

**PLA Executive Committee
Fall Meeting
October 19 & 20, 2007
Chicago, IL**

ACTIONS

Present:

Jan Sanders, President; Carol Sheffer, President-Elect, Susan Hildreth, Past President; Carolyn Anthony, Issues and Concerns Cluster Chair; Alan Harkness, Library Development Cluster Chair; Marcellus Turner, Library Services Cluster Chair; Norman Maas, Division Councilor; Greta Southard, PLA Executive Director.

Staff in attendance: Linda Bostrom, Kathleen Chau, Kathleen Hughes, Joseph Potaczek, Angela Thullen, Louisa Worthington; Susan Zillman.

1. **By consent** approved the adoption of the revised agenda.
2. **By consent**, accepted the following reports on the consent agenda:
 - a. Draft 2007 Annual Conference Board Actions, 2008.2; Publications Report, 2008.3; Membership Report, 2008.4; "Public Libraries" Magazine Report, 2008.5; Education Activities Report, 2008.6; 2009 Spring Symposium Update Report 2008.7
3. Received 2008 National Conference Report, 2008.8. Registration is open and tracking 100% ahead of comparable point in time—however—this early indicator should not be relied up on as a precursor for ongoing registration uptake; have sold 746 booths and 17 table-tops in exhibit hall; have run out of hotel rooms on Tuesday and Friday nights (shoulder nights), however, securing 4 additional hotels, all rooming requests will be filled. The housing block is 65% sold.
4. Voted to approve, request to Changes to Policies for PLA National Conferences, Policies Governing Speakers, 2008.9 to eliminate item number #25 of said policy which provides for reimbursement to speakers for duplication costs of hand-outs to be distributed to program attendees, and renumber the remainder of the policy. Approved.
5. Voted to approve, request to Change Speaker Honoraria and Expense Reimbursement Policies, Appendix 1 to the PLA Guide, 2008.14. The following guidelines enable speakers at the PLA National Conferences and at PLA programs at ALA Annual Conference to determine their individual eligibility for reimbursement and honoraria. Policy will be revised to read: Speakers who are not members of ALA may be eligible as follows: those who are *librarians presently working in public libraries* are eligible for waivers of conference registration fees only on the day(s) they are speaking, at PLA National Conferences only.

6. Received FY2007 Year-End Financial Analysis and Management Report, 2008.10 and accompanying FY2007 Year-To-Date by Project Report. Reports are based on the second ALA close, by the fourth and final close; expect to end the year about 8% under budget with a Fund Balance of 190,000 rather than the \$233,000. Produced a high print run (10,000 copies) of the PLA Toolkit based on initial discussions with the Gates Foundation regarding the advocacy training grant. The grant will pay for each participant to receive a copy of the toolkit. The Executive Director articulated concern about the sustainability of the Institutional Scholarship Pilot project. Dues income is not sufficient to support this initiative. Executive Committee (EC) asked President Elect Sheffer to liaison to the Awards Committee with the intent of analyzing the sustainability of the pilot project. EC determined that PLA was not ready to do an annual appeal as initially discussed by the Budget & Finance (B&F) Committee at 2007 Annual Conference. Concern was expressed about the timing as related to the potential appeal to the membership to approve a bylaws change. Asked that B&F look at the feasibility of tying an annual appeal to a specific program.
7. Received Gates Project Report, 2008.12. Project staff has been hired: Kathleen Chau, project manager; Mary Hirsh, program coordinator; Susan Zillman, independent contractor to fill the part-time communications manager position, contracted with Sandra Nelson to provide library lens on the instructional design of the curriculum. RFP conducted to hire the communications firm to serve as the communications and advocacy expert in the development of the curriculum. Negotiations still in progress with the firm identified as best suiting our needs. Convened a meeting in September with the year one state intermediaries and the Gates Foundation to provide an overview of the program currently in development.
8. Reviewed the discussion generated by the ALA concurrent session. The focus of that session was facilitated discussion/group work as related to the Seven Measures of Success book. Alan Harkness volunteered to represent PLA on the subsequent work group that ALA is convening also know as the "committee of 12".
9. Reviewed the Volunteer Restructuring Report, 2008.13. The report was created from the 2007 Annual Conference Board Mega Issue discussion regarding organizational restructuring. The entire report is included for purposes of clarity regarding the decisions made by the EC. The EC decisions are noted via track changes:

