

**MISSISSIPPI LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**  
**Executive Board Minutes**  
**December 4, 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 10 a.m. on Friday, December 4, 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; Ashley Dees, SELA Councilor.

Others Present: Caroline Barnett, Paula Bass, Rex Bridges, Kate Dutro, Tina Harry, Rickey Jones, Sarah Mangrum, Elizabeth Minter, Rachelle Moore, Stephen Parks, Mary Ann Peoples, Jesse Pool, Michelle Frasier-Robinson, Blanche Sanders, Joyce Shaw, Jennifer Smith, Jennifer Stephenson, Jamie Stanfield, Danielle Terrell, and Jennifer Todd.

**Approval of the Agenda:**

**MOTION: To adopt the agenda for the December 4, 2020, meeting of the  
MLA Executive Board.**

**Made by: Sarah Crisler-Ruskey      Second: Tamara Blackwell**  
**Passed unanimously**

**Approval of Minutes:**

**MOTION: To adopt the Minutes for the October 13, 2020, meeting of the  
MLA Executive Board as sent out via email.**

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

**MLA Officers and Staff Reports:**

Secretary:      Tamara Blackwell – no report.

Treasurer:      Lori Barnes reported the account balances: the main account has \$71,372.60 and the debit account has \$721.10. Lori stated that she worked with Fiscal Management Chair Patsy Brewer to ensure a smooth transition with incoming Treasurer Michele Frasier-Robinson, especially considering that 2020 was so unusual due to COVID-19. Lori stated that she favors establishing something to honor Terry Lajaunie, such as a scholarship or an award, for his selfless contributions to MLA and librarianship. Mary Beth shared that she had heard from others in favor of this, too. In response to Mary Beth's query as to if MLA could send flowers, Parliamentarian Patsy Brewer confirmed that this is permissible with the expense coming out of either the line item "Office Expenses" or "MLA Administrator Expenses." Further, when Mary Beth queried Patsy about setting up a scholarship, Patsy stated that a fund could be created as a line item in the budget to provide for a scholarship every year.

**MOTION: To take the steps necessary to create a scholarship in the name of Terry Lajaunie for his service to not only MLA, but to libraries in the state of Mississippi for over 20 years.**

**Made by: Lori Barnes**

**Second: Jamie Stanfield**

**Passed unanimously**

Following a short discussion, the Board agreed that the Scholarship and Public Library Committees will be tasked with creating this scholarship that will provide travel funds to attend the MLA conference and should be awarded to a new librarian working in a public library.

President: Mary Beth Applin thanked everyone and promised that she plans to be active as a past-president.

Vice-President: Mara Polk reported that the conference was a success, and she will be sharing lessons learned about organizing a virtual conference at ALA. She shared some statistics about the conference:

- From Whova:
  - 512 attendees, of which 505 shared their emails and 92 percent downloaded Whova
  - There were 3,147 visits to the agenda webpage; the top 3 sessions visited from the agenda webpage: 1<sup>st</sup> The Million Dollar Reason Your Library Should Market the Collection, 2<sup>nd</sup> 'Tinis, Tapas, and Trivia, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Equity Begins With Us
  - Visits were distributed among 2,821 using desktop, 262 using mobile devices, and 64 using unknown devices
  - The top 3 locations of visits were: Hernando (738), Hattiesburg (271), and Jackson (244), but there were also visits from Oxford, England, Carthage, Tunisia, and Corinth, Greece
- 500 responses to the MLA Session Feedback form were received that pertained to 72 sessions and the virtual exhibits enjoyed a 4.85 of 5 approval rating.
- Pertaining to the Google Drive Survey:
  - 16.2 percent of attendees were first timers
  - 52 percent of attendees worked or volunteered at public libraries, with 20 percent from community colleges, 13.3 from academic, 9.3 from schools
  - 84 percent of attendees rated the format and convenience of registration as 5 of 5; Mara noted that credit goes mostly to Terry Lajaunie, who created the online form for group registrations
  - 41.3 percent rated the quality of the exhibit as 5 of 5, while 42.9 percent rated 4
  - 27 people rated the ease/difficulty of using the Whova platform as 1 of 5 and had a really hard time, most likely because they were just learning it while attending the conference
  - 74.3 percent of respondents felt they learned new ideas to take back to their libraries
  - The overall quality of the sessions was 4.6 of 5 – same as overall quality of speakers with Keynote speaker Sharman Bridges Smith receiving the highest rating of 4.8 of 5



- Overall, the rating for the conference was 4.5 of 5 and many noted that they would favor a hybrid conference next year

Mara noted that she would like to see closed captioning included in the Zoom platform next year to increase accessibility. Looking towards the future, she obtained a quote from Whova of \$2,699 for next year's conference, if the Board decides to have a virtual conference. Mara shared that Sharman Bridges Smith's Keynote address had the highest attendance with 543, followed by Secrets of Proactive Communication with 535, and the MLA Awards with 422. In response to MLA Awards Chair Rachelle Moore's query, Mara stated that everyone said the MLA Awards were great, no negative feedback.

