

**DRAFT Minutes**

**Public Library Association  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Spring Meeting  
1-5 p.m., May 4, 2014  
Washington, D.C.**

**Location**

Capitol Hill Hotel  
200 C St. SE,  
Washington, DC 20003

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**(to be approved by the Board at 2014 ALA Annual Conference)**

1. Welcome and Introductions.
2. **Approved consent documents:** Draft 2014 Midwinter Board Actions (2014.46);
  - a. Edge Initiative Update 2014.47
  - b. Educational Activities Update 2014.48
  - c. Every Child Ready to Read Report 2014.49
  - d. IMLS Grant Projects-Status Report 2014.50
  - e. Membership Report 2014.51
  - f. PLA 2014 Conference Report 2014.52
  - g. Publications Report 2014.53
  - h. "Public Libraries" Magazine Report 2014.54
  - i. Technology Report 2014.55
  - j. ALA Washington Office Report 2014.56

Documents 2014.46 and 2014.55 were moved to the discussion agenda.

**Action/Discussion agenda**

3. **Approved agenda as presented, with corrections to document 2014.46** (adding Melinda Cervantes in attendance and noting Sari Feldman's campaign materials were distributed). A question was raised about document 2014.55-Tech Report. The question was about context for website analytics. Can the Board get comparison data in order to better understand PLA

numbers? Barb Macikas will follow up with staff and report back to the Board via the next PLA Technology Report.

4. **PLA President Update**, *Carolyn Anthony*, see document 2014.57. Anthony noted she continues to get excellent feedback on the PLA conference and thanked everyone for their good work including conference and program chairs and fellow board members Larry Neal and Georgia Lomax.

There was a discussion about the impact of the conference on PLA membership and whether our membership and conference attendance will fully rebound from pre-recession highs. In a difficult economy, some libraries may determine they can “live without” membership or conference participation. It was also noted that with continuing mergers among vendors, the number of exhibiting companies and the representatives they send is also decreasing. We need to find new ways to engage librarians and demonstrate value. One suggestion related to helping librarians make the case for involvement in PLA was to develop a list of benefits that could be shared with local decision-makers and funding authorities. This idea will be referred to the PLA Membership Advisory Working Group.

Other items reported on by Carolyn Anthony: the PLA Performance Measurement Task Force-- it is hoped pilot test measures will be developed soon. The Gates Foundation is supporting a meeting in Chicago in June to accelerate the process; Carolyn attended the launch of the partnership between ALA/PLA and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau at the Chicago Federal Reserve Bank and served as a panelist; Larry Neal and Carolyn met at PLA to review plans for presidential transition. It was a successful meeting and they would recommend continuing this practice.

5. **Division Presidents/Online Community**, *Carolyn Anthony*, see document 2014.58. Carolyn Anthony reviewed the division presidents’ discussion related to software to enable better member engagement. It was noted that ALA Connect isn’t serving this need. Jay Turner observed that it is less about the specific software tool and more about who champions and nurtures the group. PLA should look at models that work and build on those. The success of the ULC lists was noted. Currently there is no easy way for PLA to create lists for specific groups of library staff (e.g., director list; department head list, tech list, etc.). Anthony will follow up with ALA President Barbara Stripling on possible solutions.

6. **ALA Washington Office E-Rate Presentation**, see document 2014.64. *Alan Inouye, Larra Clark and Marijke Visser* reviewed the current status of the E-Rate discussions and ALA’s positions on E-Rate.

7. **2015 Summit Event discussion**, *Larry Neal*, see document 2014.59. Neal reviewed the idea of hosting a 1.5 day summit for directors/deputies in non-PLA conference years. This idea began with the PLA CE Advisory Group. All agreed the idea has a lot of potential. A key to its success will be linking it to another non-library conference or gathering, e.g., SxSW, CES, ICMA, etc. PLA staff will review options and report back.

**8. ALA Financial Status Report**, see document 2014.60. There was concern expressed about financial losses over the past several years. ALA structure should reflect its priorities. A balanced budget with long term projections should be developed. Other large organizations such as Rotary have made major structural changes that have had positive impact.

