President Elaine Lawless called the 2008 spring meeting of the Executive Board to order at 10:07 am on Friday, April 4, 2008, in Room 320 of the Mershon Center on the Ohio State University campus in Columbus. Members present: Tim Evans, Diane Goldstein, AFS Past President Bill Ivey, Elaine Lawless, Carl Lindahl, Lucy Long, Marsha MacDowell, Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Guha Shankar, Daniel Sheehy, Kay Turner, and Patricia Turner. Members absent: none. Executive Director Timothy Lloyd and Associate Director Maria Teresa Agozzino were also present. As per the Executive Board directive of October 17, 1991, this meeting was recorded on minidisk.

Elaine Lawless welcomed the board and called for the review and approval of the minutes of the October 2007 meeting. Two typographical errors were noted and corrected. Guha Shankar moved that the minutes of the October 2007 meeting be approved as corrected. Bill Ivey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Elaine Lawless then delivered her President’s report, focusing on her desire for AFS to continue undertaking work to support and strengthen the place of folklore in the academy.

Timothy Lloyd then delivered his Executive Director’s report, focusing on Society finances and plans for this year's annual meeting in Louisville. The present year has been a difficult one financially for the Society, since the costs of the 2007 annual meeting in Québec were much higher than anticipated (partly due to the low value of the US dollar compared to the Canadian dollar), the value of our investments has declined as part of a larger downturn in the stock market, and in 2007 the Society undertook several activities, including our China project, that had not been budgeted for and from which no revenue has been received. The total pledged or given to the AFS endowment fund, on the other hand, has grown to just under $1 million.

Plenary speakers for the Louisville annual meeting have been selected (Alessandro Portelli, Ruth Behar, and Carl Lindahl), and the meeting itself ill be preceded by one of the Board’s biennial meetings with the heads of academic folklore programs and public folklore organizations.

Lloyd then distributed copies of the report on the annual audit of Society financial recordkeeping for fiscal year 2007 (September 2006-August 2007), which contained a “clean opinion”: the judgment that Society financial recordkeeping for the year accurately represented the actual state of the Society’s finances.
The meeting paused briefly at 11:30 am and resumed at 11:45 am.

Pat Turner then made the report from the 2008 Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award Review Committee, which is recommending to the Board that Richard Bauman of Indiana University receive this year’s award. After discussion, Kay Turner moved that the Board accept the committee’s recommendation. Tim Evans seconded the motion, which passed with 11 votes in favor and one abstention.

Guha Shankar, Board representative on the Nominating Committee, then updated the Board on the nominations process for 2008.

Over a working lunch, the Board then discussed the AFS’s growing relationship with the China Folklore Society, and the possibility of international collaborations with folklore organizations in other countries, such as South Africa.

At 1:30 pm, Timothy Lloyd and Maria Teresa Agozzino left the room while the Board met in executive session, with the recorder turned off, to discuss the Executive Director’s performance. They returned to the meeting at the conclusion of this discussion at 2:25 pm, and the recorder was again turned on.

Sheila Bock, co-convener of the AFS Graduate Student section, then joined the meeting to discuss the recommendation of the AFS Students’ Working Group, which had met in January 2008 and had then conveyed its report in writing to the Board. Introduced by Timothy Lloyd, who provided background and context for the work of this group, Bock summarized the working group’s most important recommendations and answered the Board’s questions about student concerns and issues in general.

The meeting paused at 3:17 pm to reconvene the next morning.

President Elaine Lawless returned the 2008 spring meeting of the Executive Board to order at 9:20 am on Saturday, April 5, 2008, in Room 320 of the Mershon Center on the Ohio State University campus in Columbus. Members present: Tim Evans, Diane Goldstein, AFS Past President Bill Ivey, Elaine Lawless, Carl Lindahl, Lucy Long, Marsha MacDowell, Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Guha Shankar, Daniel Sheehy, Kay Turner, and Patricia Turner. Members absent: none. Executive Director Timothy Lloyd and Associate Director Maria Teresa Agozzino were also present.

The Board first discussed the recommendations of the Student Working Group. With two exceptions—the recommendations that AFS 1) produce an annual
“folklore fundamentals” summer workshop for beginning graduate students, and 2) create a seat on the Board for a student member—the group’s recommendations can be realized do not require Board attention and can be implemented by staff action, and the Board instructed the staff to do so. The Board’s discussion then focused on the second of these exceptions, and ultimately resulted in consensus that in lieu of creating a permanent seat on the Board for a student representative, the Board will institute the standard practice of inviting a representative from the Graduate Student Section to attend each October Board meeting to make a presentation of student issues, concerns, and recommendations.

