Minnesota Library Association
Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, June 18, 2021
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Board Members Present: Stacey Hendren (President), Steve Harsin (President-Elect), Kirsten Clark (Incoming Past President), Sara Fillbrandt (Secretary), Sarah Ethier (Treasurer), Hannah Buckland (ALA), Dave Collins (Intellectual Freedom), Sarah Hawkins (Legislative), Kat Nelsen for Jenny McBurney (ARLD), Jody Wurl (PLD), and Katie Sundstrom (Member-at-Large)

Board Members Excused:

Guest(s) Present: Marlene Moulton Janssen (Minnesota Library Foundation)

Synergos Present: Joy DesMarais-Lanz

MLA Business:

● Review and Adopt/Amend Agenda
  ○ The meeting was called to order by Hendren at 10:04am.
  ○ No changes to the agenda were made.

● Welcome & Introductions

● Approval of the May board meeting minutes (Fillbrandt)
  ○ Minor change to minutes was suggested and the punctuation error was corrected.
  ○ Minutes approved with the one change.

● Approval of the financials (Ethier)
  ○ May 2021 financials included in the meeting packet.
  ○ Motion to approve financials made by Sundstrom, seconded by Harsin, all in favor and motion approved.

● Synergos/Executive Director Update (DesMarais-Lanz)
  ○ If you’re emailing individual staff, please copy the office office@mnlibraryassociation.org on all communications - several staff have vacations and we don’t want anything to get missed.
  ○ Still working with MLF on their contract.
  ○ As always, if you have questions about anything, just ask!

● Strategic 90-day Plan (Hendren)
Q2 - just ended.

- Executive board will be meeting next week to review Q2 and plan for Q3.
- The document storage initiative is well underway - now working on implementation.
- Budget sheet for event planning is complete. Want to make it more like a form and put it behind the member wall.
- Many other projects are still in progress and are moving into the next phase.

Engage and Educate Members:

- **ARLD Update (Nelsen)**
  - ARLD Day happened - 113 attendees.
  - A small profit was made from ARLD Day. Yay!
  - Taking a little time off this summer, and will be picking up again in July.

- **PLD Update (Wurl)**
  - Not much to update.
  - Wurl became an advisor for the Media Landscape Advisory Board and will encourage them to start using the form on the MLA website so we can start promoting events like “23 Things.”
  - If you haven’t been attending the Media Landscape conversations put on by MINITEX, Hendren encourages everyone to attend or view recordings on the Level-Up website.

- **2021 Conference update (Hendren)**
  - Registration is open! 6 people registered and 2 exhibitors!
  - Where they need to be for the timeline! Now it’s finalizing things and getting the conference promoted.
  - Hoping to have Keynote contract letters done by the end of the day today.
  - Had around 60 proposals submitted, so the conference team and others will be meeting next week to go over those.
  - More info about silent auction, Pheedloop, registration, awards, etc. will be going out to members in the next couple weeks.

- **Intellectual Freedom Committee Report (Collins)**
  - Met last month, and the main topic was reflecting on an issue that had come up somewhere in the state with a display that was put up and then was asked to be removed.
    - Keeping details anonymous at this point because the discussion is ongoing.
  - Resources were put out at the meeting for folks who were involved with this local government issue - and will be reporting on this moving forward.
    - Made people aware of the ALA-ILF form that isn’t just for banned/challenged books - it can be applied to displays and programs as well.
  - Panel presentation submitted for MLA, it will focus on highlights of topics that have come up in the past year such as: surveillance, censorship, higher
education issues, and the crossroads between intellectual freedom and academic freedom.

Activate Library Advocacy:

- Legislative Update (Hawkins)
  - Legislature is in special session right now.
  - Higher Ed and MINITEX will likely receive their full funding; legacy funding (regional libraries) will likely see $2.5 million each year of the biennium.
  - Center for the Book will likely receive $100,000 rather than $125,000 each year of the biennium.
  - On the education side, which is a big portion of funds for regional libraries, and also includes the language about school media specialists and defining that role: they are nowhere near coming to an agreement with each other publicly. The way things are looking, if we’re lucky, an education bill will come together June 30th.
  - Starting to think ahead to the Legislative forum - the next session in July/August (more likely early September) because not sure how long this special one will go.
  - Current MLA Advocacy website is not part of the MLA website, and are going to reevaluate and move it back within the website.
    - Talking about adding a purchase site - where you can order bags, mugs, t-shirts with MLA/ARLD/PLD logos. Super cool!
  - Reminder, the Legislative Committee meets the first Weds. of Month at 10am and all MLA members are considered members of this committee and can attend meetings.
  - Reach out to Sarah Hawkins with any questions!

