

**Public Library Association
Board of Directors
Fall Meeting
October 24 & 25, 2008
Avenue Hotel, Chicago**

Draft Board Actions

Present: Carol Sheffer, President; Jan Sanders, Past President; Sari Feldman, President Elect; Irene Blalock, Audra Caplan, Sara Dallas, Marion Francis, Michael Golrick, Mary Anne Hodel, Kathy Knox, Judy Napier, Larry Neal, Neel Parikh; Susan Hill Pieper, Eva Poole, Cathy Sanford, Gary Shaffer, Lillian Snyder, Marcia Warner;

PLA Councilor: Christine Lind Hage;

PLA Staff: Greta Southard (Executive Director) Linda Bostrom, Kathleen Hughes, Julianna Kloepfel, Joseph Potazcek, Louisa Worthington, Doug Dawson;

Absent: Danis Kreimeier.

1. **By consent**, approved the adoption of the agenda with the addition of the following new discussion items: Endowment Task Force, spring Board meeting dates, request for project support, ALA appointments, Board Service question.
2. **By consent**, accepted the following reports on the consent agenda:
 - Draft 2008 Annual Conference Board Actions, with the correction of spelling of visitor's name (Nann Blaine Hilyard), 2009.2; Publications Report, 2009.3; Membership Report, 2009.4; *Public Libraries* Magazine Report, 2009.5; Education Activities Report, 2009.6; 2009 Spring Symposium Update, 2009.7; PLA Partners Report, 2009.8; Councilor's Report, 2009.19
3. Reviewed and discussed the FY 2008 Year End Financial Analysis and Mgmt Rpt, 2009.9. Discussion included the following topics:
 - Existing program of work, including educational product offerings
 - Dues revenue does not keep pace with basic operational costs
 - Need to further analyze member retention rates as we gather and research member behavior
 - Last dues increase was 12 years ago, board has a responsibility to review dues rate on a regular basis, and consider the timing of any potential dues increase, while closely analyzing expenditures.
 - Discussion resulted in the following motion:
Motion, refer to Budget & Finance Committee the task of looking at the member dues rate and developing a recommendation regarding any potential change in dues rate. Approved.
4. Received staff update on the Gates Grant Project, 2009.11. Discussion included the benefits to PLA, which include: salary savings, ability to extend our reach to librarians who may never be able to become PLA members---what services might we be able to develop for them that would not be dependent on membership, discussed the notion of 'subscriptions' to services. Staff will continue to develop this idea. This project informs other programmatic initiatives in

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development by the Gates Foundation. Reviewed and discussed the theory of change that PLA seeks to evaluate based on the training provided to the grantees.

5. Reviewed the Rural Libraries White Paper, 2009.13. This document is the outcome of the rural libraries summit meeting convened by Clarion University attended by Sheffer and Southard. Board member Pieper expressed interest in working with anyone (individuals or organizations) interested in rural libraries, and the program of work outlined in the white paper.
Motion, PLA supports the direction outlined in the "White Paper on the Future Agenda for Rural and Small Libraries in the US" and that Susan Pieper is the board liaison to anyone interested in rural libraries. Approved.
6. Discussed Emergency Public Library Funding Ideas, 2009.13, request from the Washington Office (WO), Melanie Anderson, Assoc. Director, Office of Government Relations. The WO requested our input on developing ideas for an emergency supplemental appropriations bill for library services. Many ideas surfaced during the discussion including:
 - Monies for after school programs to serve as day care for those trying to find work
 - Monies for adding electronic resources (databases for jobseekers) and library materials
 - Including public libraries as applicants in other government funding streams that exist but not currently open to libraries, i.e. workforce development monies. Currently, IMLS is the primary source for federal government monies
 - Monies towards operating expenses
7. **Motion**, to approve request to present an advocacy preconference at the 2009 ALA Annual Conference, 2009.14. Motion approved as stated in the request, single day event, speaker fee reduced to \$3,000, and that a minimum of 50 registrants is required in order for the event to proceed. Approved. Board recommended that staff identify what other preconferences are being presented at that conference.
8. Received staff status report on Communities of Practice and PLASpace, 2009.15. Over 250 user accounts have been established in PLA's communities of practice. Members are unsure how or what this tool can be used for. Staff will engage in extensive outreach to educate our members on the utility of this tool. Suggested that staff conduct an information session at the Spring Symposium on the use of PLASpace, and conduct demonstrations at the PLA all committee meeting at the ALA Midwinter meeting. Overall, a positive member response to this new tool.
9. Received the Leadership Task Force Report, 2009.16. There has been a positive response from the membership thus far to these new scholarship opportunities. Sanders is a member of the task force, the Board reminded her to discuss with the task force the notion of evaluation, relative to the educational events attended but also the evaluation criteria that the task force will use to determine the overarching success of this initiative. (Can pre and post testing be developed to measure the impact of the leadership training?) Question from Board discussion. Sander and Potaczek will take these discussion points back to the task force.

