

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

ALABAMA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

MARCH 19, 2026

The Executive Board of the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) met on March 19, 2026 at the Alabama Public Library Service building in Montgomery, Alabama. A quorum was present and prior notice was given as required by the Alabama Open Meetings Act and Act #2022-421.

Chairman John Wahl called the Executive Board Regular Meeting to order at 1:06 p.m., in the Alabamiana Room, and roll was taken. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated he is honored to have them.

The following Board members were present: John Wahl, Ron Snider, Jerria Martin, Debra Windsor, Amy Minton, and Kasandra Stevens. Board member absent was: Angelia. Stokes. APLS staff members present: Kelyn Ralya, Katie Bailey, Jennifer Holman, Ryan Godfrey, Matt Sponsler, Pennie Broussard, and Vanessa Carr.

Visitor attended: Ben Albritton, Office of the Attorney General.

Adoption of Agenda

Chairman Wahl asked if there were additions to the agenda. Under New Business add: Waiver of the State Aid Rules – Elton B. Stephens Library. The agenda was approved as amended by unanimous decision.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Wahl asked if there were any corrections or edits to the Minutes. There were no edits or additions. Minutes were approved as written by unanimous decision with no objections.

Participation

Maggie Minsk – did not attend

Chairman's Report

The main thing I want to highlight is the lawsuit between Tuscaloosa Public Library and Eagle Forum. The lawsuit involves Tuscaloosa library refusing to let Eagle Forum meet at the facility because of religious affiliations. Obviously, that concerns me. I think religious liberty is one of the greatest principles the American Constitution is founded on. It's an American tradition and one of the defining moments in our history as a country. Something I believe this Board and vastly all Americans strongly support. We want religious liberty for all groups. This is not about Eagle Forum; this is about fundamental American principles. I also don't want to have a knee jerk reaction. The best approach is reaching out to the Tuscaloosa Public Library, talk to them, to see if we can resolve this, but I also think it's important for us, as a Board, to keep in mind we safeguard our liberties as a government institution. No taxpayer funded organization or institution should be refusing anyone based on their religious beliefs. We would love to hear feedback. The most important thing is to start with is dialogue, to see what the options are, to see if there is something in the state code or in our policies that we can use to encourage one way or the other. I would love to hear your thoughts.

Chairman's Report (continued)

Ron Snider – It's in litigation – it seems that we should let the litigation play out. I read briefly the issues. I am not sure what grounds they had but it seems before we start taking position, we ought to see how the litigation resolves itself then take a position one way or the other.

Amy Minton – I would like to table this until we get a little more information. I would like to recommend Chairman Wahl look into this, and give us more feedback at the next meeting. Maybe invite the director from Tuscaloosa and Eagle Forum and hear from them, if possible. I would like to make that motion to table it and the Chairman give us more information at the next meeting.

Chairman Wahl – I don't think you need to make a motion to table – you can make a motion to look into it and report back to the Board.

Amy Minton – We don't have enough information on it right now, but we need to say something.

Chairman Wahl – The best scenario is to be a peacemaker. I believe the vast majority of people in this state, the Tuscaloosa Library, and Eagle Forum, all believe in the principle of religious liberty and finding the consensus that we are all on the same page in standing for values Alabamians believe in. Jerria Martin seconded the motion. There were no objections to the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Unfinished Business

Administrative Code Certification – Kelyn Ralya

The Administrative Code updates were submitted to Legislative Services Agency (LSA) after Board approval. The effective date was February 14, 2026.

Chairman Wahl will work with Kelyn Ralya to make sure libraries have a copy of the code changes and move forward. If there is any input, feel free to pass it on to me of things you think need to be included. The main thing is making sure local directors have clear guidance of what the code changes says and let them know we are a resource if they need clarification or questions.

Kasandra Stevens – What is the deadline for libraries to submit their policies to make sure they are in compliance?

Kelyn Ralya - We have not set a deadline. Our suggestion, because of the timing of this, and since we are coming up on the end of the second quarter, everything should be submitted by the end of September so it can be effective for FY2027. Because of the lateness of the code changes, it would be a lot easier if they can have that extra time to get the policies done. If they want to get FY2027 first quarter state aid, the policies must be done by September 30, 2026.

