

**Public Library Association
Board of Directors—Fall Meeting
September 25, 2017, 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM
September 26, 2017, 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM
Chicago, IL**

DRAFT Board Actions

- Present:** President; Pam Sandlian Smith, President; Felton Thomas, Past President; Monique le Conge Ziesenhenné, President-elect; Directors at Large: Rhea Brown Lawson, Michelle Jeske, Richard Kong, Carrie Plymire, Tracy Strobel; Stephanie Chase, ALA Division Councilor
- Approved Absences:** none
- PLA Staff:** Barb Macikas, Executive Director; Scott Allen, Deputy Director; Nellie Barrett, Program Coordinator; Mary Hirsh, Deputy Director; Emily Plagman, Project Manager
- Guests:** Amita Lonial, co-chair, PLA Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) (by phone)

1. **Welcome and Introductions**, *Pam Sandlian Smith*.
2. **By consent, approved** the 2017 Annual Conference Board Meeting Draft Actions.
3. **By consent, approved** the consent agenda as presented.

<u>Consent Items</u>	<u>Document Number</u>
a. Draft 2017 Annual Conference Board Actions.....	2018.1
b. PLA Committee Semi-Annual Reports	2018.2
c. PLA-WebJunction collaboration re opioid crisis	2018.3
d. PLA Inclusive Internship Initiative	2018.4
e. Digital Literacy Initiatives.....	2018.5
f. Project Outcome Status	2018.6
g. Engaging Federal Agencies, National Associations.....	2018.7
h. PLA Publications Report.....	2018.8
i. <i>Public Libraries</i> Report	2018.9
j. PLA 2018 Conference.....	2018.10 a&b
k. PLA Continuing Education Report.....	2018.11 a&b
l. Leadership Academy Update	2018.12
m. Membership.....	2018.13
n. Appointments	2018.14
o. Technology.....	2018.15
p. Fundraising.....	2018.16
q. Communications	2018.17
r. EveryLibrary FAQ.....	2018.18
s. ALA Connect Status.....	2018.19

Action/Discussion/Decision Items

4. **PLA President Update**, *Sandlian Smith* (no document). Smith reported on her attendance at the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) conference, noting she heard about IFLA priorities from outgoing and incoming IFLA presidents Donna Scheeder and Glòria Pérez-

Salmerón. For her term, Smith is conscientious of the need to continue PLA's strong work and not add new initiatives but wants to consider how PLA can help public libraries have more influence and become stronger advocates. Smith suggested PLA work on helping libraries interact outside their normal spheres to show new partners the power of libraries. Public libraries need to stress their role as an approachable, accessible arm of government. Reflecting on his term, Thomas noted that one way to support libraries is to visit them and speak to staff, but many small and rural libraries have the misconception that need to support expenses for the PLA president to visit them.

5. **PLA Executive Director Update**, *Macikas* (no document). Macikas reported that finalist candidates for the ALA Executive Director position will be interviewed at ALA board meetings in October, and the new Executive Director should start in January 2018. (*Subsequently, ALA announced that new candidates will be recruited, and the vacancy will not be filled until July 2018.*) During the vacancy, the three largest membership divisions are participating on the senior management group, rather than rotating. Finances are being discussed frequently, because ALA's three main sources of revenue (publishing, membership, and conferences) are struggling. It was suggested that ALA's new leader should look at finances, the structure of ALA, and the operating agreement. Board members speculated on how quickly change might occur once the new leader is in place considered how PLA should prepare for the transition. It was recommended that PLA prepare suggestions for the incoming Executive Director rather than wait to be asked. Macikas also briefly mentioned new board member orientation and the publications PLA sends to incoming board members.
6. **Financial Reports**, *Macikas* (2018.20 a-e, 2018.21, 2018.22). Members reviewed multiple reports, including the fiscal year 2017 (FY17) status as of July 2017, the fiscal year 2018 (FY18) budget overview, and the FY17 to FY18 budget comparison. Although FY17 continuing education revenue, ad sales, and publication sales have underperformed, PLA will have a lower than anticipated negative net (loss) in FY17 because expenses are also below expectations. Decreased revenue in these areas is typical for many associations. PLA's efforts to develop new products such as Project Outcome training and personalized DigitalLearn sites have had mixed success. For FY18, PLA is budgeting for a very low net for the conference, although figures are conservative and the event may do better than budgeted. PLA's fund balance continues to be strong. Whereas PLA is required to have at least \$750,000 in its fund balance, PLA typically has well over \$2 million. The board revisited the idea of spending down the PLA fund, suggesting PLA use funds to attract big name speakers. The potential for PLA's legacy grant to drive improvements throughout ALA was also discussed. Some of the legacy funds have been allocated to support the development audit and evaluation of the Emerging Leaders program. However, supporting more critical improvements is problematic (such as information technology capacity, which is often cited by the PLA board as critical). PLA should not create new systems for itself that aren't integrated for ALA members, yet PLA cost issues and politics prevent PLA from supporting association-wide improvements.
7. **Review of actions from Annual Conference meeting**, *Macikas* (2018.23). Updates were provided on intended actions resulting from discussions at the last board meeting. Nearly all actions were completed or included on the Fall 2017 agenda for further discussion. It was noted that PLA moved very quickly, as directed by the board, to deliver something for members related to the opioid crisis. The board revisited the plan to have board members advise PLA about communications by circulating communication examples to their staffs. It was agreed that over the next few months, PLA Communications Manager Larry Deutsch will forward PLA-enews and other communications to board members with a request that they circulate them, and he will send bulk copies of *Public Libraries* magazine to board members to distribute. After a period of time to be determined, he will send a survey link to board members to

collect feedback from their member and non-member staff about the quality, benefits, and gaps of the communications.

