

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
ALABAMA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE
NOVEMBER 21, 2024**

The Executive Board of the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) met on November 21, 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, John Wahl called the Executive Board Regular Meeting to order at 10:05 a.m., and roll was taken. The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

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

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Wahl moved to adopt the Agenda as written. Jerria Martin made the motion to adopt the Agenda. Angelia Stokes seconded the motion. Members voting in favor by saying “aye” are as follows: Amy Minton, Debra Windsor, Michelle Hughes, John Wahl, Angelia Stokes, and Jerria Martin. No “nays.”

Approval of the Minutes

The Minutes of the September 19, 2024 meeting were presented to the Board for approval. Mrs. Stokes made the motion to approve the Minutes as written. Ms. Martin seconded the motion. Members voting in favor by saying “aye” are as follows: Michelle Hughes, Amy Minton, Debra Windsor, John Wahl, Angelia Stokes, and Jerria Martin. No “nays.”

Participation

Mr. Wahl – We have several people who want to address the Board today. Some folks were not approved or did not get their requests in until the last minute to address the Board. If they are here, I will allow them to speak. I very strongly believe in hearing a grievance or anyone having concerns. There will be a three-minute time limit per speaker. If they submitted the request, whether they had time to be approved or not, we are going to let them speak today.

Amber Frey – Read Freely Alabama

Public institutions serve all American citizens, regarding of religious, political, sex or socio-economic status. In September, the Board changed how Alabama libraries received their federal funding. Parents are trusting the libraries, and I am asking the Board to trust them too. Today, I ask that you listen to the library board directors who are speaking and do what we ask you to do.

Trust them and reverse your decision on LSTA grants and provide libraries their much needed funds.

Craig Scott – Director, Gadsden-Etowah County Public Library and President of the Alabama Library Association

I am here today not just to represent the Gadsden Public Library but to represent over one hundred libraries that depend on LSTA funding to provide services in their communities. Your decision to not approve LSTA grants at the September meeting has created much strain and hardship. Library directors around the state realize that some of you are new in your positions and may not realize how important LSTA funding is, and how those funds have been successfully used. In FY2025, \$1.5 Million Dollars was authorized by IMLS Services for APLS to use and distribute. APLS announced the competitive LSTA grant cycle last December with applications due by April 19 (application for Gadsden Public Library given to the Board). This took weeks to research and prepare. After the due date, all the applications went through a rigorous preview and examination last summer by the LSTA Advisory Council. This grant process is nothing new.

Many smaller libraries depend on LSTA funding to purchase books for their communities; they receive no other support for their collections. The Gadsden application asked for nearly \$20,000.00 including equipment and supplies. The application process required that we know exactly what to purchase, know what the costs were, and if approved, we will spend the funds allocated to us, and have the final report completed without difficulty by July.

Jessica Ross – Director, Washington County Public Library

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you how much the LSTA grant program has meant to my community and my library. I have been the Director of Washington County Public Library for over twenty (20) years and each year, we have been awarded an LSTA grant to support innovative valuable projects that meet unique needs of our area. The library serves as the anchor and community center for the county. The funds received from LSTA helped build a career readiness and small business development center which serves as the hub for workforce development, community college satellite campus for adult education, and the local veteran affairs office. Because of LSTA funds, an outdoor story walk was installed and recreation park to encourage family literacy and quality time spent together as a family at the library. This year, the grant will help access materials for senior citizens and patrons with hearing and vision impairments, and update the genealogy room.

I have served two terms on the LSTA Advisory Council and have seen first-hand how beneficial matching grants are to maximize local funds. When the decision was made to cancel LSTA funds this year, I want you to know that my staff and I are more than capable of successfully distributing LSTA grants, as all libraries across the state of Alabama. We are hopeful that you will today approve the LSTA grants as scored and recommended by the Council. It's not too late

to help our libraries provide vital access to materials and services that improve lives and better the communities that we call home. Thank you for your service on the APLS Board, and thank you for continuing to support Alabama's public libraries.