Chairman Wahl - The code change went into effect February 14, 2026 but it won't take effect on libraries until the first quarter which is the end of September 30; effective October 1 for FY2027. I've had questions from both librarians and members of the press about making sure we have clear protocols in place and making sure that we give local libraries clear guidance.

Status of Assistant Director Position

Chairman Wahl – The Assistant Director position, concerns filling Kelyn's old position with a different role; because I don't think anyone can replace Kelyn with the grants. Right now, she is working dual roles. It's important to have someone on hand to make sure libraries have clear guidance and the resources they need. I know there has been conversation about what we voted on at the last meeting. There is a better administrative way to handle it. Kelyn, do you want to share that with the Board?

Status of Assistant Director Position (continued)

Kelyn Ralya – State Personnel provides state agencies with two appointed positions they can use. As far as I know, we have not used the positions. We can make this an appointed position so we don't have to go through the process to get a register.

Chairman Wahl – It is also helpful that we are trying to get the current hire under Kelyn's Assistant Director position. There is a pay structure in place so we can fill that role. Our plan is to work together and try to get that done sooner rather than later.

Ron Snider – Kelyn, will that still have to be advertised?

Pennie Broussard – The appointed positions don't have to be advertised. If you have somebody, we can appoint them, but it is an at-will position, not going through the merit system. If you hire in the merit system, they are here.

Chairman Wahl – Overall, looking at the options, the appointment process is the best and it flows under Kelyn with her position as Director.

Ron Snider – That still requires Board approval under state code.

Pennie Broussard – Kelyn goes through the interview process, the Board approves, and go through the process.

Ron Snider – If we're not advertising it, how does anyone know to apply for the position?

Pennie Broussard – We can advertise but, something like this is why I told Chairman Wahl that this would be a perfect position for a retiree looking for something that may or may not be full-time or permanent, rather than somebody looking for a career.

Chairman Wahl – It's cheaper in the long run; someone to take on the role while we have new rules in place to make sure our libraries have the resources and guidance needed to support them. It doesn't necessarily have to be a permanent position.

Ron Snider – It's the Assistant Director position.

Pennie Broussard – No. Each state agency has two ad hoc positions that are appointed. There is a merit system assistant director position.

Chairman Wahl – We can assign it whatever title we want.

Pennie Broussard – Yes. You can assign whatever title, but there is a difference.

Ron Snider – On the Agenda it's described as an Assistant Director position being established.

Chairman Wahl – That's what we did at the last Board meeting because we didn't have all the information. I don't mind keeping that title, it's a good title because that's the structure this organization has in place. The goal of the position working under Kelyn as Director, in key areas that she will assign the person to take part, working with libraries, coaching them on other duties she needs to assign.

Amy Minton – What is the timeline for this, given that we need to have the policies in before September. I assume this person needs to get started.

Chairman Wahl – I think we can get started and done by the next Board meeting; that's my goal.

Kasandra Stevens – Sixty (60) days.

Chairman Wahl – Do you think that would be reasonable, Kelyn?

Status of Assistant Director Position (continued)

Ron Snider – I still think it is a mistake to be hiring in effect the number two person without doing any search, and leaving it to Kelyn to make that determination.

Kasandra Stevens – We have done a search in the past; I felt like we have.

Chairman Wahl – We have time to do this; Pennie, how short a time frame can it be put out there before the next Board meeting. Can we do it in thirty (30) days?

Pennie Broussard – We can do thirty (30) days.

Chairman Wahl – That will give Kelyn and me thirty (30) days to look at it and make a recommendation. Let's do that. Kelyn, work on the duties what you want this person to do, and I will look it over before we send it out. Is there anything with the appointment pay scale we need to keep in mind? What was the Assistant Director's pay scale in the past? We can make a final decision at the time of hire because it wouldn't be the exact amount based on experience. The suggested pay scale is between 80-100, that will fulfill the role and we can decide on that.

Ben Albritton – You don't need a motion because it's an appointed position.

Amy Minton – Let's summarize this one more time:

- Kelyn will write a job description, what she wants this person to do
- John Wahl will review the job description
- Pennie Broussard will advertise the position for thirty (30) days
- We will see who responds
- Kelyn will receive resumes and John Wahl will assist in the process to review the resumes
- Send to the board to review
- Make a recommendation who you want
- Board will discuss at the next meeting

Chairman Wahl – Kelyn, that person is going to be working with you from day-to-day. You will review the resumes, you do the interviews, and I will be here to support you, at your disposal, to give input if you need me. Pennie Broussard will send the job descriptions and resumes to the Board to review.

