

MISSISSIPPI LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
Executive Board Minutes
October 13, 2020

Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Mississippi

Call to Order:

The October virtual meeting of the Executive Board of the Mississippi Library Association was called to order by Mary Beth Applin, President, at 3:15 p.m. on Tuesday, October 13, 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; Sarah Crisler-Ruskey, Immediate Past President; Patsy Brewer, Parliamentarian; and Meredith Wickham, ALA Councilor.

Others Present: Caroline Barnett, Paula Bass, Hulen E. Bivins, Mac Buntin, Joy Dubose, Kate Dutro, Justin Easterday, Tina Harry, Rickey Jones, Elizabeth Minter, Rachelle Moore, Stephen Parks, Jesse Pool, Jennifer Todd, Janessa Ullendorf. Also, in attendance were Diana Brown, Sissy Bullock, Mike Emerson, Martha Lawson, Jennifer Stephenson, and numerous other MLA members.

Approval of the Agenda:

MOTION: To adopt the agenda for the October 13, 2020, meeting of the MLA Executive Board.

Made by: Mara Polk Second: Rickey Jones
Passed unanimously

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: To adopt the Minutes for the July 10, 2020, meeting of the MLA Executive Board as sent out via email with one change as requested by Sarah Crisler-Ruskey on page 3.

Made by: Lori Barnes Second: Sarah Crisler-Ruskey
Passed unanimously

MLA Officers and Staff Reports:

Secretary: Tamara Blackwell – no report.

Treasurer: Lori Barnes reported that the attached budget report is valid through the end of September. As for the account balances, the main account has \$72,374.98 and the debit

account has \$1,358.13 for a total of \$73,733.11. Lori noted that income and expenses has been very different this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the switch to a virtual conference, though dues generally fluctuate throughout the year. Mary Beth reminded the Board that dues renewals are now good for one year from the date the dues were paid.

President: Mary Beth announced:

- Committees, sections, and roundtables should notify Paula Bass of the names of incoming chairs, if a change occurs.
- Tonja Johnson resigned as the Legislative Committee chair. She will, however, remain the “official” chair until the end of the year.
- Paula mentioned that there is funding in the budget for promotional items usually included in conference bags and she inquired if MLA would be offering anything this year. Board members liked the idea of a “happy,” especially an item to commemorate the first virtual conference but noted that postage may be cost prohibitive. Mara confirmed that extra postage costs had not been included in the budget. Lori Barnes reported that while MLA is already overspent in the postage category, there is money elsewhere. The Board agreed to table the issue until after the conference when Mary Beth, Mara, Paula, and Lori can re-evaluate the budget and then make a recommendation at the December meeting.

Mary Beth ended her report by acknowledging and thanking Mara and her committee for a wonderful job so far on the conference.

Vice-President: Mara Polk thanked committee chairs for their hard work.

- Recommended Executive Board budget for the Whova platform in the future due to its power to reach 500 plus attendees. While she had not anticipated it, the virtual conference planning experience was great, especially due to the flexibility of the platform. She assured those who may be involved in planning a virtual conference in the future that she would be available to assist them. Her main goal was to keep the virtual conference experience as close as possible to the in-person experience.
- Attendees may leave session feedback on Whova and the conference survey will be uploaded soon.
- The conference session recordings will be available for three months on Whova.
- Lauded Justin Easterday, who organized the silent auction, and Jamie Stanfield and Elizabeth Minter for their work in recruiting vendors and sponsors for conference.

Immediate Past President: Sarah Crisler-Ruskey reported that she had been investigating the previously proposed one-day regional conferences for front-line staff, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, everything had changed. With the virtual conference and high attendance, she wondered if regional conferences were still needed and asked the Board members if there was still interest in the proposal for next year. Mara suggested that possibility that MLA host virtual presentations for paraprofessionals, but Sarah again questioned whether they were still needed. Mary Beth suggested the possibility of hybrid meetings, i.e., in-person but recorded so they could be shared. Sarah will continue to investigate the feasibility of regional conferences.

MLA Administrator: Mary Beth reported for Paula Bass that MLA has 708 members and 393 active members, which is up from last year. Mary Beth lauded Paula on her dedication to recruitment and maintenance of the membership. Mentioned October birthdays: Mara Polk and Lori Barnes.

