Minnesota Library Association
Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 21, 2021
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Board Members Present: Stacey Hendren (President), Patti Bross (Past President), Steve Harsin (President-Elect), Kirsten Clark (Incoming Past President), Sara Fillbrandt (Secretary), Hannah Buckland (ALA), Dave Collins (Intellectual Freedom), Sarah Hawkins (Legislative), Amy Mars for Jenny McBurney (ARLD), Jody Wurl (PLD), and Katie Sundstrom (Membership)

Board Members Excused: Sarah Ethier (Treasurer)

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

Synergos Present: Joy DesMarais-Lanz

MLA Business:

- Review and Adopt/Amend Agenda (Welcome and Introductions)
  - The meeting was called to order by Hendren at 10:06am
  - Fillbrandt made a motion to adopt the amended agenda; all were in favor and the motion was approved.

- Welcome & Introductions

- MLF Update (Moulton Janssen)
  - Foundation has not been doing a lot - are looking to do strategic planning when they can get together again in person, hopefully this Fall.
  - Hoping to use MLA's contract with Synergos as a springboard to update and manage MLF's website. MLA sees the benefit in having both websites managed by the same company.
  - MLF is a volunteer organization - so having a good infrastructure behind it will benefit the organization and the volunteers who keep it running.
  - The Silent Auction at MLA Annual has been MLF's way to gather funds to help support MILE. This remains one of their primary focuses for support as they look to the future - this is contingent on MLA determining that they are interested in seeing MILE continue.
  - Questions for Marlene:
    - Why do you think membership in MLA is important?
      - Professional membership is vital for us to grow as an organization. Particularly for those librarians in greater Minnesota. MLA provides an opportunity to network, contribute to the future
directions of the library field, and to further the management skills needed as a librarian. Being part of that greater whole is vital.

■ What is something MLA is doing well?
  ● MLA is using technology well. It’s adapting to this new virtual landscape in a professional manner. Reaching out to sister organizations and collaborating with the Foundation is something that MLA is doing well. MLA is taking some vital steps to remaining relevant in these changing times.

■ What do you challenge MLA to consider for the future?
  ● Right now it’s a very dangerous time for libraries. Libraries used to be standalone entities, but it’s so important to become part of the community we serve. We need to understand that the reason we exist is to support and bring the unique qualities that the profession has to the table. What I see now, is that when we no longer became the fiefdom builders, we lost the ability to articulate and dictate the future for ourselves. As we look at the changing field of libraries, we need to redefine the library role and be proactive in the way we provide literacy, information, accurate information - especially in an era of “alternative facts” and when any answer is just “good enough.” How do we carve out that role of the importance of a well-informed citizenry? How do we identify our future when it’s not being a warehouse for books. I see that MLA has a critical role as it brings together different types of libraries, as we identify what makes libraries unique; and identify and ensure the vital future of information.

  ○ MLA is looking at the following: if libraries are changing, how do they support that change? What other ways, besides MILE, can/should they be contributing to the future of the profession?

● MLF/MLA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding website management
  ○ Foundation has been in communication with MLA staff about taking over management of the Library Foundation website.
  ○ MLA has contracted for staff and support solutions for its organization. Under this memorandum of agreement, MLA will allow MLF to enter into a subcontract with the management company providing its staff support for the transfer, updating, and provision of ongoing management of MLF’s website.
  ○ MLA will allow MLF to utilize the services of its management company under a subcontract agreement; notify MLF in writing at least 90 days prior to termination of its contract with its management company; provide MLF the opportunity of subcontracting for website management with subsequent management companies; and refer all questions regarding the MLF website to the designated MLF contact.
  ○ Moulton Janssen says they are still in conversations with Synergos re: how they handle the contract, and once the MLA board finalizes this understanding will
work with Joy to finalize the agreement. Synergos has alluded that MLF will need its own contract under the MLA umbrella, but the MOU is necessary for the future and to clearly define roles.

- Motion to approve Memorandum of Understanding made by Harsin, seconded by Sundstrom, all were in favor and motion approved.

- Approval of the April board meeting minutes (Fillbrandt)
  - Changes to minutes were suggested and made.
  - Hawkins moved to approve minutes with changes, Harsin seconded, all in favor and minutes approved with changes.

