

**Public Library Association  
Board of Directors—Spring Meeting  
May 1, 2016, 12:30 pm – 5:00 pm  
Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, Executive Office Board Room  
Washington, DC  
DRAFT Board Actions**

*To be reviewed and approved at the 2016 Annual Conference PLA Board of Directors Meeting*

**Present:** Vailey Oehlke, President; Felton Thomas, President Elect; Larry Neal, Past President; Directors at Large: Carolyn Anthony, Rhea Brown Lawson, Melanie Huggins, Gina Millsap, Rivkah Sass, Manya Shorr, Jay Turner

**Approved Absences:** none

**PLA Staff:** Barb Macikas, Executive Director; Scott G. Allen, Program Manager; Mary Hirsh, Manager, Special Initiatives

**Guests:** Julia Cottrill, Brianne Johnson, Ashley Middleton, GMMB

1. **Welcome and Introductions**, *Vailey Oehlke*
2. **By consent, approved** the adoption of the agenda as presented.
3. **Consent agenda documents:**

<u>Consent agenda documents</u>	<u>Document Number</u>
a. Draft 2016 Midwinter Board Actions	2016.49
b. ALA National Library Legislative Day Agenda	2016.50
c. Letter in support of Carla Hayden for Librarian of Congress	2016.51

**Action/Discussion/Decision Items**

4. **PLA President Update**, *Vailey Oehlke* (no document). Oehlke reported on her participation in the ALA delegation to Cuba. The delegation toured several libraries, many of which had outdated collections and/or were in need of repair. The delegation met with the National Library and University of Havana, and local experts reported they are eager to have better access to and structure for digital content. Oehlke promoted Project Outcome at a library conference. Cuba has high literacy rates, in part due to a national initiative, yet access to books is limited, and there was some discussion of what ALA might do to increase access to materials. Oehlke also reported to the board on the PLA 2016 Conference in Denver, noting it was very successful and thanking PLA staff and committees for their strong work. Board members expressed surprise to learn that nearly 50% were first time attendees, however this is fairly typical for PLA conferences.

- 5. PLA Positioning Update, Barb Macikas, GMMB** (no documents). Macikas reiterated the board's decision to focus on positioning, not a public awareness campaign. Julia Cottrill, GMMB reviewed the development process, which included landscape analysis, stakeholder interviews, a positioning summit, and drafting of the statement, story, tag line, and core messages. This work has created a positioning statement that "all libraries can see themselves in" and that can be propagated through library staff, who are the best stewards of the message. The statement addresses both how people think about libraries and how members think about PLA. Launching of the positioning work may tie in with the legacy grant activity.

Next steps include a roll out plan to incorporate the messaging and story into routine PLA work. GMMB has shared a proposal of recommendations with PLA staff. Three audiences have been identified – staff and leadership, PLA members, and the broader library community, which includes prospective members, people served by libraries, and policymakers. Proposed activities include a logo refresh or new logo; development of a style guide and talking points; identification of a task force; web site integration; letters to new members about the positioning statement; events at the June Annual Conference; and video footage of individuals reading parts of the statement to be spliced together. The board briefly discussed using terms such as patrons versus people who use libraries and public library leaders versus leadership. Board members had mixed reactions to the tag line ("Open Possibility"), which will continue to be discussed before it's used.

- 6. ACTION. FY 2016 Financial Status Report and FY2017 Draft Budget Overview, Barb Macikas** (2016.52, 2016.53, 2016.53a). An FY 2016 report through February 2016 was reviewed. In terms of revenue, PLA is exceeding budget on membership dues but under budget on publications, ad sales, webinar registrations and donations. Conference revenue is expected to be strong, and expenses are generally on budget. Macikas also presented the draft FY17 budget, noting it will be revised again and reviewed at the board's June meeting. On the revenue side, Macikas noted conservative projections for webinars and ad sales but potential new revenue from DigitalLearn. In terms of expenses, some salary expenses will be reduced as they are displaced by legacy grant funds.

