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**PLA Board of Directors Meeting**

**September 10, 2021**

**Virtual**

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

**Absent:** Amita Lonial, Director-at-large

**Guests:** Larry Neal, ALA Executive Board

**PLA Staff:** Mary Davis Fournier, Executive Director; Scott Allen, Deputy Director; Larra Clark, Deputy Director; Lian Drago, Meetings Manager; Sara Goek, Program Manager; Mary Hirsh, Deputy Director; Samantha Lopez, Manager, Marketing and Membership; Megan Stewart, Program Coordinator

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

**Consent Agenda Document Number**

* 1. Draft June 2021 Board Minutes 2022.1

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

1. PLA President Update, *Huggins* (no document). Media requests and interviews continue to keep Huggins busy, focusing on the Building America’s Libraries Act, eliminating fines, the roles that libraries play in education and equity, and other issues. Huggins also presented at the National Library of the Philippines virtual conference. Huggins and Fournier are convening regularly, and Huggins has participated in a planning meeting for PLA 2022.
2. PLA President-elect Update, *McCauley* (no document). MacCauley has been getting up to speed by reading and meeting with staff and leaders. MacCauley read powerful quotes about PLA and its members from the recent strategic plan update, which speak to the board’s responsibility to carry out the mission and programming. MacCauley also commented on the equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice (EDISJ) work of PLA, and how PLA’s EDISJ committee has connected readers to the [Fugitive Libraries](https://placesjournal.org/article/fugitive-libraries/) article, which describes the rise and subsequent attacks on Black libraries and the lack of support or response from the organized library community. The need for PLA to do work in this area and *lead* is critical. She encouraged the board to consider what its role is in this work and will be leading some board exercises around this in the future.
3. PLA Executive Director Update, *Fournier* (no document). Fournier also thanked MacCauley for agreeing to lead strategic and EDISJ efforts of the board. She noted that furloughs and summer vacations have ended, so PLA staff is back on regular schedules. Fournier is having bimonthly meetings with ALA Executive Director Tracie Hall, participating on a newly created operations working group, and pulling together an informal ‘orientation’ program for herself which will also help new leaders in the Association for College and Research Libraries (ACRL) and the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS). She is also scheduling meetings with external partners for introductions and updates. She noted the upcoming committee orientation, launching of PLA 2022 registration on September 22, program acceptance notices for PLA 2022, and discussions with the ALA Membership Office to improve the member experience in relation to joining and registering for PLA 2022. An update on the strategic plan refresh will be held next month. Fournier and Hirsh are working on plans for a staff retreat, including review of duties and capacities to be able to implement the board’s strategic plan goals. Fournier continues to become familiar with PLA and ALA budgeting and will be presenting PLA’s FY22 budget to ALA leadership next week. PLA will be hiring a temporary employee for some urgent data initiatives and other work, and Fournier also just received approval to hire for three vacant, grant-funded positions (two Program Managers, and one Program Coordinator). Collaborating with ALA Human Resources, as well as ODLOS, to ensure a diverse candidate pool is a priority.
4. PLA Liaison to ALA Executive Board Update, *Neal* (2022.2). Neal has received a continuing assignment to liaison to the PLA board. Neal continues to work on having Executive Board updates be concise and distributed widely, and he encouraged PLA leaders to give feedback. The Executive Board has been discussing the status of LibLearnX. Issues ALA has been discussing include ALA’s role in encouraging people to convene, burdens on staff, political issues, and more. Related, it was suggested that members review the ALA issue brief about recent Texas legislation and the risk to librarians of providing information on abortion. In terms of LibLearnX, a decision was made and will be announced shortly. Communicating about how ALA makes decisions and what the ramifications are is critical. The ALA Executive Board will hold its next meetings in October. Neal has been appointed to ALA’s budget committee.
