

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
ALABAMA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE
SEPTEMBER 19, 2024**

The Executive Board of the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) met on September 19, 2024, 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, Ron Snider called the Executive Board Regular Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., and roll was taken. The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

The following Board members were present: Ron Snider, Angelia Stokes, Michelle Hughes, Jerria Martin, John Wahl, Debra Windsor, and Amy Minton. APLS staff attended: Nancy C. Pack, Kelyn Ralya, Jennifer Holman, Ryan Godfrey, Matt Sponsler and Vanessa Carr. Visitor attended was: Ben Albritton, Office of the Attorney General.

AGENDA

Mr. Snider asked if there were additions to the Agenda. Under New Business (G-1) LSTA FY2023-2024 Grant Requests – Applications by Districts and Proposed Awards should be listed as **LSTA FY2024-2025**.... Ms. Martin made the motion to adopt the Agenda as amended. Mrs. Stokes seconded the motion. Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the May 16, 2024 meeting were presented to the Board for approval. The Minutes were approved as written. Mrs. Hughes made the motion to approve the Minutes as written. Mrs. Stokes seconded the Motion. Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Participation

Mr. Snider stated there were people who requested to address the Board today. All of them had previously addressed the Board. Because of the full agenda and they had previously spoken, I denied the requests and told them they could request to address us at the next meeting

Chairman's Report

There is nothing to report.

Unfinished Business

APLS Administrative Code State Aid Changes Update – Letter to Public Libraries

Dr. Pack - A letter was provided to directors, administrators, and board of trustees of public libraries informing them of the changes to the Administrative Code. Revised policies are to be returned to APLS with the agreement signed by the library director, the library board chair, and notarized.

Mr. Snider – How many have sent in new policies at this point?

Dr. Pack – We have received seventy-five (75) new policies, mainly from small libraries. It's my understanding some libraries are waiting for the outcome of the Autauga-Prattville County Public Library legal case. On Friday, September 20, 2024, the plaintiffs have to submit one last filing to the motion filed and Judge Myron Thompson will make a ruling.

Mr. Snider – We have seventy-five (75) out of 220 public libraries that submitted policies, that's approximately one-third responded.

APLS Budget Cut Recommendations

Dr. Pack - APLS budget was cut by 9% for FY2025, this is a reduction by \$351,000.00. Jennifer Holman and I reviewed the current financial and determined areas to cut.

Dr. Pack – the cuts are as follows:

- Cease the Hotspot Program (at an estimated savings of \$150,00)
- Not renewing PCI webinar (training for library directors and staff in the communities)

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- Not renewing PCI webinar (training for library directors and staff in the communities)

- Ended the contract for web maintenance with stamp idea group website (I.T. staff taking the maintenance)
- Not to fill the Library Operations Manager and keep essential staff positions filled
- Miscellaneous – monitor printing, supplies, electronic savings. That should bring us down to the 9% budget cut.

Mr. Snider – The biggest part of the cut was the hotspot that mainly serves rural communities.

Ms. Martin – I am wondering what is the impact going to be taking that service away from those rural communities.

Mrs. Stokes – Especially the small places.

Mr. Snider – It's bad, but you know when we have cuts of this magnitude, we have to make hard decisions. This agency for many years has been underfunded, in my view. When we have a 375,000 reduction, we are cutting to the bone respectively.

Dr. Pack – They wanted an 18% cut.

Mr. Snider – We were able to get half of that back.

Mr. Wahl - What are the services the hotspots provide? What's being lost.

Dr. Pack – Circulating hotspots in libraries in the black belt. We have had about seventy-five (75) libraries participating.

Mrs. Stokes – People can check them out and have wi-fi capabilities.

Dr. Pack – We paid for use of the broadband.

Mr. Wahl – How many active units were issued out?

Dr. Pack – I can get that number for you. It was a very vital program; a lot of people used it. The Board will receive summary that will be placed in our annual report.

Ms. Martin – This started out as a grant, correct?

Dr. Pack – This started out as a grant and we picked it up as an APLS expenditure.

Mr. Wahl – Is there anything that can make a smooth transition to hopefully full funding next year to make a smooth transition re-starting the program; shutting it down will it be hard to re-start it back up.

Dr. Pack – I don't know if we want to re-start the program back up. There is some talk about the federal telecommunications agency's bill that is to provide broadband and hotspots for circulation. In October, more information will be provided when we have our state librarians meeting in Huntsville, AL that APLS is hosting. The FCC has proposed guidelines for review.

Mr. Wahl – So we may not need to do it if someone else is taking over that?

Dr. Pack – That is correct.

Mr. Snider – My own view is if we could get back our funding level, that probably would be a program that we should consider doing for a two-year period.

Mr. Wahl – Until someone else can take it over. I agree.

Mr. Snider – Yes. That's my view.

Letter to AVL asking Compliance with Intent of the Law and AVL's Response

The Board asked Dr. Pack to write a letter to the Alabama Virtual Library (AVL) asking their intent of the law for new guidelines.

Dr. Pack – A letter was sent to AVL dated May 22, 2024 and a response was received from AVL on August 4, 2024. AVL had a meeting on September 18, 2024 and provided the updates to their Collection and Materials Management Policy. (Policy was given to the Board members).

Mrs. Stokes – They just had their meeting yesterday so we will know more about it at the November meeting.

