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**PLA Board of Directors Meeting**

**Virtual Meeting – 1:00-4:00 pm Central, February 25, 2022**

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

**Absent:** Dara Schmidt

**Guests**: Larry Neal, ALA Executive Board; ALA Candidates for President Emily Drabinski and Kelvin Watson; ALA Candidate for Treasurer Peter Hepburn; PLA Presidential Candidates: Sonia Alcántara-Antoine and Kimberly Johnson; PLA Director‐at-Large Candidates: Ashlee Chavez, and Mary Ellen Icaza, Members of PLA Budget and Finance Committee: Edith Craig, Karen Danczak-Lyons, Kelly LaRocca, Mary Hastler, Chris Jowaisas and Cindy Fesemyer

**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; Melissa Johnson, Conference Manager; Nellie Barrett, Program Officer; Sara Goek, Program Manager

**Agenda**

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*

McCauley pointed the group to the revisited December statement [regarding censorship and the freedom to read](https://www.ala.org/advocacy/statement-regarding-censorship#:~:text=ALA%20strongly%20condemns%20these%20acts,resources%20and%20services%20of%20libraries)

The board had a robust conversation about its commitment to both intellectual freedom and EDISJ. The Board would like to see the association take action in providing practitioners with language and practical resources to respond to challenges. PLA should consider a more proactive approach to helping members, such as providing talking points.

**Consent Agenda Document Number**

1. *Organizational Excellence and Governance*
   1. Draft December 2021 Board Minutes 2022.18
2. Membership Report 2022.19

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

1. Introduction of ALA and PLA Election Candidates

The following Candidates for PLA and ALA election briefly introduced themselves:

ALA Candidates for President Emily Drabinski and Kelvin Watson; ALA Candidate for Treasurer Peter Hepburn; PLA Presidential Candidates: Sonia Alcántara-Antoine and Kimberly Johnson; PLA Director‐at-Large Candidates: Ashlee Chavez and Mary Ellen Icaza.

PLA Candidates [Michael Colford](https://www.ala.org/pla/about/people/election/colford) **and** [Ricardo Peralez](https://www.ala.org/pla/about/people/election/peralez) **were not present.**

1. PLA President Update, *Melanie Huggins*

Huggins continues to field media requests related to intellectual freedom and challenges. From a local standpoint, she is coordinating with colleagues from different library types across the state. It has been very valuable, more engaged in supporting school colleagues. Huggins encouraged her fellow board members to reach out in times of crisis, so school librarians, superintendents, and school board understand they have support for public library partners. Huggins thanked PLA staff for providing talking points and resources to use and share during these conversations.

1. PLA President-elect Update, *Maria McCauley*

McCauley attended recent ALA executive board conference call. She reported that the new e-learning and ecommerce system launched, and single sign on and membership system are undergoing upgrades. The new CFO was introduced on the call; the executive board is focusing on framework for budget planning.

McCauley is participating locally on e-book legislative, working with PPA. She also received training for virtual advocacy visits for Congressional visits.

1. PLA Liaison to ALA Executive Board Update, *Larry Neal*

Neal shared liaison update document from previous executive board meeting. At that meeting, ALA Executive Director Hall spoke on internal EDI initiatives, hiring and staff training, adding Institute for Study of Race to Center for the Future of Libraries. The executive board voted to include EDI metrics in Accreditation rubric.

PLA was thanked establishing model for conference health protocols that will be adopted for Annual. A closed session focused on review of draft audit, which will be made public later in the spring.

The spring board meeting will be hybrid and all are invited to listen in.

Neal reminded the board that this is a two-way conversation and he appreciated feedback about NYT opinion piece, will pass this on to the EB later today.

1. PLA Executive Director Report, *Mary* *Davis Fournier*

One month out from PLA Conference, Davis Fournier is impressed by PLA staff and conference team’s laser focus. PLA has five open positions currently posted, anticipating April start dates for new staff. Davis Fournier pointed to the membership report which shows clear path in areas for growth, with a focus on retention.

ALA has seen a tremendous acceleration of censorship activity, with many internal conversations. PLA staff agree there is a priority need for practical information and talking points. Davis Fournier will bring this conversation back to internal leadership. PLA is working with CMO, OIF, and PPA on media requests related to censorship; Huggins is an excellent spokesperson. ALA has retained a research firm to examine attitudes for a public campaign.

