

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, November 10th, 2021
Zoom

Present:

Joy Alter, Mayra Cabrera, Kathryn Feeley, Megan Fenton, Giovanna Fiorino-Iannace, Krishna Horrigan, Dana Hysell-Alongi, Diana Lennon, Kathy Palovick, Elaine Provenzano, Renee Rauch, Anthony Reda, Allison Robbins, Joanna Rooney, Kim Stucko, Melissa Victoria

Excused: Lisa Dettling, Terry Kirchner, Christa O'Sullivan

Absent: Z Baird, Oz Coto-Chang, Virginia Dunnigan, Eleanor Friedman, Daniel Glauber, Maxine Grandison, Martha Iwan, Joseph Mannozi, Lynn Parlman, Tracey Wong

The meeting was called to order at 9:32 am. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Allison and was seconded by Elaine. Corrections to note that the conference theme and tagline, "Libraries Embrace Change" are being used interchangeably and that translations are going to be solicited for the tagline "Libraries Embrace Change" were suggested by Giovanna via chat and were made prior to submitting for website posting.

Professional Development Committee:

- WLS has agreed to co-sponsor the headshot event and asked that a block of time be set aside for WLS employees
- Questions were compiled including the possibility of a snow date with the photographer and a contingency plan if not enough people participate. Suggestion of \$20 for WLA members with payment made at registration.
- Questions will be taken to the photographer and they will hopefully have a possible date to present to the board at the next meeting
- Other possible professional development programs include Nicole Schur, the Asst. Director of Suffolk Library System (suggested by Catherine Riedel) for a possible early December program and Krishna reaching out to the NYBLC for a program in the spring.

Treasurer's Report:

- Allison presented the monthly Treasurer's Report. Elaine P. made a motion to approve it and Kathy P. seconded.
- The 2021-2022 budget was presented to the board with a negative balance of \$12,619.49. WLA has been providing more free programming to members and the more costly items are the conference and professional development. In addition, we have an increase in legal fees as we work towards regaining non-profit status this year.
- Allison emphasized that WLA can only lose money for 2 years before being in financial trouble and that we need to be able to diversify and increase sponsorships to increase revenue.
- Discussion on the presented budget centered on concern about the precedent set on approving a budget with such a large deficit. Recommendations included removing items that were less essential this year and postponing them to a later time (ex. archival items) and focusing only on priorities. It was also unclear as to whether or not previous budgets were approved by the board and a check on previous minutes was mentioned.
- The Budget vote was tabled to December so that the Executive Board could rework the budget based on the discussion.
- Some ideas to increase revenue included applying for grants for programming (Westchester County grants, Nonprofit Westchester) and reaching out to organizations besides WLS, perhaps

Library Friends groups. Also to create a Sponsor form letter to send out to prospective organizations.

- It was suggested broadening the scope of the “Outreach Committee” to include focusing on Fundraising or Marketing & Outreach and to increase the member participation. The recommendation to create a six month task force to focus on intensive fundraising and sponsorships was made and the President will email a call to members to see who would like to participate. Having the task force meet before the monthly board meeting from 9-9:30am was suggested.

President’s Report:

- Kim and Allison are meeting with the lawyers on November 19th to discuss the Conflict of Interest Policy and the Bylaws.

Mid-Winter Conference:

- The conference will be held virtually on Zoom with a tentative theme of “Safeguarding our Digital Spaces: How can we outsmart those who want to do us harm?”
- The conference committee will be meeting with Rory Mir tomorrow to finalize details.
- A tentative schedule for the conference was provided. Diana did not feel that a full 30 minutes in the conference schedule was needed to present the Bonnie Katz Award. The time will be adjusted.

Vice-President’s Report:

- Nothing to report

Bonnie Katz Award Presentation:

- Information on the award will go out in the upcoming Newsletter.
- There was a discussion as to whether this would be a monetary award- perhaps a donation to an organization that was important to Bonnie. Another suggestion was a gift card.
- A record of award recipients would be available on the WLA website
- A final suggestion was to select a print of one of Bonnie’s photographs to place on a plaque to the award recipient. Would need to reach out to Bonnie’s family to see if they would grant permission.