Lindsay Gardner – Director, Oneonta Public Library and President of the Public Library Directors Association of Alabama

Thank you, Mr. Wahl for giving us the opportunity to have open dialogue this morning. It was very productive, and I am extremely grateful and look forward to meeting with you one-on-one to discuss the issues that are important to us. Thank you all for serving on the Board; the decisions you make have a huge impact on libraries, and I appreciate your willingness to invest your time to make sure libraries have what they need to succeed. Based on what we heard from Mr. Wahl this morning, I am encouraged that we can work together to increase our communication between library directors and board members. As President of the PLDA, I am very happy to conduct surveys and put together focus groups. We are happy to provide the information that you might need to make informed decisions. I need you to be specific about what you need and the channels to give that information to you. Another thing I want to ask is:

- let there be transparency around these meetings;
- post a preliminary agenda;
- livestreaming the meetings so libraries across the state could understand what happens and why you make the decision that you make.
- Minutes to distribute to libraries.
- Lastly, help us spread the word about great things libraries do, not just in a general way

Let's work together on a specific strategy on what librarians do in their communities. You represent all the libraries in the State. I look forward to working with you and improving communication with libraries.

Melanie Kolowski

Wendy Pickering – Orange Beach, AL

We are at a time that you are either on the side with the kids or you are on the side of child predators. She read excerpts from a book that 13 years old are allowed to read in the library. If you think that is appropriate raise your hands, it is sick and disgusting. If the library directors and librarians think this is ok, then we have a serious problem. Who can do something about this? We've had enough, the parents have had enough, and I don't care if the library directors and the libraries had enough. I am a mother, a grandmother, and we will have the kids read from these type books at the steps of the Capitol if somebody doesn't do something. I am sorry about the pictures, but that's what they are allowing 13 year-old to look at.

Mr. Wahl – Thank you for your comments. I will quickly address that I think all public libraries and I know the Board agrees, that we want the children section free from sexual explicit materials that are inappropriate. That’s what the code changes passed are about and I know we are working right now with the local libraries to make sure they are in effect, and that children across the state are safeguarded so parents have confidence in our local libraries.

Melissa Gates – Mobile, AL

I have a four-year-old grandson and yes, I take him to the library. I did a reconsideration on this book, (book shown to Board) so it could be removed or placed at the higher shelf because it’s not age-appropriate for a four-year-old. I was told the book couldn’t be moved or placed on a higher shelf because the book had been in the library for fifteen (15) years and checked out numerous times. I am not saying the book needs be removed, just put it in an age-appropriate area. I went to the library meeting in Mobile and their solution is to have a regular library card and a restricted library card. (card given to the board for review). The books are not moved away from children’s view; this destroys their innocence. Would it help matters to have a regular and restricted library card; I don’t see where that would be a good solution. Although they are not checking the books out, they can still grab books off the shelf. My request was denied to move the book or place it on a higher shelf out of the way of a four-year-old.

Mr. Wahl – To comply with state code, they would have to move this book from the children section.

Rebecca Watson – Moms for Liberty, Fairhope, AL

(Documents given to the Board). I am here today because we have some inconsistencies in the Fairhope Library. These are all screen shots of the catalog, the book, *Parts and Hearts* in the age group of 3 to 12-year-old (book presented with photos given to Board). This is all about gender, transgender, hormones, how to take hormones and what it does to your body. That is in the juvenile non-fiction section. We did ask for reconsideration and was told by our library they were keeping it where it is because there is an exemption granted by the APLS Board for education and/or instructional purposes. We went to our Board, and the Board said they will not be looking at anything, they voted unanimously last December to uphold the decisions of the library regarding book reconsiderations. Therefore, the decision holds as far our policies for five years. This book has been in the library since 2016. Will this book be considered information, education, or biology, there are some serious things we need to look into. *Jacob’s New Dress*, young adult fiction. There are some libraires that are reshelving the books and there are some libraires that refuse to do it at all. We need clarification and consistencies in our libraries. In Baldwin County there are thirteen (13) libraires. I can’t get the by-laws; I can’t get where their funding comes from; and the budget is not available. There is no room for open dialogue when parents can’t say, can we talk about this, can we consider reshelving books.