The Public Library Association **(PLA)**

Board of Directors:
Continuation of Mega Issue Discussion on:

*How do we maximize our volunteer work force
and create a more nimble structure in order to
respond effectively and efficiently to member
needs?*

June 25, 2007

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INTRODUCTION

On June 25, 2007, the Public Library Association's (PLA) Board of Directors met to discuss the recommendations developed by the PLA Executive Committee on how to address the Mega Issue:

How do we maximize our volunteer work force and create a more nimble structure in order to respond effectively and efficiently to member needs?

The Executive Committee used the work begun by the Board at their January 2007 meeting as their knowledge base and starting point for discussion. Recommendations made by the Executive Committee are included below with additional comments made by the Board of Directors. The recommendations put forward by the Executive Committee responded directly to the recommendations created by the Board during their January meeting (see complete report from meeting for additional details).

Paul D. Meyer, CAE, Principal Partner, Tecker Consultants, provided an external context for the discussion on governance change. He presented to the Board the information used by the Executive Committee has important considerations in thinking about a new governing and volunteer workforce structure for PLA.

Paul Meyer's presentation included:

- Trust is very important in making governance and organizations work well;
- Knowledge is key to making good decisions, the Board and staff must collect data and information so that the Board will have the necessary tools to make good decisions;
- Nimbleness is another key element for effective associations--how can we ensure that we are a nimble organization is one of our central questions;
- Key concepts: 3 types of member groups are needed by an association—1) those who govern (Boards/Executive Committees), 2) those who do the ongoing work of the association (Committees) and 3) those who are created for limited specific tasks (Task Forces);

Not-for-profit Board Trends:

- There is no single "right" structure emerging;
- Boards are getting smaller;
- Boards are moving toward competency/knowledge-based;
- Associations are eliminating or decreasing the role of Executive Committees;
- Nominating Committees are evolving into Leadership Development Committees;
- Use of advisory groups is increasing;
- Boards are transitioning from representative positions to at-large positions;
- Boards are embracing the value of diverse opinions;
- Process is being emphasized more than structure;
- Movement toward defining and delegating rather than reacting and ratifying;
- Informed dialogue is becoming increasingly important;
- Information collection and analysis is becoming more important/research agendas expanding;
- Agendas are changing – consent agenda is the norm/four-part agenda
- Focus on strategy and "mega issues" for both the association and field/industry/profession are being discussed;
- Use of technology tools for discussion between meetings;

- Communication to focusing on the “what” and the “why” decisions are being made;
- “Oversight” is a key word – leadership oversight, cultural oversight, and operational oversight;
- Better understanding of association finances is becoming crucial;

Volunteer Work Force (Committees) Trends:

- Flexible structures to allow groups to discontinue or morph – less standing committees and more task forces;
- Competent leadership/facilitation skills;
- Are delegated an appropriate level of decision-making authority;
- Assigned a specific charge connected to strategic direction;
- Are not micro-managed by leadership;
- Understand resource opportunities/limitations – staff and financial;
- Include diverse/cross-functional experience;
- Are held accountable for outcomes rather than just outputs;
- Regularly evaluate need/willingness to disband;
- Serve for necessary period of time;

DISCUSSION ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Next, Paul Meyer presented to the Board the draft recommendations created by the Executive Committee and the Board provided comments and suggestions provided below.