ALA overhead will increase in FY17 from 23.7% to 26.4%. Historically, this is the highest rate, and for comparison rates from 2005 (18.8%) and 2011 (26.1%) were noted. In FY18, this will impact PLA significantly due to conference revenue. ALA justification for the increase (post-retirement benefit obligations) was noted, including the statement that ALA "may or may not incur such an increase in the future." Board members cited the difficulty such unanticipated changes pose to division leadership. They asked that ALA leadership assure division leadership that efforts were being made to prevent future liabilities from similar negative impacts, and that ALA improve transparency about its current and future benefit commitments. Board members also suggested that in order to provide effective oversight of PLA, they need assurance of a ceiling on the overhead rate and five-year projections for planning purposes. It was moved and **approved** that Macikas will request a response on the above issues to the PLA board from ALA.

- 7. Results of ALA Technology Review, Barb Macikas** (2016.54, 2016.54a). Discussion of the ALA Technology Review identified some positive developments, such as improved ability to monitor grant

budgets. However the board expressed frustration at ALA's "band aid" approach to technology improvements and the lack of an organizational plan and vision. Thoughtful identification of the technology needs of members and ALA divisions is needed. For instance, Board members suggested that the broader membership would benefit – and ALA would be seen as a pioneer – if PLA and/or ALA could develop a system for members to track their participation in continuing education. ALA's current membership database includes some participant information, but it is not complete or accessible to members. Internally, there are efforts underway to provide CE tracking but the complexity of the organization and resource challenges are slowing progress. Lack of technology resources and siloed operations were identified as major ALA challenges.

Board members suggested that the nature of ALA as a volunteer-led association, which includes routine changes in leadership, prevents sustained conversation, accountability and vision. Oehlke reported that ALA division leadership has requested a meeting with ALA leadership at the 2016 Annual Conference. Oehlke asked the PLA board for input on items for discussion. In addition to improved accountability and management through transition as noted above, members suggested direct representation of the divisions to the ALA board. Whereas Council oversees policy, the board oversees management, so this could enable better input on management issues while also improving coordination between divisions. It was also suggested that PLA set up an ad hoc group of its board to identify PLA's future requirements from ALA including legacy and other work.

8. **PLA 2016 Conference Preliminary Report**, *Barb Macikas* (2016.55). Macikas reported that the conference is expected to do well financially due to high registration and that preliminary evaluation results are very positive. A more complete report will be provided at the June meeting. The conference app was commended. It was noted that a strong majority (70%) of attendees used the app, and usage will likely increase in 2018, so the program book should be discontinued.
9. **ACTION. PLA Performance Measures Task Force Request**, *Barb Macikas* (2016.56). It was moved and **approved** to extend the Performance Measurement Task Force and its charter for one year, to expire on June 30, 2017.
10. **ACTION. Results of 2016 PLA Election and 2017 Nominating**, *Larry Neal* (2016.57 and on-site). The terms for Carolyn Anthony, Larry Neal, and Jay Turner will end at ALA 2016 Annual Conference. New board members will be Pam Sandlian Smith (PLA 2017-2018 President), and Richard Kong and Tracy Strobel (Directors-at-Large). At the 2017 Annual Conference, members Rivkah Sass (ALA Division Councilor) and Melanie Huggins and Manya Shorr (Directors-at-Large) will end. Neal led discussion of the 2017 election. Assessing the strengths and interests of the continuing board members using a recently-identified tool was suggested, in order to determine needs for 2017 candidates. It was **approved** that the tool would be circulated for input and completed. The ballot structure can be altered based on the will of the nominating committee, to either run all candidates for at large positions against each other or in specific races. This strategy can be employed if the nominating committee determines representation from a certain type of member or library (for instance, a small or rural library) is needed on the board. The need to fund travel to the Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference in order to fulfill PLA board commitments may be a barrier for some potential

leaders, and the possibility for PLA to support those costs was discussed. Board members also strategized about how to prepare members-at-large for board service, suggesting ideas such as intern positions and engaging leadership trainees.

