Minnesota Library Association
Board Meeting
Friday, March 20, 2020
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Remote:
Jen Newberg (Executive Director for MLA), Patti Bross (President), Stacey Hendren (President-Elect), Jami Trenam (Legislative Chair), Amy Mars (ARLD Chair), Lisa Motschke (Secretary), Sarah Ethier (Treasurer), Julia Carlis (PLD Chair), Jim Weygand (MLTA Chair), Katie Sundstrom (Member at Large), Hannah Buckland (ALA Chapter Councilor), Kirsten Clark (Past President)

Guest:
Lydia Potthoff

Absent:
Dave Collins (Intellectual Freedom Chair)

Welcome and Introductions – Bross
The meeting was called to order by Bross at 10:02 a.m.

Review and Adopt/Amend Agenda – Bross
Trenam made a motion; Hendren seconded to approve and move agenda items around as needed. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

Approval of February 2020 Board
Carlis made a motion to approve; Trenam seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

MHQ Update – Newberg
MHQ has transitioned to full remote work, and someone goes into the office every few days to pick up mail, and get checks. MHQ is in a financially stable position. They have decided not to hire on a few new positions at this time, but will be keeping all existing positions.

Engage and Educate Members
Conference Update – Bross
The conference planning committee positions are now filled. The call for proposals went out. Things are in place for a keynote and four other featured speakers, but nothing has been signed just yet. Hendren is determining a new pricing structure for online ads for the app.

A conference planning committee member asked about the possibility for free or reduced conference registration for volunteers. The question comes up every year. Mars suggested we reach out to other organizations to see how they approach this. The Board discussed several paths forward, including additional scholarships through the MN Library Foundation. Bross will put out an all call to folks interested in looking into it further, and bring the conversation back at a future meeting.

MILE Request to Approve Prepaid Expense for 2021 Venue – Bross
The 2021 MILE Planning committee is reaching out to MINITEX and other organizations for sponsorship. MN Library Foundation is willing to donate the $10,000 for the event, but they would like a little more information before making it official.

Bross asked for a vote on the down payment for the venue. Hendren made a motion to pay the down payment and approve the MILE contract with the Sugar Lake Lodge; Mars seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.
MYRA Scholarship – Minnesota Youth Reading Awards – Bross
The request is for $200. MLA has contributed this amount in the past. Sundstrom made a motion to contribute the $200 to the MYRA Scholarship; Carlis seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

Approval of Financials – Ethier
March 2020 Financial Report
February 2020 financials included in the meeting packet.
1. Total Assets: $174,119.73
2. Total Revenue YTD: $24,355.37
3. Total Cost of Sales YTD: $0
5. Total Expenses YTD: $26,728.02
Ethier didn’t have a chance to review MLA overall financials in light of the COVID-19 situation. Bross noted that we were able to get out of our contracts for PLD and ARLD, and refund registrants who had already paid.

Motschke made a motion to approve the February financials; Trenam seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

Strengthening Our Organization
Strategic 90-Day Plan – Bross
The Executive Committee will be meeting to put together the next 90 day plan. Bross will put out a call for Continuing Education Committee members in the next Round Up, and for any other committees that are in need. Once there are more folks on the Continuing Education Committee we can take next steps to offer webinars. Newberg will set up a meeting to set the next 90-day plan.

Membership Update – Newberg
Membership report is being reviewed by MHQ Marcom team before being sent out to the Board.

Website Update – Newberg
The Board’s changes were sent to the vendor. MHQ pulled synthesized the changes that were truly regarding the design and sent those on. Navigation changes will be updated by MHQ staff. Next steps are to update imagery, testimonials, and icons. We will still have two rounds of design edits after this set of changes.

Content updates can go to Newberg or Krystin Eldridge at MHQ: mla@management-hq.com.

Communications Committee – Bross
There are currently two folks on that committee. Bross will include a call for new committee members for that group in the Round Up. Mars mentioned that ARLD has a communications position, and wondered if it would be helpful to have them liaise with the Communications Committee. Bross noted that we will need to determine responsibilities for updating the MLA website; it will be readdressed when the new site is ready.
Activate Library Advocacy
Legislative Update – Trenam
House Legislators put together a bill regarding libraries that host Drag Story Hour programs. Bross was contacted by ALA, and Trenam followed up with them.

Legislative Day
Legislators are on call right now. The biggest priorities regard COVID-19. There are a lot of competing priorities right now. Walseth advises that we could still do something, but to focus on things that are likely to be viable in this session, such as one-time RLTA expenditure shift towards e-Resources for schools and the state. We can also encourage individuals to thank their Legislators for supporting libraries and what libraries are doing. Carlis brought up the value of advocating for broadband and net neutrality – internet as utility.