Future Board of Directors (timeframe for change was not determined)

- 10 member Board including:
 - President
 - President-elect
 - Past President
 - ALA counselor
 - Six at-large Board members with staggered terms (two elected each year)
 - One Alta ex-officio member appointed by ALTA

Our Practice or overriding principles include:

- No representation from specific committees on the PLA Board with the exception of Budget and Nominating as related to the following practices;
- Our practice will be that the most recent past president is asked by the president to chair the nominating committee, see next section for more detail;
- Our practice will be to appoint the President, President Elect, and Past President to the Budget & Finance Committee in addition to members at large to ensure organizational continuity in the development of our budget priorities and strategies.
- Our practice will be that Competencies needed on the Board are driven by strategic plan

Comments from Board on Board of Directors Recommendations:

- The Board supported the recommendations above.

Nominating Committee

- Seven Member Nominating Committee
 - Past President serves as Chair
 - Expand Nominating Committee to allow for greater representation
 - President-elect appoints Nominating Committee
 - Members serve one-year terms and/or through election cycle
- Committee plays a role in developing and mentoring new leaders.
- Practice/policy document will be created codifying the function, purpose and intent of the nominating committee

Comments from Board on Nominating Committee Recommendations:

- Generally, Board supported recommendations above.
- There was some discussion over the importance of staggered terms and the possibility of two-year terms to create greater continuity.
- Requires a more proactive call for nominations and defined competencies created by the Board.

Nominating Committee is a neutral party not a committee of the Board. ___

Standing Committees (Ongoing)

Characteristics:

- Considered permanent committees.
- Support ongoing association activities and operations.
- May have budget responsibilities.
- Appointed by the PLA leadership.

Recommended Standing Committees:

- Program Coordinating Committee – Responsible for:
 - Annual Programs
 - Symposium
 - National conference
 - Note, the Program Coordinating Committee is large, more than the current 12 appointments.
- Nominations Committee (past president as chair)
- Budget Committee
- Bylaws Committee (subset of board when needed)
- Awards Committee Juries (President appoints juries) – Awards jurors sit on Awards Committee
- National Conference Committee (Chair serves on Program Coordinating Committee)
- -Legislative Committee (direct responsibility to Board)—determined that this will be an Advisory Group to the Board, not a standing committee named in the Bylaws.
- Publications Committee – Responsible for:
 - PLA monographs
 - Electronic communication advisory
 - Public library advisory
 - Statistical report

- University press books?—decided to delete this committee. Will not make new appointments to this committee. Southard to notify the Association of University Press Publishers of our decision.

All other committees that currently exist and not mentioned above will be disbanded.

Comments from Board on Standing Committee Recommendations:

- Generally, Board supported recommendations above.
- There was some discussion on whether the Legislative Committee should be a standing committee. It was suggested that ad hoc groups may be a better approach to responding to legislative issues. PLA Representative to the ALA Legislative Assembly could become a responsibility of the Board during times when PLA does not decide to appoint a Legislative Advisory Group.
- There was significant discussion on how to maintain PLA's voice on the ALA level and how to handle that link. No final conclusions were made.
- Publication Committee – there would not necessary be a reporting up requirement to the Board.
- Committees will continue to have written charges and members will be appointed to serve.

Advisory Groups

Characteristics:

- Primary role is to advise the PLA Board of Directors and Executive Committee on areas of relevant issues and/or areas of practice.
- Do not have budget authority.
- Ongoing, but reviewed annually for relevance.
- Members serve multi-year and staggered terms.
- Members are appointed based on their expertise in the subject area.
- Work product consists of policy statements, white papers, research, etc. for use by the PLA leadership in decision-making.

Recommended Advisory Groups:

- Intellectual Freedom (Chair continues to be liaison to ALA IFC)
- Legislative Advisory (Chair continues to be liaison to ALA Legislative Assembly)

Comments from Board on Advisory Group Recommendations:

- Clarification Provided: Current subject interest groups housed in the existing Cluster Committee structure would be turned into Advisory Groups, they are not standing committees.
- Board suggested that PLA check our definitions against ALA definitions—may have to change names.
- Board supported recommendations outlined above.

Working Teams (Groups) or Task Force

Characteristics:

- Project driven.
- Shorter term – provide beginning and end point.
- Subject to annual review for continued relevance.

