Board Meeting Minutes  
Friday, December 17, 2021 via Zoom  
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

**Board Members:** Stacey Hendren (President), Steve Harsin (President-Elect), Sarah Ethier (Treasurer), Sara Fillbrandt (Secretary), Dave Collins (Intellectual Freedom Chair), Sarah Hawkins (Legislative Chair), Jenny McBurney (ARLD Chair), Jody Wurl (PLD chair), Hannah Buckland (ALA Chapter Councilor), Kirsten Clark (Past President)

**Excused:** (Member-At-Large position vacant)

**Executive Director (Synergos):** Joy DesMarais-Lanz

**MLA Business:**

- Welcome and Introductions (Hendren)
  - Board Orientation and Board Member Update.

- Review and Adopt/Amend Agenda
  - The meeting was called to order by Hendren at 10:06 a.m.
  - Agenda approved as sent out.

- Approval of the November Board meeting minutes (Fillbrandt)
  - Minutes have been distributed, three changes were suggested via email and have been made.
  - Hendren made a motion to adopt minutes as amended, Collins seconded, all were in favor and the minutes were approved as amended.

- Approval of the financials (Ethier)
  - November 2021 financials included in the board packet.
    - Motion made by Fillbrandt to approve financial report, seconded by Wurl, all were in favor and the motion was approved.
  - Review proposed 2022 Budget
    - The numbers are pretty typical for each budget year, the only thing that is in flux right now is the anticipated conference registration income.
    - Since the conference budget hasn’t been finalized, a lot of the expense numbers for those line items are tentative - food and beverage costs will probably go up as much as 20% so Harsin will be finalizing this budget after some additional negotiation and price investigation.
    - As things stand, and with the ITEM merger, we should make up for some of the loss that we’ve experienced in the past few years and end 2022 in the black.
    - Should have relatively finalized conference budget before January board meeting. Will hold off on approving budget until January 2022.

- Synergos/Executive Director Update (DesMarais-Lanz)
Do have a special strategic planning event on January 25th, 2022 that Joy has been working on with Hendren.

Have had some staff changes: Jennifer will be the other point person for MLA moving forward (in addition to Joy).

Brett has departed as finance manager, and an interim finance manager has been hired, but Synergos is still searching for someone to hire full-time.

For communication purposes, use the office@mnlibraryassociation.org email address, and cc any individuals who need to take particular attention.

If you have questions about anything, just ask!

- Strategic 90-day Plan (Hendren)
  - Review Q4 goals
    - Orientation of new board is complete.
    - Many things are still in progress because processes are taking longer than we expect. We will re-evaluating these projects in January.
    - Hawkins mentioned that under Activate Library Advocacy: recruit members and formalizing 2022 Legislative priorities have been completed and convening LegWork committee is in process.

Engage and Educate Members:
- ARLD Update (McBurney)
  - Big focus has been the “Unpacking White Supremacy” series, two sessions have been completed and the third will take place in January.
  - Transitional board meeting will be this afternoon.
  - ARLD Day planning is underway, discussing who to have for keynote. Will also be advertising in early January for proposals for ARLD day.
    - ARLD Day will happen virtually on May 6, 2022.
  - Have transitioned all the materials to the new Google Drive (YAY!) and wanted to ask how transition of access to folders goes.
    - Access is granted/revoked based on who should/needs it - in terms of who is on the board vs going off the board.
    - Outgoing Chairs give access to the incoming folks who need it, and once the new Chairs/boards are installed, they are in charge of revoking access for folks who no longer need it.

- PLD Update (Wurl)
  - One person submitted their name for PLD Board (for the Member-at-Large position). The board will meet next week to discuss.
  - Julia initiated a welcome message for any new PLD members so there’s more of a personal connection happening.
  - Planning on a virtual PLD Day.
  - Have not moved any documentation over to Google Drive yet.
  - Kristen Schneider will be the new PLD Chair.

- Future Conference update (Hendren/Harsin)
Had our first meeting to discuss the budget, and subsequently met with Amy Boese who will continue as conference chair.

The next meeting will be in the beginning of January 2022.

Have some budget issues to work out. There are a few unknowns and slipped the possibility of using Pheedloop again in just in case we need to do a transition to a virtual conference.

In 2023 we will be at the River Center!

For 2024 we are starting negotiations for Rochester, but we could move this to '25 and do a virtual in '24.

We have discussed having a periodic virtual conference for those who are unable to travel for in-person conferences.