MLA Author Awards Chair Caroline Barnett stated that the Author Awards had only 50 attendees this year, which is half the number that usually attend. Caroline recommended that if the conference is virtual next year the ceremony be moved to earlier in day. In Zoom Chat Jenniffer Stephenson noted that if the conference is hybrid next year, the ceremony could be recorded in the evening and presented as a session the next day. Mary Beth continued that the Author Awards should also receive more publicity. Sarah Mangrum and Kate Dutro both volunteered to help with publicity next year. Mary Beth suggested reaching out to Janessa Ullendorf, who has experience writing press releases, as well. Caroline also called for more involvement with publishers and authors, who might be able to help with obtaining copies of hard-to-find books by Mississippi authors.

Jenniffer Stephenson said that the hybrid conference model is a great idea that would allow for more library staff, especially in schools, to attend the full conference. She suggested finding sponsors to fund virtual events, perhaps even just one sponsor to pay for it all.

Mara concluded her report with the amount of funds collected for the conference:

- \$345.00 Scholarships through registration
- \$2,445.00 Member registration
- \$6,300.00 Non-Member registration
- \$2,000.00 Sponsorships (through booth and regular)
- \$12,965.00 TOTAL as of October 16, 2020

Immediate Past President: Sarah Crisler-Ruskey had no report.

MLA Administrator: Mary Beth reported for Paula Bass, who was present but having microphone issues, that MLA has 717 total memberships, 390 of which are active, 304 are lapsed, 14 are new memberships, and 9 are pending renewals. In a Zoom Chat, Paula shared Happy Birthday wishes to Jesse Pool, Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>; Janessa Ullendorf, Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>; Phillip Carter, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>; Terry Lajaunie, Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>; and Joy Dubose, Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>. Paula noted that she received CEU requests from 55 attendees, that CEU certificates will be completed by Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>, and MLA will schedule the mailing after that date.

ALA Councilor: Mary Beth reported for Meredith Wickham that Council has voted to extend the Forward Together timeline and establish a new working group in 2021. Meredith gladly voted for that sensible plan on behalf of the chapter. The Council has no other business until it meets again at the ALA Midwinter.

SELA Councilor: Ashley Dees reported that due to COVID-19, the SELA Centennial Celebration was held November 12<sup>th</sup> at Signal Mountain, TN, but was limited to approximately



15 attendees with those SELA members unable to be there attending via Zoom. SELA created a webpage for the event that includes SELA history and interviews with past SELA presidents. To commemorate the celebration, the Fall 2021 issue of *The Southeastern Librarian* will be a special centennial issue. Ashley ended her report by announcing that Sarah Mangrum will be the SELA Councilor next year.

MLC Executive Director: Mary Beth reported for an absent Hulen Bivins that the Governor's proposed FY 2022 budget calls for level funding for MLC, meaning the Governor did not restore the 3.5 percent loss that is being absorbed totally in-house this year. The Governor announced in November there will be an increase in cost of health care premiums, projected to be \$11 per MLC employee and a 3.5 percent increase for those in the P.I.G. program. MAGNOLIA will receive level funding, as well. She concluded Hulen's report by noting that a great deal of work is still needed to restore both lost funding and dollars to cover the insurance cost increase in the FY 2022 budget.

ACRL Section: Kristy Bariola is not present – no report. Mary Beth noted that they elected new officers, but they may not be confirmed yet.

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 had no report. Incoming Section Chair Joyce Shaw reported that she was happy to hear their session received a 4.5 of 5 rating and thought the support and attendance for the session was wonderful, as was the tech. She noted that their speaker Mr. Michael Angelo Caruso was pleased, as well.

Trustees Section: Rickey Jones reported his section continued to work with legislators to promote libraries. He also spoke with an official from a local SBA about the importance of wi-fi and broadband in public libraries, especially in relation to pandemic recovery. He also spoke with an official from USDA about rural concerns.

