Minnesota Library Association
Board Meeting
Friday, September 18, 2020
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Remote:
Jen Newberg (Executive Director for MLA), Patti Bross (President), Lisa Motschke (Secretary), Jim Weygand (MLTA Chair), Katie Sundstrom (Member at Large), Dave Collins (Intellectual Freedom Chair), Stacey Hendren (President-Elect), Sarah Ethier (Treasurer), Kirsten Clark (Past President), Julia Carlis (PLD Chair), Jami Trenam (Legislative Chair)

Guests: Sarah Hawkins (Legislative Chair-Elect), Jenny McBurney (ARLD Representative), Christie Kess (TSS Chair), Carla Lydon (CRPSLA Representative)

Absent: Amy Mars (ARLD Chair), Hannah Buckland (ALA Chapter Councilor)

Welcome and Introductions – Bross
The meeting was called to order by Bross at 10:04 a.m.

Review and Adopt/Amend Agenda – Bross
Trenam made a motion to adopt the agenda, Collins seconded.
All were in favor and the motion was approved.

Approval of the August 2020 Board Meeting Minutes
Hendren made a motion to accept the August Minutes, Sundstrom seconded
All were in favor and the motion was approved.

Approval of the Financials – Ethier
September 2020 Financial Report
August 2020 financials included in the meeting packet.
1. Total Assets: $152,741.55
2. Total Revenue YTD: $89,612.99
3. Total Cost of Sales YTD: $1600.00
4. Monthly Expenses for August: $13,039.70
5. Total Expenses YTD: $104,983.82

The financial situation improved a bit in August. Membership dues collected were $7,200; this is an improvement but still not as high as last year.

Newberg stated that membership dues collected by mid-September were $5,200. Also, St. Kate’s is interested in continuing to support membership dues for their current MLIS students.

Ethier requested that the Board encourage non-members to join and members to renew.

Carlis made a motion to approve the financials; Collins seconded.
All were in favor and the motion was approved.
State of the Organization – Bross
MLA Budget Information Meeting
Bross recapped the budget meeting from September. The group discussed MLA’s financial situation and ways to change it. The conversation focused on what we can do next year to improve the financial situation. Librarians are accustomed to giving things away for free, but to support our organization we need to consider placing more of the valuable content behind the membership wall on the website.

Other ideas include assigning mentors to new members to help them get involved and stay involved, welcoming new members more fully, reaching out to lapsed members, offering more trainings/workshops throughout the year, and some friendly membership rate competition between regions.

Ethier will set up another meeting after the Annual Conference to continue the discussion.

ITEM
The ITEM executive board has voted unanimously to join MLA. They will bring it to their full membership, and there may be logistical questions that need to be answered. The transition process could start as early as next year.

Hendren asked about MLA’s next steps. Bross stated that we need to start a conversation on our side first and then have another meeting with the ITEM Presidential Trio after their annual meeting in October. Hendren, Bross, and Ethier will have a meeting to think through logistics and financials.

Management Company Transition
The Presidential Trio has been meeting with Synergoes (new management company) to get oriented for January. Synergoes has also been talking with MHQ, and it seems like the transition should be rather smooth.

MHQ Update – Newberg
MHQ is growing! They have brought on a new Executive Director for two organizations. MHQ has assigned three of their team members for the MLA transition to Synergoes, and will set all the necessary meetings.

Engage and Educate Members
Conference Updates – Bross
There are 261 registrations; one-third are non-members. There wasn’t the incentive to register early bird, so the registrations are more in real time. Conference is showing a profit of just under $19,000. There will be resume review, and trivia activities.

Carlis said everyone should sign up for trivia.
The Conference Planning Committee has done an amazing job!

Strengthening our Organization
Strategic 90-Day Plan – Bross, Hendren
The Board reviewed the Q3 Q4 2020 plan; most items are progressing.

Website launch will happen after the conference. Newberg stated that we’re scheduled to launch the weekend after the conference.

McBurney asked about options for how ARLD has used the website to archive materials. Bross noted that we will talk more about the process of working with the site and archiving documents.
Hendren is working on training and recruitment sessions, talking with past leadership in DORT, and talking with the Small and Rural Library Roundtable. One goal is to provide equal engagement for people in leadership roles throughout Minnesota.