Linda Poiroux-did not attend

Cheryl Corvo – Fairhope, AL

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today about the institution that holds a very vital place in our communities, and local libraries. Libraries are so much more than shelves of books, they are lots of opportunity, education and connection. Across Alabama, libraires offer programs that change lives; story time sessions that help children develop early literacy skills; job readiness workshops preparing adults for new opportunities; technology access and training; and bridge gap divide especially for seniors and low-income families. Libraires provide safe places for teens to learn, explore and create. These programs along with countless others help build stronger and more resilient communities. The reality for many of the rural and low-income areas is that underfunded libraires struggle to meet the essential needs. In these communities, libraries are often the only places people can access free internet, free educational resources, and attend programs that enrich their lives. When funds are insufficient, these services are reduced or disappear and with them goes the opportunities they provide. Federal dollars help ensure that no matter where someone lives, they can access transformative resources libraries offer. Supporting libraries is not just an investment in books, it is an investment into people, communities and the future of Alabama. I urge you to please continue to championing our libraries and abrocate for robust, stable, federal funding. Together we can ensure that Alabama libraries remain vibrant spaces for learning and an opportunity for all regardless of zip code or income level.

Chairman's Report

I have two things that I want to see change in place, two things in priority I want to put in place. One is more dialogue with our public library directors, I want more communication between the Board and the local libraries. The second thing I have a commitment to, and I feel very strongly about, I am a strong advocate for the first amendment, making sure everyone has the right to express their grievances. It may take some time, bear with me, and we will keep the time limit of three minutes per person; but, I will never refuse someone the opportunity to address this Board. If they want to address this Board, I want them to have that chance. I have directed the secretary that we will take the time to hear from people if they ask to speak.

I very much enjoyed the conversation with the local library board directors across the State. They brought up several things that they feel will be very helpful for us to implement, for us to do, or say. Some of those were very transparent, such as: public access to the agenda when available, putting the minutes on line, and video conferencing the board meeting. I like the concept of all of this. I am a big advocate of transparency, and I don't see any reason not to. I am going to be looking into that. I would like to talk to you individually and to Dr. Pack initially. I don't want to make a decision right now, but I want to hear from my fellow board members if you have any objections to that, or any concerns you have with that, or from legal. I want to see those issues addressed; that would be healthy for us as a Board. Public relationship and transparency is always a good thing.

Unfinished Business

LSTA Statewide Initiatives

STEM Kit Collection

Nancy Pack – You have heard in this meeting how important STEAM and STEM collections are that is one of our statewide initiatives priorities. Having a circulating collection at APLS will allow space savings for libraries and a larger choice of materials.

Having Notary Licensure

All public libraries need to have a notary available to notarize, free of charge, and help people with their papers. Many of our small libraries do not have a notary in their service areas.

Curated Alabamiana Collection

APLS state wide initiative is to curate a small Alabamiana collection to promote Alabama authors. We are the only agency at the state level that curates Alabama authors . Since the bicentennial, APLS provided approximately twenty (20) alabamiana books to public libraries collections. A curated list will be developed and the public libraries can choose from the list. The books will be placed in the OCLC database where they can be interlibrary loaned. Making books available to public libraries, school libraries, and academic libraries. The impact is by and large across the state.

Curation of Collection for Small Libraries

We focused on libraries with the population under 10,000. If you look at the statistics, this is the majority of the public libraries in Alabama. Many of these are opened sixteen (16) to twenty-nine (29) hours per week. When you are circulating materials, you don't have time to curate materials. The board was given a spread sheet showing ten (10) years of LSTA grants. If you look at that list you will see there are libraries that never received LSTA grants and most of them fall under the population of 10,000. APLS would curate titles for this particular group and the libraries would choose what materials fit their communities.