ALA Councilor: Meredith Wickham reported that there had been no recent council work, but the committee had been researching the “Forward Together” proposed ALA restructuring. They are having meetings every two weeks for discussion and will have a big meeting in November to discuss findings.

SELA Councilor: Ashley Dees is not present, but Mary Beth reported for her that the joint conference with GLA and SELA was well attended but does not have numbers at this time. A centennial celebration is currently being planned on the day and location where SELA began (November 12th at Signal Mountain, Tennessee). More information is forthcoming.

Mary Beth asked about plans for a joint MLA and SELA conference. Lori Barnes confirmed there had been a recommendation, but no official action was taken. Sarah confirmed that the recommendation had been approved for possibly 2022. Mary Beth stated that she would investigate and announce it at the Business Meeting.

MLC Executive Director: Hulen Bivins – no report.

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

Public Library Section: Phillip Carter is not present – no report.

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

Special Libraries Section: Stephen Parks – no report.

Trustees Section: Rickey Jones – no report.

Advocacy Committee: Mary Beth noted that Kate Dutro had one of the first sessions this morning, prompting a short discussion by Kate about her experience using the Whova platform. Kate reported:

- Offered a free webinar for MLA members and librarians titled “Voter Registration @ the Library” that was hosted by the League of Women Voters in Jackson that was attended by 52 librarians. She noted that the League allowed the session to be recorded and shared.
- Offering two sessions at MLA conference: “Advocacy 101” and “Library Advocacy During a Pandemic: A Panel Discussion on How All Libraries Can Adapt.”
- In the coming year, the Committee will focus on the member survey, coordination with the long-term planning committee, coordination with the legislative committee, more webinars for members, and a website re-design.

Awards Committee: Rachelle Moore reported that several nominations were received, and the committee met via Zoom and chose the winners. The awards were ordered from Discount Trophy in Jackson, who mailed the awards to the winners. She noted that many of those

who nominated a winner would be presenting that winner's award. Mary Beth thanked Rachelle for her work as the chair.

Black Caucus Roundtable: Mary Ann Peoples is not present – no report.

Election Committee: Jennifer Smith is not present – no report.

Fiscal Management Committee: Patsy Brewer reported that the interest earned for July-August is \$11.78 and the balance on the IShare account is \$34,858.09.

Gaming and Graphic Novels Roundtable: Elizabeth Minter reported:

- The Roundtable had their meeting today with 179 (confirmed by Mara Polk) attendees and they would raffle off five Games & Graphic Novels Roundtable Cares boxes at their exhibitor booth. They are planning a game night event for next year.
- They are also working on a board game collection for the Roundtable and will talk to MLC about including them in kits for circulation to public libraries.
- Mary Beth asked if they would continue to have four co-chairs or would they have an election to choose a chair. Elizabeth responded that they liked the co-chair arrangement, but Mary Beth recommended they check their by-laws about whether they are required to have an election or not. Mara praised the committee for its hard work and enthusiasm.

Legislative Committee: Tonja Johnson is not present – no report.

Ad Hoc Committee on Fees: Patsy Brewer reported the committee will meet after the conference to continue their discussion about institutional and conference fees. She will talk to Mara about numbers and the committee will proceed from there.

Long Range Planning: Amanda Clay Powers is not present – no report. Mary Beth noted that this committee was on-hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Marketing/Public Relations: Brandon Cain is not present – no report. Mary Beth noted this is a new Roundtable and they met this morning and elected Rex Bridges as new chair. They are working with Janessa Ullendorf to establish a new webpage.

Membership Committee: Chair to be announced – no report.

MS Author Awards: Caroline Barnett reported the winners were Kiese Laymon for *Heavy* (non-fiction), Jo Watson Hackl for *Smack Dab in the Middle* (special/children's), and Joe Edd Morris for *The Prison* (fiction). She stated that Kiese Laymon was a good choice, especially as his book was awarded a Carnegie Medal. Caroline closed by expressing her appreciation of committee members for their work during the pandemic.

National Library Week: Tori Hopper is not present – no report.

New Member Roundtable: Jesse Pool reported they had their session today where they covered the basics about MLA and invited everyone to review handouts from an earlier session. Jesse noted that this is his last year on the committee, which he served on for 12 years. He will

remain the chair until a new chair has been elected. He encouraged everyone to participate in the Scavenger Hunt with a \$25 Amazon gift card and a READ poster as prizes.