Strengthening our Organization:

- ITEM/MLA update (Hendren)
  - Notified that ITEM has voted to merge with MLA and become a new division.
  - Next steps to create a transition plan and contract for legal things.
  - Hendren will be working with MLA staff, leadership, and ITEM leadership to move this forward.
- Working Document Access Update - MLA Document Storage (Fillbrandt)
  - File Naming Conventions and Directory Structure document created.
  - Fillbrandt conducted training for the MLA board and other stakeholders on Friday, June 4th.
  - Next steps: work with Synergos to get folks added to the right folders, upload video for additional training, and get started.
- Website Navigation Update (Wurl)
  - Navigation has been settled, so just a website update. At the Subunit forum, they decided that website updates will happen after elections.
    - Do we have a calendar of when elections take place? Is there anything written about when this happens?
Changes for leadership mostly happens in January, but ARLD changes in December. Hendren started collecting leadership information in November for those updates.

The bylaws have some language about elections and when they happen.

- **Membership Committee Report (Sundstrom)**
  - Still making adjustments to spreadsheets. Almost have a complete report for expired, newly renewed, and active members that we can sort by unit/section.
  - This will aid in more personal connections with members.

- **Policy Review: MN Library Association Awards and Criteria (Hendren)**
  - Language removed:
    - Member Anniversary Recognition section: “Starting with five consecutive years of membership, members will receive a handwritten thank you note signed by the president or membership chair to mark the anniversary. The demarcation of five year anniversaries will continue as long as membership remains consistent over that time. The list of members recognized for a 5 year anniversary will be listed in conference book.”
  - Language changed:
    - In the ARLD communication path there was a specific communication path listed, changed to “via multiple methods to the Minnesota and national academic library community.”
    - Spacing error and italics consistency items fixed.
  - Motion to accept these changes made by Fillbrandt, seconded by Harsin, all were in favor and motion approved.

- **Policy Review: Awards Committee Procedures (Hendren)**
  - Language added, “and to coordinate the awards presentation at the Annual MLA Conference.”
  - Language changed:
    - From “public and academic” to “from multiple library types.”
    - From “Coordinate with Intellectual Freedom Committee and SSPIN.” to “Coordinate with the MN Writes MN Reads, the Intellectual Freedom Committee, and the MLA President.”
    - Timeline was very specific in months, so changed the timeline to an approximate month range, and added more general language which follows the conference planning timeline better.
  - Language removed:
    - Under duties, 8. “Identify members celebrating 5 year anniversaries for inclusion in the conference book.”
  - In general Hendren tried not to put the procedure in the policy manual.
  - Discussion: remove “immediate” from “immediate past president” - because bylaws state what happens if there is a change in leadership/designation.
    - Need to discuss this in terms of the policy manual and how we address designees in the future. How many cases are there in which categorizing this will make sense and where can we leave language as is?
  - So this was a lot of cleaning up the timeline and generalizing the language.
Membership recognition discussion:
- Different people have different ways that their membership is paid for.
- Huge difficulty in maintaining membership roster and should we even be tracking this? We do a lot of awards and recognition of outstanding work within our organization.
- We also include renewing member names in the Round-Up.
- Motion to accept this language made by Harsin, seconded by Hawkins, all were in favor and motion approved.

Anti-Racism Discussion (Collins)
- Juneteenth is now a Federal Holiday. So what’s next? What does this mean? This article talks about Juneteenth and what reparations might look like.
  - Article from the Brookings Institution: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2021/06/16/as-juneteenth-becomes-a-federal-holiday-the-us-needs-a-culture-of-reparations/
- Discussion about anti-racism, reparations and libraries concepts, and more:
  - Think about the movement of many libraries to remove fines as a barrier to access. We’re seeing more of this, because fines disproportionately affect lower income families.
  - How do we as librarians help with the mapping prejudice project that the University of MN is doing as they look into expanding into new communities beyond Hennepin County?
  - Now that Juneteenth is a Federal holiday, it helps increase our ability to do our work and have a foundation to push back against racism in our programming, displays, digital posts, etc.
  - In a mostly white profession - does making Juneteenth a paid day off make sense? What does it mean? Is it a negative to be closed for communities of color even though it’s a huge recognition for workers of color? What’s the balance?
  - How do the redlining structures work? Property taxes go to fund local public libraries - so are these communities really being served the best that they can?
  - Can we find a way to better help fund libraries in redlined communities? What can we, as an organization, do to help funnel more funds to those underfunded places?

Other:
- Items from the Floor
  - The state library services library director posting has gone up. Hiring is moving forward for this position. A letter was sent from the MLA Board in February/March saying that we support an MLIS requirement for this position. It has been listed as a “preferred” qualification, but not a required one. The position sounds like the job is something else, and they tacked library stuff onto it - and this is not seen as acceptable.
MLA will write a letter to the education committee that the importance of this position cannot be over-emphasized; even if they don’t require an MLIS degree, they need to include library experience in the job description.

- Suggestion made to look at the Hennepin County Library Director job description conversations and public statement (2018).
- Kirsten to look and see what she’s got documentation wise about this.
- Hawkins and Hendren to work on this statement and try to get this out quickly.

- Reminders: let Hendren know if you have things you want to add to the agenda in July.

Meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

June Board Packet materials:
18 June 2021 Board Meeting - Google Drive