5. PLA Committees Update, *Huggins, all* (2022.3). The process of reviewing volunteers interested in serving on PLA committees, task forces and other groups was informative. Many members are interested in serving on those groups. Huggins’ goal is to make sure the effort PLA and staff put into managing committees is worthwhile and benefiting PLA’s strategic direction. Committees should focus on the ALA pivot strategy goals, which involve revenue, partnerships and EDISJ. There are no new committees in development at this time, and more discussion needs to be held about how and when committee might be sunset. It was noted that other roles for PLA committees are to engage members, to provide volunteer experience to public library staff, and to be a “pathway,” so they are prepared to engage at other levels, including within the larger ALA. Creating more diversity within committee memberships, and helping committees more directly connect to the populations they serve, was also stressed. This work has to be intentional. As a first step, PLA and ALA need to require more demographic information in the application process (it was confirmed during the meeting that ALA will be adding new questions to the form). PLA should also review how we promote the committee volunteer process, since there could be specific groups we reach out to, encouraging application from more diverse public librarians. Finally, it was suggested that PLA could solicit additional information from applicants, independent of the ALA volunteer form, as part of the process.
6. FY21 Financial Update, *Bohrer* (2022.4, 2022.5a-d). The third quarter report for FY21 was included in the packet. In FY21, PLA was expected to lose (spend down) around $500,000 but is only at $68,000 as of May 2021. Dues income has not dropped to the low level budgeted, however PLA needs to watch the final FY21 quarter reports, because while revenue has been higher than anticipated, membership numbers are low. Also noted was that the substitution of virtual events for the planned live training events has generated similar new revenue for PLA. The Long-Term Investment (LTI) is doing well. It was reiterated that despite PLA’s intention to move funds from our fund balance into the LTI, those transfers will not happen due to ALA’s cash situation. It was also noted that due to timing, PLA’s final FY21 budget did not include a few grants even though PLA was aware near the end of the budgeting process that they were coming. This has resulted in a large budget-to-actual discrepancy. Overhead amounts paid to ALA were also reviewed. Bohrer also reported that the Budget and Finance Committee has new members, so there will be an orientation, and that Bohrer will be attending the long ALA Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC) meetings later this fall.
7. Upcoming PLA Board Meetings, *Huggins, all* (no document). Members discussed whether or not they would attend the PLA board meeting at LibLearnX, if it continues to be held as a live event. Meeting in advance of the PLA 2022 Conference in Portland was also briefly discussed.
8. ALA Executive Board Conference calls, *Fournier, all* (2022.6). As in the past, board members will be asked to sign up to sit in on the ALA Executive Board calls. A poll will be circulated so members can sign up.
9. New Business, *all* (no document).
   1. PLA Awards Program: The status was discussed. As it developed over time, the previous PLA awards program recognized a random assortment of library accomplishments, was losing many sponsors over the years, and was not creating the strong recognition for libraries or PLA as intended. Allen explained that the subcommittee identified to refresh the awards program was not convened as planned. Some staff-level research was done to identify promising models, but staff time to move this forward was limited, and as COVID dragged on and many libraries remained closed, it also seemed like an odd time to unveil a new program asking members to submit their “best work.” Fournier, Allen and Stewart will meet and restart the plan to identify a new awards program.
   2. Build America’s Libraries Act: Clark updated the status of ALA’s efforts related to the Act. She reported that the Act is part of the budget reconciliation process. It is not in the bipartisan infrastructure bill. How ALA and PLA members can help was discussed.
   3. Status of PLA 2022: Fournier noted that if the COVID situation deems it necessary, PLA will be deciding whether to keep PLA 2022 live or go virtual in December 2021. Members suggested that PLA might survey potential attendees now to determine if they intend to travel to PLA 2022. Fournier will bring that suggestion back to the conference planning team.
10. Adjournment, *all* (no document). There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40pm Central. The next meeting of the board will be held on Friday, October 22, 2021, from 1pm to 4pm Central.