- Should we add a 5th “location” for a virtual conference in the rotation? Or do one every 3 years?
- McBurney feels strongly on having a virtual conference periodically because it’s a huge win for accessibility. Likes the idea of a three year rotation but it can definitely be a discussion.
- Fillbrandt also loves the idea of having a virtual conference in rotation - she understands the concern that we may not have folks on the planning committee who have experience putting on a virtual conference, but the new Drive set up allows for all that knowledge, timelines, planning steps, to be shared forward. Also have Synergos to lean on.
- Collins advocated for a hybrid experience - this may become a new normal, at the very least having keynotes live-streamed. Having some virtual aspect is becoming an expectation.
- Hendren: for our ‘22 conference we are talking about having all keynotes recorded and accessible, as well as having presenters create recordings we can also have available for members.
- Carlis thinks that virtual/hybrid should become one of the things that allow us to serve ALL our members because it allows for all kinds of folks who experience obstacles to participate in conferences.
- McBurney feels like a recording afterward is more like an afterthought for accessibility because there isn’t the chance to participate and ask questions of presenters. ARLD is going to ask folks in various regions to do in-person get-togethers after the conference.

This needs to be a discussion for strategic planning to add a virtual conference to the informal rotation. Not sure that a hybrid conference for ‘22 is going to be feasible, but we can look into some of these hybrid pieces for Duluth.

We will move forward with Pheedloop for the conference and talk to the next board as we look at strategic planning for hybrid/virtual conferences in the future.

- Hybrid or virtual ‘24 will be the next decision that needs to be made in January.

- Intellectual Freedom Committee Report (Collins)
  - Incoming co-chairs will be Kate Eidem and Rachel Wexelbaum.
  - Working on updating the website with Julia Carlis - and this came out of a conversation about supporting, advocating for IF in our state.
Other state library associations have been putting out statements about book challenges, this isn’t something that we’ve had to deal with in MN, but to think it won’t affect us in the future is not realistic. Discussions around this are ongoing.

Hawkins indicated the legislative committee would love to be involved in educating and preventing book challenges in the future. Buckland said that she and her co-workers would be willing to get involved as well.

Carlis wants to update the website to include what to do to prepare for a potential book challenge, what to do when it happens and after.

Continuing Education Committee (Clark)

Restarting this Committee. Action: to establish the Continuing Education Committee as a Standing Committee of the Association to lead in the development and implementation of relevant, accessible professional development opportunities for library staff in all branches of librarianship and at all stages of their careers.

Discussion:

- Wurl mentions that there’s a section on the website labeled Education & Events. Would this committee be taking on this page and updating/adding content? Answer: yes.
- As part of the discussion at Branch Out in 2019, doing more training for paraprofessionals and in greater Minnesota. “Branch Out” did disband, and all the money that was set aside by the Foundation exists in an account for use for development purposes.
  - Consider this for strategic planning.
- This is a huge opportunity for supporting existing members at all different levels. There is an opportunity to partner with other professional development organizations to get not just statewide but national exposure and recognition (akin to “Level Up”).
- Would this group collaborate with St. Kate’s? To help identify areas for professional development for members? St. Kate’s would be another potential bridge for this committee.

Develop Leaders

MILE Update (Hendren)

- MILE will take place May 10th - 13th, 2022.
  - Currently working on COVID guidelines documentation for in-person meetings.
- Joy and Hendren will be heading up a strategic vision meeting for MILE and are looking forward to including a variety of librarians from different library types. Have several folks attending who are MILE alums who attended the reunion, this will also be a good jump off for some of the organization strategic planning as well.

Subunit Orientation (Harsin)

- Written into the job description for the President-Elect. Harsin will be working with Carlis on this in January.

Activate Library Advocacy:
● Legislative Committee Update (Hawkins)
  ○ It’s been a pretty quiet month since our last meeting. Economic forecast has been released: estimated $7.7 billion budget surplus. Heading into 2022 legislative session with enthusiasm and hope.
  ○ Chasing hard after the RLDSS increase and formula change, as well as capital investment bonding for public libraries in particular.
  ○ Working with various partners to consider where there’s potential investments from federal funds this year for capital investment and pandemic relief where libraries fit into those conversations.
  ○ Legislative trio met with Sam, MDE and various stakeholders to discuss the technical amendments that MDE is proposing in their policy bill. Will be supporting those.
  ○ Still pursuing adding a definition change for a school library and media center and the implications of that change.
  ○ LegWork committee does all the planning for Legislative day/week and will make that day and event a success.
  ○ Shared a proposal for a standing legislative committee, received some formal feedback from MCMT and informal from CRPSLA and will be moving forward with discussion on proposal before the end of the year.
  ○ Hannah Buckland will continue to serve as ALA Chapter councilor.
  ○ Will work on shutting down the “rogue” Google drive, and have moved all the content to the MLA Drive, and will continue getting these organized.
    ■ Things that are not currently G-suite docs need to be downloaded and then re-uploaded to be accessible for future folks - ownership needs to be of the MLA office not individuals. Fillbrandt to work with Joy on figuring out how this is going to work.