At the next meeting, the Board will vote on the recommendations for the position for a final decision. Once approved, the Board can send the job descriptions to persons who they recommend for the position. I want people to be able to submit an application and resume.

New Business

Waiver of the State Aid Rule – Elton B. Stephens Library

Kelyn Ralya – Elton B. Stephens Library did not complete their survey last year. Katie can explain a lot better because we had issues with the service provider so the deadline was pushed up.

Katie Bailey – Elton B. Stephens requested a waiver of the state aid rules. Attached is an e-mail from the consultant stating, let me know, I'm here, I will work with you. Several requests were sent to the library, but no response. This is the only library that did not return their survey. The problem I have is with the waiver they stated, they were trained on the survey. They did receive state aid training. What we are looking forward to is getting them back in good graces for the next fiscal year. I don't think it's a wise idea to approve the waiver this year.

Chairman Wahl – They have to do their part and you gave them multiple chances.

Waiver of the State Aid Rule – Elton B. Stephens Library (continued)

Katie Bailey - We don't want to deny them state aid but it's very clear in the Admin Code that you must complete the survey to be in compliance. That alone disqualifies them this fiscal year. I believe we did our due diligence trying to get libraries to complete the survey. Every library in the state completed their survey with the exception of this library.

There were two main providers for the library survey. Ours, through the news, no one at the company told us, but our rep informed us that Bibliostat is going away December 16, 2025 and you need to have everything done by November 30, 2025. We have 25 years of survey data that we didn't want to lose. We were busy exporting data and encouraging libraries to do the same. We exported all their data and backed it all and that forced us to shut the survey down early. I was very impressed – we worked hard to get people in compliance. In January 2026, Bibliostat said we are not going to shut down, but APLS had already moved on. They have been up and down and are not reliable. We are through the RFP process and other main survey persons; it will be a smoother process for the other libraries. Once I train myself and I train everybody else, it will be an easy process. I did not feel confident in continuing with Baker & Taylor considering the lack of communication. They refunded the money that APLS sent to them so it was decided to leave Baker & Taylor. A request was made to deny Elton B Stephens waiver and forward a letter back in compliance for the upcoming fiscal year. There were no objections to the request. No "nays". Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Kelyn Ralya - The last time Elton B Stephens was granted a waiver was in FY2011. The state aid amount for the year was approximately \$4,200.

Chairman Wahl – I know you have been reaching out and working with them but the fact that they submitted this waiver is good. I think it's important to remember there is a reason these policies are required and we want libraries to take them seriously.

Approval of FY2026 LSTA Grant Awards – Grant Requests Applications by Districts and Proposed Awards

Kelyn Ralya – We put a call for people to apply for FY2026 LSTA grants and the deadline was December 31, 2025. The LSTA Advisory Council had to do the evaluation process quickly. We gave you a list of the FY2026 LSTA applications we received. The libraries are broken out by district. The highlighted libraries are located in counties represented by more than one district. The total amount requested was \$1,674,445.

Ron Snider – Years ago, we requested the totals by districts because we wanted to ensure the districts were equally counted. What explains Districts 6 and 7 being almost 100% more than other districts? Historically, we were trying to keep the grants proportioned to the state's population. This time we're not doing that. We normally receive district totals.

Kassandra Stevens – So is there a county total?

Ron Snider – Or just a district total? Because that's what we normally got.

Kelyn Ralya – Yes, that's what you normally get. Unfortunately, this year we didn't have time. That's basically what happened.

Ron Snider – So we don't really know.

Kelyn Ralya – Katie and I were trying to get these awarded.

Ron Snider – That was one of the things we thought was important to understand the relationship between the two.

Approval of FY2026 LSTA Grant Awards – Grant Requests Applications by Districts and Proposed Awards (continued)

Chairman Wahl. – There is always going to be certain projects that libraries may have. With District 7 there is a lot less local city and county funding available. You can't proportion exactly the same for every area based on population, some areas have more local support and some have less. Sometimes it's a special project, that's what grants are about, helping libraries with projects they need. It may need to be some flexibility in the districts.

