



NJLA Executive Board Meeting
February 16, 2021, 10:00 a.m.
via Zoom

Minutes

Call to Order – Jen Schureman Brenner, President

The President calls the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Present: Jen Schureman Brenner, Danielle Cesena, Leslin Charles, Corey Fleming, Kate Jagers, Allan Kleiman, Adriana Mamay, Laverne Mann, Samantha McCoy, Eileen Palmer, Will Porter, Selwa Shamy, Jessica Trujillo, Leah Wagner, John Wallace, Kerry Weinstein

Guests: Karen Cerra, Linda Hoffman, Sarah Lester, Juliet Machie, Jen Nelson, Jeanne Marie Ryan, Mary Moyer Stubbs

Absent: Pham Condello, Leah Wagner

Adoption of Agenda – Jen Schureman Brenner, President

The agenda is amended, a report from the Employee Relations Committee will be reviewed next month. Danielle Cesena moves to amend the agenda, Will Porter seconds and the motion passes

Minutes - 12/15/21; 1/19/21; 1/26/21 Board Meetings

Selwa Shamy, Secretary, 12/15/21; Kate Jagers took minutes 1/19/21 & 1/26/21

With no corrections, the minutes for all three dates are accepted.

Welcome to Jen Nelson & Board Member Introductions

- Jen Nelson arrived in NJ on Sunday night and is excited to be here and work with everyone
- Immediate focus will be getting the construction grant underway
- Once the pandemic restrictions are lifted she will start visiting libraries
- Jen's door and phone are always open

Financial Report - Samantha McCoy, Treasurer

- January expenses were \$16,075.76. Juliet Machie has secured a credit card and expenses are being moved over
- The investment committee will reconvene in March to make a decision regarding the \$220,712.97 Valley National CD in a brokerage account
- Had a good meeting with the Harrah's representative, more details are below in the Conference Update section

- Worked on the office lease with Juliet Machie and got a great deal, more details in Juliet's report
- Membership dues were underestimated, the total is \$85,113 and the estimate was \$90,000
- The Annual Appeal estimate is just under 50% of actual income, the goal is to reach \$7500 before the end of the fiscal year. All executive board members are strongly encouraged to make a contribution
- Eileen Palmer asked about the \$30,000 in revenue, assuming it will be from Harrah's, will it be revenue from last year or this year? Samantha McCoy is not certain. Jeanne Marie Ryan said she believes it will count for this year because it was returned this year. Will recalls that the recommendation was that it should count for this year
- The audit from 2020 was approved

Reports within NJLA

Jen Schureman Brenner, President

- Juliet Machie and Jen Schureman Brenner attended the last board meeting for Vineland Public Library. These are excerpts from a lengthy discussion.
 - Ten additional staff were laid off leaving just eight staff. Will Porter said eight people are not enough to staff the whole building, which is large. At the meeting, Juliet made a wonderful argument about why the layoffs should be tabled. The board believes staff salaries are too high
 - The board is following a civil service layoff plan, they are eliminating the positions with no intention of filling them
 - All purchases need to be approved by the board and they have final say over what materials are purchased
 - Eileen Palmer asked if the township is requiring the library to return funds to the municipality. She suggested developing a list of what information needs to be gathered and submit freedom of information requests if needed. If $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mill is not being spent and is being hoarded then that is an issue we can discuss. Allan said that in order to give the money back unspent funds there is a whole process and package that goes to the state, you must prove that the library is providing all the necessary services
 - NJLA sent a letter to the board president but did not get a response. Juliet told Jen that she will do whatever needs to be done

Juliet Machie, Executive Director - [Full report](#)

- Legislative engagement: virtual legislative visits to advocate for FY22 library network appropriations, and to educate lawmakers about the value of New Jersey's libraries. Details about the visits are in the full report. Thanks to the legislative team: Peggy Cadigan (NJSL) and Public Policy Chair & Vice Chair, Sarah Lester and Linda Hoffman
- NJLA Keynote: Turning Tinted Pages about Black librarianship. It was very heartwarming

to see the talent in the program. Also humbling because the program highlighted areas where more work is needed, especially to examine where we are with equity, diversity, and inclusion as an organization and profession. We need to challenge ourselves to put actions in place to make sure NJLA is welcoming and nurturing to all members

