sessions will be live streamed to those attending the virtual conference. The goal is to have 2,000-2,500 attendees and 1,000 exhibitors, which is about half the attendees as the PLA 2020 conference in Nashville.

1. Advocacy and Intellectual Freedom Update, *Larra Clark and Megan Cusick* no document

Caldwell-Stone: The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) is seeing censorship trends taking place, and there are efforts to organize legislation around censorship in the spring 2022 session. OIF is most concerned about proposals/efforts to charge librarians for obscenity crimes with respect to providing LGBTQA materials to communities. There are also increasing efforts to target public library boards for take-over to push censorship agendas. OIF is working daily with public and school libraries regarding these issues. Conservative national organization representatives are attending school board and public library board meetings to speak up about “bad book” lists. OIF is looking for public librarians who are willing to talk about censorship and its impact on their communities; she asks that anyone interested reach out to herself and Larra Clark. Caldwell-Stone also acknowledged ALA’s Kristin Pekoll for her work in this area.

Cusick: In the course of her work with ALA’s Public Policy and Advocacy Office (PPA), she’s seeing an increase in censorship campaigns, which switches conversations away from community-driven discussions. Rhetoric has gotten very heated. We’re seeing parties attempting to use the power of government to leverage censorship. Elected officials are also threatening to violate first amendment rights of readers. Government censorship does not end well. Local library leaders have a history of engaging with and acting on behalf of communities. This is not happening in isolation – there’s also been an increase of silencing voices at ballot boxes and quashing the ability to protest. We can expect to see efforts to censor online materials. Conversations that are taking place now have implications for the future. PPA stands for policies and practices which would allow libraries to best serve their communities. PPA will be releasing a legislative toolkit focusing on messaging, infrastructure (within ALA and with external partners), outreach and visibility, and legal support.

1. New Business, *all* no document

Bohrer recommended everyone view the ALA Connect post regarding the ALA Operating Agreement.

Fournier brought up scheduling a meeting for February 2022; please contact Fournier if there’s a Friday in February that you cannot attend. PLA staff will send out a Doodle poll for the purposes of scheduling the meeting.

Huggins is interested in scheduling an in-person get-together at PLA 2022.

Chase would like to discuss practical tools relating to censorship issues and what it means to support the first amendment. What is ALA doing to reach out to special districts? Can PLA’s Leadership Development Committee and Continuing Education Advisory Group tackle this work? Perhaps as a webinar? Huggins to connect with Fournier on these points.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55pm Central