Dr. Pack – They passed the Collection and Materials Management Policy at the Meeting and this should fulfill the new requirements placed on AVL.

Open Meetings Act – Committee Meetings

Mr. Snider - The Board had questions regarding committee meetings and asked the Attorney General's Office to provide something in writing for subcommittee meetings. Mr. Albritton very graciously sent this memorandum indicating with respect to committee meetings that they will need to follow the Open Meetings Act, to be noted, open to the public. Which I think makes committee meetings impossible and impracticable. That's why for some of the items on today's agenda, I normally would have appointed a committee, but I did not see any point in doing that given the statutory alliance.

Mr. Albritton – The history behind that was larger boards and especially Auburn University was having subcommittee meetings, deciding everything in subcommittee meetings and coming to the board meetings saying ok, agenda item number one, all in favor. The public had no idea of what they were discussing. That was aimed to prevent this.

Mr. Snider – That has never been the history of how we used committee meetings. Normally, we would appoint a committee of two people or so on a particular issue who would then report back to the Board. They clearly did not constitute a majority and let them make a recommendation. With a Board of only seven people, and the distances to have a committee meeting, just doesn't make

Mrs. Stokes – Normally, there would be a committee to make sure everyone or at least somebody in charge of reminding everyone to get the director's evaluation done. We couldn't do that this year.

Mr. Snider – So, anyway we appreciate the advice even though we were disappointed.

Mr. Albritton – You can disseminate the information, but you can't discuss it deliberate. Don't carry on a discussion about it.

Mrs. Stokes – Everyone individual evaluation is personal.

Athens Limestone Public Library – APLS Time Line

The Board requested a time line of documents received at APLS from Athens-Limestone.

Dr. Pack – I did the research and this is what I found in our files. This is the summary and timeline.

Mr. Snider – I received an e-mail from Elizabeth Stewart. As the Board recall at the last Board Meeting, our consensus was that this is a local issue and the county and the city needs to resolve it. We recommended that the city and/or county request a legal opinion on this issue. In Ms. Stewart's e-mail to me, she stated: "neither governing body chose to request an AG determination or summary." I think she was one of those who wanted to speak to us again, and I advised her that we had previously discussed from her presentation on the issue that we suggested they get an Attorney General's Opinion. The governmental entities were not interested apparently in doing that and that we had a full agenda for the meeting. I did not see anything to be gained by her speaking to us again. I do believe that it is a local issue that needs to be resolved by the city of Athens and the county. If neither of them, according to her, chose to request an opinion, I don't think it's appropriate that we get in the middle of that.

Athens Limestone Public Library – APLS Time Line (continued)

Mr. Wahl – I agree. You know that's my home county and my district.

Mr. Snider – That's how I feel.

Mr. Wahl – Both sides have been trying to draw me into that.

Mr. Snider – They are trying to draw us into it, and I don't think that's appropriate.

Mr. Wahl – I don't either. Elizabeth called me as well and I had a long conversation with her yesterday. I tend to agree. The conversation should be between the city council and the county commission. I know the county commission did just take a vote and they said they were not going to be giving any funding to the library unless they receive representatives on the library board. I think that is the county's prerogative and I think that is fair for them. The one thing that both the county and both higher representatives have reached out to me on as well as Elizabeth, it appears legally right now that the structure of the Athens-Limestone Library is actually only a city library and not a city and county library. The only reason we would be involved in that in anyway if it would change the state funding from being allocated based on the entire county population to only the city population. That would be the only thing that I think we would have to look at as a state board.

Mr. Snider – As I understand it that that is the only library in Limestone County.

Mr. Wahl – I believe that's correct.

Mr. Snider – So, it's my understand that if they are the only library in Limestone county, they would get all the state aid. According to my understanding, the only way that would change if the county wanted to establish a separate library, then that part of state aid would be split between them based on population. Isn't that correct Dr. Pack.

Dr. Pack – Yes, as I understand it.

Mr. Snider – We are leaving that again up to them. Right now, with that being the only library in the county, they would be the one who receives state aid. We are leaving that up to them to work out their own issues.

Mrs. Stokes – If they don't want to ask for an AG Opinion, the only other recourse is to keep funding from the county.

Mr. Wahl – Correct. The county made that call without the AG Opinion. That's their decision. If they don't want to take our advice at any given time make that decision by themselves.

Mrs. Stokes – Yes. Let's see what happens.

Mr. Wahl – Well, I am still hopeful they can work it out. I know I'm an optimist, but it doesn't seem that had. Maybe I need to get the mayor and the county commissioner chairman together and say guys we can do it.

Mr. Snider – You think they could.

Bill of Rights for Public Librarians Use

The Board asked members to send suggestions or changes to the Bill of Rights to Dr. Pack. Dr. Pack - We received two responses after the May Board meeting with comments to be incorporated into a new Bill of Rights. The comments I received were not appropriate for a Bill of Rights. I wasn't sure of how to incorporate it. The Alabama Library Association (ALLA) developed the Alabama Bill of Rights with the input of public libraries, directors, academic libraries and school librarians. Many of the public libraries have adopted the ALLA Bill of Rights. I feel that public libraries that wish to adopt a Bill of Rights has adopted one by now.

Mr. Snider – It is my view that we leave this to the individual libraries to make a decision and we not weigh in.

