Council Forum

1-25-2021

**Tribute resolution for Ona Šimaitė**

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:
honors and is grateful to Ona Šimaitė for her dedication, courage, and achievements to the “beloved profession” of librarianship, the preservation of archives, protection of history, and serving as a beacon of humanity in the midst of barbarism;
expresses its gratitude for the example she set to librarians and archivists across the world.

Mover presented. Councilor asked mover to give more background on Ona Šimaitė. Mover summarized her actions and deeds. Many councilors commented on this being a deserving tribute. Councilor noted that movers are not asked to speak to tribute resolutions, but thought that the context mover provided was something others should hear. Suggested that mover use point of personal privilege to ask to speak.

**Update on the change from Programmatic Priorities to Budget Objectives**

Background: In accordance with ALA Bylaws (Article IX, Sec. 1), the ALA Executive Board presents to the ALA Council both the annual estimates of income and the budget objectives for approval.

Treasurer presented. Gave an overview and talked about how this year the focus has been on budget structure and if that is not paid attention to, then can’t reach programmatic priorities. Would like for at least this year to focus on Budget Objectives instead of Programmatic Priorities. Noted that Council approves, but does not develop the Budget Objectives, these are developed by the Executive Board. Councilor – Thank you for this reorganization, it gives Council and Membership a method by which to measure where we are with our goals. Treasurer – wanted to focus on 4 – 6 and they have settled on 5. Councilor – “Aligning expenditures with revenues,” but when you look at organizing, some expenditures do not generate revenue. Treasurer – to make certain we don’t spend more than we are making. Programmatic priorities developed by the Strategic Plan, Council is involved in that. However, if we do not meet Budget Objectives, we can’t meet Programmatic Priorities and therefore our Strategic Plan. Councilor – not sure about Programmatic Priorities. Councilor – gave overview and historical review. Treasurer – referred to Bylaws and the 2 items that Council votes on. Councilor – Which objective will address concern regarding financial transparency, there is still concern on how long it takes to get information and how it impedes decision making. Treasurer – Budget metrics addresses this a little and some of financial stability. Some of this is dependent on contracts that we are already in and we have to finish those contracts. Some changes are being made such as moving from monthly reports to quarterly reports, as it takes much time and effort from Finance Office to prepare those reports and not enough information. Search for CFO will begin very soon and this person will be looking at a lot of this. Councilor – The new CFO will help stabilize. Surplus is not like a “bag of money” but a contingency fund “air bag.” Thanks Treasurer for giving a clear high level view. Treasurer – Surplus is a word we are tripping over, the current surplus is just over $500,000; need to have a contingency plan. Councilor – thanks again for the clear overview. May want to call it budget reserves instead of surplus to make that clear. Treasurer – will note other terminology and refer to when presenting to Council. Treasurer – Question from chat re new IT systems, will there be a budgeting module? Answer – just like libraries there are a number of software packages and they are not integrated. Would look to the new CFO to analyze and recommend ways of integrating this. Budgeting software is currently in-house, but may be better to outsource the software. Denise Moritz has been very open and transparent this year, but need a permanent CFO to move us forward. Councilor – I thought we were getting an ERM that would bring all of our IT up to date? If it is not integrated, then new and better isn’t better. Treasurer – IT question and outside of the scope of this discussion. A lot of IT changes have been about software and moving to the cloud, but not budget software. IT has made a lot of improvements, but financial software hasn’t changed very much. ERM impacts membership and membership dues. We were concerned about IT overspend. Denise has worked with IT and they now meet monthly with Finance Office, keeps their own set of books and double checks that with the Finance Office. That has really helped with tracking expenses. Councilor – In addition to CFO, we need someone to be looking at the technology issues and need a CTO. Is that being looked at? Treasurer – Agree, believe that those key leadership positions will be filled by next year.

Councilor – will there be in between meetings like we had in the fall. EB Member – we don’t have anything yet, expect for the Forward Together Resolutions Working Group report. but this is owned by Council. Councilor – do we know anything about Annual? Councilor – I believe we will have something after MidWinter. Councilor – Forward Together Resolutions Working Group will report by March. That is the last action that Council has taken. This group has not met yet. Councilor – Forward Together report has been given, not Resolutions Working Group, they may not be able to meet that deadline. Councilor – Isn’t the Forward Together Resolution Working Group going to be incremental? Will look bad if we push back the date without putting anything forward. Councilor – We cannot go into the Council meeting tomorrow and delay what we just voted on. Timeline was ambitious, but we need to come back in March with something to work on. Councilor – Focused on language, language says group will provide an update of their work in March. President can call on additional meetings as necessary. As a member of this WG, would ask to begin with a timeline. The way it is written, WG doesn’t have to be done by March. Councilor – Reiterated previous speaker. Councilor – Don’t we have people on the call who are members of the new group? (Another Councilor added if so, they can speak or wait until they have something to present.)