Katie Bailey – Everyone is welcome to apply for grants but a lot of libraries do not. We were very encouraging this year because of the no match, but some libraries don't have time. Some libraries don't need the funding. Unfortunately, we can't make them apply.

Chairman Wahl – We want to give to the libraries that need it. That's why we have a grant process; you request it to have access to it.

Kelyn Ralya – There are some libraries who are in good standing financially that don't apply because they don't want to take it away from the other libraries.

Chairman Wahl – It's a team. That's one thing I love about an organization like APLS and the grant program, there is camaraderie and a family feel to libraries across the state.

Katie Bailey – Part of the judging of the grants the LSTA Advisory Council does is there is a weighted part for need.

Chairman Wahl – I assume that the final totals are probably close to the percentage in the requested.

Kelyn Ralya – Unfortunately, because of the time crunch, I didn't have time to give the Board the level of details that I usually do. The reason we were working so hard to get this done for this particular meeting is because they only have until July.

Ron Snider – They only have until July to what?

Kelyn Ralya – To finish their grant. They usually have nine months; now they only have a few months. We wanted to offer them something because we were still unclear about the budget from last year.

Chairman Wahl – We have requests for \$1,674,445 and we've allocated about a million.

Kelyn Ralya – Which is generally what we do and we try to be fairly conservative at the beginning not knowing what might come up. Then we might be able to increase it later.

Amy Minton – Once the LSTA grants are given, for example: Jefferson County, then they're given, right? If they were non-compliant with their policies, that would not be stopped, this is a one time or does it trickle out over months with the LSTA grants?

Chairman Wahl – This is not like state aid. When a grant is approved, it's approved.

Ron Snider – It's hard to add these up. I really don't understand why it would have taken that much time to do what has been historically done.

Kasandra Stevens – I'm going through it really quick. I'm trying to get you a number, Ron.

Ron Snider – But how do you add what's in what district?

Kasandra Stevens – I'm counting it to both districts so it's not going to be exact.

Approval of FY2026 LSTA Grant Awards – Grant Requests Applications by Districts and Proposed Awards (continued)

Katie Bailey – I also think the timeline was very constricted because of not being sure about the funding. And we don't want to give people grants and then not be able to afford them.

Chairman Wahl – Any time you're dealing with government budgets, sometimes that happens especially when you're getting money from different federal and state budgets; and you don't have clear guidance on what those budgets are going to be, it's hard. When you're working on a multi-year rolling program, that also makes its very difficult.

Ron Snider – Like I said, it wouldn't have taken more than a few minutes to have this prepared for us. And just looking at it, there's no library from Houston County that got an award.

Amy Minton – How many people are on the LSTA council?

Kelyn Ralya – It's a sixteen-member council, but only 12 persons are on the current council because we could not find replacements for some people.

Amy Minton – So these twelve persons decided this and came up with these totals.

Kelyn Ralya – The council is divided into groups. They send their score sheets to me and then I calculate the average scores.

Chairman Wahl asked if any LSTA Advisory Council member was present to address the Board on the LSTA grants.

Amy Minton – Do they ever split because Gadsden/Etowah requested \$20,000 and they didn't receive any. Do you ever split the amount and give them \$5,000?

Kelyn Ralya – We have done that in the past.

Ron Snider – Kelyn, didn't we used to get a summary that showed the scores to see where people ranked with respect to that so you could see how it made sense or didn't make sense?

Mandy Warren, Director of Eufaula Carnegie Library and LSTA Advisory Council member, entered the room to address the Board.

Kasandra Stevens – I can give you an average distribution.

- District 1- \$141,000
- District 2- \$93,000
- District 3- \$114,000
- District 4- \$ 58,000
- District 5- \$ 166,000
- District 6- \$164,000
- District 7- \$207,000

District 7 has the most and district 4 the least.

Chairman Wahl – I can understand District 7 because it's the Black Belt. They're not going to get a lot of local support.

Ron Snider – But some of the biggest were Birmingham.

Kasandra Stevens – Yes, Jefferson County had \$90,000.

Chairman Wahl – Do you know what the specific need was for the \$90,000 grant?

Ron Snider – It said it was vehicles.

