MISSISSIPPI LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
Executive Board Minutes
July 10, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Mississippi

Call to Order:
The July virtual meeting of the Executive Board of the Mississippi Library Association was called to order by Mary Beth Applin, President, at 11:04 a.m. on Friday, July 10, 2020, via Zoom.

Roll Call/Signature List of Attending Members:
Present – Mary Beth Applin, President; Mara Polk, Vice-President; Tamara Blackwell, Secretary; Lori Barnes, Treasurer; Patsy Brewer, Parliamentarian; Meredith Wickham, Ashley Dees.


Approval of the Agenda:

MOTION: To adopt the agenda for the July 10, 2020, meeting of the MLA Executive Board with one amendment to move Ad Hoc Committee on Fees report between Long Range Planning and Marketing/Public Relations.
Made by: Tamara Blackwell Second: Mara Polk
Passed unanimously

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: To adopt the Minutes for the May 8, 2020, meeting of the MLA Executive Board as sent out via email.
Made by: Ashley Dees Second: Lori Barnes
Passed unanimously

MLA Officers and Staff Reports:

Secretary: Tamara Blackwell – no report.

Treasurer: Lori Barnes reported the main account currently has $68,831.89 and the debit account currently has 520.81. Lori noted that the budget will be different this year due to the shutdown (COVID-19) and expenses will be different due to the conference being virtual this year. (See attached “Operating Budget” report.)
President: Mary Beth Applin thanked Mac Buntin and Steven Parks for their work on the MLA statement regarding the state flag. She happily noted that the statement appeared in several different newspapers and reminded the Board that response to previous statements had been “lacking.” She thanked the Board, as well, for their support of the statement.

Vice-President: Mara Polk reported:

- She signed the contract changing the conference at the MS Riley Center to October 11-14, 2022, noting there was no penalty for rescheduling. This year, the virtual conference is October 13th through the 15th and she is planning for sessions to be daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. She is working with Jennifer Todd on the program proposal form, which she will share next week.
- The platform for the event will be Whova at a cost of roughly $2,699. The base price was $1,699, but she added the PDF uploading capability that will allow presenters to share handouts ($300), in-session feedback, and a virtual vendor room ($500).
- The meeting platform she is proposing is Zoom. She is currently debating whether to use the monthly pricing plan or the year’s subscription that allows up to ten (10) hosts (one for academic, one for public, etc.) for up to 1,000 people in a room, which is an extra $109. In response to a query, Mara confirmed that for concurrent sessions, attendees may watch recordings from the sessions they were unable to attend.
- She is proposing registration fees of $15 for members and $25 for non-members. Conference fees will include access to recordings and media for up to one year.
- She is proposing registration fees for vendors of $100 for “booth” space, noting that in the past, non-profits/educational received a discount. In response to a query, Mara explained that vendors, like all conference attendees, may access the conference and will have their own “room” where they may upload their logos, PDFs, and other media.
- In response to a query, Mara noted that she will be talking to MLC about offering CEUs for conference attendance. Mary Beth stated that if there is a problem with the sessions being virtual, MLC will most likely make an exception due to the circumstances.

Past-President: Sarah Crisler-Ruskey is not present – no report.

MLA Administrator: Paula Bass reported that if you look at her report (see attached “Membership” report), it appears that there is an increase in membership. She clarified that the increase is mostly due to lapsed members renewing. Paula mailed over 280 lapsed members reminding them it was time to renew. Mary Beth thanked Paula for sending out the renewal letters. Paula ended her report by wishing Steven Parks and Meredith Wickham a happy birthday, which was echoed by the Board. (See Paula’s attached letter.)

ALA Councillor: Meredith Wickham reported that ALA had their first ever virtual conference and their first ever virtual governing sessions. While there, she attended councils 1, 2, and 3, as well as a councilors forum and a chapter councilors forum. They passed several resolutions and several others were tabled or sent to committees; see ALA website for details.
She noted that a virtual environment can be a challenge due to the number of attendees, making resolutions that must be voted on via an app, etc. She recommended taking the following into consideration while planning MLA’s virtual conference: keep the pace slow; less tools are better; and no chat, which is a problem for people using ADA adaptive technology.

She has concerns with the “Forward Together” plan to restructure the ALA governing body, specifically, how this plan will improve engagement with Mississippi libraries and librarians. With the new plan structuring, there will no longer be individual votes; membership will now vote through their councilor, which is Meredith for Mississippi. She has concerns about how to get more librarians involved and will be working to actively obtain feedback from librarians.