Mr. Wahl – Is there any other discussion on the LSTA grants?

Mrs. Minton – After listening to the library directors at the meeting this morning, over fifty (50) asking us to re-consider the LSTA grants, I would like to make a motion that we do that and consider awarding these LSTA grants as competitive grants to the public libraries. Mrs. Windsor seconded the motion.

Mr. Wahl - I am very torn on this. An organization changes position after making a decision at the last meeting. This is an interesting question; I see the pros and cons of both sides. If you have any questions, this is your time to ask them.

Mrs. Stokes – We have to have clients with the new policies. Of the persons who have requested LSTA grants, how many have actually complied. If one hundred (100) people raised their hands, has everyone complied, that's what we need to know?

Mr. Wahl – This is not the state funding that will be complying with, it's the administrative code. They would have to comply with that in order to receive it.

Dr. Pack - In the LSTA guidelines, it states “ a library must be eligible for state aid to receive an LSTA grant.” Those who have submitted grants seventy-five (75) which met the requirement which is 63%; and forty-four (44) have not submitted or met the state aid requirement for eligibility LSTA grants. 36.9% have not submitted or met the state aid.

Mr. Wahl – Good information. What is the deadline for receiving LSTA grants?

Dr. Pack –We have to report all of our spending to IMLS by June.

Mr. Wahl – The LSTA Advisory Council makes the recommendations.

Dr. Pack – They make the recommendations, and they advise. What the staff and I presented to the Board is based on the decision at the September meeting to fund state-wide initiatives. I have never known a corporate to change in the middle of the stream with such an important impact on libraries. APLS knows the state-wide needs of public libraries. The LSTA Committee does not have the in-depth knowledge that APLS has regarding all public libraries. Most of the grants are for collection development and for technology. Two years ago, APLS issued \$2.2 Million in ARPA money for technology. The LSTA Advisory Council Minutes contains comments about reading the same type of grants each year.

Mr. Wahl – Two things for me personally: I believe that you make a decision and you receive input, this is a classic reason why government is so inefficient; because they usually do just what they decide and they don't have the courage or the creativity to say, we're going to change and we're going to make sure this is initiated properly. So, I think for this Board, we all have the courage to say, let's do what's best, whatever it is, and not just be stuck with what's happened before. Let's look at what's best for our local libraries and be willing to make those innovative changes that might help things. Don't just do something because we've always done it; don't just do things because we've already voted on it; let's look for the best. As far as the consultants are concerned visiting local libraries, one thing I know is that I usually trust the people running the operations than the consultants. I was shocked by far more than those libraries that participated in the grant program. All librarians, there was not a single hand that didn't go up when the question was asked, do you want to continue where you are right now, or do you want to reverse this, it was unanimous. I've never seen anything like it. It's a national record; and it's very hard for me to go against that.

Dr. Pack –What's best for the state of Alabama? Having access to information across the entire state: the school systems, the college systems, or having an individual library community. The mission of APLS is to make sure libraries across the state of Alabama flourish. All the

suggested items on the list would help everybody across the state. The Governor appointed you to look out for the growth of all libraries as a whole, and visualize quality public libraries in all areas of the state, and not just for your districts.

Mr. Wahl – One of the things I always disliked in government is when leadership assume they know how to live people's lives for them better than they do. This seems like a classic example of that. We're saying we want to be fair to local libraries, shouldn't we listen to their input on how they want us to implement.

Dr. Pack – You're listening to one hundred (100) voices, there are two-hundred twenty (220) public libraries, you have not asked board directors what they want. You had one hundred library participants in the meeting, do you know how many were public library directors or how many more did not attend the meeting? One hundred didn't show up, fifty percent raised their hands and fifty percent did not show up.

Mr. Wahl – On the statistical average what are the chances of the fifty percent?

Mrs. Minton – People took a lot of time to write these competitive grants.