Bill of Rights for Public Libraires Use (continued)

Mrs. Stokes – This is very comprehensive and it covers pretty much everything.

Mr. Snider – They can make any changes they wish.

Mrs. Minton - I know Tara Hetzel last time suggested that it should include disabilities, and I don't see disabilities in here.

Dr. Pack – It is covered under “no individual should be denied access to or restricted from using a library based on their origin, age, background, or viewpoints.” In a lot of respects, that does cover disabilities.

Mrs. Stokes – Unless somebody brings an issue about it.

Dr. Pack – Yes. Mental and physical disabilities.

Mr. Snider – My view is, this is not our document anyway.

Mr. Wahl – Right. I will make a motion because the Board has a heavy agenda today. I make a motion to table this and we can decide if we want to do something different in a future meeting. Mrs. Minton seconded the motion. Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

New Business**LSTA 2024-2025 Competitive Grants**

Dr. Pack – I want to describe the process that we usually use to approve LSTA Competitive Grants. These funds have to be sent in by June 30, 2025. The LSTA Advisory Council scores all of the submitted grants. The Board approves the competitive grants that Kelyn and I recommend. Usually, these are approved at the July Board Meeting. By August 1, we have received all of the documentation signed for them to begin the grant process. The documents require the library directors and board chairs' signature and must be notarized. Once the documents have been received at APLS, the APLS director's signature is required before they can start.

Kelyn Ralya – May I add one thing. The contracts are signed by the library directors first. Then they are sent to APLS. Keep in mind, the grants are not effective until October 1, the new fiscal year and Dr Pack cannot sign before that date. They know even though they do a contract in August, I warn them every time do not purchase anything because I cannot pay you back.

Dr. Pack – Normally, when we notify them that it's coming, in August they can start planning their grants, contacting vendors, and getting things set up. That usually gives them about eight (8) months to get everything in line, spend, and report back to us. These libraries have to meet state aid requirements that's in our Administrative Code if they are to receive competitive grants. Also, there is a cut off for the scores. The highest score is 150, depending on how grants are scored and a cut off in score is determined. We usually give out roughly \$1,000,000.00, and it has been less than that.

Mr. Snider – In the issue we have right now with the changes to the Administrative Code that were approved, we only have seventy (70) plus libraries that have adopted new policies. We only have around 30 percent of libraries that would be eligible for grants. One of the things Dr. Pack has talked to me about is that given the time period, and how long it's going to take for some libraires to adopt the policies, would we not be better off for the upcoming fiscal year to use that money for grants that help all of the libraries. Delay making individual library grants the following year, when we know everyone would have had sufficient time to adopt their policies. Right now, we wouldn't want to allocate all of the money when only seventy-five (75) libraries have applied.

Dr. Pack – There are seventy-five (75) public libraries who have submitted their policies. Out of that seventy-five (75), there are only twenty-nine (29) who have applied for LSTA grants. Some of the scores on these grants are very low. The LSTA Committee did not feel that they were of merit when some of the others who have not turned in their policies, had projects that were chosen.

New Business**LSTA 2024-2025 Competitive Grants (continued)**

Mr. Wahl – The grants are due October 1, or do libraries have more time? What is the deadline to receive the grants? Is there a deadline when they have to be approved by or submitted?

Dr. Pack – The federal deadline for reporting and having all money spent is June 30, 2025. We usually award at the July Board meeting. They usually begin knowing that after Ms. Ralya sends a letter out in August, and they start negotiating. On October 1 is when the grant actually starts. They have from August when we notify them until June to complete spending the grant. If we were to approve the grants in November, they must get the paperwork back in to APLS. I don't know if they will complete the grant process by then, get all their purchases done, spent, and reported back. Isn't that correct Kelyn?

Ms. Ralya – Yes. The June date is an in-house date because the state starts shutting down for the new fiscal year. My report to IMLS is due every year in December. That's something that I have to report to them before everything starts shutting down. We have to get all of the information in and processed so I can have that information for them.

Mr. Wahl – So you have to have that by December.

Ms. Ralya. Yes. So that's where June comes in. We're trying to get them paid before the state starts shutting down.

Mr. Snider – I think based on all of that, when I heard what the issue was, it seems to me that we would be better off for this fiscal year to use the money for programs that benefit all libraries as opposed to having limited periods of time. According to Dr. Pack, we only have twenty-nine (29) libraries who qualifies. It sounds like a number of those would not be libraries that would have received grants in the past because of the scores they received. Given those issues, it seems like it was better to go ahead and make the decision and advise the libraries that we can do other programs for the coming year. That's proper legally, and that's permissible.

Ms. Ralya – With LSTA.

Mr. Snider – Yes.

Dr. Pack – If APLS is pushing out a project, we can possibly use \$150,000.00 and re-initiate our hotspot program. We can make that a project for everyone and determine how many wants to participate. They would not be required to have a state aid match, which is 25 percent of the budget project. We are not using ALA meetings for trainings, and this would give us the opportunity to have some training programs. Our state librarians are lacking in knowing about artificial intelligence (AI) and its impact on libraries. Qualified speakers can present and hold regional workshops. This provides an opportunity for regions to work together in which I feel would be a great thing because you have large and small libraries.