**SELA Councilor:** Ashley Dees reported that due to a change in the person in charge of planning the Georgia SELA conference (October 5-7, 2020), she has no update. She will send an email when she has more information. Meredith Wickham shared that she was happy to be an official “seconded” on the resolution passed in June to recognize the 100th anniversary of SELA.

**MLC Executive Director:** Hulen Bivins reported that MLC received a three-and-a-half percent budget cut from the legislature, which is not too bad considering a larger cut was expected. He related that with COVID-19, the budget hearings were difficult this year, noting that the meetings took place in the parking lot. He was happy to report that the PIGP would be fully funded this year. MLC is also working with Senators Hyde-Smith and Wicker concerning proposed legislation to provide $160 million to be spent among the states for connectivity to strengthen broadband networks. The Board thanked Hulen for his work on the budget. Hulen further noted that MLC would continue to provide office space for Paula Bass and MLC. Meredith Wickham also thanked Tonja Johnson, all who participated in advocacy, and MLC for their work on behalf of public libraries, which was supported by the Board. Kate Dutro talked about the importance of advocacy work in the state and its impact on this legislative session.

**ACRL Section:** Kristy Bariola is not present – no report.

**Public Library Section:** Phillip Carter had no report at this time.

**School Library Section:** Angela Mullins is not present – no report.

**Special Libraries Section:** Stephen Parks is not present – no report.

**Trustees Section:** Rickey Jones is not present – no report.

**Advocacy Committee:** Kate Dutro reported:

She met with Jennifer Todd about updating the website, which Jennifer will address later, and met with Amanda Clay Powers about long-range planning.

She worked on the Board memo addressing the state flag issue and helped disseminate it. She noted that it received a lot of press and Mary Beth noted that Sarah Crisler-Ruskey mentioned that it was on Facebook, too.
At ALA virtual conference, Kate heard Stacy Abrams speak about libraries place in the society, our role in stemming the spread of misinformation and as factfinders. She shared her campaign idea “Ask a Librarian, y’all!” – which would be launched via social and traditional media. Possible slogan: “Just because it’s on the Internet, doesn’t make it true, #askalibrariany’all!” Kate has talked to Jennifer Todd about the website and Janessa Ullendorf about graphics. She envisions this for all libraries, but especially academic and high school libraries with focus on COVID19 and general election information. Kate also introduced the idea of offering voter education for library staff. While many Board members liked the idea of such an advocacy campaign, some drawbacks/problems were identified, including: Many patrons to do not trust the government and see libraries as part of the government; as to a voter education/registration drive, most libraries are actively attempting to limit the number of patrons who visit libraries, which may make this proposal difficult to deliver; a voter education/registration drive could potentially result in political fallout and/or public backlash; with COVID-19, many librarians may not have the time to devote to such a campaign; and many libraries lack sufficient bandwidth (digital divide).

Following discussion, the Board agreed that now is not the right time for this campaign. As to voter education training, Kate suggested recording a training session that could be shared among libraries to train library staff, which the Board favored. Meredith noted libraries would need to receive the recorded session no later than August to allow for adequate training of staff to then launch the program in September (voter registration ends October 4, 2020). Kate suggested libraries promoting themselves is a good topic for a campaign coupled with the digital divide issue, which school libraries are experiencing, with which the Board agreed. Kate stated she will get with Janessa to begin work on a graphic for that topic. The Board agreed that MAGNOLIA, which is experiencing a large increase in usage during the shutdown, should be promoted in such a campaign. In response to Mary Beth’s request, Kate summarized her idea for a statewide advocacy campaign:

- Promote digital resources, especially eBooks as being real books and MAGNOLIA.
- Gather statistics and promote what libraries have been doing during the COVID-19 shutdown.
- Address the digital divide, especially among school libraries.
- Libraries should promote themselves and what they have to offer in a post-shutdown world.

Kate noted that she will also move forward with the plan to have a Board voter registration training session that will be recorded and shared with public and school libraries. She asked the Board to consider participating and asking questions during such a training.

**Awards Committee:** Rachelle Moore is not present. Mary Beth reported for Rachelle that the Committee likes the idea of having the person who sent a nomination to present the award to that winner in real time. She also noted that no nominations have been received to date. (See Rachelle’s attached report.)

**Black Caucus Roundtable:** Mary Ann Peoples is not present – no report.
Election Committee: Jennifer Smith is not present – no report.

Fiscal Management: Patsy Brewer reported that there has been no new statement received since May.

GGNRT: Hannah Berryhill, Jamie Stanfield, Dawn Collins, and Elizabeth Minter are not present – no report.