Dr. Pack – What if they don't get the grants because we can't fund them all? They can use this data to write grants for other organizations.. APLS sent grants to IMLS and we didn't receive them. Yes, it took a lot of time, every bit of that information can be used for other grant purchases.

Mrs. Minton - Couldn't every librarian have done this?

Mrs. Stokes – No. Some of the libraries are so small, they don't have people to take care of the library while they focus on grant writing.

Mrs. Minton – But they could have done it; if they're not qualified, they could have written a grant.

Dr. Pack – No ma'am. They can't meet their match of 25% of the grant due to funding.

Mr. Wahl – So where does the match requirement come from?

Dr. Pack –The 25% match comes from the local library budget.

Mr. Wahl – You do realize the libraries that submit grants use that requirement for the percentage to get more funding from local funding sources.

Mrs. Stokes – That's their opportunities; and a lot of places don't have any opportunity.

Mr. Wahl - This is what I'm hearing, the process has already started; they done the work, submitted their grants, already reached out to their local governments, received their commitment. To change on them now puts them in a hardship. I am not opposed to looking at ways to help the small libraries, but can we find a way to do that without compromising APLS program this year.

Dr. Pack – We can't because the state didn't provide our full funding request. APLS does not provide discretionary funds.

Mr. Wahl – Are there any other questions or thoughts?

Ms. Martin – This has me torn too. We as board members represent our districts. Collectively, we come together, but we represent the voices of our districts. After receiving e-mails from Mrs. Minton with the voices of directors from around the state, I took the liberty of talking to some of the librarians in my district. They said they were disappointed to hear about the LSTA grants. Today, I am voting in the best interest of my district. I respect the state and I hope that each of us can vote in the best interest of our districts so we can collectively support the state, but I definitely will vote on my district.

Mr. Wahl – All in favor of reversing policy and go back to the individual grants by raising of hands: Members voting in favor by saying “aye” are as follows: Mrs. Minton, Mrs. Windsor, Ms. Martin, and Mr. Wahl.

Mrs. Hughes – I have a conflict. I want to help the small libraries, and I understand about the other libraries, so I will abstain.

Member voting by saying “nay.” Mrs. Stokes. Vote taken, the majority in favor. Motion passed.

Ms. Martin – I think we should definitely consider now how we can help those smaller libraries.

Mr. Wahl - I concur and suggest the priority of the Board is to represent the people first and also the local libraries. I think this was the path we laid out originally, this is what we are operating under, and I think it's important for us not to change in midstream. I do think this was the right decision and I appreciate the Board's courage being willing to change that and to move forward in the best interest. Thank you for being courageous and being willing to look at a new direction. Let's be innovative and with that in mind, let's continue. I want to look immediately into what we can do next year in the Legislature to put some of these programs into place for libraries who may not have ever put in for grants; how can we help them. What are the best task for it; how much money will some of these things take to make sure every public library have the resources they need to be successful in their communities.

I want to thank all the speakers for being here; I also want the parents to know the Board is behind you. We do believe in making sure that the people of Alabama listen to you; that our children are kept safe from sexual materials; that's what our coaching and policies are all about. Local libraries will have to comply with those in order to receive state funding. If you have books out of place that are being reclassified properly, thank you for sharing that with us. We do ask that you give your local libraries time to comply with the state codes, once those are in full effect, they receive state funds, and the books are still in the wrong places, bring them to us and we will see what loop holes are. Sexual materials should be out of the children section, not on a higher shelf, but out of the children section to comply with state code.

Dr. Pack– I was in a meeting with the director of IMLS and they are operating on stop budgets and have changed the regulations for funds for next year. This is the opportunity to rewrite the Administrative Code for state aid. This will impact the schedule what Kelyn Ralya works with and she does a great job. Also, in the budget this year, we had a 10% cut in LSTA funding. It was projected that it will be a 20% cut to any programs, humanities, and LSTA. There may be cuts in LSTA and that is something we have to look at.