Timothy Lloyd then summarized progress toward the goals set forth in the Society’s current long-range plan. Though we have not yet been able to identify a major funding partner for the significant (and costly) efforts named in the plan, we have done a good job of planning and carrying out, according to schedule, the activities in the plan that we had indicated we would undertake ourselves. The worsening general financial climate is a further indication that we will not soon have the resources to bring on a third staff person to expand our capabilities to undertake significant new work in marketing and development.

He then summarized the Society’s forthcoming grant proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities to support a long-term effort 1) to create field-wide best practices and infrastructure for access to the multi-format ethnographic collections maintained by public folklore programs across the US; and, based on those best practices and infrastructure, 2) to preserve, catalog, and provide integrated digital access to the ethnographic collections of these programs. In the discussion that followed, the Board encouraged him to expand the project to include the archival collections of academic programs in the field as well, and indicated that the Society’s mission statement should contain some reference to the importance of ethnographic archival collections.

The meeting paused briefly at 10:48 am and resumed at 11:00 am.

Timothy Lloyd then presented his proposed priorities for FY 2009 (September 1, 2008-August 31, 2009). Apart from ongoing activities, such as the annual meeting and journal, his highest priorities for the year to come are 1) to carry through toward completion the work of the Society’s present working groups and committees, 2) to give a particular focus to the efforts of the working group devoted to Folklore and Health Policy, and 3) to undertake the redesign of the Society’s website into a Web 2.0 resource for the Society and field. During this year, AFS will also begin the search for the next editor of the Journal of American
Folklore, and will begin researching the possibility of a future annual meeting in Mexico.

After discussion of most of these items, Olga Nájera-Ramírez made a presentation on the possibilities and advantages of holding an AFS meeting in Mexico, particularly one produced in cooperation with related societies and institutions in that country. There was consensus that the Executive Director should begin researching such a meeting.

The meeting broke for lunch at 12:25 pm and resumed at 1:10 pm when Past President Bill Ivey presented, on behalf of the entire Board, a Presidential gavel to President Elaine Lawless.

Timothy Lloyd then presented his budget proposal for FY 2009, as a way of expressing financially the Society’s work and his priorities for the year. Elaine Lawless then reported that in its executive section the day before, the Board had voted 1) to increase executive director Timothy Lloyd’s salary by 5% (no increase had been requested in the budget proposal), 2) to increase associate director Maria Teresa Agozzino’s salary by 10% rather than the 5% that was included in the budget proposal, and 3) to adopt the policy that AFS, whenever possible, would provide its full-time staff with annual cost-of-living increases in step with the Urban Consumer Price Index (CPI-U).

After further discussion of Society priorities and finances, Bill Ivey moved to approve the director’s FY 2009 budget proposal as amended by the executive-session actions of the Board, and including the Board’s new policy on annual cost-of-living increases for full-time staff. Dan Sheehy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

There was no old business.

Under the heading of new business, Kay Turner asked about the new language in the call for papers for the 2008 annual meeting that seemed to restrict members’ options for selecting the subject matter and approach of their meeting presentations. Tim Lloyd provided background information on this change, and after discussion there arose consensus that such changes should be presented to the Board for discussion before they are implemented.

Patricia Turner and Carl Lindahl then updated the Board on the status and activities of the “Surviving Katrina and Rita in Houston” project directed by Lindahl and folklorist Pat Jasper. AFS advocacy, and/or more direct AFS participation, may be needed to help the directors maintain the identity of the
project as a folkloristic enterprise as they negotiate arrangements for support of the project by the Social Science Research Council.

After discussion, Patricia Turner moved that the Board authorize the executive director and selected members of the Board to undertake whatever forms of AFS partnership and cooperative work with the “Surviving Katrina and Rita in Houston” project that will best advance the goals and values of the project and strengthen its identity as a folkloristic enterprise. Bill Ivey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Elaine Lawless moved that the meeting be adjourned. Patricia Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

______________________________  ________________________________
Timothy Lloyd                                     Date
Executive Director

Approved by the American Folklore Society Executive Board:

______________________________  ________________________________
Elaine Lawless                                     Date
President