Trenam will work with partners to pull together relevant content to bring forward.

PLD Day Update – Carlis
We need more information before we can move forward with rescheduling. The best idea at this point is late August, but the situation is changing so fast that they’re not prepared to make a final decision right now. All speakers have been contacted.

ARLD Day Update – Mars
The committee will meet to decide if they want to reschedule or offer the program virtually. Clark said the decision is up to the subunit unless there is an increased budget due to the decision. Mars suggested she could encourage those with ARLD proposals to submit to MLA Annual Conference instead.

Contingency Planning: Coronavirus – Bross
The topic was moved to the end of the meeting to make sure there was enough time. Mars noted that situations are very different for libraries across the state. MLA put out a statement. Areas of action could be to issue another statement to advocate for library staff and community members. MLA could also host a virtual townhall to better understand the issues. Buckland updated the group on the current state of library service levels across the state but the situation is changing rapidly.

Weygand and Sundstrom expressed concern that library services are essential and library closure can be seen as a dismissal of library value.

Trenam agreed that it needs to be a local decision and that MLA can provide a statement of support to libraries to maintain safety for staff and community.

It’s a complex situation, and it’s important that the Board be unified in its response to the situation. Perspectives on whether libraries should close, what their role is during this pandemic, and how MLA should respond varied. Some felt strongly that libraries should be urged to close if they could not ensure the safety of library users and staff. Others felt just as strongly that libraries need to remain open since they are the only source of vital resources & services (physical space, computer, internet, etc) for certain community members and that grocery stores and other vital services are remaining open.

The Board discussed the value of making a second statement, but determined that the original statement captured the concerns of safety for staff and community.

There is concern that MLA members do not feel heard or supported at this time. The Board discussed the idea of offering a town hall event to share ideas and raise concerns. Carlis and Mars volunteered to brainstorm ground rules, an agenda, and question prompts. Newberg created a Google document and shared with the Board to contribute ideas.
Other

Policy Review: AntiTrust – Hendren and Lydia Potthoff
Hendren and Poffhoff reviewed the policy. We need to determine if we should revise the policy or remove it entirely. There is mixed messaging from other organizations about whether or not this it is necessary.

Potthoff reviewed the language and found it odd that MLA refers to itself as a trade association, not a professional association. The language may have been taken from another organization without proper edits. There is a very clear list of dos and don’ts, but it should be updated to reflect current legislation and guidance. ALA doesn’t have a policy they have guidelines, and AALL doesn’t have a policy at all. Anything MLA decides should be run past legal counsel.

Potthoff is a former lawyer and law librarian. She currently works for Anoka County Library.

The topic will be revisited at a future Board Meeting.

MALF Update – Weygand
MALF is going through transitions. They have been reevaluated by the IRS, and instead of being designated as a 501 3c they are now considered a private foundation. They are rewriting their articles and bylaws.

MALF is considering having their own convention and to not participate in the MLA Annual Conference. This equates to a loss in registration numbers for the MLA Annual Conference.
They will include information about the new MLA Membership category in their upcoming newsletter.

Weygand is on the committee to rewrite their articles and bylaws.

MLA Retention
Tabled until April Board Meeting

Bross adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Chat transcript
10:18:12 From Jami : I like the idea of scholarship/application. thanks Amy for researching
11:02:02 From Jami : I agree that makes sense to me
11:10:26 From Lisa : Stacey, how do you spell Lydia’s full name?
11:11:57 From Stacey H : Lydia Potthoff
11:16:31 From Jami : I also think tabling
11:26:07 From Hannah Buckland : To be clear, I am not advocating for any sort of sweeping statement declaring all libraries should close. It’s a local decision. I get that.
11:27:36 From Hannah Buckland : I have to get ready for another call now -- hope you all have safe, restful weekends.
11:30:36 From Jami : I agree, Stacey
11:31:38 From kirstenclark : I need to take an urgent meeting. Sorry not able to be part of the conversation.
11:45:27 From Jami : yes I love the idea of sharing creative solutions, and we can reaffirm that we are here to support members, and encouraging striking a balance between safety and service
11:49:29 From Jami : I wonder if there's a way to leverage a closed Facebook group? I really love the idea but I do not have capacity to lead anything... could be adhoc
11:51:08 From Jami : yes, I like that Julia
11:56:23 From Jami : stay safe and remember to take time away from the news and social media and just breathe

Board Packet materials: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12cDhwfBfQGNtap0Gbzs6nl1c0rZFw?usp=sharing