Mr. Wahl – Do we need to vote on the Administrative Code changes?

Dr. Pack –The Administrative Code has to be written, approved by the Board, submitted to Legislative Reference Service, have a hearing, and then vote. Can the language be done by January to present to the Board.

Mrs. Stokes – What kind of timeline will we have for changing this? Will it fit into the time line we have for grants to be done for last year?

Dr. Pack – The changes went into place at the October session.

Mr. Wahl – We should be able to have this done before the new grant season, I would think.

Mrs. Ralya – Just to give you guys some ideas of the changes. One of the changes they made is changing the equipment threshold from \$5,000.00 to \$10,000.00. Right now, IMLS considers an IMAC or a desk top computer as a disposable because it's less than \$5,000.00. Federal law requires prior approval to purchase an equipment item, via server, etc. Also, whistle blower protection is in place. One of their new requirements, IMLS has to change their requirements as we are changing ours. Our new changes must match their requirements. We are the grantee, we choose to do sub grants, but it is our responsibility to make sure our grantees are also in compliance. The Assurances will change a little bit, as stated earlier, I don't know how the whistleblower protection is going to change. One of the things that are going to be a requirement is, advise all employees in writing of the whistle blower protections. It's all cited in the Code, add a new certification that must be placed on applications, payment requests, and final reports.

Those are the three largest changes. The Admin Code changes effect October 1, 2024. It will impact the 2025 allotment that we receive from IMLS. We generally receive that near the beginning of the year. We are waiting to see what's going to happen. I am trying to get as much work up front as I can to be ready for the changeover. Also, since I am going to change the Admin Code anyway, our subgrants are divided into general, which is populations of 10,000 or more for small library development, which is less than that. Right now, the match is 25% across the board. What I would like to do is take the small library developmental grants and knock them down to \$10,000.00. That will possibly help or motivate some small libraries to apply for grants; we are here to help them. Small libraries can apply for general grants, if they do, the 25% is going to be in the general. I would love to have the opportunity to change that in the Code. It is a process, we do changes, put it up for review, we do the waiting period, it may not apply to grants until 2027. If we can get the process started. It is on line now, that's where we are. This is a recap.

Status of Filling Essential Positions at APLS

Administration Division

Personnel Assistant III – Pennie Broussard.

Dr. Pack - I would like to introduce Pennie Broussard, new Human Resources staff member. She has been with APLS since October 1, 2024.

ASA II – Vacant

The ASA II position is still vacant. Interviews were conducted and no candidates were acceptable.

Interim Assistant Director – Katie Bailey

Katie Bailey, APLS consultant, is being utilized as the interim assistant director for public services.

Assistant Director – Vacant

The Assistant Director classification has been announced. Interviews will be conducted and presented for board approval.

Blind and Physically Disabled (BPD) Division

Library Technician - The position is still vacant.

Warehouse Worker – Portia Wyatt

Portia Wyatt is the newest warehouse worker in the BPD Division. Ms. Wyatt came aboard on November 1, 2024.

Administrative Code Policies Statistical Report

Dr. Pack –In your packet was provided a statistical report outlining the areas of the Administrative Code for Supplemental State Aid requirements. In this report, areas are identified showing the number of libraries that had to resubmit in that area.

Mr. Wahl – I see you have a metrics with the compliance?

Dr. Pack – We have a metrics we developed; we look at each policy and use the language used in the Administrative Code. We are very strict with compliance of the language; Several staff read the policies and made comments. In most instances, the comments concur with each other.

Mr. Wahl – That metrics board – is that something you can share with the Board?

Mrs. Minton – I have a question: Where did educational and instructional come from because I know Fairhope has used that, and that is not in the Code.

Dr. Pack – It falls under the obscenity law.

Mrs. Minton – Where?

Dr. Pack – In the Code of Alabama - it exempts public libraries and educational institutions from obscenity materials if they are used in educational systems.