**11. ACTION. Statement on Future Accreditation, Larry Neal (2016.58).** PLA and other divisions were asked to prepare statements regarding the needs for graduate education in the future, to inform ALA's accrediting activities. Some library and information school (LIS) curricula are out of date; an example of teaching basics of building a web site rather than information architecture was provided. However, many library schools are redefining themselves. Members noted a divergence between traditional programs and those programs with curricula designed to produce candidates libraries want to hire. Board members cited competencies and skill areas that should be taught, including early childhood and adolescent development, literacy instruction, human development, adult education theory, instructional design, career counseling, diversity, community development and partnerships, social work, and facilitation. Some concern was expressed that LIS programs cannot teach all these skills, however students may be able to specialize, have field experiences, or get more than one degree in order to have choices when they graduate. It was moved and **approved** that Huggins would help Neal complete the statement for ALA and that PLA should request time on the agenda of the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) at an upcoming meeting to discuss public library issues. Huggins expressed interest in speaking to ALISE, which meets January 17 to January 20, 2017 before the ALA Midwinter Meeting.

**12. ACTION. PLA Legacy Grant Update and Discussion, all (2016.59, 2016.59a-d).** PLA requested \$10,805,701 from the Global Libraries (GL) program of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support legacy grant activities from July 2016 to June 2026. Elements of the legacy grant activity and timeline were reviewed. Members commended the interconnected results and cited the potential for the work to bring value to libraries and library leaders at the community level. Board members saw clearly how libraries who are engaged in the proposed work would be better able to tell their own stories, scale their work, and increase their impact.

Board discussion focused on the following.

- **Leadership Transition:** Board members noted that future PLA leaders will need orientation to the legacy framework and activity so they continue to support it. Current leaders will need to share and sustain the vision with incoming colleagues. However, staff also noted that activity proposed as organizational capacity work will result in talking points, board and leader orientation programs, and other tools to this end.
- **Legacy Partner Collaboration:** Specific activities and benefits of collaboration with the legacy partners, particularly how PLA will engage internationally, are not yet clear. Legacy partners, (PLA, the Technology and Social Change Group at the University of Washington's Information School (TASCHA) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)), have shared proposals but they have been in different stages and lacked detail. In July 2016, the partners will meet to begin working on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) about how we will collaborate and how specific financial resources set aside in the PLA legacy budget will be

spent. Some ideas from early legacy grant drafts related to PLA's global work may be reintroduced.

- **Innovation and Data:** The board expressed high hopes that collaboration with TASCHA will better prepare PLA and its library support organization (LSO) partners to benefit from data collection and research. The partnership should provide PLA and other LSOs with advance notice about innovations and enable us to leverage them through products, publications, and member communication.
- **Coordination with ALA:** The ability of PLA to implement legacy as envisioned is partially dependent on ALA. Unforeseen changes might pose challenges to PLA, but conversely, ALA could provide support that would impact the legacy work positively. PLA has been proactive in providing updates and drafts of legacy work to ALA leadership, and PLA staff have suggested that some legacy work will benefit all of ALA and its divisions by providing models, engaging non-library stakeholders, and highlighting the value of libraries. More specific discussion is needed, about how legacy will benefit ALA, but more importantly how ALA can support PLA to do the work, for instance by strengthening technology support. Given that the legacy grant will provide substantial, ongoing contributions to ALA through ALA overhead, the board was interested in determining how ALA would facilitate the legacy work in exchange.
- **Collaboration of Library Support Organizations (LSOs):** PLA's legacy grant aspires to develop strong collaboration between LSOs. Key partners to be engaged include the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), the Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), WebJunction, TechSoup for Libraries, and other ALA units. PLA will approach this work with humility, discipline and previous experience. Success will increase the impact of the legacy goals, reduce redundancies, and leverage new resources to benefit all LSOs. Challenges are anticipated, given that LSOs are unique organizations with different leaders, resources and priorities. However, the potential for all LSOs to become more effective and sustain their work should be the driver for participation. Furthermore, sufficient opportunities exist to make room for all LSOs to be involved. Partnerships with non-library stakeholders are critical to all LSOs, and each LSO can help engage and bring to the table different stakeholders (for instance, ULC's relationship with the Summer Learning Association was noted). PLA's board – as leaders, practitioners, and often members of multiple LSOs – should deliver these messages and are ultimately responsible for making these connections successful. Specifically, members serving on both the PLA and ULC boards suggested a joint meeting of the two boards. It was further suggested that PLA present information on Project Outcome at the fall 2016 ULC meeting, and that ULC should educate its leaders about the legacy framework at a future ULC convening. Synergy between Project Outcome and EDGE needs to be promoted, given their complementary focuses. Initiatives delivered to practitioners from both PLA and ULC would carry substantial weight and assure adoption. It was moved and **approved** that Macikas would share this input from the board members with ULC CEO Susan Benton.
- **Communications:** Board members questioned how the legacy work, its value, and its complexity will be communicated to members. Communicating directly to members and prospective members and tying it to the PLA positioning work was suggested. It was also suggested that PLA communicate through partners, such as COSLA to engage state library agencies. Messaging