Newsletter Committee:

- Waiting for revisions to be sent back to Elaine and Diana and the newsletter will be sent out by the Public Relations Committee soon after.

Reference Section:

- Kathryn had nothing new to report.

Youth Services Section:

- Representatives are not present.

Support Staff Section:

- Representative not present.

Academic and Special Libraries Committee:

- A point was made that our conferences should not be an added cost to WLA’s budget. Prioritize finding speakers who may waive costs because presenting is beneficial to the speaker (ex. tenure review)

- Suggested holding a conference every 2 years rather than annually would be a way to save on costs.

Legislation Committee:

- Dana had to leave the meeting early but stated she would send information on upcoming legislation via email.

Public Relations Committee:

- A Save the Date for the Conference can be sent out after the conference committee's meeting with Rory Mir. Hopefully by the 18th or 19th

Website Committee:

- Representative not present. The website has been updated.

Membership Committee:

- Joy had to leave the meeting but submitted the following via chat: There are 10 new memberships: 5 from Purchase and 5 from Shrub Oak.
- Joy also requested clarification on how to send membership reports.

Archives Committee

- Nothing new to report.

Outreach Committee:

- The committee is planning a meeting for next week to create a plan of action.

WALDO:

- Representatives were not present.

BOCES:

- Representatives were not present.

New Business:

- No new business

The meeting was closed by the President at 10:46.

Respectfully Submitted,
Melissa Victoria

Next Board Meeting:

Wednesday, December 8th, 2021 on Zoom at 9:30am

Task force on Fundraising and Sponsorship Committee will meet at 9am

WLA Past President's Report

2020-2021

Accomplishments

The challenges posed by the pandemic affected our ability to meet in person with members and presenters throughout the year, but did not dampen WLA's ability to "embrace change." As this year's tagline has proven "libraries embrace change" on a daily basis. With the help of the WLA executive board, board members, and committee chairs, we were able to increase the number of programs offered and explore new partnerships. To start the year off, the WLA brochure was redesigned and distributed to Library and Information Science programs in the New York area to reach students and faculty. One unexpected revelation was the lapsed non-profit status of the organization due to a number of circumstances. In order to rectify WLA's non-profit status and prepare the submission of a 501(c)(3) form, WLA entrusted the help of two Pro Bono attorneys. The process of updating the Bylaws started in the fall of 2020 and is expected to continue throughout 2022. An Ad-hoc Bylaws Committee was established in early 2021 and has been meeting regularly to address the revisions that are required in order to reapply for non-profit status in the state of New York.

WLA adapted quickly to an online presence, offering numerous virtual professional development workshops to both members and non-members of the association. We continued offering "Meet & Unwind" monthly gatherings on Zoom which provided an informal way to stay connected with everyone. Over the summer, Dr. Adwoa Akhu offered workshops on *Self Care* and *Implicit Bias* and the New York-Presbyterian Medical Center presented a talk concerning *Returning to the Workplace: Managing Anxiety and Stress*. In the Fall we presented *Giving Tuesday: The When, Why and How for a Successful Campaign*, and in the winter season we offered a virtual workshop on *Westchester County Archives and Resources* with the Westchester Historical Society and the Westchester County Archives on January 17, followed by an online author event with New York Times *Book Review* editor Pamela Paul (*How to Raise a Reader*), in collaboration with Westchester Library System and Book Ya Ya, on January 28.

When it became apparent that WLA would not be able to offer any in-person events in the new year, we immediately began planning for a virtual Mid-Winter Conference on "New Technology and Best Practices for Libraries and Archives," which was successfully held on February 3. Fortunately, most of the featured guest speakers had already accepted the invitation to address WLA members at the 2020 Annual Conference and were happy to speak at the virtual Mid-Winter conference. Among the presenters were Hillel Arnold (Rockefeller Archives Center), Robert Cartolano

(Columbia University), Lisa Kropp (Lindenhurst Memorial Library), and Kathryn Shaughnessy (St. John's University).

In the Spring, WLA offered a virtual, two-part program on *Job Interview Skills for the Covid 19 Period and Beyond* and *How to Create a Professional Resume* with Jeanne Nelson and Lyn Leis of Prowess Workshops (Protocol for the Workplace and Etiquette for Social Situations), as well as a virtual workshop on *Staying Fit While Working from Home* with New York-Presbyterian Medical Center.