Mrs. Minton – I saw Fairhopes and they said APLS has given approval for books like she read *Parts and Hearts*, based on APLS saying if it was used for instructional or educational, and that's not in our policies.

Dr. Pack –APLS confirmed their guidelines met what the Board required.

Mr. Wahl – It reads, “Age appropriate materials regarding religion, history, biology, or human anatomy should not be construed to be against this rule.”

Mrs. Minton – That is, but not to use these books for educational or instructional. This should not be an educational or instructional book teaching about parts and parts.

Mr. Wahl – Their question is what constitutes a biological or human anatomy?

Mrs. Stokes – That's up to the individual boards of the libraries.

Mr. Wahl – It is, but if this Board feels like it contradicts our policy change, we still have the authority if they receive state funds or not.

Mrs. Minton – A book like that – Alabama right now has VCAP it's a law that says you cannot encourage vulnerable child and protections – right now that is illegal in the state of Alabama to encourage that. The book she read is encouraging something that is not legal right now. How are we going to be able to look at these policies ourselves to know which of these libraries – I know they're getting a notice that they are approved. Are they getting a notice that they are approved, is that the case, the libraries?

Mr. Wahl – I don't think the question is necessarily the administrative code change with libraries, are the local libraries changing not actually removing a book that needs to be removed from the children's section.

Mrs. Stokes – They are saying that – are they following through?

Mr. Wahl – Right. I am not questioning the code changes; I am saying are they following through – this is still early. I don't want to jump on this and say, oh we have a problem with the libraries because they need time to implement.

Mrs. Stokes – When someone comes up here and reports it?

Mrs. Minton – And it can't be re-fixed for five years, it is a problem.

Mr. Wahl – Right and that's what I'm saying, if they are not actually removing the materials that is a conflict even if they change their code with leaving the books there, that is in conflict with our policies. You can't change the code and leave the book; you have to obey the code; and if you don't, you won't be eligible for state funds, legally. Obviously, they need time to implement the new code, and they need time to remove the books. Once they do that, and the official codes have changed, and they are in compliance with the state code and those books are still on the shelves, parents should show us those books. If they are not in compliance and the books are in the wrong section, that would lose state funding for local libraries.

Mrs. Stokes – Who notifies them that they have been reported as in non-compliance.

Mr. Wahl – We would want the parents to take it to the local libraries first and give the libraries a chance to see the materials to say, I didn't realize that was in there; mistakes can be made; we want to be gracious. If the parents are refused on a local level and come to the Board, then it's our duty to make a judgment if that is inappropriate or not. If any library is intentionally disobeying state code, then we have a responsibility as a Board to make that decision.

Mr. Wahl – They have to be in compliance before they receive state funding; it's going to be different for different libraries. The final for this fiscal year is June, but they will not receive any state funding until they are in compliance and policy changes have been approved by APLS.

Dr Pack asked a question regarding the distribution of State Aid or grants after it is learned that a local library is not implementing policy. APLS does not have a procedure or policy that determines this.

Mr. Wahl - We have to comply with state law – so that’s why it’s so important that local libraries do follow their policies. Unless I am not correct – we are legally bound by the Code as well, so we cannot send state aid to a library that is not in compliance.

Mrs. Stokes – She’s saying if they have already received it.

Mr. Wahl – If they have already received it the money is out.

Mr. Wahl –I would ask Mr. Albritton to look into this whether the guarantee will be when the grants are approved or will it be when the money would go out. I think that is the question. If the library is in compliance when the grant is approved or out of compliance, would the grant stay good since it was good when the library was in compliance.

Mrs. Minton – Can we have a list of libraries that are approved on the website, given to us, or just published somewhere so we know the libraries that have been approved, Dr. Pack. You sent us the libraries that were not approved.

Dr. Pack – I can send you the libraries that are approved, but it changes on a daily basis.

Chief Officers of State Libraries Agencies (COSLA) Annual meeting Report – Nancy C. Pack

Dr. Pack Ms. Cindi Landrum, deputy director of services from Washington, DC, discussed IMLS and what to expect with cuts. They are still searching for a director and their budget is still on a stop gap situation.