Mr. Wahl – Is there anything that will affect small libraries, for local directors. Will there be any push back to hurt them? Will this hurt anything they are working on?

Dr. Pack – There is going to be push back because we are changing the way we have done things for over a decade. Libraries never budget for technology, they want an LSTA grant to pay for technology. Some of the smaller libraries don't have the funds for collection development, so we see a lot of collection development grants. Kelyn, how many would you say have unique programs that are not technology tied in?

Ms. Ralya – It's definitely a minority because the libraries actually need the technology grants and the collections. Every now and then we will get some; in fact, we had some this year. There is a library who wants to set up a story walk area, that's getting very big around their area, to help their community. They are trying to do something recreational outside. I enjoy reading those applications because they have some very good stuff.

Dr. Pack – grants for professional training have been awarded. I'm not sure if new board members know this, but APLS provides an opportunity for paraprofessionals to apply for a professional training grant. They receive dollars to attend library school programs. The amount

New Business

LSTA 2024-2025 Competitive Grants (continued)

pays for approximately one course each semester. When they complete their library degree and continue to work in an Alabama public library for two out of three years. If they fail to work in an Alabama public library, they have to pay back all the money given them. Grants were given to staff at Albert L. Scott and Thomas B. Norton Public Libraries. We are trying to recruit professionals who will become directors.

Mr. Wahl – Kelyn, since you're working with the local libraries, I would love to hear your inside on this: Do you think that local libraries would rather like to have a limited amount of time to try to get it done if it's only five (5) months, or would they rather have something statewide that would hopefully help everyone. What do you think, which would you think would be greater consequences? Is there anybody who is really left out in making that change.

Ms. Ralya – That's a loaded question. That depends on what their grant is that they might be able to complete. I do understand the need to try to possibly do a statewide thing. Right now, it's so complicated this year with all this.

Dr. Pack – John, we can't give it to the libraries unless they meet the state aid requirements. If those libraries are holding out, and don't get their state aid requirements in until December, and applied for a grant, this gives them even less time to complete the process.

Mr. Wahl – I know. I just hate to punish those who do have everything ready.

Dr. Pack – It's not punishing really. APLS has chosen to give competitive grants. Other states don't even give them. This year, if they don't have their state aid policies complete, they will not be eligible for an LSTA grant.

Mr. Wahl – Let me ask you this, with the statewide program, can part of that grant be for technology for smaller libraries for those who are struggling so they can still be helped state wide for the people who hurt the most.

Ms. Martin – Yes. I want to add something like that. How are we going to come up with these statewide plans, strategies, and programs that will make a greater impact on libraries that need the most. I think that's what going to be the deal. Is there something that we need a committee to do; or, is that something that you guys work to do. I would like to see some programs that we have data on so we can see that it's going to affect in a positive way, those communities that need it most. Because I think that we can work strategically to identify programs that will get the greatest impact in those communities.

Dr. Pack – We've already worked on some of this as a group. Consultants are very familiar with their libraries. In reality, small libraries never apply for LSTA grants. The one-person librarian rarely has time to apply for a grant. So, if you're talking about benefitting everyone in the state, this is truly the one time that every library in Alabama will be able to get a small grant. If you recall, Mr. Peters would always say, the small libraries never get the money, it's always the bigger libraries who have staff that can write grants.

Mr. Wahl – So we can actually write statewide grants to help smaller libraries?

Dr. Pack – We can do anything. APLS can award regional grants, and use the LSTA Committee to have an emergency meeting to recommend topics for statewide programs. The LSTA Committee is only advisory. It is their responsibility to recommend and to review grants.

Mr. Wahl – Sounds like that will actually give us more flexibility if we do it statewide. We need to be flexible in thinking about libraries who will be hurt the most by not having them, and help them out.

Mr. Snider – That was what I was convinced of. I do think one of the things that we can do is re-start the hotspot for at least the next year and let's see what does happen with broadband expansion. Most of those programs always take a lot longer than we anticipate.

New Business**LSTA 2024-2025 Competitive Grants (continued)**

Mr. Wahl – Agreed. Especially if the federal government is working on it.

Mr. Snider – With that, do we have a motion then to

Mrs. Stokes – I have a question. So, you're saying that you don't fulfill any of the grants that have come in so far; instead, provide statewide grant programs to benefit everybody.

Dr. Pack – Several statewide programs.

Mrs. Stokes – Ok. I just want to make sure. The people put in so much effort to write the grants and now we say, sorry. This year is different.

Mr. Wahl – Yes. That was my concern too. I don't want it to negatively impact those that received high ratings, but it seems like we can work it out.

Ms. Martin – It seems like what we can do, if folks that have already completed applications, that can be our guide to say well, this is what folks are actually interested in when we make our statewide program.

Mr. Snider – Can we have a motion for this coming fiscal year, instead of making individual LSTA grants, that we would use the LSTA funds for programs that will benefit the entire state.

Ms. Martin made the motion. Mrs. Stokes seconded the motion. Vote taken, all in favor.

Motion passed by unanimous decision. At the next Board Meeting, Dr. Pack and staff will make recommendations to what those programs would be.

LSTA Advisory Council Members Terms Expire Without Reappointment: Member Request Reappointment; and Persons Requesting Appointment to the Council

Dr. Pack – We have several persons who have served out their terms. I would like to request re-appointment of Nelda Hudgins, Director of Pickens County Cooperative Library for three- year term of service, and request new applicants be appointed to the LSTA Advisory Council.