- Specific charge/task is provided.
- Members may be appointed by the group's leader.
- Disbanded when work is accomplished.
- May have budget responsibility.

Comments from Board on Working Teams Recommendations:

- Board supported recommendations outlined above.

Communities of Practice (COPs)

Characteristics:

- PLA provides technology to support COPs (My PLAspace)
- Communicate and network primarily virtually, but may meet face-to-face.
- Self-emerging.
- Provide ability to post documents, pictures, links, etc. online.
- Provide online ability to connect with other communities of practice.
- Self-sustaining.
- Dedicated staff available to support technology and systems.
- Leadership can be appointed or can come from the community. Leadership is not required, but encouraged.
- Do not have representation on Board.
- Board may solicit ideas/projects of COPs.
- PLA membership is required for participation although non-members may be able to view discussions.—EC determined that membership is required, non-members will not have access to COP
- Specific communities will not have assigned staff support.
- Communities cannot speak on behalf of PLA
- Integrated with electronic newsletter and PLA directory, etc.
- Can create recommendations for consideration of programs and services.
- Work Teams (Groups) doing a project of the association, may morph into a community of practice.
- Communities of Practice (COP)—not necessarily doing the work of the association. They provide a venue for subject interest discussion, and are a benefit of membership—networking avenues.

Comments from Board on Communities of Practice Recommendations:

- Board supported recommendations outlined above.
- It was noted that the association will need robust community technology to support COPs
- May be appropriate to provide a venue for COPs to meet face-to-face, but not required.
- COPs could be a very powerful way of empowering people.

Parking Lot Issue for Future Discussion:

- Consider provided a virtual membership category—how would this fly? What would be the restrictions/limitations imposed by ALA?? Could this somehow coordinate with an organizational membership?

MOTION AND NEXT STEPS

Motion was put forward to approve, in concept, the reorganization recommendations outlined above. The motion was approved.

Next Steps:

- Create a task force of members to discuss bylaws implications, create an implementation strategy and timeline.
- Create a COP pilot program possibly considering the topics: technology in public libraries and readers advisory.
- Report out at the fall meeting, October 2007, with the intent that the bylaws change and reorganization be presented to the PLA membership for a vote within one year of the final report to the Board.

Additionally, the EC determined that the following steps should be taken:

- In the future, the All Committee meeting should be retained. At this meeting, the President will make remarks and update the members on the state of the association.
- Development of a transition plan
- New Bylaws will be drafted. **Those Bylaws will not include the provision for an Executive Committee. The Board will operate as a committee of the whole. The Board will be responsible for attending 4 meetings a year: Fall, Midwinter, Spring, and Annual Conference.
- President is responsible for appointing liaisons.
- More electronic lists will be developed.
- Advisory groups can petition the Board to become a task force once the task is complete the group reverts back to the original status of an advisory group. ** This provision must be created in the new Bylaws.
- **The Board has the authority to create work groups, appoint task forces, and to disband or sunset such groups when their project is complete.
- The membership will need to be informed and educated as to the new opportunities for involvement.
 - Information will be posted on the website;
 - New processes and procedures will be drafted explaining how we work;
 - Self registration form will be available on the website for the creation/participation in a community of practice; communities of practice will be activated based on adherence to the ground rules governing participation;
 - Pilot a few communities of practice this spring to assess transition issues. Potential committees to pilot as communities of practice include: Technology in Public Libraries Cmt; Cataloging in Public Libraries; Readers Advisory Cmt.
 - Self registration form will be available on the website and feed a database for service on committees. President Elect will make appointments for committee service to commence during their presidential year.

- Look at the possibility of creating a virtual membership only category.

To do's included:

- Draft Bylaws
- Create timeline
- Develop a transition plan
- Develop communication plan
- Develop new processes to include
 - Draft over riding principles/practices policy documents
 - Draft job descriptions for Board positions to guide the work of the Nominating Committee, and to be used to inform the potential Board candidates of their responsibilities
 - Draft competencies for service on the Nominating Committee
 - Develop new Board meeting schedule