PLA has planned a town hall style webinar and conference forum in response to intellectual freedom challenges.

Davis Fournier will be attending an IMLS convening next week about empowering readers. Michelle Jeske and staff from Richland will also be present. One of the outputs will be a research agenda that PLA has informed and could take future action on.

The strategic planning refresh work continues, and the board should have a document to review at its June meeting.

Davis Fournier indicated ALA has hired a new CFO, filling an important role. She is grateful for Clara Bohrer’s mentorship and guidance as she familiarizes herself with PLA finance and budgeting practice.

1. Fiscal Officer Report, *Clara Bohrer*

PLA received financials too close to the meeting to have a report ready.

2021 was much better than budgeted as PLA did not spend down nearly what was budgeted.

There are also some discrepancies in Q1 2022 that need to be investigated. Bohrer does not anticipate there will be an overall change in PLA’s financial position based on the results.

Bohrer and Davis Fournier have asked for the ALA financial report schedule so we can build PLA board meetings around report availability.

1. Operating Agreement Discussion, *Bohrer*

Bohrer thanked PLA Board members for attending recent operating agreement workgroup meeting. Divisions have been asked to provide feedback to operating agreement committee. There are two parts to discuss: First, the financial model followed by everything else we want to see. For the work group, the next step is writing actual policy and relationship document. The operating agreement work group unanimously puts forth the proposal for No Overhead.

Proposed Financial Model with No Overhead

If this passes, there will not be net asset balances for divisions. This change will use finances to support entire organization.

PLA has not used its NAB in over a decade as PLA is fiscally responsible and brings in revenue to cover expenses. Right now, NAB is on paper only, and ALA does not have the cash flow to pay it out. The key change will be getting the budget we want for special projects, based on our track record of success. This will have to be based on trust.

There are questions about how divisions get funded, especially with regards to special projects or new investments for innovations, fundraising, and staffing.

There are addition questions regarding using endowment interest to fund projects, as well as transferring funds to the endowment. Bohrer believes there should be a mechanism for this, with funds available to support special projects.

Huggins reiterated the importance of holding core service provision units accountable. Units have engaged outside services to fill gaps, which led to over-complications. Huggins would like to see service level agreements with core service units. She questioned if PLA’s approval of a new operating agreement is contingent on accountability.

Other observations include:

* General fund and mission driven units will all benefit from this which could lead to better collaboration.
* Calling for two-year budget and suggesting considering three-year rolling budget to collaborate on off years.
* Ability to determine our own staffing is a very important question to ask.
* Need super clear expectation about member experience
* ALA should put together process for budgeting that supports Pivot Plan and move backward from there.

As a next step, this conversation will be condensed into a memo for the two operating agreements work group chairs. The chairs will be invited to speak to board in April. Ultimately the executive board approves the fiscal aspect, policy changes go before a vote of council.

1. PLA 2022 Conference Update, *Melissa* *Johnson*

Johnson is excited to share that there are over 3200 full conference registrants, and housing is on track to not incur any attrition. Exhibits are also tracking on budget despite a few big publishers dropping out due to ongoing staff travel limitations.

Covid safety measures including requiring proof of vaccination or negative test will be in place, along with mandatory indoor masking. PLA Hired Safe Expo to verify, contract getting finalized now, and Safe Expo staff will be on hand for onsite vaccination and negative tests. PLA believes are attendance numbers are strong because of these safety measures. This approach aligns with conference best practice and has gone through rigorous legal review

The budget is on track, and we will continue to see increase registration revenue. Virtual Conference registration is doing extremely well.

All the exciting aspects of conference will still be there, including Career center, giving back, Big Ideas, pop up shops and other things on exhibit floor. This is not a pared down event. Three libraries are hosting library experiences, including Anything, Richland, Multnomah.

The board encourages PLA staff to consider future Virtual Conference plans, keeping the 2022 robust offerings into 2024 and beyond. The board also encouraged PLA staff to consider how to engage rural libraries around the host city in 2024.

PLA staff will provided a high level day-by-day schedule for Board members and exhibit floor plan and assignments for Board members to thank exhibitors.

1. New Business, *all*

Huggins enjoys writing columns for *Public Libraries*. The March-April column is about 2 years of Covid.