Mr. Snider – So the first ones are the ones whose terms are expiring. Is the way that works, they cannot be re-appointed or did they decide not to because it says expires without re-appointment.

Ms. Ralya – There are three-year terms on the LSTA Advisory Council. Members can serve two consecutive terms. After that, they have to rotate off for at least three years. We had some folks who came back, they have chosen to do that, which is great because they are already familiar with how it works. You will notice there are six (6) people who have rotated off. Of the six that are listed, Abby Carpenter finished her first term and didn't want to be re-appointed so we need to replace her. Cindy Hewitt retired so her replacement is from her library. There are seven to be appointed. In addition to the original council members, there were three who left the library vacant so I was trying to get those filled. I ended up with nine vacancies and was able to find seven applicants. I asked persons rotating off the council to suggest a replacement because I am trying to fill vacancies with all the districts.

Dr. Pack –A call is put out to anyone who wants to be considered for any committee to send an application and resume.

Mr. Snider – These are all for three-year terms.

Ms. Ralya – Yes. The LSTA Advisory Council consists of sixteen (16) persons: There are fourteen public libraries represented by directors and staff. There are two standing committees, one at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, the other AIDB.

Mrs. Minton – How long have you been doing the grants for APLS?

Ms. Ralya – I have been doing grants probably around eighteen (18) years.

Mrs. Minton – Eighteen years, that's a long time.

New Business**LSTA 2024-2025 Competitive Grants (continued)**

Mr. Snider called for a motion to approve appointments and re-appointments to the LSTA Advisory Council. Mrs. Stokes made the motion. Ms. Martin seconded the motion. Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Waiver of the State Aid Rules – Thomasville Public Library - Funding

Dr. Pack – I have been here for ten (10) years and this is the first time a public library has more money than they wanted in FY23-24. I recommend that the Board approve the waiver for Thomasville Public Library. Thomasville has a beautiful new library/museum.

Mr. Snider asked for a motion to approve the waiver for Thomasville Public Library. Mrs. Stokes made the motion. Ms. Martin seconded the motion. Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Status of Filling Essential Positions at APLS**Administration Division****Human Resources Officer – Personnel Assistant III**

Dr. Pack - We have been working to hire a person for the HR position who left in April. It's taken us this long to start the interview process for the Personnel Assistant III. The interviews were conducted two weeks ago, there were six applicants scheduled to come, out of the six, two came in for interviews. People get on registers and when they are called for an interview, they tell their supervisors, and they receive a raise from their agency. The applicants were interviewed by Kelyn Ralya, Ryan Godfrey, and Nancy Pack. There were two very good candidates, one had head and shoulders experience over the other one. The other one would need more training, but she would have been a good second candidate. The position was offered, and it was accepted. The candidate will start October 1, 2024. The candidate works with FEMA, she has worked with EEO complaints, travel, FMLA, and e-Start. A motion was made to ratify that decision. Mr. Wahl made the motion. Ms. Martin seconded the motion. Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Administrative Support Assistant II

A register was pulled from State Personnel for the ASA II position. This process did not yield a large pool of applicants. One candidate was offered the position, but declined. We will continue with the search as new names are added to the register.

Blind & Physically Disabled (BPD) Division

Library Technician – position still open.

Warehouse Worker

We are still looking for a warehouse worker. We have not been successful in finding one.

Resignation – Jessica Everingham, Assistant Director

Jessica Everingham, APLS Assistant Director, submitted her resignation and left APLS effective August 23, 2024.

Dr. Pack asked the Board if they want to advertise for an Assistant Director or a Library Operations Manager with the resignation of Ms. Everingham. I prefer an Assistant Director, but it's up to the Board. Mr. Wahl made the motion to search for an Assistant Director. Ms. Martin seconded the motion.

Mr. Snider – Nancy, Do we need the Library Operations Manager? Do you need that position also, or just the Assistant Director?

Dr. Pack – With our budget cuts, I propose to the Board that you let me appoint an interim Assistant Director that works with the consultants while a search is conducted. State Personnel will have to open up the register, develop the test, and list the position. It may be six months before we get someone. Hiring another consultant would be helpful because there are six consultants and seven districts. With a new consultant, the salary will be lower. Some staff members have indicated interest in becoming the Assistant Director. This position will be open-competition and nationally advertised.

Resignation – Jessica Everingham, Assistant Director (continued)

Mr. Snider – The point is all we need to do is search for an Assistant Director.

Dr. Pack – Also, If I can have the Board’s permission to hire a consultant and report back to the Board.

Mr. Snider asked Mr. Wahl to amend his motion. Mr. Wahl amended the motion. Ms. Martin seconded the amended motion.

Mrs. Minton – Can I ask a question? Do you already have one assistant director? Isn’t she one already? So, you need two.

Dr. Pack – Yes. Kelyn Ralya is dealing with federal programs she is over the Library for the Blind & Physically Disabled and she is over the federal grants program. There are a lot of changes coming out of Washington, DC that she needs to work with. When I came to APLS, we decided to hire a public service assistant director who was over Reference and the Consultants so I would have time to do the things I needed to work on. Ms. Everingham was directly over public service pushing out initiatives.