Approval of FY2026 LSTA Grant Awards – Grant Requests Applications by Districts and Proposed Awards (continued)

Mandy Warren – The library vehicles grant cap is \$90,000. If you're applying for vehicles, which is typically larger library systems that have vehicles like a van or bookmobile, that's going to be a much larger chunk of grant money.

Kelyn Ralya – Jefferson County has a mobile delivery service to all the libraries because they have the same automation system. They run a courier service just like Baldwin County.

Jerria Martin – Can you tell the Board about the scoring system and the rubric used?

Mandy Warren responded that each committee receives certain grant categories. Each member scores independently based on a rubric provided to make sure everybody is judged the same way. The committees then come together to discuss the scores given independently whether high or low; then point out things the other person didn't see or notice to get on the same page and make sure the scores are not skewed in one direction. Also, committee members can't judge their own grants.

Chairman Wahl – I appreciate you sharing that. How many members are on the committee? How are they selected?

Mandy Warren – The way we are selected is if someone from our district rolls off, a member nominates someone to take their place.

Chairman Wahl - I appreciate what you do, it's a lot of work, and it's a volunteer position.

Kelyn Ralya thanked Mandy and the Council for their hard work and stated this is Mandy's first term serving on the Council.

Mandy Warren – I wish more libraries would apply for LSTA grants. Some libraries don't apply because they don't have a need for it. Some libraries don't apply because they don't know how to write grants. I have expressed to Kelyn that I would love for APLS and directors to get more grant writing workshops for smaller libraries.

Chairman Wahl – Let's add that to the new position because if this person is working on code changes, that also helping libraries with the grant process, especially the libraries that doesn't know how to write grants.

Mandy Warren stated if the person who fills that position has extensive grant writing experience that would be amazing.

Ron Snider – We pushed that a few years ago.

Chairman Wahl – We don't want a library that has never requested a grant to fall through the cracks just because they don't know how to write a grant.

Mandy Warren – LSTA grants are very cut and dry, and very simple. You just answer the questions but to answer the questions thoroughly, you need some experience. It can be very intimidating if you are not used to writing grants. If you can't write an LSTA grant, you are not going to apply for more grants. If they can learn on an LSTA grant, that opens them up to so many more grants nationwide.

Amy Minton – Are most people on the committee directors?

Mandy Warren – Some directors, some librarians, and we have a professor from the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies.

Amy Minton – Are the grants ever divided? I noticed Gadsden applied for \$20,000 but didn't receive any. Are they ever divided or is it all or none?

Approval of FY2026 LSTA Grant Awards – Grant Requests Applications by Districts and Proposed Awards (continued)

Mandy Warren – We don't make the decisions on the dollar amounts, we just score them and turn the scores in to APLS and they make the decisions based on how much funding is available.

Chairman Wahl – Is there anything for libraries who apply late? I have been in communication with the director at the Mobile Public Library. She is a new director and wanted to ask about that. Is there a secondary time frame for someone in that situation?

Kelyn Ralya – I didn't receive anything from Mobile Public Library. I spoke to her when she was here in January and she inquired about the grants. She knew she missed the deadline. I told her to get it submitted to me the following week but we never received a grant from her. Yes, we will work with her.

Katie Bailey – There's also Director's discretionary grants.

Chairman Wahl – Let's flag Mobile and help them out. She's a new director and she's trying to do a good job.

The Board congratulated Mandy Warren for her work on the LSTA Advisory Council and thanked her for answering questions from the Board.

Chairman Wahl – We will move forward with the current process. If there were folks who fell through the cracks, we may have a little wiggle room for libraries with the final budget.

Ron Snider – Kelyn, we don't have a hard deadline for these grants? Historically, I thought when the Board approved the grants, if they did not apply to get them, we went down the list of the next highest scoring. So, I don't think that I recall someone who didn't meet the deadline. If we can do that, it's fine, but I am confused as to what we are doing.

Chairman Wahl – What we are doing today is approving these and if there is more money that can be allocated for the grants, we can look at additional later.

Ron Snider - We used to do it by numerical scores – whatever library didn't receive all of their money it would go to the next library. It was a scoring system.

Chairman Wahl – Katie, where can we learn more about the Director's grant?