- Office relocation: we have completed lease negotiations with Bordentown Professional Plaza LLC. The finalized document is on this meeting's agenda for Board approval. Thank you to our treasurer, Samantha McCoy and legal counsel, Michael Cerone, for their diligence in reviewing the lease document
- Conference readiness: our Stripe account setup and Pheedloop connection is complete, tested and enabled. Juliet met with Radwa Ali last Friday to enable the Stripe/Pheedloop connection. Discussions with Kim Lyons and negotiations with Harrah's produced good results for NJLA. The current proposal, for Board approval, is on today's agenda. Thanks to the conference committee for their patience while we explored solutions.
- Partnership with NJLTA: the MOU is fully executed and filed. Pat Pavlak wanted us to know the Johnson Act program that NJLTA sponsored had 100 attendees and they have two additional programs in the coming weeks
- NJASL president Beth Thomas reached out and asked Mary Moyer to represent the organization at today's meeting
- LibraryLinkNJ Partnership: Juliet reached out to LibraryLinkNJ's leadership to begin conversations to explore our synergies. Executive Director, Susanne Sacchetti, Board President, Bonnie Lafazan, and Board Vice President, Jennifer Podolsky, are all enthused about opportunities for us to work together. More on this in my future updates
- Leadership orientation date will be confirmed by the end of this week.
- 2020 Librarian of the Year program and Awards Ceremony is scheduled for this afternoon

Eileen Palmer, ALA Councilor - [Full report](#)

- ALA Midwinter Meeting was completely virtual. They were pleased with the response they got for attendance. They gave away a lot of registrations to those out of work and to students, Eileen is unsure whether they met revenue targets. The idea of opening the conference at a reduced rate or for free is a good idea. Could get corporate sponsors to underwrite that expense. There was a lot of positivity that came from the attendees who benefited.
- Council got a report from the Forward Together working group to reorganize ALA, the report is available to read, there is a link in the full report. The last three pages are the heart of that report. The next step is to have a Forward Together resolutions working group, which Eileen is a member, that will turn work into actionable items.
- Eileen recommends reading the [ALA Five Year Pivot Strategy](#) on the ALA website, the best example where Tracy Hall sees the organization going. The way she looks at organizational growth is refreshing
- Finances: when you don't have good reporting it is difficult to make good decisions and ALA does not have good reporting because they hired out fiscal services the last few years and they cannot get any data, last good data is April 2020. They are making some

progress and are stabilizing things. The plan, if their financial assumptions are correct, will move them forward

- Resolutions
 - To condemn white supremacy and facism as antithetical to library work, this came up from the members, it is a worthy read
 - On replacing the Library of Congress Subject Heading “illegal aliens” with “undocumented immigrants.” ALA passed a similar resolution a few years ago, this one affirms the first one and will continue to be worked on
 - Classifying Library Workers as 1b Workers to be Listed as a Priority Workforce in Receiving the COVID-19 Vaccine. This passed although Eileen voted against it because the resolution was revised to remove the part about classifying library workers as 1b). ALA does not want to expend political capital unless we know we will get it, their focus is on money not library workers
 - Broadband as a human right, Eileen is hoping the NJLA Public Policy Committee brings this up in NJLA to do something similar. What we understand about this issue is what we bring to the table. Huge symbolic move on ALA’s part
 - Privacy oriented resolutions
 - opposing facial recognition software in libraries
 - on the misuse of behavioral data surveillance in libraries -- T. J. Lamanna was one of the principal forces behind this resolution. NJLA Intellectual Freedom Committee could take this up
 - Eileen suggested that the Emerging Technology Committee could create a statement regarding how the data library vendors have access to can be used
 - Once the resolutions are posted on the ALA website Eileen will forward them to the board
- Senator Reed construction bill - ALA issued an alert, they are targeting their advocacy who are 100% on budget issues. ALA Washington Office is focusing on LSTA increased funding, which was brought up in a Senate subcommittee. Linda said Senator Booker has signed on, not aware it has been introduced to the House yet

Board Subcommittee Reports

Budget Subcommittee - This committee (Sam McCoy, Laverne Mann, Will Porter, Kate Jagers, Jen Schureman Brenner) will meet with Juliet to set the stage for next year.

Bylaws Subcommittee - Kate Jagers, Subcommittee Chair, reports that changes previously approved by the Board still need to be presented at a full membership meeting.

New Business

1. **2022 Legislative Priorities - Sarah Lester and Linda Hoffman** - A copy of the priorities are in the board packet. Public Policy is very busy with legislative visits which have been very positive. They are working closely with Peggy Cadigan who does a great

job, along with Betsy Beavers who does the scheduling. Based on visits over the last few weeks, the state legislature understands the value of libraries. Many legislators know us as the “library people” and are familiar with their local librarians who attend the visits. Top priority is network aid and state aid. Have gotten only positive feedback, they understand it is more important than ever.