Mrs. Stokes – Federal government grants are extremely complex. It’s getting more so.

Mr. Snider – We have a motion that was amended and seconded as amended. No other discussion. Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Affirmation of Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA)

The Alabama Supercomputer Authority (ASA) had a federal department to audit E-rate documents. ASA asked libraries to reaffirm or find in their appropriate documentation needed for the CIPA Act. We had a hearing on this and APLS has been following this procedure. I thought it was a good time to reaffirm so we can receive our E-rate discount.

Mr. Snider – That’s significant.

Mrs. Stokes – Has anything changed since the last time?

Dr. Pack – No. They want to have updated letters. Mr. Wahl made the motion to reaffirm CIPA. Ms. Martin seconded the motion. Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Midfield Public Library Requesting Re-establishment as a Public Library

This library closed because the city and county were not able to fund it. It closed during COVID and I have some issues of the request to reinstate the library. Signatures are not from the city council. Midfield Public Library was asked to start paper for re-establishment purposes. A Resolution was not received from the city or the county to affirm that they are willing to pay and support a library in their community. I understand from some of our consultants who have worked with this librarian, that there are some questions whether Midfield is going to be able to support a library. A director was hired to shadow other librarians to see how libraries work.

Mrs. Stokes – She has to get all of her ducks in a row. You have to have funding and a board of directors.

Mr. Snider – I think we should try to encourage libraries. Should we consider approving this subject to the letters of support you receive from the city and who else will they get funding from?

Dr. Pack – They were a part of Jefferson County Library Cooperative (JCLC) so they received E-rate and other benefits because they contributed.

Mr. Snider – So, if we were going to approve it subject to their providing evidence of support from the board and from the city of Midfield.

Midfield Public Library Requesting Re-establishment as a Public Library (continued)

Dr. Pack – Yes. A Resolution establishing the library from the city governing agency that they will fund the library. Mr. Wahl made the motion, Ms. Windsor seconded the motion. Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Resolution 2024-18 - City of Clay Withdrawing from the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)

Dr. Pack was invited by the board chair of Clay Public Library to attend the city council meeting. Basically, the board was not able to operate as a board. Decisions were being made by the city manager. They asked the Mayor for a budget and he refused their request. During my presentation, it was emphasized that the Board needs to function as a Board, making motions and developing policies; or, they need to withdraw from APLS because the Board is not operational. The city manager mentioned in the meeting that he was going to hire some library staff. I mentioned this was the responsibility of the Library Board. The board chairman started asking more questions and the Mayor was aggravated. It was explained that if they withdraw from APLS, they will lose E-rate. If a public library does not belong to a state library or the Department of Education, according to the Telecommunications Act, they will not receive a discount on E-rate. The Mayor was under the impression that they could get what they needed from JCLC because they were a part of the cooperative and they didn't need APLS.

Mr. Wahl – I commend you for going up there and speaking to them. I realize that was an issue and I appreciate you going up there.

Mrs. Minton – Will they be able to reapply next year, does that not work?

Dr. Pack – Unless they get a new Mayor or a new city manager.

Mr. Wahl – They don't want a library board is the issue.

Dr. Pack – They want to be an independent library and Rep Garrett gave them \$10,000.00 out of the special monies that representatives can appropriate.

APLS Financial Update – Jennifer Holman

I don't have much to say. I am going to speak about the budget for August 31, 2024. The top portion is state funds, this also includes AVL funds. Our funds are 97% obligated as of August 31. The middle section is federal and local funds. We are pretty much shut down for year end.

Mr. Snider – We are in a good position.

Legislation – Senate Bill 6 Library Boards Appointed by the Appointing Authority may be Removed by the Appointing Authority - House Bill 4 – Criminal Obscenity Laws

This is to inform legislation of pre-filed bills and the impact they will have on public libraries.

Mr. Wahl – Who is the sponsor for House Bill 4? Representative Mooney.

Mr. Snider – I think it would be regrettable if such legislation passed. To chill for libraries in the state I am not sure we take an official position on legislation.

Dr. Pack - We may want to later when they come into session.

Mrs. Minton – I think it's fifty (50) co-sponsors on that right now, so that's an important factor.

Mr. Wahl – We have 105 in the House and 35 in the Senate. With fifty (50) co-sponsors on this if the caucus decides to go for it, it will be no stopping this.

This Board has done a lot of work to address these types of concerns and I feel like we have done that and I would hope that would be recognized in the House and the Senate.

Director's Report on Activities

It should be noted that fifteen (15) APLS staff attended a two-day policy writing course taught by Dr. John Bell, AUM Continuing Education Services. The staff was excited about going and l

Director's Report on Activities (continued)

earning more about policies. It was a great refresher course for Kelyn and I who have written policies forever. It was beneficial for the staff to attend.

Ryan Godfrey – I thought it was an excellent training, it was great.

Dr. Pack – Our consultants are in a better position to help assist libraries in a lot of different ways. APLS partnered with the AUM Humanities Group and we have five (5) libraires that are sponsoring book talks by Terah Harris Shelton a former librarian.

Mr. Snider – What has she written about?

Dr. Pack – She's written fiction about a family whose father dies without a will and the property goes to the heirs.

Mr. Snider – So, it's a novel.