Hendren stated that she will work with ITEM to develop the future Regional Ambassador Program, since they already have a successful program in place.

Community Conversations will continue on topics such as conference follow up, how to have difficult conversations, calling in and calling out, and updates on work plan in addressing systemic racism.

Hendren asked if we addressed the cash flow issue between our contract with the lobbyist and the partners. Trenam responded that CRPSLA is the only partner that was going to have a change in their agreement, but when that is signed they will immediately issue their first payment. This should help our cash flow concerns.

**Anti-Racism Discussion – Collins**
The exercise last month was to review the article, “White Privilege Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” and reflect on a time in the last day or week that you experienced privilege.

This month’s exercise is to view a short video and reflect. The video is, “Are you racist? ‘No’ isn’t a good enough answer.”

Collins found a link to the video on a LibGuide while researching resources for the MLA website. Marlon James is a professor at Macalaster University and a winner of the Man Booker Prize in Literature. This video will be included on the MLA list of resources.

Hendren noted that we have committed to reflecting on topics of anti-racism at our Board meetings, but wondered if we should share the topics with membership.

Collins will share in his Conference report to membership what we’ve been doing at Board meetings and will share the resource list.

Hendren asked if we could simply include this as a Facebook post, “This month we reflected on this [link].”

The Board supported that idea. Hendren will draft a post and run it by Collins before sending to the Communications Committee.

**Activate Library Advocacy**

**Legislative Platform Update – Hawkins**
Draft Legislative Priorities for 2020-2021 was reviewed from the packet.

Ideas were discussed at the Forum, drafted with Sam Walseth, presented to the Partners, presented to the MLA Board today, and finally will be presented to all membership. The format is different from previous platforms; it is organized by theme and includes more nuanced messaging.

Trenam noted that the platform is in concept. Language may need to shift and be responsive to political and community situations.

Bross thanked Trenam and Hawkins for all their hard work on this.

Hendren moved to accept the Legislative Priorities DRAFT in concept, Collins seconded. All were in favor and the motion was approved.
Hawkins thanked Hendren for making sure the different voices of MLA were represented.

Other

Working Document Access Taskforce – Bross
Documents will be moved to SharePoint when we transition to the new management company. Unfortunately, SharePoint may not be the best solution for working documents. Another option is Google for Business, and licenses are $15/month per user.

Sara Ring, Patti Bross, Lisa Motschke, and a representative from ARLD will meet to determine what we need, and what it might cost. There could be budget implications.

Policy Review: Fiscal Policies/Procedures Overview (including Audit Policy) – Ethier
Ethier stated that MLA’s current audit policy is to complete a full audit every two years. Each audit is approximately $5,000. We discussed changing the full audit frequency from two years to every six years, and to perform financial reviews every two years. Financial reviews are a less intensive and therefore less expensive.

The MHQ accountants felt that every two years wasn’t necessary for an organization our size, and suggested that every six years would be more appropriate.

Hendren noted that the management company transition documentation recommended an audit, but we opted not to do that since one was just completed.

Sundstrom asked why we have done it every two years. Ethier said it was likely related to the change in treasurers.

Motschke asked what a financial review entails and how frequently we’d plan to perform them. Ethier recommended every two years to align with the changeover of treasurer. Given MLA’s financial situation, and the recommendation of MHQ’s accountant this would be sufficient. It just wouldn’t be an IRS Official Audit.

Bross approved of changing to less frequent audits.
Hendren suggested we rename the section in the policy to align with our plans, “Audit and Financial Review.”

Bross recommended revising the policy with all our changes, and to bring that back to the Board. We should also review a side-by-side comparison of costs between the audit and a financial review.
Ethier will work on a draft and get some cost estimates. The Board will review the draft at the November Board Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.; be well.

Chat transcript
10:02:46 From Julia Carlis (she/her/hers) : Hi everyone, sorry I'm late
10:36:33 From dave collins, h/h/h :
https://cdn.theguardian.tv/mainwebsite/2016/01/07/160107MarlonJamesCIF_desk.mp4
10:46:51 From Jami Trenam : Great idea Stacey - thank you Dave
11:04:24 From Stacey Hendren (she/her/hers) : Great question Katie
11:04:48 From Jami Trenam : Sorry - my computer crashed!

September Board Packet materials:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15ZlEeuCKUEzefm6u3te6SC54AWGJnM2_