Strengthening our Organization:
● ITEM Update (Hendren)
  ○ Met on December 7th and talked about logistics and info that MLA needs from them. Still waiting on documents from ITEM for our lawyer. Plan is still to make transition before December 31st, 2021.
  ○ Did get information about their financials so we can start integrating that into our budget considerations.
  ○ They may have a button maker that we will acquire as well as a really old PC.
  ○ Contracts are being looked at by the lawyer. ITEM is going through the contract with Synergos so we can edit and finalize that.
  ○ Once all the legal things are settled then we can move into logistical things like getting them on the website, added to the Drive, etc.
  ○ Thanks to Harsin for having vision on how they are going to be part of MLA moving forward - they lit up at the idea that they will continue to have opportunities to participate as active members. It’s critical for the Board and Committees to include ITEM members in conversations and opportunities.
- Maybe do a quarterly panel with a rep from each division and discuss crossover in different areas: information literacy, advocacy, intellectual freedom, etc.
  - Will be joining the Board at the January 2022 meeting!

- Website/Communications Committee Update (Wurl)
  - Discussion document: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Wbqe1Kq9oxBuEqF0ApPGZpPcrf38w5zG/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Wbqe1Kq9oxBuEqF0ApPGZpPcrf38w5zG/edit)
    - Need to move everything from the Gratia Countryman gmail to the MLA drive.
    - “News” page - want to clean up the wording, add a form for Round-Up articles and for social media posts.
    - Want to bring back the “Membership Spotlight.”
    - Want to draft a message to like and reshare content (esp. on Facebook) to ensure that they get seen.
    - Looking at Hootsuite as a way to schedule posts to FB & Twitter. Someone suggested we get an Instagram account - but we don’t really have a lot of picture content to drive use of this: perhaps a #bookstagram from RART?
    - Might want to investigate photos in G-Drive, we currently have a Flickr, but don’t use it often.
    - Do we have any guidelines for what we post and do not post? The communications committee would be happy to work with Harsin to develop a process for this.
      - If we boost this committee, they could do more and be advocates for our organization and membership.
      - Have we talked about the role of what MLA's social media is vs. the role of individual library socials? Are we supporting MLA specifically? Or promoting other libraries around the state?
      - There hasn’t been a lot of strategic focus with this committee so please include in future planning.

- Google Drive Sustainability (Fillbrandt)
  - Leadership changes!
  - Pending questions:
    - Adding/removing people from drive and documenting this process.
    - PDF ownership not transferable, how to get around this?
    - Sustainability and training moving forward.

- Policy Review (Hendren/Fillbrandt)
  - No policies on the packet for today. Hendren and Fillbrandt met this week and will meet again next week - working on making sure that everything that we changed/approved this year are reflected on the website.
  - Updated dates will be added to the policy manual, will be updating notations to references in bylaws as well.
  - Will revisit this with the full board in the new year.
● Anti-Racism Discussion (Collins)
  ○ Document from “Unpacking White Supremacy” called “Interrupting Bias: Calling out vs Calling in”:
  ○ For more about this topic, check out the book Blindspot.

● President-Elect Statement for 2022 (Harsin)
  ○ We have a great year coming up with a lot of opportunities. We are emerging into a new reality: merging with ITEM, hearing from State Library Services, legislative opportunities, bringing new ideas forward, and rebranding ourselves. We will be working toward

Other:
● Outgoing Board Members (Hendren)
  ○ Thank you so much for all the work you did as we worked through the strategic planning document!
  ○ Thank you Kirsten for all your support and advice and coming back on the Board when we needed you. Thank you Sarah Ethier for staying on top of the financials and keeping things simple for us. Dave Collins - thank you for your leadership in pulling the IFC and anti-racism discussions together.
  ○ Sarah Hawkins, thank you for your leadership and for putting the pressure on where it needs to be.
  ○ Jenny McBurney, thank you for advocating for everyone and keeping us on track as we strive to be better as a Board.
  ○ Jody Wurl, thank you for taking on all the website stuff and your leadership in PLD.
  ○ Those of you who are sticking around, it’s been an honor to lead this board and I appreciate all the work you have done this year!

● Items from the Floor:
  ○ Thank you Madam President for a year of great leadership!

● Reminders: let Harsin know if you have things you want to add to the agenda in January.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

December Board Packet materials:
2021-12-17 Board Meeting - Google Drive