APLS has one other construction project to complete the final renovation of a ten-year project--the Alabama Authors' Room outside of Reference. We are hoping that the bids will come under what we put in our budget for maintenance. The project will consist of replacement of lights, new carpet, new painting, and re-setting the shelving.

Mr. Snider – For someone who has been coming here for twenty-five (25) years, it never been in this good condition. Especially the atrium area, with the bottle tree and the plants, it's very attractive. You've done a very good job with all of that.

APLS Staff Activities

Rhonda Napier, Amanda Trawick, Tim Emmons and Nancy Pack attended the 2024 State Conference and Exhibitor Convention on August 16-17, 2024 in Birmingham, Alabama.

Barbara Curry attended the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) Annual Meeting in Denver, CO on August 27-30, 2024

Rhonda Napier attended the 2024 National Conference of Librarians Serving Blind and Print Disabled on September 9-13, 2024 in Washington, DC.

Administrators' Meeting – July 25, 2024

The July Administrators' Meeting was held on July 25, 2024 at APLS. The Administrative Memorandum was provided for the Board's review. Also, statistics were provided for the meeting

139 public libraries were represented

137 directors attended

17 other librarians attended

TOTAL: 154 persons attended the July meeting

New Directors' Orientation – August 6-7, 2024

The New Directors' Orientation was held on August 6-7, 2024 at APLS. Stephanie Taylor was the Coordinator. Also, statistics are as follows:

August 6, 2024

17 public libraries were represented

17 – directors attended

1 other librarian attended

TOTAL: 18 persons attended

August 7, 2024

22 public libraries were represented

22 directors attended

1 other librarian

TOTAL: 23 persons attended

It was a very good orientation. The best part of that orientation was bringing in seasoned directors who could answer questions.

Mrs. Minton – I am on the Etowah County Library Board and I have the opportunity to ride out and deliver checks from the county and I want to commend them because they work so hard to comply with these policies. I commend them for their hard work.

APLS Calendar of Meetings – FY2025

A calendar of meetings for the Executive Board, AVL, BPH Council and LSTA Advisory Council was provided to the Board. Also included are dates for Summer Reading and Administrators' Meetings for FY2025.

Ms. Martin – The only thing I have on the calendar, it's been a trend since I been on the Board is the July meeting being cancelled. Do we want to think about that meeting because it comes during a time, when some are going to the beach or it's summer time. I looked at my e-mails for the past few years and we cancel that meeting.

Mr. Snider – My own thoughts are to leave the schedule the way it was. This past July we cancelled because the majority could not attend. I think in past years, I don't think we cancelled the July meetings. I think we've had some members not present, but we've always, at least with my memory, we've had a majority so we've always been able to hold the meetings. This is for information purposes. There is no action needed on this.

Mr. Wahl – We can reschedule the meeting if we can't have a majority.

Service Certificates and Pins

Service Certificates and pins were provided to the following staff at the conclusion of the Board Meeting: Nancy C. Pack and Michael Davis.

Director's Annual Performance Evaluation

Mr. Snider asked Jennifer Holman since we don't have a Human Resources director to follow the procedures with respect to Dr. Pack's evaluation. Ms. Holman sent the evaluation form to all board members, but didn't receive a response from Mr. Wahl.

Mr. Wahl – That is correct.

Mr. Snider – Ms. Holman compiled the ratings from 0 to 3. The average of the board members who responded was 1.78. I recommend and move that we approve a one-step increase for Dr. Pack. We've historically approved a one or two step increase and I would move that one step be approved. Mrs. Hughes seconded the motion. Is there any discussion.

Mrs. Minton – I don't know if we should do that. With the APLS budget getting cut wouldn't that come out of that budget?

Mr. Snider – Well, it does but it's several thousand dollars. Jennifer how much is it?

Jennifer Holman - It's approximately \$4,000.00.

Mr. Snider - I think she deserves that and I think it's appropriate.

Mr. Wahl – I am trying to figure it out for the rest of the staff. What is the normal, is it an automatic cost-of-living increase for the staff as a whole?

Mr. Snider – Of course, as I understand it, when the state approves a COLA, staff are still eligible for step raises if their performance is good.

Ms. Holman – We have a two percent COLA that will be on our October 1, 2024 pay check. All state employees will receive the COLA.

Mr. Wahl – In addition to this?

Ms. Holman – Right.

Director's Annual Performance Evaluation (continued)

Mr. Snider – That's a state increase, and employees other than Dr. Pack, are reviewed by Dr. Pack and the Human Resources Director.

Mr. Wahl – So, Dr. Pack will receive that two percent increase as well?

Ms. Holman – Yes.

Dr. Pack – All staff, if they get a good rating, receives a two-step increase. We have to follow the schedule that State Personnel puts out. Even if we wanted to give someone an increase, APLS would have to follow procedures and go through the State Personnel Board to do that. The APLS budget has been figured with a two-step increase for all staff, for next year, assuming they meet the requirements.

Mr. Wahl – I am a little bit more hard-nosed than some people. I've always had the opinion that if you have to cut, and especially if there's a two percent cost-of-living already that's going to be taking place, I am not sure I can support an increase with the budget cuts.

Mrs. Minton – I can't either, not with the libraries being cut, not 9 percent. I can't.

Mr. Wahl – I do believe the cost-of-living increase is due and I'm glad that's happening, the 2% is happening.