**9. PLA FY2014 Status Report and FY2015 Draft Budget**, see documents 2014.61 and 2014.62. *Barb Macikas* reported on the status of FY 2014 budget. The PLA conference made budget on revenues; expenses are not all in yet but we do not anticipate any major expense overages. The FY 2015 budget is based on last non-conference year budget, with expenses for staff salaries (due to grants that are ending) increasing. Net for FY15 budget is (\$804,043) with an estimated fund balance of \$1,471,619. The FY15 budget may be revised based on the strategic planning session results. The final budget will be prepared and submitted for the Board's approval at the ALA Annual Conference.

During the review of FY 2014 budget status, it was requested that the PLA Bootcamp program be reviewed at the next Board meeting. Staff will prepare a document for the Board's review.

**9. Conference Canvassing Policy**, (see document 2014.66). The Board discussed the background document and the need for a policy. Following discussion it was moved and **approved** that the new policy be accepted as presented: "Canvassing of PLA conference attendees during programs and at the conference venue (outside of the areas approved by PLA for exhibitors) is strictly prohibited. If this activity is encountered, violators will be directed to cease immediately. PLA provides many opportunities for representatives from for-profit and non-profit organizations to make conference attendees aware of their services and products. These include: exhibiting, advertising, sponsoring and as approved by PLA, program planning. For information on participating in PLA Conferences and professional development events, contact the PLA office."

**10. PLA Strategic Planning**, results of Midwinter leadership discussion and next steps, *Pam Sandlian Smith*. Smith reviewed the Board's Fall 2013 discussion where the Board determined that the current PLA strategic plan did not require major revision. Rather the Board would seek out member input and consider a two-three year focus on a few specific areas.

Next, the results of the Midwinter Meeting discussion with PLA leadership were reviewed in the context of the existing plan's goals. Two goal areas resonated especially strongly. Under the "Advocacy and Awareness" goal, how can PLA help support libraries as their roles continue to change and shift? PLA's communication channels would be especially critical here. The Board discussed the idea of hiring outside expertise (and identifying vendor partners) to begin work on a communications strategy to re-position the perception of public libraries. Pam Smith provided the example of the Colorado initiative, "Outside the Lines" (see: <http://getoutsidethelines.org/>) which was created to help shift perceptions.

The second area where there was the greatest energy centered on the Leadership & Transformation goal, specifically on how to position libraries to be conveners of the community conversations; to be community leaders. We are already doing good work in this area though our leadership training and ICMA partnership but we need to continue to develop programs that introduce libraries to their communities as leaders and active influencers. There was also a discussion about how library school

curriculum impacts librarians' knowledge and understanding of this role and how PLA might work to influence library education. Additionally, many libraries are hiring non-MLS staff to manage IT, early literacy, etc.

Related to the other two PLA strategic goals, it was noted that through ECRR and DigitalLearn.org, we are working in the literacy area. Related to the final goal of Organization excellence, it was noted that it will follow if the other three are done. Overall the Board noted there are many on-going initiatives we are continuing.

A subset of the Board consisting of Pam Sandlian Smith, Larry Neal, Portia Latalladi and Carolyn Anthony will meet to develop next steps for the next Board meeting.

**11. Aspen Institute Report-Outs, Felton Thomas and Pam Sandlian Smith.** Thomas and Smith each reported on the status of their respective Aspen working groups. Thomas is participating in the [Aspen Institute Task Force on Learning and the Internet](#). It is a national conversation led by a task force from technology, public policy, education, business and online safety sectors. The Task Force aims to better understand how we can optimize the web to improve learning. A white paper should come out prior to the ALA 2014 Annual Conference. Smith reported on the "[Dialogue on the future of public libraries](#)." A lead takeaway is that it is critical to engage people from outside the library and to ensure that elected leaders understand the role of PL's. There will be a program at the ALA Conference that provides an overview of next steps for both initiatives.

**12. Report on ALA Center for the Future of Libraries Summit, Eva Poole.** Poole attended the Summit convened prior to the Board meeting and reported on that meeting. She noted the new center will be modeled on the existing center for the future of museums. At the Summit, librarians and representatives from organizations that work with libraries met at the Library of Congress to discuss the future of libraries. Participants engaged in conversations about trends in society that libraries will have to address and how librarians might prepare, respond, and lead. The results of the discussion will inform the development of a Center for the Future of Libraries to be initiated by the American Library Association in the spring of 2014. [Here is a final report from the summit](#).

13. It was agreed to postpone a discussion of the ALA Emerging Leaders program and to add it to the Board's summer agenda.

14. Seeing no new business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.