Advocacy Committee: Kate Dutro reported that she wanted the Board to be aware that the Governor's budget calls for elimination of income tax, no teacher pay hike, and includes \$3 million for a so-called "Patriotic Education Fund," which will impact libraries and librarians throughout the state. At the conference, she noted that John Chaska gave a bleak picture of what library funding will soon look like. In response, she recommended increasing library contact with legislators, noting past efforts included sending out holiday and/or Valentine's cards and Library "Love Letters" to elected officials. The goal is a program of consistent advocacy.

Awards Committee: Rachelle Moore reported that she is thrilled with the 4.5 of 5 rating the Awards Ceremony received. She noted there were a few "hiccups," most notably that some awards were lost in transit, which were quickly reordered and delivered on time, but it went well and the committee had a great year.

Black Caucus Roundtable: Mary Ann Peoples is not present – no report. Mary Beth noted that the new Chair is Blanche Sanders from Alcorn.

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

Fiscal Management: Patsy Brewer reported that interest for the month of October was \$56.10 and the interest year-to-date was \$372.44 with a balance in the Ishare account of \$34,585.43.



Gaming and Graphic Novels Roundtable: Elizabeth Minter and Hannah Berry were present. Elizabeth reported that the winners of the Care Packages were Dena Killborn from Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System; Nicole Nichols from McNeil Elementary; Robin Brannon from Enterprise Elementary and Middle School; Barbara Rodgers from Leland High School; and Greg Sellers from Hinds Community College in Vicksburg. She also stated that the GGNRT exhibit booth had 243 visitors and 108 attended their roundtable discussion panel. The group plans to work with MLC, possibly with Charlie [Simpkins], to create board game kits that can circulate to libraries in the state.

[Ad Hoc Committee on Fees: Patsy Brewer submitted a written report via email that after consulting with other committee members, the committee decided it would be best to table this discussion until the May 2021 meeting due to COVID-19 and recent budget cuts to school, college, and public libraries.]

Legislative Committee: Mary Beth reminded the Board that Tonja Johnson resigned and introduced Jenniffer Stephenson as incoming Chair. Jenniffer has no report currently.

Long Range Planning: Amanda Clay Powers is not present – no report.

Marketing/Public Relations: Brandon Cain is not present. Incoming Chair Rex Bridges reported that Brandon Cain created the Marketing/Public Relations Roundtable, which currently has 18 members. The goal of the Roundtable is to provide training and information about marketing, branding, and basic public relations for Mississippi libraries. Rex concluded his report by confirming that the Roundtable will be electing new officers soon.

Membership Committee: TBA – no report.

MS Author Awards: Caroline Barnett, having reported above in the Vice-President's report (page 3), concluded by encouraging Board members to be thinking about authors they might nominate next year and to also consider serving on the committee.

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

New Member Roundtable: Jesse Pool is not present. [Jesse submitted a written report via email that reported the winner of Roundtable's MLA Conference Scavenger Hunt was Cheyenne Calvi from the M.R. Dye Public Library at First Regional Library and the Roundtable's meeting at the conference went as planned. Jesse sharing that he is currently searching for a new committee Chair, stating that he is amiable to continuing to act as Chair until one is found.]

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

Outreach Committee: TBA – no report.

Publicity Committee: Janessa Ullendorf is not present – no report.

Scholarship Committee: Justin Easterday is not present – no report.

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

Technical Services RT: Joy Dubose is not present – no report.

Web Committee: Jennifer Todd and Phillip Carter are not present – no report.

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

Mississippi Libraries: Tina Harry reported that the winter issue is almost finished, and there are currently two articles that will be included.

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:** Fiscal Management Chair Patsy Brewer stated that the Board needs to discuss and approve the FY 2021 budget that will go into effect on January 1, 2021. She reported that the FY 2021 budget differs from the FY 2020 budget in five areas:

- Income from Section dues increased from \$100 to \$120.
- Income from EBSCO Royalties increased from \$100 to \$150.
- The MLA Administrative Fund increased from \$12,790 to \$13,498.
- Expenditures for bank charges and fees increased from \$50 to \$500. Patsy noted that due to COVID-19 MLA is doing things differently. Every time a transaction is made it results in a service charge.
- The switch from PayPal to Wild Apricot will increase the expenditure to \$1,728.

These changes resulted in a \$778 increase in the budget.

**MOTION: To accept the budget for the coming year.**

**Made by:** Lori Barnes      **Second:** Sarah Crisler-Rusky  
**Passed unanimously**

**Adjournment:**

**MOTION: To adjourn the meeting.**

**Made by:** Stephen Parks      **Second:** Mara Polk  
**Pass unanimously**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

*The next regular meeting of the Mississippi Library Association Executive Board is December 4, 2020, at 11:25 a.m.*



Tamara Blackwell, Secretary