Mr. Snider – We have a motion on the table, and I understand that y'all can't support that for a one-step increase. I guess we should vote on that motion since we moved and seconded it.

Mr. Wahl – For discussion, I would like to say I hope you know, it's not personal at all.

Mrs. Minton – I want to say if any business loses 9 percent, I can't vote to give you a raise.

Mr. Snider – We were going to be cut 18%, but if it hadn't been for Dr. Pack talking to the Legislature, it was cut 9%.

Mr. Wahl – I would say that I too also worked very, very hard lobbying in both the House and the Senate. I thank you for your work; I also deal with a lot of people who worked hard on trying to limit the cuts.

Mr. Snider – All in favor of the motion for a one-step increase for Dr. Pack. Members voting by saying "aye" are as follows: Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Stokes, and Mr. Snider, so we have three. Members voting by saying "nay" are as follows: Mr. Wahl, Mrs. Minton, Mrs. Windsor and Ms. Martin. The motion failed by majority vote.

Election of Officers for FY2025

Mr. Snider – Under the By-Laws, I cannot serve again as Chair. I would recommend Angelia Stokes as Chair for the coming year, given her experience and Jerria Martin as Vice Chair. That is the motion I make. Mrs. Hughes seconded the motion.

Mrs. Minton – I would like to make a motion.

Mr. Snider – Well, she seconded it so we will now have discussion. What do you want to do?

Mrs. Minton – I want to make a motion from the floor for someone else.

Mr. Snider – I think you're wanting to amend this motion?

Mrs. Minton – Yes.

Mr. Snider – What is your amendment?

Mr. Wahl – I have not looked at the By-Laws, will it be a motion to amend or would it be an election process.

Election of Officers for FY2025 (continued)

Mr. Snider – I think we have a motion. I am not sure on that one, but I think we have a motion. I think under the Roberts' Rule the Board would then have a motion to amend the motion. What would you recommend, what is your motion to amend?

Mrs. Minton – I would like to recommend John Wahl as Chair and Jerria Martin as Vice-Chair. Again, based on the cuts, the \$350,000.00, I think John has the relationship with the legislature.

Mr. Snider – It didn't work this time.

Mrs. Minton – Yes, I know, but they are sending us a clear signal with House Bill 4 being pre-filed with fifty (50) signing on it that they will handle it themselves, if we don't handle it. I think John has the best relationship with them to prevent further cuts because I see further cuts coming.

Mr. Snider - What do you mean if we don't handle it?

Mrs. Minton – If we don't get these policies not only put in place but enforced in the libraries. So, I would like to recommend John as the Chair and Jerria as the Vice Chair.

Mr. Snider – We have a motion to amend. I guess we would have a vote on the motion to amend. All in favor of the motion to amend. You're voting yes, Mrs. Minton.

Mrs. Minton – Yes.

Mr. Wahl – Let me think about it. I really do have a heart for libraries. I am concerned with some legislation that is coming. I have always been an advocate to help libraries be more successful and get funding to help make that happen. I would accept, I say yes.

Members voting by saying "aye are as follows: Mrs. Minton, Mr. Wahl, and Mrs. Windsor.

Mrs. Stokes – The only thing that I would say is that John, I think you are more qualified to lead than I am, but I do have the most experience on the Board with policies. I think we have to give the new policies a chance for everybody to understand and implement what we are attempting at this point. How would it look bi-partisanly that since you are the Republican Chair for the state for you to be also the Chair of the Library Board?

Mr. Wahl – Well, the great thing there is I would actually have the same voting power, that wouldn't actually change the make-up of the Board or the voting... I don't think there would be any, I would defer if there was. I don't think there is any conflict; it would be the same conflict with me serving, I would have no more power or votes. I also think I can help this Board be more successful, it is not a negative, it's a positive.

Mr. Snider – Are you voting No on the amendment, based on what you said?

Mrs. Stokes – Yes. I am voting No.

Mr. Snider – I am voting No on the amendment

Mrs. Hughes votes No.

Ms. Martin – We need a common ground, and we need a middle ground. What if we made another amendment. Since you guys are saying you want more experience. Let John Chair and one of you guys with the experience be Vice Chair.

Mr. Snider – We have to finish with this amendment. So, are you voting yea or nay?

Ms. Martin – Then if it has to be as it is, I would have to accept the co-chair and John the Chair.

Mr. Snider – So you vote for the amendment?

Ms. Martin – Yes sir.

Election of Officers for FY2025 (continued)

Mr. Snider – Alright.

Mr. Wahl – Now the floor would be open if you want to make the amendment. Which I have to say that I don't know if you need too, but I am going to compliment you on that heart. That's very commendable.

Ms. Martin – I'll move it from the floor. I guess we will go as it is.

Mr. Snider – Just to be clear, the motion to amend was adopted for John as Chair and Jerria as Vice Chair. I think, therefore, they are elected. Alright. That concludes the Meeting.

Mr. Wahl – May I have a moment of personal privilege here. I want to thank everyone for their service, and I really look forward to working with everyone. I would look forward to serving as Chair on the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Snider made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wahl seconded the motion. Vote taken, all in favor. Motion passed by unanimous decision. Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Next meeting is November 21, 2024


Ron Snider, Chairman

Nancy C. Pack, Ph.D., Director


Vanessa E. Carr, Recording Secretary