- Approval of the financials (Hendren)
  - April 2021 financials included in the meeting packet.
  - Discussion about line items.
  - Financials approved.

- Synergos/Executive Director Update (DesMarais-Lanz)
  - Office closed on the 31st for Memorial Day.
  - ARLD went well, had some tech hiccups, but overall went well.
  - Joy and Synergos CEO Lane attended the MILE All-Class Reunion on May 4th - and had a conversation about the future of MILE.
  - As always, if you have questions about anything, just ask!

- Strategic 90-day Plan (Hendren)
  - Ambassador program - handed off from Bross.
  - MILE class reunion completed - around 40 attendees - there was lot of positive feedback.
    - Thank you to Joy, Lane and committee members for all their work!
    - May be turning this into an every-other year event.
    - Once information/feedback is compiled and approved by the board we will send it to MLF for review because of the interest in continuing this initiative.
  - Some of the dates have changed in the Advocacy portion, Hawkins has emailed those changes to the office and Joy will update in the plan.
  - Thank you Patti Bross for leading us through a pandemic and for your leadership in MLA over all the time you have spent with this organization. Best wishes in your retirement and for your future!

Engage and Educate Members:

- ARLD Update and ARLD Day recap (Mars)
  - ARLD Day was April 30th - virtually via Zoom. Event was a success, had 113 attendees, and was able to secure sponsorship dollars from MINITEX, the St. Kate’s MLIS program, as well as the Minneapolis College Library Information Technology program.
Great keynote: Nicola Andrews spoke on “No More Pipelines: Indiginous Knowledge in LIS.”

Observed many indiginous workers, and others who had never been to ARLD Day, but were engaged in the chat.

Thank you Synergos for your support!

- Academic Innovator award went to Dawn Wing for her work at Metro state in incorporating and showcasing marginalized voices and her really creative work bringing graphic novels and zines into the classroom.
- In June, ARLD is going to hold an informal get-together with some of the “Unpacking White Supremacy” attendees to check in about their personal goals.

Thinking about holding another session of the “Unpacking White Supremacy” again in the Fall due to the large waitlist and huge amount of interest.

- PLD Update (Wurl)
  - Had a small but engaged conversation at listen & learn about what folks want to hear about at MLA Annual. Goal to do outreach and engage folks in doing session proposals.
  - Planning on another listen & learn session in August.

- 2021 Conference update (Hendren)
  - Due date for proposals is today, but will be extended.
  - Continue to move forward on the timeline for the conference - encourage others to present and consider single, panel, and forum types of presentations.
  - Think about who might be good for MLA board positions that will open up: president-elect, treasurer, member at large, legislative chair, and intellectual freedom chair.
    - Pam O’Hara is the head of the nominating committee, please reach out to her or Stacey with any names for consideration.
    - It would be great to get an academic person in for the president-elect position.
  - One keynote confirmed: Tracie Hall, ALA Executive Director will be speaking on Friday about “Building Community through Connection: Letting our Legacy be Justice” and calls to action for all library staff.
  - Review Pheedloop Conference Platform Quote.
    - Exhibitor and Sponsor committees have been reviewing what they can offer to exhibitors - more than what Sched can provide
    - Sponsors/Exhibitors could have Zoom meetings, create pages with resources, have pictures, links to resources and websites, and more flexibility to do things.
    - This platform would allow our members to create more networking connections during the conference and chat about dinner plans, session goings-on, and get into sessions more easily than they did from Sched.
Conference committee reviewed the platform and they are excited by the potential. Sched is around $250, but Pheedloop would be about $3622 with discounts - for an annual license per event.

- Individuals can create their own profiles to connect better than in Sched. The platform is intuitive for attendees to navigate and use.
- There will be a promotional plan for exhibitors and members about the benefits of this new platform.
- Sessions exist on the platform for 6 months so attendees can go back and view recordings more easily.
- Motion to adopt Pheedloop for the 2021 MLA virtual conference platform made by Fillbrandt, seconded by Hawkins, all in favor and the motion approved.
  - Discussion about having the conference virtually every 3rd year and Pheedloop could replace Sched during those years.