Katie Bailey – Sometimes there can be something that happens like a disaster, things that are unexpected. It's a discretionary fund; that's probably where Mobile's money will come from. There is a way to still help someone. We had something earlier this year where a library couldn't afford to purchase barcodes for books because of a gap in funding. That's a basic need for a library to be able to function. The process includes writing a letter to the Director explaining your need. The Director may come to the consultant or the Assistant Director and talk about it to make sure it's legitimate. It's very rare, probably a hand full each year. That's not really considered grant funding.

Ron Snider - When you say Director's grant, I don't ever recall a Director's grant.

Katie Bailey – Nancy made many Director's grants over the years.

Ron Snider – Where did the money come from, LSTA?

Jennifer Holman – State money, helping out with special needs.

Katie Bailey – There is no reporting needs. People thank us profusely. Over the years, Nancy gave a number of my libraries Director's grants. It's very conservatively done.

Approval of FY2026 LSTA Grant Awards – Grant Requests Applications by Districts and Proposed Awards (continued)

Chairman Wahl – Very special situations, we're a family, a team, and we want to help. I think Mobile fits that, a new director, not knowing all the protocols, and a lot of turn over in staff. Let's keep the federal grants, keep the deadline, and look to Mobile. I accept a motion to approve these grants as distributed. Jerria Martin made the motion. Amy Minton seconded the motion. There were no objections. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

I enjoyed the conversation and learning about the process of LSTA grants. This is what a good meeting looks like. We want to do the research, do everything, and understand how things work. I appreciate the questions and the opportunity to learn that.

Examiners of Public Accounts – APLS Audit Report (Findings) – Kelyn Ralya

An audit was done at APLS last year and the findings from the Examiners of Public Accounts were given to the Board. There is one finding, posting board vacancies on the Secretary of State (SOS) website.

Vanessa Carr asked for permission to address the Board. I post the vacancies on the Secretary of State (SOS) website. (Handouts were given to the Board.) When posting on the website in prior years, and a vacancy occurs, the vacant box is checked and the information taken off. A confirmation is received from the SOS confirming the vacancy and the reason with dates but no name. I can't prove I took that person's name off the website because all is erased. The confirmation only shows it was posted, now vacant, the time and date and reason for separation. It was spoken at the previous meeting that a discrepancy occurred that I didn't post or update vacancies on the SOS website. That's what's on the report from the Examiners of Public Accounts. I want this Board to know that I did my job, but I can't prove I did it from this printout. The SOS website was updated in March 2023, as you can see the updated version shows the board member name and information. Any updates now will reflect the prior and current information.

Chairman Wahl – I appreciate you doing that and we all know things like that happen especially when they change a program. I believe that it's just one discrepancy, I will take it especially when it's legitimate and not our fault.

Kelyn Ralya – The Examiners said this particular finding is common around the state.

Resignation – Kayle Foster – Library Technician – BPD Division Permission to Interview and Fill the Vacant Position – Kelyn Ralya

Kayle Foster was a Librarian Technician in the BPD Division. Her last day of employment was February 28, 2026. Request the Board's approval to hire a replacement and report to the Board at the next meeting. Chairman Wahl asked for a motion to accept her resignation, interview for the position, and fill the vacancy. Debra Windsor made the motion. Kasandra Stevens seconded the motion. There were no objections. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

2025 Statement of Economic Interests (SEI) Form

The Statement of Economic Interest is due to the Alabama Ethics Commission on or before April 30, 2026.

Discussion on a Different Topic – Kelyn Ralya

At the last meeting, I stated that at each board meeting we will highlight a particular library in the state. The Hobson City Public Library is located in Calhoun County and serves a population of less than seven hundred and fifty (750) persons. Hobson City is

Discussion on a Different Topic – Kelyn Ralya
the oldest established African-American city in the State of Alabama, founded in 1899. A community garden was started a few years ago. There are food security issues in the community. The garden has expanded and the library has won awards for it and it was featured on APT. The library starting partnering with an extension office and it has gotten very big in this tiny little town. The produce is delivered to families in need. People in the community work in the community garden so it is very well attended. There were abundant crops over the summer that served over eighty-five (85) families.

Chairman Wahl – It's a good example of how libraries impact the communities.

Director's Report

APLS Financial Update – Jennifer Holman

The financial report is right on track. If anyone has questions, feel free. We should get our federal grant award next week. APLS has already received our allocation.

Chairman Wahl – I like to hear we are right on track. That's good.