frequency was briefly considered, noting the need to repeat messages often for ideal impact and engagement. The legacy grant includes communications staff and consultants who should be able to accomplish this work.

- **Other Partnerships:** Some discussion focused on involvement of other library field partners such as *Library Journal*, the ALA's Digital Content Working Group, and organizations currently doing library research. Strengthening relationships with non-library partners like major corporations or the US National Park Service was also cited as a future benefit of the legacy work.

Finally, Macikas reported that legacy partners met recently with African library representatives prior to the African Library and Information Associations and Institutions (AfLIA) conference. The GL program is proposing to fund leadership training, resource development and other work for AfLIA. PLA will help draft those proposals, on an accelerated time frame (due August 2016) in order to meet the goals of the GL wind down. PLA will likely receive additional funding to support leadership work in Africa.

**13. COSLA proposal re national plan for public library data (2016.60).** The board was asked to provide feedback on the *Measures that Matter* proposal from COSLA. The project seeks to create a "National Public Library Data and Outcomes Action Plan" that builds bridges between current data collection activities to ensure sustainability and long-term access, resolves concerns related to duplication of efforts, and results in a comprehensive and cooperative approach to library data that addresses the importance of outcomes in addition to outputs and indicators. In general, board members expressed support for this effort, specifically stressing their desires to see the work reduce data collection to what is most valuable to libraries and their stakeholders, align efforts, develop common language, reduce redundancy, and result in more timely data. Board members also suggested areas for future conversation with COSLA. Clarifying expectations of PLA as a partner is needed, in addition to considering the impact of this work on the future of the Public Library Data Service (PLDS) and on Project Outcome. There was discussion of current processes, whereby information funnels through state libraries, and individual libraries often do not see tangible benefits for their time and effort. Members wanted assurance that this project would open up that process; that state libraries would be comfortable with roles changing; and that legal mandates on IMLS concerning how they collect information would not prevent the process from changing to benefit all partners. PLA also strongly suggests that COSLA include practitioners in the process to make sure that the cost of collecting and submitting data is captured and to advise on strategies to ensure data is accurate and reliable when compared across libraries.

**14. National Library Legislative Day (NLLD) and PLA Board survey results, Scott Allen (2016.61).** Allen briefly reviewed the results of the PLA board member survey and noted that appointments have been made to meet with the following agencies on May 2-3, 2016: US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA), US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

**15. New Business.** The following was briefly noted:

- Anthony reported that the ALA Digital Content Working Group would sunset and suggested PLA discuss the potential need to continue this work.
- Thomas commended the draft of the foundational document for the Family Engagement Task Force's work, which was circulated to Task Force members by the Harvard Family Research Program.
- Members were reminded that the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and The Aspen Institute are currently fielding a survey to determine ICMA member attitudes toward public libraries, which should prove useful to PLA.

Following these brief reports, it was moved and **approved** to adjourn the meeting at 5:00pm.