Intellectual Freedom Committee Report (Collins)
    - Dollars from library subscriptions, directly or indirectly, now support these systems of surveillance.
    - Data can be traced back to our users and this is hugely problematic.
  - Discussion at ARLD Day, and in other places on intellectual freedom and the monopolies that are going on with vendors: LexisNexis & ICE, ProQuest & Clarivate, etc. When we contract out with these aggregators we lose a lot of control over user data and that is at odds with many library privacy policies.

Activate Library Advocacy:

Legislative Update (Hawkins)
  - The legislature adjourned on Monday with no new budget deal. But did announce a target date for their budget
  - Will come back mid-June for a special session to hopefully approve a budget to avoid a government shut-down.
  - Where things stand today for the library items:
    - Higher Ed: Full ask has been included in both House and Senate for MINITEX and MDL.
    - Agricultural bill includes funding for broadband in both the House and Senate.
    - The House is working on some capital investment bills and there was a bill introduced for funding for construction and improvements for libraries.
  - Bonding bill will be reintroduced in the Senate in the regular session of next year.
○ On the Federal side, the Build America’s Libraries Act, Smith, Omar, McCollum, and Craig have signed on (co-sponsors), this would include 81 million in funding for MN libraries if it were to pass.
○ 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:

● Working Document Access Update - MLA Document Storage (Fillbrandt)
  ○ File Naming Conventions and Directory Structure document created.
  ○ Discussion
    ■ Naming structure going back into previous years.
    ■ Rogue Legislative site - and what that’s going to look like.
    ■ Incorporating this document into the Secretary role.
  ○ Sundtrom made a motion to adopt the File Naming Conventions and Directory Structure document as a living document to govern the MLA G-Suite folder structure and keep MLA’s documents and files organized and easily findable. Mars seconded, all in favor and motion approved.
  ○ Next steps: Fillbrandt will meet with Kinney to flesh out the FAQ section, finish formatting the document, link the table of contents, and discuss the upcoming training for the MLA board on Friday, June 4th.

● Website Navigation Update (Wurl)
  ○ Paid a small fee to unfreeze the navigation at the top to make the site more responsive and mobile-friendly.
  ○ Wurl to reach out to Hendren if there are terminology changes that she wants to be made.
  ○ Working with Synergos on FAQ about how to do a Zoom event as opposed to a regular event, this will go on the Forms & logos page.
  ○ Working on a schedule for updates and working with the communications committee on potentially creating a role for someone to oversee website stuff. It’s a matter of capacity.
  ○ Synergos is creating an additional form on the Contact Us page that will be for news updates that units and committees want shared more widely. We need to decide what constitutes news - in terms of amplifying communications (for Social media vs. the website vs. newsletters).

● Membership Committee Report (Sundstrom)
  ○ Have streamlined the reports to include numbers we want.
  ○ 545 individual members.

● Policy Review: President-Elect Job Description (Harsin)
• Added a responsibility to president-elect job description in line 4 to support subunits beyond orientation.
• Language added: The President-Elect serves as a liaison to Subunit chairs, convenes quarterly meetings for communication, training, and support, and reports back to the Board of Directors.
• Motion to accept this language addition made by Collins, seconded by Sundstrom, all were in favor and motion approved.

● Policy Review: President, Minnesota Library Trustees and Advocates (MLTA) (Hendren)
  • Carry over from MLTA being a division. Since it has moved into a section, the motion is this policy be archived and removed from policy manual, Hendren moved, Hawkins seconded, all were in favor and motion approved.

● Anti-Racism Discussion (Collins)
  • Article about Nikole Hannah-Jones and her request for tenure at University of North Carolina:
    http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2021/05/19/pw-special-report-after-conservative-criticism-unc-backs-down-from-offering-acclaimed-journalist-a-tenured-position/?fbclid=IwAR1ceTL-A5PRhcJvj9n03Wc7bGeevs_qiDNpVKzGkg5GDHJNgMtb8LAuZrg
  • As of 5/20/2021, ALA announced that Dr. Hannah-Jones will be one of the keynote speakers at ALA this year.
  • Conversation:
    ■ It’s disturbing to see this in academia. This trend is basically like academic censorship coming from the Board of Trustees.
    ■ They don’t vote against a person, they just don’t vote. It’s infuriating and a continuation of white supremacy culture.

Other:

• Items from the Floor.
• Reminders: let Hendren know if you have things you want to add to the agenda in June.

Meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

May Board Packet materials:
21 May 2021 Board Meeting - Google Drive