- a. The \$20 million equity ask is separate and went directly to the governor’s office, CARES funding, followed by a broadband bill. Peggy is in conversation with Senator Menendez’s office
 - b. Linda said the visits have been amazing. The most heartwarming part is the stories from local libraries and hearing what everyone has been doing during the pandemic. Also talking about construction funds and bringing awareness to the libraries that did not get construction funds. Betsy has done an amazing job scheduling and getting information to legislative teams. Senator Menendez will be doing a press conference in Woodland Park, Betsy will try to get library information to him
2. **Economic Recovery Taskforce, Linda Hoffman** - discussion regarding the role of libraries in economic recovery in NJ, especially Post COVID. Create and develop a strategy for a plan and ultimately an ask. Want to be prepared should funds become available to NJ libraries. Met with Juliet to bring her up to date, sent a survey to NJ libraries. Task force is seeking partners, will have listening sessions and a Q&A session once we are at that point. Sarah thanked all members of Public Policy from the Executive Board.
 - a. Laverne Mann, who was the past chair of Public Policy, is glad to see the co-branding. She recommended the NJLA website include legislative priorities and asked how that can happen. Sarah said the long form was submitted to the board. The Public Policy Committee has not met with the primary sponsor of the per capita bill, everyone else said they would sign on once that person signs on. Last year it was introduced by Carol Murphy in the Senate, Juliet met with her and asked that she introduce it again this year. Senator Sandra Cunningham was the prime sponsor last year along with Senator Linda Greenstein. Legislative priorities do not include NJASL priorities right now but it can be tabled until next month until a meeting with NJASL is set and before the Public Policy meeting in March. Once approved it will be brought back to the board. Eileen Palmer said it’s important to approve the NJLA priorities now with an understanding that we will merge priorities with NJASL. Eileen asks that when it is put on the website that it be placed in a different place for easier access.
 - b. Eileen Palmer moves approval of NJLA 2020-21 legislative priorities with the understanding that NJASL priorities will eventually be included. Laverne Mann seconds and the motion passes.
3. **Member Services Committee** - Kate Jagers reports that the committee is working on a sponsor-a-member program, when the board approved a hardship rate for renewing memberships the committee proposed developing a sponsor-a-member program and they have come up with a proposal, although Juliet said the committee did not submit it

to the executive board

- a. They want to solicit financial support to donate specifically for the purpose of sponsoring a member. They are developing an application process for the recipient of those funds. It isn't a scholarship but they are working with the Scholarship Committee
 - b. Eileen Palmer said it's a great idea and she would like to see criteria for how they are going to select who gets sponsored, whether there will be a relationship between the person who donates and is sponsored, how will it work? Also, will they look at a program to sustain membership for those new to the profession. Ex) first year 100% support, second year a 50% percentage, the next year lower than 50%, then no support. The goal is to develop new members and keep them as members
 - c. Kate Jagers said she will share the document with the board and ask for feedback. Ally Blumenfeld's email address can be shared to offer feedback directly to the committee chairs. The first step now is to ask for donations to make sure there are funds to offer this program
- 4. Scholarship Committee, John Wallace** - awarded a scholarship in 2019 through the Karma Foundation to a library student, Elbie Love. Awarded up to \$30,000 for the cost of her schooling.
- a. Elbie was unable to finish the Fall 2019 semester and was also unable to submit paperwork to access the scholarship funds. Sharon Karmazin from the Karma Foundation intends to continue to support Elbie's schooling through this scholarship, and has proposed language in the existing MOU to extend the deadline that scholarship money must be used (to Summer 2021).
 - b. Currently, \$1142 needs to be paid to Rutgers to lift a hold on Elbie's account, and in addition, \$9000 of student loans for Fall 2019 need to be repaid to Elbie directly.
 - c. Jen Schureman explains that the sequence for scholarships is that the student registers for classes, NJLA pays, and the Foundation reimburses NJLA. Samantha McCoy asks how soon the Foundation will reimburse NJLA the \$1142 that is needed immediately.
 - d. Samantha McCoy motions to approve the payment of \$1142 directly to Rutgers. John Wallace seconds and the motion passes.
 - e. Eileen Palmer moved to amend the motion indicating that we will move forward now and the scholarship committee will create a letter about what happened for the file so it is distinct and can easily be referred to. Samantha McCoy seconds the amendment and the motion passes.
- 5. Nominations and Elections Update** - voting opens today for the slate; one last addition is Maureen Langley for Member-at-Large

Old Business

1. **Office Update – Professional Plaza & Moving Expense Request - Authorization to Sign a Lease for office space at the Bordentown (Juliet)** - Samantha McCoy, Michael

Cerone, and Juliet Machie met with the leasing agent.