Legislative Committee: Tonja Johnson reported that the legislative session was fairly successful, noting the need to continue stressing to our legislators what libraries do in their communities, how they serve those communities, how they impact literacy, job training, job readiness, and the economics of their communities. She likes Kate’s “Ask a Librarian Y’all” advocacy idea. Kate Dutro noted that the governor vetoed a section of the school budget that has left school librarians in limbo, prompting Tonja to agree there needs to be better advocacy through the Department of Education that promotes the importance of school libraries and the need for better funding to our legislators and school boards.


Ad Hoc Committee on Fees: Patsy Brewer reported that the Ad Hoc Committee on Fees was formed March 6, 2020, to look at the conference registration fees, membership fees, and institutional memberships. The Committee consists of Patsy (small library system), Josh Haidet (larger library system), Dr. Deborah Lee (academic), Angela Mullins (school), and Jennifer Todd (community college at the time of appointment to committee). The Committee looked at membership fees from Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee and found their fees were all higher than MLA. Our institutional fee is $55 and the lowest among the others was $100. Patsy stated that Angela pointed out that school librarians must pay their own membership fees because the school districts will not pay them for individuals. However, if we had an institutional membership, the school districts would pay. Due to COVID-19 and lack of concrete budgets, they recommended the matter of membership fees be tabled until December. The Committee does, however, recommend that MLA create an institutional membership. As to conference fees, the Committee looked at other associations conferences fees and supports Mara Polk’s recommendation of $15 for members and $25 for non-members. (See attached report.)

Marketing/Public Relations: Brandon Cain is not present – no report.

Membership Committee: Chair to be announced – no report.

MS Author Awards: Caroline Barnett is not present. Mary Beth reported for Caroline. The Committee is currently reading their books and will submit their reviews by August 15th. The Committee will choose winners by the end of August and contact authors. When we know the details of the virtual conference, we will ask the authors about making presentations. (See Caroline’s attached report.)

National Library Week: Tori Linville Hopper is not present – no report.
New Member Roundtable: Jesse Pool reported that he is still working on the details for a virtual NMRT meeting for the conference, noting he will have to revamp the BINGO card. He also offered his help to any others that need assistance with the virtual conference.

Nominating Committee: Tisha Zelner is not present – no report.

Outreach Committee: Chair to be announced – no report.

Publicity Committee: Janessa Ullendorf reported she had nothing new. Mary Beth thanked Janessa for her publicity efforts.

Scholarship Committee: Justin Easterday reported launched digital application process for Peggy May Scholarship, which is working good with only a few glitches. A few applications have been submitted so far and the Committee is waiting for more packets to arrive.

Social Justice: Mac Buntin is not present – no report.

Technical Services RT: Joy Dubose stated she no report but said that if anyone has questions about the Cataloging Manual, email her.

Web Committee: Jennifer Todd reported MLA swapped over to Wild Apricot in 2014. Since then Wild Apricot has added new features for non-profits that we can choose from, including a “call to action” and “donation” buttons on the homepage, plus a more responsive design. She noted that now is a good time to update the website, noting that it would be a year-long process to rebuild. Mary Beth stated that appointing specific people to be responsible for specific pages would allow for timely updates. Jennifer recommended a complete makeover and showed screenshots of a possible new design while discussing design various features. Mary Beth agreed the website needs to be updated, suggested that Jennifer Todd and Kate Dutro create a “mock-up” of their ideas, and recommended to Mara that updating the website be a goal for next year.

YPSRT: Carrie-Ann Pierson reported the YPSRT poll is ready to e-mail, but she is still working on delivery details. She states she is also working on artwork for a logo.

Mississippi Libraries: Tina Harry reported that work on the Fall issue of Mississippi Libraries is progressing and they currently have three submission for peer-reviewed articles, which were sent to reviewers yesterday.

Old Business: There is no old business.

New Business: None.

Lori Barnes mentioned that she is working on a survey project about the future of libraries. She asked those who have received the survey, but not yet completed it (or those who may receive a survey in the future), please consider completing the survey. In response to a query, Lori
explained that her goal was to prepare for her library’s next 5-year strategic plan which begins 2025.

*The next regular meeting of the Mississippi Library Association Executive Board is October 13, 2020, at 4 p.m. via Zoom Meeting (Virtual).*

**Adjournment:**

**MOTION:** To adjourn the meeting.

Made by: Tamara Blackwell  
Second: Phillip Carter

Pass unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

[Signature]

Tamara Blackwell, Secretary