New Committee Chairs:

- **Professional Development Co-Chairs:** Megan Fenton (Bedford) and Krishna Horrigan (WLS)
- **Youth Services Co-Chair:** Lisa Dettling (Rye)

Bylaws and Conflict of Interest Policy: Once it became apparent that the current Bylaws required revisions, WLA started working with Pro Bono attorney Judy Siegel, who assigned our case to two attorneys at Winston and Strawn LLP -- Laura Krucks and Carey Schreiber -- who are advising the board on the necessary changes. The Adhoc Bylaws Committee has started reviewing the new Conflict of Interest Policy and the Bylaws revisions.

New Award Established in Honor of Librarian Bonnie Katz: In commemoration of former WLA president Bonnie Katz, WLA will be establishing the Bonnie Katz Award at the Mid-Winter Conference in 2022. Diana Lennon and the Ossining Public Library will be coordinating the criteria for the award.

WLA Archives: Elaine Provenzano and Catherine Riedel began working on organizing the WLA documents in our possession. Earlier documents are available at the Westchester Historical Society.

Budget Status: Expenditures were minimal this year and included nominal payments to guest speakers at the Mid-Winter and Annual Conferences, and fees for online platforms, such as Zoom, PayPal and Election Buddy.

NYLA Roundtable: WLA proceeded with discussions to become a NYLA Roundtable this year, especially driven by the lapse of its non-profit status. Enough votes from NYLA members were collected which allowed the motion to be brought to the NYLA Council. Although the motion was passed and preparations were underway to formalize the WLA Roundtable, unexpected changes within the NYLA organization during the Summer preempted the decision. After careful consideration, the WLA board ultimately

chose to dissolve the establishment of the Roundtable at this time. The option to join NYLA as a Roundtable will be revisited in the future.

Professional Development Awards: This year's recipients were Kenji Kaneshiro (Harrison Public Library) and Jessica Neto (Tuckahoe Public Library). They both were awarded \$500 at this year's Annual Conference.

WLA Newsletter: Two issues of the WLA Newsletter were issued and organized by Elaine Provenzano and Diana Lennon with assistance from Christa O'Sullivan who distributed the newsletters to members via email.

WLA Website: Dan Glauber maintained the website and updated information as needed throughout the year.

Voting: Electronic ballots were emailed to membership and tallied using Election Buddy, an online platform designed for this purpose.

Annual Conference: This year's conference theme was *Balancing Change: Libraries & New Concepts in 2021* and included a number of presenters as follows:

- Poetry Reading with Poet Laureate, B.K. Fischer
- Panel Discussion on "Librarianship: Career Paths & Transitioning Roles" followed by a Q&A session. Guest speakers were
 - Christine Angel, PhD, Associate Professor, MLIS Department, St. John's University, Queens, NY
 - Clara Cabrera, Research & Reference Supervisor at Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr
 - Barbara Davis, Location Historial, New Rochelle Public Library & Co-Director of the Westchester Historical Society
 - Ellen Elsen, School Media Specialist at the Dobbs Ferry Free School District
 - David Waring, Music Librarian at the Greenwich Library
- Breath, Body & Mind Session with Elena Falcone of WLS
- Guest Speaker Damon Centola, Author of *Change: How to Make Big Things Happen*
- Guest Speaker Michael Schein, Author of *The Hype Handbook*

Copies of *Change* and *The Hype Handbook* were purchased in bulk from The Village Bookstore in Pleasantville and donated to over 45 WLS libraries, local colleges and

organizations. Everyone who completed the Exit Survey for the conference was entered into a raffle to win one of the books written by the guest speakers. A total of six participants won a book.

Suggested Goals for 2021-2022

- Add a Treasurer-Elect position, as previously discussed
- Modify job descriptions for board members and committee chairs in accordance with Bylaw revisions
- Initiate an outreach program to school libraries in Westchester (all levels) to increase WLA's visibility and help increase membership
- Poll members about future professional development programs and special events

Giovanna Fiorino-Iannace, October 15, 2021