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

Outreach Committee: Chair to be announced – no report.

Publicity Committee: Janessa Ullendorf has been busy with Facebook and Twitter posts. She called for conference photos, which she will post on Facebook. She stated that she would be happy to help any roundtables set-up a group page on Facebook and link to the MLA page. If anyone needs help, email her. Mary Beth thanked Janessa for her contributions throughout the year.

Scholarship Committee: Justin Easterday reported that he has been taking notes on how to do a virtual auction and online scholarship applications. He stated that 27 items were donated and up for auction. Justin confirmed that the platform for auction bidding is RallyUp and that those who donated items for the auction were also donating shipping costs, too. Mary Beth stated her appreciation of Justin's work on the committee this year.

Social Justice: Mac Buntin reported their Facebook page is still a project. They worked hard getting ready for their session this morning. They have 18 members, plus 6 more signed up for Facebook. Members agreed that the committee will meet quarterly via Zoom throughout the year to discuss topics. Mac noted that they needed an election for a new chair.

Technical Services RT: Joy Dubose reported they had their session today with 40 people in attendance during which they talked about the cataloging manual, accessibility with digital services, and elected a new secretary Lauren Geiger and a new chair Preston Salisbury. Mary Beth thanked Joy for her service.

Web Committee: Jennifer Todd reported she has been working on registrations with the help of Paula Bass, Selena Swink, and Mara Polk and setting up the Whova platform getting ready for the conference. In response to Mary Beth's inquiry about the status of Terry Lejaunie, Mara stated that he will be moved to a long-term facility soon (hopefully next week) and his wife will post on Facebook only if there are any dramatic changes.

YPSRT: Carrie-Ann Pearson is not present – no report.

Mississippi Libraries: Tina Harry reported the fall issue was published. Three articles were received for peer-review: one was published in the fall issue as peer-reviewed; one will be published in the Winter issue without peer-review (author's choice); and the remaining article is still in the peer-review process. They were busy working on recruiting articles for the fall and future issues. Mary Beth praised Tina on a job well done.

Old Business: None

New Business: Mary Beth asked if there was anything MLA could do to assist libraries during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

- Mac Buntin noted that libraries are facing budgetary issues and advocacy is needed. Mary Beth stated that is a good topic for the Advocacy Committee to address is funding at the state and local levels.
- Kate noted that libraries need to have safe re-opening plans and broadband is still an issue, especially with so many children without reliable internet access at home.
- Meredith suggested the need for an innovative plan on how to advocate to the legislature, especially if there is no meeting at the Capitol this year. She further noted that wi-fi hotspots are needed in addition to broadband and the Legislative Committee should address this issue, too. Mary Beth agreed and pointed out the need for a new Legislative Committee chair.
- Mara noted the need for an alternate plan for Legislative Day, if the in-person date is cancelled, that advocates for all libraries and for MAGNOLIA, which is predicted to have a funding shortfall next year despite the increase in usage since schools re-opened. Meredith stated even if the Legislative Day is not cancelled, probably only 20 people will be allowed in the Capitol.
- Mary Beth suggested sending videos to legislature, prompting Joy Dubose to note that Mississippi State has a studio. Mary Beth asked Joy to investigate the possibility of a class taking this on as a project at Mississippi State and she herself would investigate at Hinds. Dawn Zimmerer confirmed that Madison [County Library System] has a sound booth, too. Dawn stated that she knows a technology specialist who is great with producing videos. Mary Beth said that they would need to come up with a good message. The Board agreed to address the possibility of creating videos and brainstorm message ideas at a meeting following the conference, which Mara agreed to set-up. Lori Barnes recommended talking to Rex Bridges, chair of Market/Public Relations Committee, about working on this, as well. At Mary Beth’s request, Mara agreed she will look up the MLC/MLA dates.

Mary Beth noted that the MLA Business Meeting is tomorrow, October 14th at 8:30 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the Mississippi Library Association Executive Board is December 4, 2020, at 11 a.m.

Adjournment:

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting.

Made by: Rickey Jones Second: Mara Polk

Pass unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Tamara Blackwell, Secretary