8. **EDI Task Force**, *Kong, Lonial* (doc on site). A brief history of the Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) was provided. The Task Force is framing their work for PLA and public libraries around key concepts such as the impact of oppression (a prejudice towards a particular group plus the power to unjustly distribute resources through the control of institutions, cultural attitudes, economy, and political systems) and the goals of collective liberation, compassion and accountability. They are guiding PLA's work away from discussions of privilege (which often derail discussions about equity) and focusing instead solidarity across our many human differences.

The Task Force hopes to undertake new communications and educational programming and will help integrate EDI into PLA's new 2017-2020 strategic plan. Their approach will help public library staff first explore individual experiences of identity and oppression, then move on to organizational/institutional challenges and community challenges. A meeting for directors is planned for the 2017 Midwinter Meeting, and a day-long preconference is scheduled for the PLA 2018 Conference in March in Philadelphia, PA. Questions we will help members ask and address include whose labor is overused, undervalued, not or under-compensated? Whose experiences, perspectives, or bodies are left out? Who doesn't participate or feel worthy of belonging? What cultures, experiences, or backgrounds are co-opted, exoticized, deemed strange/not normal, or erased? Who is being harmed physically, mentally, or spiritually? The Task Force is approaching its work not as a 2-year special project but as a way to establish an underlying core value in PLA and its members. Board members appreciated this approach and noted how public libraries, collectively and as individual libraries, are in a great position to show solidarity. The Task Force was commended for not simply trying to make things more "diverse" but promoting structural and institutional changes that address inequity.

In terms of EDI programs and products, Task Force members have suggested regional, facilitated programs at the library level. PLA should explore how the planned EDI efforts might coordinate with PLA's work with the ALA Public Programs Office (PPO) to develop training and tools for community conversations. Board members suggested strategies for rolling out PLA's EDI products, noting they should involve compassion and accountability (rather than judgment), meet people "where they are," and align along a continuum so public librarians can grow their skills and knowledge. Like Project Outcome, PLA's EDI effort should offer both concrete tools and action steps along with more philosophical content to change perceptions and self awareness. Members suggested that library staff can be leaders for other city agencies in this area because of the public library's mission and other core values, and PLA's effort might be a model. Partnering with groups like the United Way and YWCA was suggested, given the progress such groups have made in this area. The potential to solicit foundation grants to fund this work was noted.

9. **Nominations and board composition**, *Macikas* (2018.24 a&b). PLA has had difficulty getting the needs and interests of library staff from public libraries of all sizes represented on the board. This is primarily due to the financial barrier serving on the board presents for small and rural libraries. The Nominating Committee requested board action that would make it easier to run and support representatives from such libraries. It was moved and **approved** that the PLA board shall include two candidates from small/rural libraries on future ballots who will run opposite each other to insure one PLA board member represents that constituency, and it was moved and **approved** that PLA will, upon request, support travel and housing expenses for the board member elected from a small and/or rural library for all PLA board meetings for the three years of his or her term. PLA will evaluate the results of this change and

determine whether to continue the practice for the 2021 slate and beyond. The board also reviewed the new nomination acceptance form that will be used going forward.

10. **Board speaking engagements**, *Sandlian Smith* (2018.25). Board members expressed their support for plans to develop standard and flexible presentations and employ board members and other PLA leaders to present them at state and regional meetings. This approach will expose PLA's work to members and potential members, while also soliciting feedback from the grassroots as a "listening tour." It was noted that Project Outcome has presented at many state conferences, so there's potential to build on those relationships and PLA's presence with these new talks. It was agreed that PLA will support the travel expenses for volunteers to make these presentations, when those expenses are not covered by the event's host.
11. **Legacy Update**, *Macikas* (2018.26). The comprehensive update on the legacy grant work developed in the summer of 2017 was briefly reviewed.
12. **Professional Development Theory of Change**, *All*, (2018.27b). New legacy funding and increased staff capacity has encouraged PLA to be more strategic about continuing education/professional development (CE/PD). The theory of change document developed by PLA with consultant ORS Impact was reviewed. The process included visualizing the results PLA's CE/PD should achieve for the public library field, then identifying public library staff competencies necessary to reach those results. Although topic ideas are present in the theory of change, the intent was not to dictate future program content. The theory of change will help PLA shift from a reactive approach to CE/PD to a proactive approach. PLA should educate members about the theory of change so they understand how specific CE/PD content fits into the larger approach and high level goals. Another future challenge will be getting partner library organizations to understand and embrace the theory of change and competencies, so consumers of CE/PD see alignment.
13. **New Business**, *All*, (no document). Lawson-Brown described the situation in Houston, Texas following Hurricane Harvey. Only seven of the Houston Public Library's 43 locations were heavily damaged, but many library staff were personally impacted. The library assisted other agencies by housing other city departments and helping take care of the children of first responders. City services and agencies will likely face a deceleration of spending to accommodate for the increased costs of the hurricane, such as trash pickup. In addition, le Conge Ziesenhenne reported that after the success of the 2017 event, a second ALA/vendor golf tournament will be held prior to the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.
14. **PLA Strategic Plan**, *All*, (doc on site). Kelly Carey of consulting firm GMMB facilitated a strategic planning session with attendees on Tuesday, September 26.
15. **Date of Next Meeting**, *All* (no document). The next meeting will be held on Saturday, February 10, 2018 at the ALA 2018 Midwinter Meeting in Denver, Colorado.
16. **Adjournment**. There being no new business, it was moved and **approved** to adjourn the meeting at 4:00pm.