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10. **Motion**, PLA drop its membership to Information Coalition for Networked Information (CNI), 2009.17, and no longer support member travel to CNI meetings. PLA will ask the ALA Office of Technology Policy to keep us abreast of any issues affecting public libraries. Approved.
11. Received and discussed the Strategic Opportunities Update, 2009.18. Discussion included the following:
 - NEA, Is there a way to leverage PLA into the selection of the titles profiled in the NEA's Big Read project, to create a broader list of titles
 - WGBH, opt-in program, consider video on demand rather than books only, and expand a wider target audience, consider developing a leader's kit so that library staff could deliver programming. Staff will communicate these issues in our ongoing discussions with WGBH
 - Syracuse University, interested in more information that the project might garner regarding the economic impact that the library has as a result of services to entrepreneurs and innovators; also interested on the personal impact of these types of programs and services.
12. Received and discussed the Update New PLA Website, 2009.20. Staff noted that a forms engine is in development, this will enhance our ability to implement online registration and data gathering from members; awards online application process was supposed to be functional in September; due to internal glitches in the creation of the original online application process, the online awards application process was delayed as a result the awards deadline will be extended to December 15.
13. Received PLA Membership Research Study Report, 2009.21. Study will develop a weighted composite picture of PLA benefits. Determining the benefits that members most value will aid us in program development and smoothing out the member attrition in non-conference year. The following Board members volunteered to participate in the survey vetting: Hodel, Gorlick, Parikh, Caplan, Hage, Neal, and Francis. Staff will follow up with them. Discussion included:
 - This may provide a model for the broader association (ALA) to use if this data proves useful to us
 - Is it possible to look at a two-year membership to mitigate membership drop off
 - PLA membership retention rate, should add this information into future board documents. Secure that data from ALA if possible.
14. Discussed the ALA Division concurrent session that the Board participated in on Friday afternoon. Mixed discussion regarding the pros and cons of this event and included the following:
 - Concern was express regarding the overall value to the organization relative to the cost of bring member leaders together, this event should be rethought in these challenging economic times
 - However, it was noted that there was value in the leadership getting to know each other
 - Would have preferred to see more substantive discussion on how the business model of the organization might change to reflect the changing environmental and organizational dynamics
 - Member leaders should be used in a more strategic way

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- Noted that work done in the past on ALA strategic planning was valuable, but the plan ultimately developed by ALA was not a reflection of the work they invested
 - Will discuss at the PLA spring Board meeting, what we would like to see on the agenda of the fall concurrent session and will provide that information to the meeting planners (Mary Ghikas and division president's planning team).
 - Concern expressed that this year's fall event had not been very well thought out or received adequate advance planning
 - The Board would have liked to hear from the ALA Executive Director regarding his vision for ALA and strategic activities being implemented
15. Discussed potential meeting dates for the spring Board meeting. Directed staff to survey the Board and determine our meeting dates based on responses received.
16. Discussed the possible appointments to the newly established Endowment Task Force. TF chaired by Carolyn Anthony. Members thus far: Claudia Sumler. Additional names welcome and should be given to Sheffer.
17. Request received by Feldman from member, Anne Marie Gold regarding PLA support for leadership program she's working to develop with Drexel University. Board asked for more information as this project develops and noted that a letter of support is a reasonable course of action for us. Feldman and Sanders to follow up with Gold.
18. Feldman noted that ALA was seeking input regarding appointments to ALA committees and to contact her if interested or have names to recommend; she will pass along.
19. **Motion**, recognizing that terms of service have changed, thanks board members for their service via letter and gift, Parker and Kreimeier. Approved.
20. Discussion of the effectiveness of the Board meeting, board noted the following:
- While at Board meetings we must abdicate our 'role at home' and look at what's best for PLA, this is considered the duty of loyalty in non-profit law
 - Reiterated that our minutes reflect actions taken and broad general discussion rather than verbatim record of the meeting
 - Reminded the Board that the official minutes are the only minutes distributed or shared
 - Board functions best when all points of view are discussed and considered, and decisions are made that are in the best interest of PLA rather than individual constituencies. This relates to the duty of care and loyalty in non-profit law.
 - Overall, the board functioned effectively and efficiently in dispatching their work. Thanks to all for a productive meeting.

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