- Teresa DeVoe, Associate Director, IMLS talked about the uniform guidance revisions grants to states.
- Robin Dale, Deputy Librarian, Library of Congress provided updates on parents’ approval on NLS service applications for children under the age of 18. This will go into effect January 2025. State regulations prevent this information from being provided to NLS. There are some legal questions about signing up children and young adult persons for talking books.
- Discussion was held about service provided to 18 years or younger having to have a parents signature. If the parent refuses to sign the application, APLS will be required to possibly take service away from them. Fees charged are being considered for lost equipment.
- COSLA is sponsoring “Voices for Libraries 2025” for advocates to go to Washington, D.C;

New Business

Summary of Budget Request for FY2026 – Nancy C. Pack

You have the information of the submission to the Governor for approval, and APLS' operating budget for FY2026. Also, the Alabama Virtual Library outlined their operating expenses for FY2026 budget.

Letter to Bill Poole, Finance Director, APLS Budget

A letter was given to Bill Poole, Finance Director, outlining APLS budget for FY2026. Mrs. Minton inquired as to language in the letter: "An additional Library Consultant is needed to work with libraries on training plans, and development of resources that APLS secured through the American Library Association." I thought we disassociated from the American Library Association.

Dr. Pack –APLS is no longer using the American Library Association's training. The addition of a consultant will allow development of training and other projects.

Mrs. Minton – I think that needs to be reworded.

Mr. Wahl – This letter has already been sent. Make sure Bill Poole knows about the language in the letter.

Waiver of the State Aid Rules – Abbeville Memorial Library – Funding

Dr. Pack - Abbeville Public Library requested a waiver of the state aid rules for funding. I recommend that the library be provided a waiver. The Board gave unanimous consent to approve Abbeville Public Library for a waiver for FY2025 with no objection.

Alabama Virtual Library (AVL) Executive Council Committee -Members Term Expires Without Reappointment and Persons Requesting Appointment to the AVL Council

Dr. Pack – My term of service as well as Ronnie Smith, Director of Eufaula Carnegie Library expired on September 30, 2024 Two applicants are requesting to be appointed to the AVL Council:

- Alex Perry, Consultant at the Alabama Public Library Service
- Kevin Pearcey, Director, Greenville-Butler County Public Library (Resume given to the Board)

Dr. Pack asked the Board's approval to appoint the applicants to the AVL Executive Council. The Board voted by unanimous approval.

Director's Report

APLS Financial Update as of October 31, 2024- Nancy C. Pack

There's nothing to report – we are in good shape right now.

Director's Report on Activities and Front Desk Statistics

Dr. Pack –A list of meetings and activities were outlined for the Board’s review. Also, front desk statistics were provided for August – October, 2024.

Staff Activities

Rhonda Napier and Tim Emmons attended White Cane Safety Day in Dothan, AL on October 12, 2024. Alisa McLeod attended e-Rate training in Nashville, TN on November 5-8, 2024. The training focused on broadband of the new requirements on e-Rate, including hotspots.

APLS Property Audit

A property audit was conducted on August 12, 2024. All property was located and Ms. Holman was awarded a Certificate of Commendation from the State Auditor, Andrew Sorrell.

Letter from Mark Wilson, AUM – Writer in Residence Program

Nancy Pack – Mark Wilson, Director of College of Liberal Arts at AUM, commended Terah Shelton Harris (a local librarian and Alabamian) on collaboration of this program. Her book was chosen as target book of the year.

Service Certificate and Pins

Matt Sponsler and Andreana Webb will be awarded service certificates and pins for twenty (20) years of service to the state of Alabama. Mr. Wahl presented them with their awards after the Meeting.

Adjournment

Mr. Wahl asked for adjournment. Ms. Martin made the motion for adjournment. Mrs. Stokes seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously with no objection. Meeting adjourned at 11:49 a.m.