- a. They are asking for a 2 month deposit plus first month rent, total \$3600, to move in March 1
- b. The CAM [Common Area Maintenance] payment of \$645 is being waived until 2026. Rent is \$1200 per month for the first five year, plus utility fees for electricity and heat, the water is billed per square footage, calculate that at 5% of the bill will be an estimated \$64 per month
- c. Areas to be determined - one renewal option for another five years. The initial proposal required a percentage increase, now negotiated as flat CAM for year 6 (\$1905) , going up incrementally to \$2063 by year 10. (REVIEW LEASE FOR \$\$)
- d. Eileen Palmer moved to approve the lease, John Wallace seconds and the motion passed
- e. Juliet said the landlord does not want to pay to replace the carpet. NJLA would need to pay to either replace carpet or install wood laminate which costs \$1.99 per square foot plus \$1 per square foot for labor, total cost \$4337.74. Julie would like the laminate floor option
- f. Juliet has requested \$8000 to purchase furniture, fixtures, and equipment. There was a donation from LibraryLinkNJ for Juliet's desk. There is one desk in storage that may or may not be usable
- g. Samantha is interested in doing a capital plan
- h. Moving expenses are not included in the budget request. Based on LibraryLinkNJ's move from Piscataway to Trenton, the cost is estimated to be \$4000. The total request is \$19,938
- i. Samantha said NJLA has the money for this because rent was not paid for several months. Technology, which still needs to be determined, will cost quite a bit but the moving cost will most likely be less than \$4000
- j. Moving into a new phase of NJLA in that we are an organization to be reckoned with. These are positive changes that will last a long time. The office can be used to host legislators, etc. Furniture can be acquired cheaply. Samantha said we can go slow and take up to six months to get the technology set up, there will only be two people in the office
- k. Eileen Palmer brought up the distinction between operational and capital expenses. What is the new money we are committing? Allan Kleiman said the lease is operational as well as capital, let the minutes reflect that this is a combination of operational and capital expenses. Samantha is confident the expenses will come out of the 2021 budget and not need to come out of savings. We don't want to spend more money than we have.
- l. Allan moved to approve the budget request, both operational and capital expenses up to \$20,000. Laverne Mann seconds and the motion passes.

2. **Conference Update** - Juliet Machie

- a. Harrah's initially offers 1-2 MB of complimentary internet and they are willing to grant us 15 MB in the meeting rooms with an increase up to 18 MB if needed.

Harrah's has to pay the vendor on our behalf. They made a counter proposal for the food and beverage minimum which is currently \$31,000. In 2019 \$49,000 was spent on food and beverage and Harrah's wants it to be increased to \$40,000. Juliet pushed back and said 2022 is unknown as of now. Harrah's offered a gradual food and beverage minimum.

- i. 2022 = \$31,000
 - ii. 2023 = \$33,000
 - iii. 2024 = \$37,000
 - iv. 2025 = \$40,000
- b. Kate Jagers said food and beverage from Harrah's has consistently been \$40,000. NJLA is required to reach the food and beverage minimum to get the space. Much of the cost is through luncheons paid for by attendees. Contract needs to state that we have \$35 luncheon plates or else it could go up to \$75, which attendees won't pay. Everything that attendees purchase within the conference program counts toward total food and beverage, including happy hours that committees and sections sponsor. Adriana Mamay said the gradual increase in the minimum puts pressure on having a certain number of attendees. Ex) finding the kind of keynote speakers that will attract attendance.
- c. Wifi is off the table. Juliet will send the contract to the Conference Committee, Kate Jagers and Jen Schureman Brenner will review the contract and make sure it all checks out
- d. Pending review by the Conference Committee, Kate and Jen, Laverne Mann made a motion to extend the contract with Harrah's through 2025 including the schedule of food and beverage increases. Adriana Mamay seconds the motion and it passes

Partnering organizations

1. **NJ State Library** - Jen Nelson, NJ State Librarian, submitted a [full report](#)
2. **NJASL** - Mary Stubbs Moyer reports that NJASL is looking forward to having a public policy priorities conversation with NJLA. She appreciates the support for school library legislation. Happy to support per capita legislation, it helps school libraries too.
3. **NJLTA** - Two workshops have been offered for library trustees, 65 registrants, over 100 people attended the workshop on the Johnson Act.
4. **Rutgers LIS** - no report

Action Plan - Next NJLA Executive Board meeting: **Tuesday, March 16, 2021, 10:00 a.m.**

Good of the Order

Kate Jagers moves to adjourn at 12:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Selwa Shamy