Kelyn Ralya – President Trump signed the budget in January IMLS actually got a \$450,000 bump to their Grants to States (G2S) program which provides our annual appropriation.

COSLA Spring Meeting – Voices for Libraries – March 3-6, 2026 – Washington, DC

Kelyn Ralya attended the COSLA Spring Meeting and Voices for Libraries (2026) event in Washington, DC on March 3-6, 2026. There are two days of meetings (Tuesday and Wednesday) and Thursday was meetings with legislators on Capitol Hill. On Tuesday, the group was addressed by Second Lady Usha Vance. She was very well-spoken about the importance of literacy especially during the summer and libraries' roles in helping with their communities. On Thursday, Kelyn visited each legislator's office to talk to their staff and delivered packets which included annual reports, newsletters, and examples of how APLS uses its LSTA appropriation. She also brought each office a packet of Summer Library Program (SLP) bookmarks.

Staff Activities

Katie Bailey and Stephanie Taylor – January 12-15, 2026 – IMLS SDC Conference–New Orleans, LA

Katie Bailey – Stephanie Taylor and I attended the IMLS SDC Conference in New Orleans, LA on January 12-15, 2026. Representative from the new service provider APLS will be using was also in attendance which allowed us to speak with them privately to discuss how we want our survey to be set up in the future. The survey module is also used for state aid paperwork so we wanted to make sure this company was going to be able to do this. It was a very effective meeting. In April and May, the company will be working on the actual survey, uploading our data from the past year from Bibliostat and loading it into the new module. We will have a survey for FY2026 ready to go as of October 15, 2026. We are on time.

Alisa McLeod – Disaster Training on Materials – January 21, 2026 – Charleston, SC

Katie Bailey – Alisa McLeod attended Disaster Training on January 21, 2026 in Charleston, SC. Alisa works with disaster plans to make sure libraries keep them updated. Speaking as a former director, it's easy to write a disaster plan and then forget it exists. It's good to look at it periodically. When I do trainings for boards, I recommend they set aside a month to review their disaster plans because it's easy to forget it exists.

Kasandra Stevens – North Shelby just did that and one of the things I suggested to them is once a year, take the whole morning and let the staff review the plan. Have a training

day and it reminds people that there is such amazing information in the disaster plan. There are things like active shooter in there, very good stuff.

Jay Mims – InfoTech Live Conference – February 2-5, 2026 - New Orleans, LA

Jay Mims attended the InfoTech Live Conference in New Orleans, LA on February 2-5, 2026.

Mary Beth Wise, NLS Administrator, Visit to APLS, BPD Division – February 5-6, 2026

Mary Beth Wise, NLS Consultant, made an annual site visit to APLS Blind and Physically Disabled (BPD) Division on February 5-6, 2026 to tour the division and speak to staff. She was very pleased and impressed with BPD and staff.

Administrators' Meeting Statistics – January 22, 2026

The Administrators' meeting was held on January 22, 2026 via video-conferenced. Statistics are as follows:

160 - public libraries participated

183 - persons attended the meeting

Front Desk Receptionist Statistics – January and February 2026

Statistics for the front receptionist desk activity for January and February 2026 were provided to the Board.

Service Certificates and Pins – Rhonda Napier and Kedia Richardson

Service certificates and pins will be presented to staff members below for their years of service to the state of Alabama at the conclusion of the Meeting.

10 Years

Rhonda Napier

Kedia Richardson

Chairman Wahl – This has been a good Board meeting.

Comments

Amy Minton – I want to say something and I mean this with all sincerity. Last year, we were worried about LSTA grants and state funding. I sincerely appreciate your part in this, John Wahl. Thank you because we didn't have to get approval to get this LSTA grant money. Thank you and please thank President Trump.

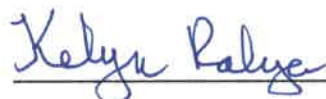
Chairman Wahl – I will pass that along. I know there has been a lot of drama over the past couple of years, but libraries are really near and dear to my heart. They were an important part of my growing up. I love our libraries and I will do anything I can to support them. I am very pleased at the federal and state level that we have some increased funding for our libraries. I will pass that along.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:19 p.m.



Chairman, APLS Executive Board



Kelyn L. Ralya, Director



Vanessa E. Carr, Recording Secretary